

PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF ART.

BY

W. D. HALL

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T. ELDER DICKSON.

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CONTENTS.

	page
PREFACE	i
CHAPTER I. The Meaning and Scope of Interest in Art	2
CHAPTER II. Art, Beauty and Aesthetics	46
CHAPTER III. The Historical Background of Contemp- orary Theory	92
CHAPTER IV. Approaches to the Problem of Artistic Creativity.	115
CHAPTER V. Croce's View of Art as Intuition- Expression.	152
CHAPTER VI. Noegenesis and Artistic Creativity.	209
CHAPTER VII. The Hidden Soul: the Psycho-Analytic View of Art	287
CHAPTER VIII. Return to Expressionism	386
APPENDIX I. Psychological and Pedagogical Aspects of Aesthetic Appreciation	415
APPENDIX II. The Criterion of Accuracy in Representational Art	446
BIBLIOGRAPHY	469

PLATES.

	preceding page
I. "St. Gerome." Cosimo Tura (1430-1498)	Frontispiece.
II. "Woman with Bowl." Belgian Congo (Ba- Luba Tribe).	46
III.A,B,C. Reproduced from Pfister's <u>The Psycho- Analytic Method</u>	287
IV. Negro Mask. From the P. de Loes Collection.	386
V. Drawing by Rubens (detail). From the National Gallery of Scotland	404

TABLES.

	preceding page
Table I.	46
Table II.	92

PREFACE.

Few artists have the hardihood to set up as psychologists. It is meet, therefore, that I should preface these studies with an apology. The conspicuous failure of attempts by artists to write psychology requires no recalling. This fact might well have been a salutary warning against entering so specialised a province as that of aesthetics. But the desire to comprehend those secret processes by which I have, to some extent, been able to achieve my artistic aims has always been strong and at times imperious. It was not, therefore, any undue confidence in my ability to prosecute these investigations or any self-assurance that I could bring new light to bear on so vast and so difficult a problem that prompted the undertaking, but a keen desire to satisfy a clamant personal need.

There was perhaps another motive present in my mind besides mere curiosity as to the nature of my own psychological processes: the desire to compare representative views and theories with my own experience as a producing artist, and to observe the extent to which they appeared to confirm

or disprove my own speculations and introspective results. Throughout I have aimed at accuracy rather than novelty, facts rather than originality. I have tried not to obtrude unduly my own theoretical predilections, but rather to examine such doctrines as have come up for discussion in the double light of my own creative experience and the accredited facts of psychology. To what extent I have been successful in these pursuits the following studies will presently bear witness.

The work has undergone many modifications since its inception. Originally the plan included the study of the appreciative as well as the productive aspect of art. But circumstances early led to the curtailment of its scope: first, the realisation that the task was impossible because of its immensity; and second, prolonged periods of illness between the years 1930 and 1933 which forced me to reduce my activities to essential duties. Perhaps the curtailment of the field has not been without some compensatory virtue; for I have been able to concentrate on one aspect - and that, one in which I am naturally chiefly interested. The appreciation of art has to a limited degree been dealt with in an Appendix, where the problem has been approached from a pedagogical standpoint. I have also added an Appendix dealing with representation in art - this, too, from the

pedagogic point of view. Both appendices, I hope, will clear up minor difficulties which could not conveniently be discussed in the main text without involving some divagation.

My acknowledgments should be numerous, but I select the following. First, I would express my indebtedness to the many authors whose books and articles I have consulted. Next, to Professor James Drever of the Department of Psychology in this University, for his patience and tolerance over a long period during which I have frequented his laboratory; to the University Librarian and his assistants for their kindness and help; to my former teachers in University and Training College; and finally, to Mr. Stanley Cursiter, Director of the National Gallery of Scotland, for permission to photograph a Rubens' drawing from the Gallery's collection.

Edinburgh,
August 1936.

T. E. D.



Plate I.

CHAPTER I.

The Nature and Scope of Interest in Art.

CHAPTER I

"The good critic is he who tells the adventures of his soul among masterpieces."

Anatole France.

Speech and language abound in platitudes, many of which, emanating from the current usage of past ages, have become woven into the very fabric of thought; they are as free from suspicion as the coinage of the state. Based ostensibly upon self-evident truths, they carry with them the sanctions of commonsense and common usage. But, since language is ever developing and expanding with the progress of science and the advancement of knowledge, it is incumbent upon the student to be wary of the snares hidden in the ordinary words and phrases of his own age.

Throughout a wide field of literature the platitudinous assertion that art is a phenomenon of universal interest is ever recurring. This assertion no doubt contains a large amount of truth; but it is both ambiguous and misleading and ought not to be taken at its face value, as a little reflection will reveal. For clearly there are many different aspects of the phenomenon capable of arousing the interest of the observer. The interest of the Bushman

or Hindu slave is emphatically not the same as the interest of the sophisticated layman. Nor is the interest of the layman comparable with that of the aesthete, the historian, the philosopher or the Kunstforscher. Interest in art may arise from an innate endowment of the individual, a peculiar inborn responsiveness to artistic phenomena, or it may be a sophisticated or acquired interest due to learning or conditioned by environment and based on the dullest sensibility. These are psychologically quite distinct mental attitudes which ought not to be confused. In the one case the interest is aroused spontaneously and immediately; in the other, it is aroused only indirectly, through devious channels which merely skirt the secret spring. Indeed, the more sophisticated the interest is, the more consciously directed and controlled it is, the greater is the probability of its being a mere intellectual interest in some aspect of art, which presents itself to the mind of the agent as a problem to be investigated with a view to fuller knowledge and rational interpretation, not a spontaneous surrender of the mind and heart, which is the prior condition of the highest artistic experience.

In the earliest phases of man's cultural development art was so inextricably bound up with life that it is highly doubtful whether its existence as a separate phenomenon was recognised by primitive perception. It was an

activity which grew side by side with everyday experience. Field ethnologists and anthropologists, working among extant primitive peoples, have revealed over and over again the closeness of the connection between art and the practical affairs of the individual and the tribe⁽¹⁾, and, although speculations about the problem of the origin of art have nowhere produced any very significant body of agreed opinion, there is evidence enough to justify the belief that art existed long before man became fully conscious of his special creative gifts. In the course of time, as his powers of perception and reasoning developed, he may have paused to reflect critically upon the appearance of his own productions, gradually disentangling his interest in art from the more prosaic activities with which it was so intimately bound up, until he achieved a concept of it which

(1) E.g. Lévy-Bruhl (quoting Spencer and Gillen, The Native Tribes of Central Australia, p.617) points out in his book How Natives Think (p.116) that "When asked the meaning of certain drawings... the natives will constantly answer that they are only play work, and mean nothing... but... similar drawings, only drawn on some ceremonial object or in a particular spot, have a very different meaning... The same native will tell you that a special drawing in one spot has no meaning, and yet he will tell you exactly what it is supposed to signify when drawn in a different spot. The latter, it may be remarked, is always on what we may call sacred ground, near to which the women may not come." et. seq. Vide also Footnote p.118 op. cit.; Camille Schuwer, "La Signification de l'art primitif," Journal de Psychologie, Vol. 28, pp. 120-162; and Ernest Grosse, The Beginnings of Art.

established its independent status among the normal functions of life. Its later development, however, has been characterised by its gradual divorce from the ordinary conditions and activities of existence, with the result that sophisticated man tends to regard it as a special type of human activity, practised by a few people cloistered in the Ivory Tower, shut off from the world of affairs and common experience. Man's interest in art has thus varied immensely throughout the course of history.

"Interest in art" is a vague phrase, as vague as the terms "interest" and "art" themselves, and ill-suited to scientific discourse. For the sake of clearness, therefore, it would be well to inquire into its precise meaning. In everyday language it implies both knowledge about, as well as sensibility to art, two distinct and independent concepts, which are usually associated with the idea of appreciation. Psychologically, interest is a state of readiness to attend to anything. According to McDougall, "Interest is latent attention; and attention is interest in action. The essential condition of both interest in and attention to any object is that the mind shall be organised either natively or through experience, that it can think of the object and that such thinking shall evoke some impulse or desire which maintains a train of activity

in relation to the object.⁽¹⁾" The words "think" and "thinking" in this definition introduce a complication which must be examined. "To think of an object," states the same writer,⁽²⁾ "is to conceive it; to know, to recognise, to be aware of, or conscious of, any object is to conceive it, even when our knowing is a perceptual knowing:" and further,⁽³⁾ "All our perceiving is recognition in the wider sense; it is a knowing, a cognising of the object as a kind previously known." 'Thinking' of art in this sense of the term might mean anything from the mere perceptual cognition of a particular example to the highest and most complicated processes of philosophic speculation - an interpretation which is as vague as the ordinary everyday interpretation of the phrase "interest in art." It ignores the most notable feature of artistic perception. For, far from cognising the work of art as an object of "a kind previously known," the contemplative observer is virtually in a state of dissociation. Thinking may follow the act of pure artistic perception, but it is doubtful whether it can be regarded fundamentally as an essential ingredient of

(1) McDougall, W., Outline of Psychology, p.277.

(2) Ibid. p.254.

(3) Ibid. p.255.

the experience.

The purely psychological aspects of the problem, however, need not be discussed here. It will be sufficient to inquire into the nature of interest in art by examining it, concretely, so to speak, under the normal conditions of active cultural life.

Four principal classes of people are usually credited with an interest in art. First, the artist or producer, whose interest is essentially practical; second, the cultured layman or consumer, whose interest is mainly passive or appreciative; third, the critic, whose interest is mainly evaluatory; and fourth, the aesthetician, whose interest is mainly philosophical and psychological. As the interests of the critic and the aesthetician are intimately interconnected, the third and fourth classes may, for the purposes of study, be taken together. Interest in art may, therefore, be discussed under three heads:-

- (a) Practical Interest
- (b) Appreciative Interest
- (c) Theoretical Interest⁽¹⁾

(a) A practical interest in art implies having some purpose in view beyond the mere passive indulgence of the interest. This purpose may be (1) the production of art,

(1) Vide Wilenski, R. H., The Study of Art, Part III, pp.49-200, for a detailed analysis of the problem from the pedagogic point of view.

which is the special province of the artist; or (2) the understanding and elucidation of the technical, psychological and other processes involved in the production of art, which is the province of the historical and technical expert, the psychologist and the critic; or (3) the purchase or acquisition of a work of art with a view to hanging it in a particular locality or reselling it or otherwise disposing of it to gain profit or social distinction: this is the province of the connoisseur, the collector, the dealer; or (4) the writing of a book, an article or a news notice about art or a particular work of art, either for private gain or for some didactic purpose: this is the province of the journalist, the aesthetician, the aesthetic and philosophic littérateur. Now all these interests are practical, they have a useful end in view, but clearly the first is what should be - and, indeed, usually is - understood when the term 'practical' is predicated of interest in art. For, strictly speaking, the other classes do not refer to interest in art per se,⁽¹⁾ but interest only in some purpose beyond art - writing, owning, commenting, evaluating and so on.⁽²⁾ Practical interest of this

(1) i.e. For its own sake.

(2) It is hardly necessary to point out that the critic must first experience a work of art, its artistic quality, before he is capable of exercising his function. But his interest does not stop there: it becomes the starting point of a new interest, that of criticism.

latter type Mr. Wilenski would associate with "consuming and producing students" of art (Producing students of supposition, Producing students of art history, Producing students of Aesthetic, Producing students of Art Comment, etc.) as distinct from the producer of art, the artist. But, since it is no part of the artist's function to produce suppositions, art history, aesthetic theories or comments, his interest is practical only in the fullest and strictest sense of the term, namely, productive of art.

The practical aspect of art interest may, therefore, be subdivided as follows:

- (i) Production of Art (Artist)
- (ii) Production of Art Comment (Critic,
Historian, Expert, etc.)
Ownership
Dealing
Connoisseurship, etc.

It should be noted, however, that the second part (ii) is there only by virtue of the prior existence of the first. It represents a practical interest in the second degree, as distinct from the practical interest of the artist: in other words, the interest of the artist, qua artist, is essentially and wholly practical, whereas that of the critic, historian, expert, etc., is both practical and theoretical.

(b) Appreciation implies interest in art, but interest in art does not necessarily imply appreciation in the psychological-aesthetic sense of the term, which is to be

sensitive to art and aesthetic quality. The term appreciation is an ambiguous and misleading term. In everyday thought and language, and in the great mass of philosophical and critical literature dealing with art, it carries with it the connotation of 'valuing' or 'estimating,' which both imply rational processes. This no doubt emanates from the etymology of the word itself. Consequently, art appreciation is normally held to be the crowning achievement of a rational process, in which the object "appreciated" is critically examined, analysed and finally appraised.⁽¹⁾ Such a standpoint is the offspring of a view of life which exalts intellect above other forms of mental awareness, such as intuition, and flagrantly ignores plain psychological fact. For art appreciation is not an achievement of the intelligence or will, but a spontaneous act of pure sense-perception, involving an immediate apprehension of value. It is not the culmination of a process of the rational intellect, but a total state of mind, immediately induced by the perception of the sensuous phenomena of form and colour and pattern,⁽²⁾ which constitute the visible work of art.

The supposed close association of the rational intellect

(1) Cf. Appendix I, pp. 426-432.

(2) Cf. Read, Herbert, The Meaning of Art, p.18 (1st ed.)

with interest in and appreciation of art has been an obstacle to the proper understanding of the nature of appreciative interest. (1) Interest in art of the appreciative kind may arise from either of two radically different sources. On the one hand, it may arise from an inborn hypersensitivity of the individual organism to artistic phenomena (form and colour, line and pattern, etc.), which is a state of spontaneous growth and development, such as lies at the root of the best paleolithic and peasant art, and which predisposes the individual to attend to and find satisfaction in ordered visual experience. Or, on the other hand, it may arise as a result of the influence of environment upon the mind and native sensibility of the individual, or the influence of specific training and conscious education upon an organism that is, from the point of view of its responsiveness to sensuous artistic qualities, quite dull and impotent. No individual is completely devoid of sensibility. No individual, that is to say, is completely incapable of perceiving differences of form and colour, line and pattern, and of reacting to these differences feelingly or emotionally. Some people, however, are capable of perceiving very subtle differences

(1) Cf. Appendix I, p. 426-430.

such as are unnoticed by others of equal or higher intelligence and of reacting to these differences with strong feelings of pleasure or displeasure. "All works of art represent a transmission from the artist to the spectator, a transmission necessarily occurring through the medium of the senses - ear or eye.⁽¹⁾" The acuteness of these senses in the individual, then, will determine exactly how much he will experience of what the artist transmits by their means. If his senses are tuned to a high degree of responsiveness, he will become aware of much more than the man whose senses are dull and sluggish.

The acuteness of the senses, however, is not the sole determining factor of sensibility. The senses can not of themselves inform the mind. The senses of most animals are probably much more acute than those of man, but no amount of training could make them aware of what is transmitted by the simplest work of art. Sensibility implies much more than mere hypersensitivity of the senses. It implies the powers of intelligence and intuition, an awareness of the world and the power of sharing the deepest and most universal moods of man. It implies a philosophy, a way of life, a faith in the supremacy of mind over matter, a belief in the right of man to share in the shaping of his

(1) Mauron, Charles, Aesthetics and Psychology, p.53.

own destiny. These enlarge his awareness, producing what may by analogy be termed the sensibilities of the mind and spirit, which are indeed the ultimate instruments of intellectual culture. Intellect and sensibility constitute a partnership which cannot be wholly dissolved; their coöperative failure means sterility and the final decay of creativeness.

The gifts of sensibility and intelligence are unevenly distributed. Few men possess them in the highest degree, fewer still in the highest degree side by side with one another. One man will have a high sensibility and a less high intelligence; another a high intelligence and a less acute sensibility. Hence the comparative rareness of genius of the rank of Michelangelo or Leonardo da Vinci. Hence also the apparent inexplicability of the power and beauty of the art of primitive peoples, whose intellectual development, according to orthodox standards, is of the lowest order. One of the most remarkable facts about the whole history of art is that, while man's intelligence has developed immensely from first to last, his sensibility to form has remained comparatively stable.

The importance of drawing a distinction between innate sensibility on the one hand and intellectual sensibility on the other hardly needs to be advocated. Current usage, however, appears to recognise no need for differentiating

between the appreciation of the technical or critical expert and that of the untrained but sensitive spectator. But, as has been claimed, the attitudes of these two observers in the presence of the work of art are psychologically quite distinct. To regard both attitudes simply as modes of "appreciation" is slovenly and misleading. The interest of the one is, for the most part, focussed on points of style, technique and composition, which demand knowledge and logic for their appreciation and assessment. The interest of the untrained sensitive observer, on the other hand, is allowed to operate unchecked in naive indulgence. The term "appreciative interest" is indeed perhaps the most appropriate term that could be found to denote the operative attitude of the expert.⁽¹⁾ It is a critical attitude, an attitude which tends "to drive us from indulgence to take thought of our going," whereas that of the untrained sensitive observer is all indulgence and "alert passivity." Between the two extremes of sheer aesthetic intellectualism and naive aesthetic indulgence the possibilities of combination are infinite, but, caeteris paribus, the artistic

(1) Using the term appreciation in its etymological sense. Cf. Appendix I, p.426. A great deal of what is regarded as art appreciation belongs to this class of interest; it is mainly rational, analytical and critical. Witness the extravagant enthusiasm of the expert, the connoisseur, on finding some new piece of evidence, some previously unknown flaw, some new technical idiosyncrasy in a masterpiece.

experience of the man who has preserved his "innocence of eye" will be deeper and richer in significance and ultimate value.

(c) Theoretical interest in art is an intellectual or rational discipline, the outcome of a philosophic or scientific attitude to art. Its aim is the intellectual understanding of art, and its operation may range from the mere curiosity of the layman to the abstract intellectual analysis of the philosopher.

That a strong theoretical interest implies ipso facto a special degree of innate sensibility on the part of the theorist may appear a reasonable assumption; for, if he were not specially attracted by art, how else could his interest have been established, and how sustained? In point of fact, however, a theoretical interest in art may arise in a variety of different ways, few of which may be due to direct artistic experience.

If theoretical interest in art is to yield valuable results for science and philosophy, it ought properly to be founded upon innate sensibility and independent first-hand experience. For, as Thorburn points out,⁽¹⁾ the work of art cannot as such become a datum for science or philosophy until it has made its appeal directly to the

(1) Thorburn, J. M., Art and the Unconscious, p.4.

investigator. The history of aesthetics, however, raises doubts as to whether this has always been the case.⁽¹⁾ Speculation as to the fundamental impulses underlying the formulation of the major historical aesthetic theories would be both tiresome and futile, but it is at least indisputable that, from first to last, from Socrates to Croce, the important theories of aesthetics have been the work of men whose interests and cultural predilections have been primarily those of the scholar and philosopher. A few have been poets, (e.g. Goethe and Coleridge), some have been painters or sculptors, (Leonardo da Vinci, Benvenuto Cellini, Sir Joshua Reynolds), but, from the historical point of view, their contributions to the theory of art and aesthetics are negligible. Perhaps this could not have been otherwise; for aesthetics is the product of the reflective and critical mind, art the product of the creative mind, and seldom are these powers found in equal degree in one personality.

Metaphysical speculation produced the earliest theories; they were the outcome of a non-aesthetic attitude of mind, which regarded art merely as a phenomenon to be fitted into the comprehensive system of ultimate realities. Instead

(1) Nobody, for instance, could associate sensibility with a man like Kant. On the other hand, Hegel was a man with a fine sensibility and understanding of art.

of being the offspring of a desire to comprehend the nature of art from first-hand artistic experience, the first theories originated in reflections concerning the nature of the universe, from which art could not, in the Greek mind, be excluded. "The Greek world of ideas, before or outside the philosophic schools, was wholly free from dualism. Its parts were homogeneous."⁽¹⁾ Starting in speculation, metaphysical aesthetic has pursued its lofty path undeviatingly, without having revealed a single universal principle of art that could be unambiguously demonstrated, or having settled a single artistic question with any degree of finality.

During the middle ages theoretical interest in art arose from the close association of art with religion; hence the theory of the period is concerned mainly with Christian symbolism and is wholly speculative and metaphysical. Partly as a consequence of what Bosanquet calls the "individual" tendency in philosophy, partly owing to the influence of the empirical psychologists, and partly to the development of criticism, notably by Lessing and

(1) Bosanquet, B., History of Aesthetics, p.11.

Winckelmann,⁽¹⁾ the objective consideration of the work of art begins to take an important place in the theories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Coincidentally, Kant, Schelling and Hegel accord to art a key position in their respective philosophical systems. Contemporary theory in the main orientates either from the concrete phenomenon or from the concrete experience. The whole

(1) It is instructive to note the revolt of Winckelmann against "erudition" (Belesenheit) in art as opposed to direct sensuous observation. "Research and insight into art we look for in vain in the great costly works descriptive of ancient statues, which have as yet been published. The description of a statue ought to demonstrate the cause of its beauty, and point out the individuality in the style of its art; ... but where is it taught in what the beauty of a statue consists, and what scribe (Scribente) has looked at it with an artist's eye?" "How has it happened, whereas profound treatises have appeared in all other sciences, that the rationale of art and of beauty has been so little enquired into? Reader! the fault lies in our innate indolence as regards thinking for ourselves, and in the wisdom of the schools. For on the one hand the ancient works of art have been regarded as beauties to the enjoyment of which we cannot hope to attain, and which therefore readily warm the imagination of a few, but do not penetrate the soul, and antiquities have only given occasion for shooting the rubbish of book-learning, but have afforded no nourishment or hardly any to the reason. On the other hand again, since philosophy has chiefly been practised and taught by such as, through reading their dry-as-dust predecessors therein, are forced to leave little room for feeling, and cover it up, so to speak, with a hard skin, we have been led through a labyrinth of metaphysical subtleties and circumlocutions which after all have chiefly served to ex-cogitate huge books and sicken the understanding." Winckelmann, Geschichte der Bildenden Kunst, Intro. ii. Quoted by Bosanquet, History of Aesthetics, pp. 240-241.

tendency, then, from antiquity to modern times has been marked by a movement away from the abstract metaphysical intuition of first principles to the more concrete treatment of the problem. Yet it is noteworthy that no aesthetic theory of importance has, as far as is known, originated in the first instance from an interest in art primarily determined by sensibility.⁽¹⁾ Without exception all the important contributions to aesthetic theory have originated in academic philosophy, and many of the modern ones from scientific inquiry in the fields of psychology, ethnology, ethnography and archaeology. Indeed, it was through the desire of an eighteenth century philosopher, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, to round off his system of metaphysic, that the science of Aesthetics received its name, as designating the theory of "obscure" knowledge in contrast to and co-equal with the "clear" knowledge of logical thought.

These observations concerning the motivating impulse behind the formulation of aesthetic theories are of more than passing interest, because they suggest questions of considerable moment to the student. The discussion of

(1) It might be objected that Winckelmann's theory was the outcome of innate sensibility. But, although fundamentally he had a real feeling for sculpture, his interest arose through his passion for classical learning.

these, however, is no part of the present purpose. But it may here be asked whether a mere intellectual interest in art does not carry with it mental limitations, which may very well result in failure on the part of the investigator to observe essential elements in the phenomenon he purports to scrutinise. For, since the experience of art transcends mere cognitive awareness of its attributes, the theorist must, in the long run, test his theory not only by checking it against bare abstract fact, but by introspective analysis of his own experience. He cannot stand outside the universal subjective experience and examine it objectively by means of the searching rays of science; he must observe it first as a phenomenon at work within himself, checking his introspective observations by the reliable introspection of others. Neither can he know nor understand another's feelings unless in terms of his own. And for that reason a theory of aesthetics that is not founded upon first-hand experience of art is bound to be inadequate, superficial and barren. "To aesthetic experience," states Dewey,⁽¹⁾ "the philosopher must go to understand what experience is. For this reason, while the theory of aesthetic put forward by a philosopher is incidentally a test of the capacity of its author to have the

(1) Dewey, John, Art as Experience, p.274.

experience that is the subject-matter of his analysis, it is also much more than that. It is a test of the capacity of the system he puts forth to grasp the nature of experience itself." This much, then, philosophers and psychologists readily concede.⁽¹⁾ Yet the facts of history and biography point to the conclusion that the subject has more often than not been approached regardless of this fundamental prerequisite of direct experience. How rare,

(1) For example: (a) "In trying to arrive at an understanding of any activity, one must begin with a mass of experience, relative to that activity; and this experience cannot be acquired by philosophical thinking, or by scientific experiments, or by observation of the activity in other people, but only by a long and specialised pursuit of the activity itself. Only after this experience has been acquired is it possible to reflect upon it and bring to light the principles underlying it." R. G. Collingwood, Outlines of a Philosophy of Art, pp. 8-9. (Apparently Collingwood believes that the experience can be acquired like, say, motor driving! It does not occur to him that the wrong kind of experience can be acquired.)

(b) "It is of vital importance to be clear that generalisations about art and about aesthetic experience can only be justified when they are based upon immediately experienced aesthetic intuition. Without aesthetic intuition of individual beautiful things, generalisations about aesthetic experience are 'but words and breath.' Critics are right when they resent 'high priori' ways of thinking and speaking of art. It may be possible to use the concept of beauty as the completion of a system of philosophy, as some philosophers have done; it may even be possible for the metaphysician to define beauty more or less correctly, out of a very general and vague sort of experience. But this kind of thing, even in the hands of genius, is not worth a great deal, unless it is based on experience of many beautiful things, and of many sorts of beautiful things." L. A. Reid, A Study in Aesthetics, pp.17-18. Vide also footnote p.18, Winckelmann.

according to Mr. Desmond MacCarthy,⁽¹⁾ the combination of the powers of sensibility and abstract thought is, the history of aesthetics shows. "As a rule it has been towards the end of his life that a philosopher, to round off his system, has sat down to write upon Aesthetics; having explained the universe, laid the foundations of logic and morals, he proceeds at last to explain our 'sense of beauty.' The manner in which he does so is usually determined by his system, and the results are seldom as valuable as they might be, partly for this reason, and partly because they have not been drawn from wide or vivid personal experience. Any reader who has enjoyed the arts, though immensely inferior to a philosopher in intellect, is apt to notice that these theories by no means explain all that he has himself felt." Would Fechner, it may be asked, have embarked upon his long series of experiments, if his sensibility had been equal to his scientific urge? For, if such had been the case, he would surely have observed - what, in fact, has since been established - that the material he employed, like most of the material of

(1) Reviewing The Principles of Literary Criticism, by I. A. Richards, Sunday Times, July 21, 1929.

experimental aesthetics, had no fundamental relation to art. Fechner's work yielded no positive principle which could be demonstrated in art. Subsequent experiments⁽¹⁾ of a similar type have been equally sterile, although much useful information has been forthcoming that will help eventually to define the proper function of this department of experimental psychology.

Theoretical interest in art is not, however, confined to the aesthetician, whether philosopher or psychologist; it is also - or ought to be - the province of the critic and the historian. For "all criticism, which does not either achieve science, or definitely reach towards it, is mere mirage."⁽²⁾ Unless the critic can justify his criticism and the historian his history in terms of fundamental principles, there can be no real criticism and no real history, only superficial judgments based on vague preconceptions and personal prejudices.

The term "critic" is a vague term in great need of exact definition. In the world of letters and of art it

(1) Haines and Davies, "The Psychology of Aesthetic Reactions to Rectangular Forms," Psychological Review, Vol. XI. 1904; Vide also Lillian J. Martin, "An Experimental Study of Fechner's Principles of Aesthetics," Psychological Review, Vol. XIII, May 1906.

(2) Dallas, E. S., The Gay Science, Vol. I, p. 71. One of the earliest and almost unknown attempts to lay the foundations of a scientific criticism.

includes, besides the critic proper - who is fundamentally a philosopher and a publicist - individuals whose interest in art is not primarily theoretical (like the aesthete), nor yet appreciative (like the sensitive layman), but mainly practical: for instance, the technical expert, iconographer and the archivist. But it is only by according to the term its very widest and least exact connotation that these art functionaries can be designated critics; they are not primarily concerned with the establishment of intangible values, which is the business of the true critic of art, but rather with the search after facts and the systematic recording of facts relating to particular works of art. The technical expert, iconographer and the archivist are each concerned with the data relevant to the material work of art, its physical attributes, its history in terms of ownership, restorations, chemistry, technique and so on. They are not called upon to express judgments of a philosophic or psychological kind. Their function is essentially a practical function; they need not be sensitive to the intrinsic qualities of the object they are examining; they need only be capable of making exact pronouncements on questions capable of more or less exact answer. For this reason it is frequently stated that expert critics are better able to spot bad works of art than good ones!

There is, of course, a sense in which the true critic's

interest is also practical; he wishes to write about art, to interpret, to explain, to call attention to art. In a word he is a publicist; and a publicist is a practical man. But, granting that, it is important to note that before the critic is capable of fulfilling his function, he must first of all have a direct personal experience of that which he professes to criticise. The art critic's criticism must arise from lived experience; and the fundamental condition of such lived experience is innate sensibility. Between the true critic - the critic whose business it is to pronounce judgments concerning art quality - and the technical critic, iconographer and archivist, there is, then, this crucial difference: whereas the latter may exercise their function independently of any innate sensibility to art, to the former sensibility is a fundamental prerequisite, without which no valid or useful criticism is possible.

The critic who lacks first-hand experience of the significance of art is, in Mr. Wilenski's view, a mere autobiographer. But sensibility and direct experience are not enough. The critic must also possess the gift of clear and cogent exposition. He must be capable of transmitting to others something of his own enthusiasm, something of the indwelling spirit of art, which has seized him. How rare

it is, as Mr. MacCarthy pointed out, to find these requisites in a single personality the history of criticism reveals. "No one," declares Mr. Clive Bell,⁽¹⁾ "can state in words just what he feels about a work of art - especially about a work of visual art. He may exclaim; indeed if he be a critic he should exclaim, for that is how he arrests the public. He may go on to seek some rough equivalent in words for his excited feelings. But whatever he may say will amount to little more than steam let off. He cannot describe his feelings; he can only make it clear that he has them." That, too, is what Winckelmann meant when he said that "Hardly any scribe can penetrate the inmost essence of art."

But, besides sensibility and the power of literary expression, the critic must be prepared to support his judgments by reference to fundamental principles. Mr. L. A. Reid has insisted upon this with some force. "All criticism," he states,⁽²⁾ "implies good 'taste,' implies competence of aesthetic intuition. But this is not all that is required. Nor are technical, historical and biographical knowledge and the gift of literary expression adequate supplements. Philosophy is also required. The interest

(1) Since Cézanne, p. 158.

(2) A Study in Aesthetics, pp. 23-24.

of the critic is, of course, in individual works of art, and, as we have said, no amount of general knowledge is of the least use as a substitute for this. But surely it is also the business of the completely equipped critic to give reasons, if required, for the faith which is in him. I do not suggest that he must always be doing so, or that he is mainly concerned with theory. But he should be able to do so; his should be a 'thinking study' of art. He can point, or he can talk round the issue, or he can sing as the poets sing. But as the complete critic he is, if he merely does these things, a comparative (not a complete) failure, for though he has likes and dislikes, though he may know what is good, he has no idea why. He is not interested in the question. All good critics must put to themselves from time to time such questions as, Why is this or that good? Why is this technical device to be preferred to that? Why is this or that historical development important? Such questions directly involve others, such as, What is the meaning of good, or of bad, in art? What is the difference between the 'beautiful' and the 'ugly,' between the 'great' and the 'trifling,' between the 'tragic' and the 'comic,' between the 'classical' and the 'romantic'? And these are - however little this be realised by critics themselves - most emphatically philosophical questions."

During last century, Dr. Santayana points out, (1) the term criticism was employed by many writers to denote the philosophy of beauty; (2) to-day the word is retained as the title for the "reasoned appreciation of art." In Mr. Wilenski's view "Art criticism... is the systematic assessment of all kinds of values in art considered as a human activity, and all kinds of values in particular artists, and all kinds of values residing in or presented to the objects produced by that activity. (3)" Both these definitions include much more than the everyday connotation of the term, which limits art criticism to the assessment of objects, the products of the art activity. But, as Mr. Reid rightly points out, the critic's pronouncements must be based upon a philosophical foundation. Every judgment the critic makes is in the last resort based upon a more or less clearly conceived philosophy of art; or else it is not criticism, but mere prejudice or autobiography. Mr. Wilenski's definition of art criticism is, then, as comprehensive as any definition need be; it is as good a definition as it is possible to

(1) The Sense of Beauty, p.15.

(2) Cf. E. S. Dallas, The Gay Science, Chap. II, Vol. I, for a most instructive survey of the field of criticism, as it appeared to the author in the middle of the nineteenth century.

(3) The Study of Art, pp. 162-163.

find. In fact, it is a statement in exact terms of all that is by implication contained in the commonplace definition of criticism as the "reasoned appreciation of art." But for the ambiguity of the term 'appreciation' the commonplace definition might have been accepted as both sufficient and accurate - besides having the advantage of brevity. If, however, the term be used strictly in its etymological sense⁽¹⁾ as implying rational judgment, the following definition should be adequate: Art criticism is the reasoned appreciation of art regarded as the product of human activity and the public assessment of its values.

Now the values attaching to or inhering in art are mainly four⁽²⁾: (i) The value of the work of art to the art-consuming community as an expression of the intuitions and aspirations of its members and a symbol of its common culture. This is its public value. (ii) The value of the work of art to the artist as the expression or formal equivalent of a private intuition or aspiration. This is

(1) Vide Appendix I, pp. 426.

(2) Regarding the matter from the point of view of the criticism of art as an activity taking place publicly in cultural society by means of books or newspapers. Vide Chap. VI with reference to the terms "public" and "private" in art.

its private value.⁽¹⁾ (iii) The value of the work of art in terms of some system of ultimate values. This is its metaphysical value. (iv) The value of the work of art as a means of yielding psychological satisfaction (release of psychical tension, pleasure, etc.) to the artist, the spectator and the community as a whole. This is its human or psycho-sociological value. There are, of course, other values depending upon or arising from special circumstances - for instance, the value of the work of art to the artist-spectator, who might conceivably desire to make use of it in order to improve his own productions, or the value of the work of art to the morbid, psychotic or otherwise extraordinary spectator. These values, however, can all be subsumed under one or other of the four main categories enumerated. The value of the work of art to the consuming community (i.e. its public value) is, of course, not a simple but a compound value,⁽²⁾ comprising socio-psychological, pedagogical and metaphysical elements. Likewise

(1) Mr. Wilenski applies the term intrinsic to the value attaching to the work of art for the artist, and acquired to the value attaching to the work of art for the spectator.

(2) It must, of course, be assumed that the art-consuming community is not a community of theorists or philosophers, but simple a community of art contemplators with an appetite for passive artistic experience.

the value of the work of art to the artist (i.e. its private value) is not simple, but consists of psychological, sociological and metaphysical ingredients. The metaphysical value of the work of art will be determined both by reference to some system of absolute art values and by reference to some system of ultimate universal values.

Psycho-sociological art value will include all values arising from psychic causes which art is capable of fulfilling (i.e. pleasures of sense perception, sublimation of conflicts and primitive impulses, wish-fulfilments, etc.)

The critic's function, then, is a very difficult and complicated one. If he is to give a reasoned account of the faith that is in him, if he is to give a "thinking study" of art, his task is indeed an onerous one. For, whenever he makes a judgment of value in one department of his field, he immediately raises fundamental questions in another department. For instance, if he makes a pronouncement about the purely artistic qualities of a picture for which a large sum of public money has been paid, and tries to show that such a purchase is, in fact, a most laudable act, he raises questions of the utmost metaphysical importance, which can only be answered by appealing to authorities in the different aspects of art, or by attempting to answer them all himself: in which case he must assume the rôle of

the Deity as expert, historian, psychologist, philosopher and metaphysician at one and the same time. For this reason a kind of system of labour division has been evolved, whereby one man concerns himself solely with historical values,⁽¹⁾ another with philosophical values, another with social values, another with psychological values, and so on according to the nature of his interest and mental equipment. This enables the practical business of art criticism to proceed without the endless discussion of metaphysical fundamentals, which it would entail were each critic to attempt to cover the whole field of knowledge which his function involves.

Of the types of art criticism by far the commonest is what Mr. L. A. Reid calls "signpost criticism."⁽²⁾ Its main purpose is to reveal, to 'direct' the public's attention to the best and most worthy examples of contemporary art, as well as the best and most worthy examples of the art of the past. Mr. Reid, it would appear, does not rank this type very high in his scale of values, stating simply that it has a very useful function, "largely the function of a guide-book or a good newspaper."⁽³⁾ But, be that

(1) A department of public value.

(2) "Primarily, a critic is a signpost," says Mr. Clive Bell (Op. Cit. p.155). "He points to a work of art and says - 'Stop! Look!'"

(3) Op. cit. p.21.

as it may, this is surely to underestimate the importance of the regular criticism of men like Mr. Ernest Newman in the world of music, Mr. Clive Bell, Mr. Herbert Read, Mr. Frank Rutter, not to mention the late Roger Fry, in the visual arts, which is no mere signpost work, but criticism of a very high order. Indeed, the journalistic criticism of these men ranks higher, qua criticism, than a vast amount of the "technical" or "scholarly" variety, to which a too academic culture is wont to accord the highest value.⁽¹⁾ Perhaps in the long run 'signpost' criticism, when it is of the first rank, is the most valuable of all, since, unlike the so-called 'higher' forms of criticism, it is addressed not merely to a select public of critics or literature-producing and consuming students of art, but to the cultured and sensitive 'everyman.'

(1) Whistler, it will be recalled, expressed his contempt for this kind of criticism in his Ten O'Clock lecture. "There are those also, sombre of mien, and wise with the wisdom of books, who frequent museums and burrow in crypts; collecting - comparing - compiling - classifying - contradicting. "Experts these - for whom a date is an accomplishment - a hall-mark, success! "Careful in scrutiny are they, and conscientious of judgment, establishing, with due weight, unimportant reputations, discovering the picture by the stain on the back - testing the torso by the leg that is missing.... disputatious and dictatorial concerning the birthplace of inferior persons - speculating, in much writing, upon the great worth of bad work."

"Critics," says Mr Bell,⁽¹⁾ "do not exist for artists any more than paleontologists exist for fossils." ...

"The critic's business is to help the public ... To put the public in the way of aesthetic pleasure, that is the end for which critics exist, and to that end all means are good." Mr. Bell clearly has in mind a public of intelligent and sensitive laymen. It is no part of the critic's business to address artists; neither is it any part of the critic's business to address other critics. Criticism of other critics' theories is not art criticism but philosophic criticism or criticism of art criticism, which is either a scientific or a philosophic discipline. It has for its subject-matter life, more particularly that part of life which is lived in and through the experience of art. The essence of good criticism (to quote Mr. Bell again) is this: "that, instead of merely imparting to others the opinions of the critic, it puts them in a state to appreciate the work of art itself... Further, the critic has got to convince... He should be able... to disentangle and appraise the qualities which go to make up a masterpiece...⁽²⁾" The critic, that is to say, must be able to show by reference to a comprehensive scale of values, what

(1) Op. cit. p.154.

(2) p. 156.

works of art are good and why, and what works of art are inferior or bad and why. The ultimate end of art criticism may, therefore, be defined as the establishment of a comprehensive and stable system of values, that will render possible the public assessment⁽¹⁾ of the art products of the world, irrespective of their time and place. It is not, then, to the arid discourses of the technical critics nor to the panegyrics of the savants that the custodians of tradition and culture must look, but to the signpost critics of the calibre of the late Roger Fry, Mr. Clive Bell and Mr. Frank Rutter. That Mr. Reid appears to see no more important value in the journalistic criticism of these men than that of signposts which tell "the uninitiated what to seek and what to avoid" seems to indicate a lack of judgment that is surprising in a writer of his ability and perspicuity; unless it be concluded that for the purposes of his inquiry he has slumped all journalistic criticism into one common class and attributed to it a common value, which must relegate it to the lowest literary and philosophic level in the scale. Mr. Reid, however unwittingly, is guilty of a grievous error in failing alike to appreciate the true value of signpost criticism and the high standing

(1) i.e. communicable assessment.

of the journals to which the best critics regularly contribute. (1)

A great deal of what is frequently referred to as "higher" criticism is addressed to a very limited public - mostly critics themselves or literature-producing and consuming students of art and culture. Mr. B. Berenson (author, inter alia, of The Study and Criticism of Italian Art) and Mr. T. Borenius (author, inter alia, of Florentine Frescoes) are true representatives of this type of criticism, which demands for its understanding a wide and accurate knowledge of the history and technical processes of art. Whether such 'technical' criticism is really criticism is an arguable point. Criticism implies judgment; criticism is judgment. Technical criticism, then, means the critical examination of the technical characteristics of the work of art - its drawing, composition, colour, surface texture, representational accuracy, history and so on - and its disposal in terms of some ideal criterion. But, it may be asked, is there an ideal standard available by which to assess technical values? Is there some ideal

(1) That two of these writers (Clive Bell and Roger Fry) regard such journalistic work as serious criticism is evident from the fact that both have republished much of it in book form - Transformations and Vision and Design by Roger Fry and Since Cézanne by Clive Bell. Mr. Bell himself states (op. cit. p.162): "It is becoming fashionable to take criticism seriously, or more exactly, serious critics are trying to make it so. How far they have succeeded may be measured by the fact that we are no longer ashamed to reprint our reviews..."

technical standard to which all great art may be said to conform? If not, then criticism of art in terms of technique is impossible. Possessing no criterion, the critic cannot choose his material. "This," as one writer has emphasised, ⁽¹⁾ "is unsatisfactory; and it is worse - it is self-destructive. For, not being able to reject, criticism cannot, in logic, choose the objects of its attention. But a method which cannot limit on its own principles the field within which it is to work is condemned from the beginning; it bears a fallacy at its core. In order to make criticism theoretically possible at all, the power to choose and reject, and so the pronouncing of judgment, must be an integral part of it."

Now, it may be submitted that there is no criterion of technique by which to judge art, whether it be painting, sculpture, architecture or music. Alike to the academic painter and the critic of the nineteenth century such an assertion would have appeared absurd on the face of it. To-day, however, although there are critics who would hotly dispute the statement, the more responsible of them would either agree or propound a definition of technique which reduced it to something other than what the academies believed it to be. The Impressionist exhibition shocked

(1) Puffer, Ethel D., The Psychology of Beauty, p. 6.

the critics, who believed that the canons of art had been fixed for all time by the Greeks, and that any divergence from the classical path was a sign of decadence and indecency.⁽¹⁾ The supremacy of the technical canons, which had been pursued with the utmost earnestness as promising the one and only way to the citadel of art, was first contested, then finally renounced. No one of any sensibility would say to-day that Cézanne's technique was inferior to Correggio's: which is a true indication that the technical criterion is as useless as it is irrelevant as a criterion of art value.

The word "technique" is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary⁽²⁾ as "mechanical skill in art." Such a definition is quite empty. Apart altogether from the question as to whether there is any such activity as "mechanical skill" (it looks like a contradiction in terms), it implies a distinction between the artist's psychic and physical functions which no psychology can or would support. Psychic need begets the means of its own fulfilment; technique manifests itself only in expression; and expression is the only technique that is capable of assessment. Good technique is simply the best means of achieving the formal

(1) Cf. Wilenski, R. H., French Painting, Pp. 237-244.

(2) Concise Edition.

equivalent of an inner experience. And, since every creative impulse is a unique situation, each new effort at artistic production will present a new set of technical problems to be mastered. No one mode of skill in manipulating a medium will satisfy the ever-changing needs of the spirit, for technical skill in art is a life-long process of invention, which cannot be encompassed within the confines of a single formula.⁽¹⁾ There is, therefore, no criterion of technique, and, therefore, no principles upon which to found a technical criticism.

But it may be objected that there are surely rights and wrongs in the manner of handling the materials of art. And is this not what in the long run is meant by technique? The answer is that there are undoubtedly rights and wrongs in handling the materials of art, but what is right and what is wrong is neither determined by the physical nature of the material, nor by traditional methods of handling, but the artist's purpose with it. And, if the artist achieves his purpose only by taking liberties with his material, the work of art cannot be assessed on these grounds, but only by asking whether he has in fact produced a meritorious work. If it be concluded that he has not, the failure may in part be attributable to the liberties he has taken with his material, but that need not be the

(1) "... in art such a thing as a technique founded on no given basis - in short, a technique in the air - would be utterly inconceivable." (Igor Stravinsky, Chronicle of My Life, p.38.)

final reason. On the other hand, if the work of art is a work of high merit, then it matters nothing whether he has taken liberties with his material or not. The end justifies the means. Or, as Mr. John Copley, the distinguished lithographer, states:⁽¹⁾ "few, if any things, are de facto outside the scope of a medium: the artist may make his medium do anything he can make it do" - and he cites Carrière's lithography "sinking into ... the full, the most brutal depths of stone."

Technical criticism cannot be dissociated from historical or scientific criticism, which regard the history of art as a process analogous to that manifested in naturalistic evolution of species, and the work of art as a product. Accordingly, scientific criticism consists in the systematic evaluation of the work of art in terms of the evolutionary principles of stylistic species, which the historical development of art is supposed to enunciate. The adherents of the school maintain that this is the only kind of criticism which is capable of pronouncing an objective and stable judgment - a judgment free from the subjectivism of the so-called Impressionistic and Appreciative schools, of

(1) "True and False Technique," Print Collectors' Quarterly, Vol. XXI, No.1, January 1934. Cf. pp.215-217 seq.

which Walter Pater may be taken as a true representative. Judgment of artistic value, however, is neither intended nor implied by scientific criticism; "it merely attempts," declares Professor Wölfflin,⁽¹⁾ one of the most distinguished exponents of the method, "to set up standards by which the historical transformations (and national types) can be more exactly defined."

But once again the question may be asked: Is scientific criticism a feasible ideal? Is a scientific judgment of a work of art possible? Or, in other words, is the classification of a work of art according to national type and its disposal in relation to the members of its type a judgment? The answer is surely an emphatic negative. For the judgment of anything always means judgment with reference to the end for which it exists,⁽²⁾ and the end for which a work of art exists is, as Victor Hugo asserted, the cause of humanity. Its existence is its own excuse for being.

"The type belongs to natural history. The one principle at the basis of scientific criticism is, as we have seen, the conception of ... history as a process, and of

(1) Principles of Art History, Preface VII.

(2) Puffer, op. cit., p. 8.

the work of art as a product. The work of art is, then, a moment in a necessary succession, governed by laws of change and adaptation like those of natural evolution. But how can the conception of values enter here? Excellence can be attributed only to that which attains an ideal end; and a necessary succession has no end in itself. The 'type,' in this sense, is perfectly hollow. To say that the modern chrysanthemum is better than that of our forbears because it is more chrysanthemum-like is true only if we make the latter form the arbitrary standard of the chrysanthemum. No species which is constituted by its own history can be said to have an end in itself, and can, therefore, have an excellence to which it shall attain. In short, good and bad can be applied to the moments in a necessary evolution only by imputing a fictitious superiority to the last term; and so one type cannot logically be preferred to another. As for the individual specimens, since the conception of the type does not admit the principle of excellence, conformity thereto means nothing."

Scientific criticism is a misnomer born of a false conception of the meaning and scope of criticism. It ought not to be necessary to emphasise this, but in an age which is nurtured on the belief that science "is on the point of discovering the Godhead," it is important to keep in mind

that in the end science must return to philosophy for its mandate. The scientific study of art is both a laudable and an essential discipline, which has already won an honourable place in the history of the "great search,"⁽¹⁾ but it must not be permitted to overstep the bounds of its proper province.

Complementary to the scientific worker in the field of art is the art historian. It is the historian's business to attempt, from the vast material supplied by the critic and the scientific worker, to recreate by cautious inference and intuition the spiritual milieu out of which the material has evolved, and to see art both as a characteristic achievement of an individual mind and as the undeviating ideal of a people. The immensity of this task has been clearly and cogently expressed by one of the most eminent and sensitive art historians of to-day - Professor Wilhelm Worringer. "When we look upon the history of art no longer as a mere history of artistic ability, but as a history of artistic will, it gains a significance in the general history of mankind. Its subject-matter is thereby raised to such an exalted sphere of consideration that it becomes an adjunct of the greatest of all chapters in human history, the one which treats of the development of the religious and

(1) Cf. Chapter II.

philosophic ideas of man, and reveals to us the actual psychology of mankind. For changes in will, whose mere precipitates are the variations of style in the history of art, cannot be purely arbitrary or fortuitous. On the contrary, they must have a consistent relation to those spiritual and mental changes occurring in the constitution of mankind generally, those changes which are clearly reflected in the historical development of myths, of religions, of philosophical systems, of world conceptions. Directly we have discovered this consistent relationship, the history of the artistic will takes equal right of place with the comparative history of myths, the comparative history of religion, the comparative history of philosophy, the comparative history of world conceptions; it takes equal right of place with these great stages in the general psychology of man."⁽¹⁾

(1) Worringer, W., Form in Gothic, p.12.

CHAPTER II.

Art, Beauty and Aesthetics.

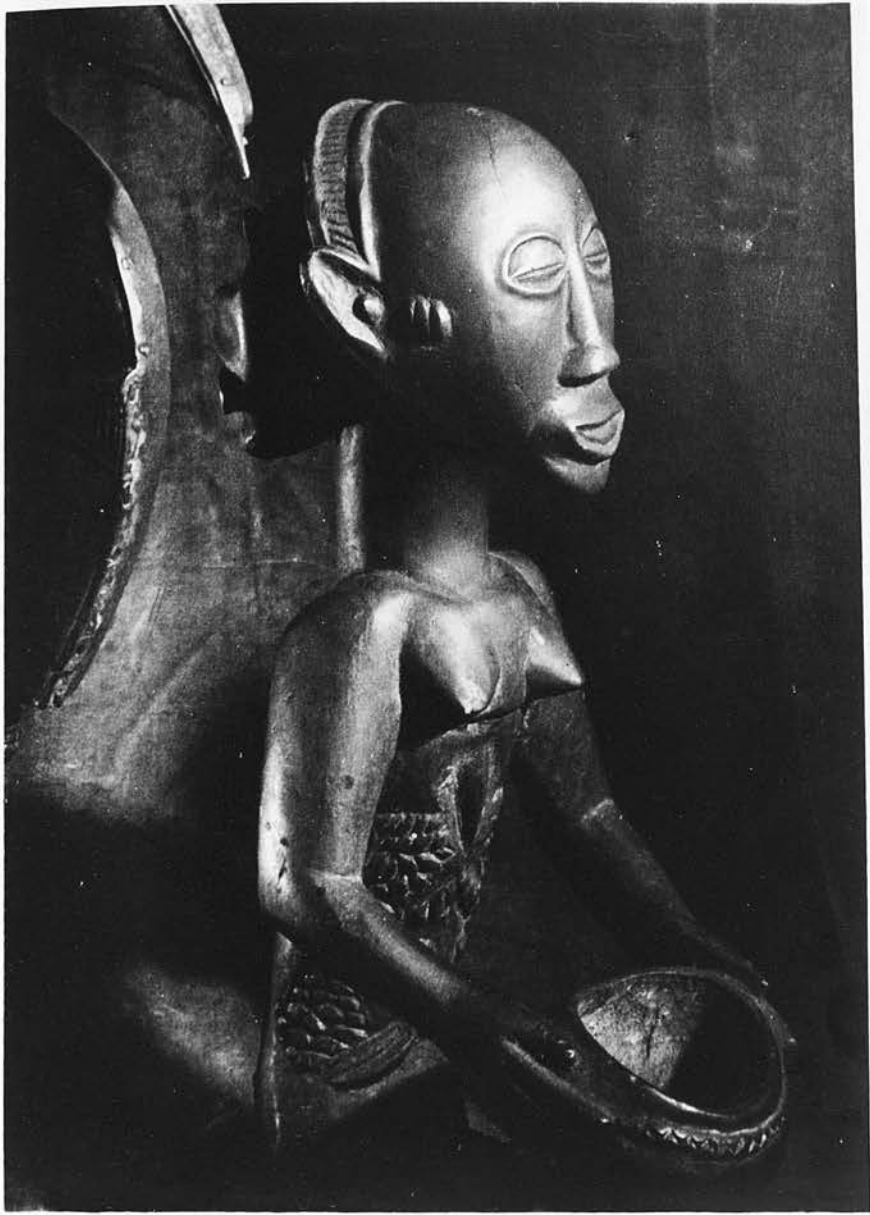


Plate II.

THE SENSES OF BEAUTY.

- A (I Anything is beautiful - which possesses the
(simple quality of Beauty.
(II Anything is beautiful - which has a specified Form.
- (III Anything is beautiful - which is an imitation of
(Nature.
(IV Anything is beautiful - which results from
(successful exploitation of a Medium.
(V Anything is beautiful - which is the work of Genius.
(VI Anything is beautiful - which reveals (1) Truth,
B ((2) the Spirit of Nature, (3) the Ideal, (4) the
(Universal, (5) the Typical.
(VII Anything is beautiful - which produces Illusion.
(VIII Anything is beautiful - which leads to desirable
(Social effects.
(IX Anything is beautiful - which is an Expression.
- (X Anything is beautiful - which causes Pleasure.
(XI Anything is beautiful - which excites Emotions.
(XII Anything is beautiful - which promotes a
(Specific emotion.
(XIII Anything is beautiful - which involves the
C (processes of Empathy.
(XIV Anything is beautiful - which heightens Vitality.
(XV Anything is beautiful - which brings us into
(touch with exceptional Personalities.
(XVI Anything is beautiful - which conduces to
(Synaesthesia.

Table I.

CHAPTER II.

"'Tis not a lip or eye we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all."

The history of intellectual culture bears witness to the fallibility of great thinkers. Erroneous assumptions have led to many a false start in the slow march of science. Again and again it has been necessary to return to the starting point and to begin anew the long labours of research.

That many of these false assumptions are traceable either to excusable ignorance or to the restricting influence of powerful authority can now be demonstrated in the light of history, but the persistent blindness of philosophers and psychologists to the fallacy underlying the identification of art and beauty is less easy to account for and more difficult to excuse. Almost the entire history of speculation concerning the meaning and nature of art is founded upon this (now) ridiculous fallacy.

The origin of this confusion may be traced back to the prevailing anthropocentric monism of ancient Greek philosophy, which exalted all human values and essayed to explain

the whole of nature in terms of one comprehensive principle. It was not inconsistent with this principle to recognise Beauty as an objective reality which pervaded the whole universe, and was embodied and localised in all natural phenomena, especially in man as the supreme and crowning achievement of nature's process. Thus it was in the idealistic representation of man - man "perfectly formed, perfectly proportioned, noble and serene" - that the Hellenic genius found the fullest and richest realisation of its artistic aspirations. Rome inherited this ideal and sought to emulate it; after the 'Decline and Fall' it was revived at the Renaissance, whence it passed into the main stream of European tradition. (1)

That such an ideal "of human qualities raised to the highest power" is only one of other possible ideals is manifestly evident from the history and genetic development of world art. It differs alike from the abstract anti-vital ideals of Egypt and Byzantium, the abstract mystic ideal of the Orient and the transcendental ideal of Gothic. Yet the whole scope of historical aesthetics from antiquity to modern times has been confined to the philosophical study of the one ideal of classical beauty. Philosophers, themselves the direct legatees of the Hellenic culture,

(1) Cf. Herbert Read, The Meaning of Art, pp. 4-5.

have regarded the totality of world art as the concrete result of a universal desire to attain one supreme ideal, the Absolute Beauty, fixed for all time by the ancient Greeks.⁽¹⁾ Hence "the time-honoured assumption that the history of art is equivalent to the history of artistic ability, and that the self-evident unvarying aim of this ability is the artistic reproduction and rendering of natural models."⁽²⁾ This assumption hopelessly fettered aesthetics to a one-sided and severely limited view of art, from which it has only been partially freed in recent times by the recognition that art and beauty are neither synonymous terms nor identical phenomena.⁽³⁾

(1) As recently as December 1934 this view was expressed by Dr. T. R. Glover in a National Lecture entitled "The Challenge of the Greek." "...In Athens... there came to be the nidus which gave the world its eternal models in art, poetry, letters, history and philosophy; ..."
Listener, Vol. XII, No. 311, December 1934.

(2) Worringer, W., Form in Gothic, p.8.

(3) Cf. "That art is not of necessity the beautiful is now a fairly well recognised fact and it is agreed that art may be both beautiful and unbeautiful. This does no more than to state that the particular emotion which we identify with art, the aesthetic may be the result of a wide field on contact of which only a part is shared by the beautiful. By enlarging the field of experience we have had to broaden our theories. The term 'Art' has come to have a greater significance in European culture since that culture has recognised not only the type of the Greek ideal (upon which it has until recently based its considerations) but also the arts of primitive people, and contemporary art both savage and civilized as being a source of the aesthetic emotion."
J. M. Hannah, The Psychology of Beauty in Relation to Art.
p. 9.

It is hardly necessary to draw from the abundant evidence which might be cited in support of this assertion; two instances will suffice. The designs produced by the haphazard tilting of a kaleidoscope and the curves produced by the automatic operations of a cyclo-harmonograph are almost invariably beautiful. No one, however, would describe these aesthetic phenomena as art except figuratively, although they may manifest all those attributes of harmony, balance, proportion and unity which aestheticians have long ascribed to beauty. On the other hand, there are innumerable objects of man's creation which do not display these qualities of formal refinement and from which the name art can no longer be withheld. (Plate 1.)

An object whose proportions and arrangement are pleasing to the eye may become a thing of beauty; but it acquires an artistic character only in so far as its formal attributes perform or assist the function of expression. The presence of formal aesthetic qualities in a construction cannot of themselves bestow upon it the title of art.⁽¹⁾ "Art must have strength and vigour," states Professor Talbot Rice;⁽²⁾ "it must be able to transfer sensation and power from the

(1) Cf. Hirn, Y., The Origins of Art, p. 117.

(2) "The Scope of Art History," Inaugural Lecture, University of Edinburgh, October 1934, pp. 14-15.

creator, the artist to the spectator. It may use beauty, just as it may use majesty or mysticism or religion to achieve its ends, but beauty need not be there, and beauty must not be the sole aim." The terms 'art' and 'beauty' are therefore not interchangeable, and if they are to be used in scientific discourse, they must be clearly distinguished.

The confusion which the history of aesthetic speculation displays so markedly is largely attributable to the erroneous identification of these two terms, for by forcing the word 'beauty' into the service of such disparate artistic ideals as those of cultured Greece and savage Africa, the whole problem concerning the meaning and nature of art has been obscured by a tangle of metaphysical subterfuge.⁽¹⁾ Philosophers, after constructing the most elaborate theories of beauty and art, were forced into the absurd position of regarding non-European art as the outcome of an ability inadequate to the highest artistic demands and incapable of fulfilling the technical conditions necessary for correct delineation and accurate plastic representation. "It was actually believed," as Worringer points out,⁽²⁾ "that

(1) Baumgarten, Lessing, Winckelmann, Kant, Schiller, Schelling and Hegel, for instance, all regard art as the province of the beautiful, and the beautiful as the sole principle of aesthetic.

(2) Worringer, W., Form in Gothic, pp. 8-9.

centuries had been necessary to enable mankind to draw correctly, that is to say, to be true to nature; it was actually believed that artistic production takes shape from time to time only by means of a plus or minus of ability. No account had been taken of the fact, although so obvious and literally forced upon the student by many factors in the history of art, that this ability was of secondary importance, and that it was actually determined and governed by the higher factor of will, which was the one and only authority."

Of these "many factors" in the history of art mention need only be made of the animal representations of paleolithic man in order to reduce the view to absurdity. But recent research into the psychology of perception reveals the fallacy of this view yet more forcibly. It has been experimentally demonstrated⁽¹⁾ that there is a very considerable divergence between what the eye actually sees and the shapes and sizes of things determined by the laws of perspective in plane projection, and that the degree of divergence varies markedly as between different individuals. Mere accuracy of representation has nothing to do with art, and although, ever since Aristotle propounded his theory

(1) Thouless, R. H., "Phenomenal Regression to the Real Object," British Journal of Psychology, Vols. XXI and XXII.



of art as imitation, it has been laid down that a work of art must be something other than a mere copy, aesthetic philosophers have been unable to free their minds from the representational fallacy. Accuracy of representation is a scientific rather than an artistic activity;⁽¹⁾ even where literal accuracy is deliberately aimed at, emotional and temperamental factors are liable to interfere with the technical processes of delineation. "Ludwig Richter relates in his reminiscences how once, when he was in Tivoli as a young man, he and three friends set out to paint part of the landscape, all four firmly resolved not to deviate from nature by a hair's breadth; and, although the subject was the same, and each quite creditably reproduced what his eye had seen, the result was four totally different pictures, as different from each other as the personalities of the four painters. Whence the narrator drew the conclusion that there is no such thing as objective vision, and that form and colour are always apprehended differently according to temperament.⁽²⁾"

A little over a decade ago three Cambridge psychologists addressed themselves to the problem underlying the

(1) Vide Appendix II, "The Criterion of Accuracy in Representational Art."

(2) Quoted by Wölfflin, Principles of Art History. Cf. Britsch, G., Theorie der Bildenden Kunst, where the view is propounded that art develops with the growth of vision. The child, says Britsch, does not 'see' in order to draw, but draws in order to see!

multiplicity of definitions of beauty. Their study is of special interest in the present connection. Many intelligent people, they point out,⁽¹⁾ abandon aesthetic speculation and take no interest in discussions about the nature and object of art; they feel that there is no likelihood of arriving at any definite conclusions. Authorities differ in their judgments as to which things are beautiful, and when they do agree there is no means of determining what they are agreeing about. The question is: What do they mean by Beauty? Philosophers and critics in their voluminous attempts to answer the question have left their conclusions uncorrelated with those of their predecessors. "But if there is no reason to suppose that people are talking about the same thing, a lack of correlation in their remarks need not cause surprise. We assume too readily that similar language involves similar thoughts and similar things thought of. Yet why should there be only one subject of investigation which has been called Aesthetics? Why not several fields to be separately investigated, whether they are found to be connected or not? ... What reason is there to suppose that one aesthetic doctrine can be framed to include all the valuable kinds of what is called Literature?" (or Art). And they conclude that no one explanation is

(1) Ogden, Richards and Wood, The Foundations of Aesthetics, pp. 15-16.

adequate.

Messrs. Ogden, Richards and Wood begin by stating⁽¹⁾ that "Whenever we have any experience which might be called 'aesthetic,' that is, whenever we are enjoying, contemplating, admiring or appreciating an object, there are plainly different parts of the situation on which emphasis can be laid. As we select one or other of these so we shall develop one or other of the main aesthetic doctrines. In this choice we shall, in fact, be deciding which of the main Types of Definition we are employing." (Table I)⁽²⁾ Here is a statement which immediately invites challenge, and although its discussion at this point may seem an irrelevance, it will be found to contain implications which bear directly upon the value of their work and conclusions, while affording an excellent illustration of the confusion and ambiguity which may result from the casual use of the two terms Art and Beauty.

It is not easy to make out exactly what meaning the statement just quoted is intended to convey: there appears to lie behind it the assumption that the very act of enjoying, contemplating, admiring, or appreciating an object is

(1) Ibid. p. 18.

(2) Ibid. pp. 6-7. In their book, The Meaning of Meaning, Ogden and Richards propound the view that the functions of language are twofold: the "symbolic" and the "emotive." The symbolic use of words is statement; the emotive (emotion arousing) use is to express feelings and attitudes.

dependent upon or involves, wittingly or unwittingly, the selection and emphasis, on the part of the spectator, of certain parts of the aesthetic situation as conforming to or in harmony with his theoretical predilections, emotional predispositions or aesthetic prejudices. "The appreciation of Beauty, whether in Painting, Music or Poetry, or in everyday experience," the authors maintain, "cannot but be developed by a clearer knowledge of what it is and where it may be looked for, and an acquaintance with the opinions of artists and philosophers on the subject will assist those who wish to increase their powers of discrimination and thereby lay the foundations of a genuine and at the same time personal taste." And since they clearly indicate that throughout their book "anything judged to be beautiful is either a work of art or a natural object," they appear to see no necessity either to distinguish between beauty and art, or between the appreciative experience of beauty and the immediate awareness of art. Further, they are definitely of the opinion that theoretical knowledge is essential to the appreciation of beauty and art, and that the organisation and clarification of such theoretical knowledge must inevitably bring about the development of the capacity for aesthetic experience. In other words, they assume that the experience of beauty and art is of a higher or

more valuable category if it is of the appreciative type rather than the 'direct' type. (1)

Although Ogden, Richards and Wood set out to disentangle inter alia differences of opinion and interest in relation to aesthetics, they have evidently failed to observe that art and beauty are radically different phenomena, and that the province of the Science of Aesthetics is not the province of the Science of Art. "The fields reached by these various sources," (Table I), they say, "can all be cultivated and most of them are associated with well-known names in the Philosophy of Art," adding a footnote to the effect that "As this discussion is throughout concerned with the theory of Beauty, we are not called upon to

(1) Cf. Professor Talbot Rice's Inaugural Lecture, p.10 et. seq.: "In attempting to justify or explain by reason our attraction to one particular type of art, we lose the true appreciation which is sensed and gain in its stead a justified one, which is so often no more than a bottomless pose. Reasoned quibble or philosophical arguments are practically never of value in the appreciation or in the appraisal of works of art, for art is instinctive, wilful or wayward in its coming..." Differences of opinion in matters of theory and differences of interest are, it may be conceded, "closely interconnected," but differences of opinion as to the merit of a work of art are not always or even usually dependent upon preconceived theoretical preferences: they may also be due to differences of sensibility and "innocence of eye." It is therefore impossible to sympathise with the rationalistic approach of these authors to art and aesthetic experience. Rather the attitude of the simple man who approaches the work of art with an open mind than that of the philosopher-critic whose mode of vision is conditioned by his philosophy.

examine the various senses in which the word Art has been used." But since one part of their purpose was to present "the main positions from which the theory of art-criticism may proceed," their failure to distinguish between art and beauty is an unfortunate blemish on an otherwise useful and instructive study of aesthetic theory. A theory of art criticism cannot be satisfactorily founded upon a theory of beauty. A theory of art criticism whose criterion is beauty is condemned from the beginning to labour under "a sort of hereditary squint." "The beautiful," declares Dallas,⁽¹⁾ "most distinctly, is one of the ideas on which art loves to dwell; but it is not an idea which inspires every work of art. Moreover, on the other hand ..., is it to be supposed that to display beauty is to produce a work of art? La belle chose que la philosophie! says M. Jourdain, not untruly; but are fine systems of philosophy to be reckoned among the fine arts? Horace, long ago, in a verse which has become proverbial, expressed the truth about the position of beauty in art. Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, he said: dulcia sunt. It is not enough that a work of art be beautiful; it must have more powerful charms."

The identification of art and beauty cannot be dissociated from the doctrine of Aesthetic Hedonism. That the aim of art is pleasure is a view which has found support

(1) The Gay Science, Vol. I, p. 86.

in all ages: for the Greeks, it was the pleasure of imitation; for the Germans it was the pleasure of the beautiful; for the English it was the pleasure of the imagination. "All the schools of criticism ... with one voice declare for pleasure as the end of art. (1)"

The persistence in history of the hedonistic view of art is inextricably bound up with the view of art as the expression or manifestation of beauty. Since beauty is a pleasure experience, it is but a step to the proposition that any production which does not yield pleasure cannot be beautiful and ex hypothesi cannot be a work of art.

"Beauty," says Professor Santayana, the most distinguished living advocate of the pleasure theory, "is value positive, intrinsic, objectified. Or, in less technical language, Beauty is pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing.... An object cannot be beautiful if it can give pleasure to nobody: a beauty to which all men were forever indifferent is a contradiction in terms. (2)" According to Santayana, there was a time in man's early history when he habitually attributed to the objects of the external world whatever happened within himself, and although this animistic and mythological habit of thought has been modified, it "still holds its own at the confines of knowledge,

(1) Ibid. Chap. V, pp. 98-176.

(2) Cf. Santayana, G., The Sense of Beauty, p. 49.

where mechanical explanations are not found." Beauty "is the survival of the original universal tendency to make every effect of a thing upon us a constituent of its conceived nature. The scientific idea of a thing is a great abstraction from the mass of perceptions and reactions which that thing produces; the aesthetic idea is less abstract, since it retains the emotional reaction, the pleasure of perception, as an integral part of the conceived thing."⁽¹⁾

Another and more sturdy advocate of the pleasure theory is the almost forgotten nineteenth century critic E. S. Dallas, to whose remarkable study reference has already been made. All human activity has happiness for its final end; but with art it is the first as well as the last.⁽²⁾ The pleasure which the artist strives to give arises from what Socrates called the quiet of the mind, which is not the quiet of inaction or empty repose but of harmony. Although harmony, like pleasure, may be indefinable, two types may be distinguished: active or dynamic harmony and reposeful or static harmony. Dynamic harmony is induced by the contemplation of dramatic effects; it

(1) Ibid. pp. 47-48.

(2) Vol. II, p. 39.

is a "mixed pleasure" - the pleasure "which rules in dramatic art, and provides its canon," i.e. pleasure "struck from pain."⁽¹⁾ No form of words, Dallas points out,⁽²⁾ has yet been invented to get rid of this contradiction - a logical lie and a metaphysical truth - that a heap of pains may be a mass of pleasure.⁽³⁾ Reposeful harmony arises from "pure pleasure" experience, which is "the product of the beautiful; and in so far as art aims at the beautiful it aims at pure pleasure,"⁽⁴⁾ a "relation of harmony," of concord of forms, concord of sounds, concord of colours. "In the forms of art where beauty predominates, we must make sure that it is balanced and in perfect law."⁽⁵⁾

Dallas' understanding of the problem of the relation of beauty to art is remarkable considering the aesthetic philosophy of his time. A few changes in terminology

(1) Vol. II, pp.49-62.

(2) Ibid. p.93.

(3) Cf. Dr. Annand, The Hindu View of Art, p.155. "Rasa (the essential quality in a work of art) may be evoked by an aspect of life treated by a perfect artist: 'delightful or disgusting, exalted or lowly, cruel or kind, obscure or refined, actual or imaginary, there is no subject that cannot evoke rasa in man.'" "

(4) The Gay Science, p.95.

(5) Ibid. p.103.

would make his book read like a contemporary document. Particularly interesting in connection with the present discussion is the following passage: "Classical art as aiming more distinctly than Christian art at pure enjoyment, aims more evidently at that harmony, that sympathy, that repose which belongs to the idea of the beautiful. And it is because Winckelmann and the critics of that school set up Greek art as the standard, that in all their criticisms they give an exaggerated importance to the accomplishment of beauty as the aim of art. Most certainly Greek art aims chiefly at the presentment of beautiful impressions; and at the creation of that pure pleasure which comes of beauty. But it is needful to bear in mind that there are other pleasures than those of the beautiful - pleasures, too, which, in spite of the much and many pains mingled with them, we, at least in this age of the world, court more eagerly. (1)"

On the one hand, tragedy and comedy, as the two leading types of dramatic art; on the other, pure beauty: these are the "great objects" of the artist to produce. The former runs to pleasure through a discipline of pain; the latter yields pleasure without pain. But for Dallas there

(1) Ibid. p. 96.

is a further object (and here he reveals an insight into the working of the mind which anticipates the findings of Freud by nearly a quarter of a century, and the most advanced contemporary aesthetic theory by a good deal longer): it is neither the "mixed pleasure" of tragedy and comedy, nor yet the "pure pleasure" of beauty, but a peculiar "hidden pleasure" - "a dream of enchantment" - which springs from the "hidden soul" and manifests itself as that "know-not-what" quality of art which he calls "the weird;" and the weird is the most constant of the characteristics of art. "You can have great art which is not dramatic," declares Dallas,⁽¹⁾ "and you can have great art which is not beautiful; but you cannot have great art which is not weird." Between the weird and the beautiful there is no antagonism. Neither is there any antagonism between the weird and the dramatic. "You may have any amount of dramatic action, and there is nothing to prevent its being weird. You may have symmetry the most perfect, beauty the most lovely, and not only is there nothing to prevent its being weird - it has a natural tendency to become so, to appeal to the secret heart, to ally itself with unknown delights, and to win from us epithets in which we recognise it as a dream of enchantment."⁽²⁾

(1) Ibid. p. 139.

(2) Ibid.

Neither Professor Santayana's nor Dallas' hedonistic view of art is self-destructive; both are tenable doctrines. Indeed, if the Freudian pleasure principle is sound, then Dallas' theory is remarkably near the truth. But, be that as it may, no hedonistic theory of art can be adequate; it cannot be demonstrated that art and beauty produce a special type of pleasure; and that, ultimately, is what the theory implies. Immediately the hedonist attempts to differentiate between pleasures which belong appropriately to art and those which do not, he is faced with an impossible dilemma. For if he admits on the one hand that pleasures differ qualitatively, he is appealing to a criterion other than pleasure; on the other hand, if he admits that pleasures differ quantitatively, then gross physical pleasures arising from sex or hunger may be superior to the refined intellectual pleasure of the scholar - the pig satisfied, to use Mill's instance, would be better than Socrates dissatisfied.⁽¹⁾ Careful introspection clearly points to the Kantian dogma that the merely 'pleasant' and 'agreeable' differ radically from the genuine artistic experience. In emphasising this fact, Dallas revealed his acute psychological insight and artistic understanding. Pleasure, as

(1) Cf. Ducasse, C. J., The Philosophy of Art, p. 195.

Lord Listowel rightly points out,⁽¹⁾ "is qualitatively the same in an act of bestial cruelty, in the delights of the palate or in frivolous games, as it is in a moment of mystical ecstasy, in the audition of a magnificent opera, or in an action of supreme heroism and abnegation of self, and for this reason it cannot possibly serve to demarcate one type of human experience from another; what differs fundamentally in each case, making of man a hero or a beast, is, not the naked feeling itself, the bare unadorned sense of pleasure, but the internal and external causes, conditions and concomitants of the feeling in question." What is required is a theory of the causes of the artistic satisfaction accruing to the artist and the spectator alike, a theory that will explain that "most vital" element of art - "the element of mystery, the sense of the unseen, that possession of the far-away, that glimmer of infinity, that incommunicable secret, that know-not-what," the study of which occupied the mind of Dallas. The 'pleasure' which accompanies the art experience arises from the totality of subjective undertones, of the feeling tones of sensation and of "hidden memories." But these are only epiphenomena, 'subjective accompaniments' of the art experience; they are not elements of its

(1) Listowel, Earl of, A Critical History of Modern Aesthetics, p. 154.

essential nature.⁽¹⁾ In the highest and richest moments of artistic experience, the stings and ecstasies of life are mingled; either may predominate, or both may be balanced in a sense of being that rests on the very edge of oblivion. "Masterpieces," Ozenfant urges,⁽²⁾ "are practically never pleasing. Their effect upon us is too striking for the definition of 'pleasing' to have any true application... The truth is that a masterpiece inevitably calls forth strong emotion: some feel pleasure because of this emotion, but others feel pain: we must have nobility ourselves to be able to support grandeur. There are no glorious ascents without fatigue, and for that reason the greatest works are not pleasing." It ought not to be necessary to emphasise this, but prejudice is so deeply rooted that even intelligent and sensitive people, whose experience of art includes a painful content, pass it over in theory as an inexplicable and irrelevant intrusion which has no right of place in what is, or what they conceive ought to be, a wholly agreeable and pleasurable indulgence.

It will be obvious that as long as the classical concept of beauty is regarded as the one universal beauty, justice cannot be done to the immense field of non-European

(1) Cf. Hartshorne, Charles, The Philosophy and Psychology of Sensation, pp. 107-189.

(2) Foundations of Modern Art, pp. 303-304.

art, which includes some of the finest creative achievements of the human race. But the view that art and (classical) beauty are inseparable is so firmly established in the European tradition, that any attempt to effect a reorientation must encounter (and has encountered) the opposition of deep-rooted habits of thought. A piece of Polynesian pottery, a Hindu dancing Siva, a Greek Apollo: these are all unchallengeable works of art; but to describe them as beautiful in the ordinary manner of speaking would involve a ridiculous distortion of language. The approach to the study of art must therefore be preceded by a choice of alternative standpoints:

(A) The term "beauty" might be abandoned altogether in discussions about art (Croce).

(B) The Classical concept of beauty might be regarded as the highest aim of art, the one ideal to which all art aspires (Winckelmann).

(C) Beauty might be regarded as an essential though fluctuating characteristic of art (Read).

Now obviously, if (A) be adopted, the ordinary connotation of the term must simply be ignored as too vague and ambiguous for exact discourse. This is a perfectly legitimate standpoint, since both the phenomenon and the theory of art can and do exist independently of beauty.

Croce's theory, for instance, might well have been expressed without the concept of beauty. And, it may be recalled, Max Müller writes: "I remember Humbolt, when he was writing his Kosmos, asking me what the Indians thought of the Beautiful in Nature. I gave him several descriptions of Nature, which I believe he published, but I had to tell him that the idea of the Beautiful in Nature did not exist in the Hindu mind. It is the same with their descriptions of human beauty. They describe what they saw, they praise certain features; they compare them with other features in Nature; but the Beautiful as such does not exist for them.⁽¹⁾" Dr. Annand gives support to this view in his study of the theory of Hindu art.⁽²⁾ "There is in the Sanskrit language no exact equivalent for the word art as it is used in modern European languages... " And the nearest equivalent to the idea of beauty is the word rasa, which is the essential quality of art - "that state of bliss through the realisation of the inner worlds of faculty and experience which is aroused by the spectacle (dramatic, acrobatic, plastic or pictorial) of a rhythmic expression and controlled emotion." No one would question the existence or the merits of Hindu art. No one need

(1) Quoted from The Philosophy of the Beautiful, Knight, W., Vol. I, p. 17.

(2) The Hindu View of Art, pp. 36 and 148.

therefore question the propriety of dispensing altogether with the term beauty in the discussion of art. Its abolition from the field of art discourse would obviate a great deal of misunderstanding. It must be granted, however, (keeping in mind the reservations already expressed above) that there is apparently a very close relation between the experience of beauty induced by the contemplation of non-artistic phenomena (e.g. kaleidoscopic designs) and that induced by the contemplation of, say, an Arabian rug. But this relation is superficial; it penetrates no deeper than the sense of sight alone can penetrate. Behind the visual aspect of the rug there is an informing sensibility whose operation invests the pattern with emotional and intuitive values for the spectator and the craftsman alike.⁽¹⁾ The rug, unlike the kaleidoscopic

(1) "It may be objected that many things in nature, such as flowers, possess these two qualities of order and variety in a high degree, and these objects do undoubtedly stimulate and satisfy that clear disinterested contemplation which is characteristic of the aesthetic attitude. But in our reaction to a work of art there is something more - there is the consciousness of purpose, the consciousness of a peculiar relation of sympathy with the man who made this thing in order to arouse precisely the sensations we experience. And when we come to the higher works of art, where sensations are so arranged that they arouse in us deep emotions, this feeling of a special tie with the man who expressed them becomes very strong. We feel that he has expressed something which was latent in us all the time, but which we never realised, that he has revealed us to ourselves in revealing himself. And this recognition of purpose is, I believe, an essential part of the aesthetic judgment proper." Fry, Roger, Vision and Design, pp. 29-30.

design, is not the outcome of chance arrangement of parts or of mechanical skill, despite its mechanical appearance. By banishing the term beauty from the field of art, the ground would be cleared to some extent for the psychological investigation of the respective contributions of sense, apperception, intellect and intuition to the total artistic experience. At the moment this task seems well-nigh insuperable, but the investigations of Professor Charles Hartshorne into the "affective continuum" of sensation promise a new groundwork from which a fruitful approach may be made.⁽¹⁾

If (B) be adopted, it will be necessary to prove, with reference to the totality of world art, the validity of the assumption that all art, irrespective of time or place, race or circumstance, aspires to the one ideal as conceived by classical man and inherited by his cultural legates and successors. This proposition, it need hardly be emphasised, is so ridiculous on the face of it as to be unworthy of serious discussion.

The adoption of (C) clearly involves an extension of the ordinary meaning of the term to include much that would not be regarded as conforming to the normal concept of beauty. In the long run, perhaps, the advantages of such

(1) Op. cit.

a procedure may outweigh the disadvantages. If beauty be regarded as a fluctuating phenomenon, as Mr. Herbert Read prefers, the main objection to (A) is overcome by including within the connotation of the term the aesthetic qualities which language is wont to attribute to non-artistic phenomena, but the other - and by far the most embarrassing - difficulty arising from the confusion of the term beauty with art remains. And, since this has been one of the main sources of the confusion existing in the history of aesthetic speculation, the conclusion that (A) is the most satisfactory course appears to require no advocacy.

The differentiation of the concepts of 'art' and 'beauty' is of immense importance to the scientific study of art. For it is no longer possible for investigators to assume that in studying the nature of beauty as revealed in art they are ipso facto studying the nature of art and artistic phenomena.⁽¹⁾ Aesthetics, originally the science of perception in all its modes and phases, should be restricted, it is now recognised, to the study of the process of perception which yields the experience of beauty. Spinoza, Leibniz and Wolff, it will be recalled, had all recognised

(1) Such an assumption, in fact, is made by most if not all the workers in the field of Experimental Aesthetics, and, as will be shown in Chapter VI, Professor Spearman is guilty of the same error in his book, Creative Mind.

an 'obscure' kind of knowledge associated with the passions and sense perceptions and available to mind through feeling. This type of knowledge was in direct contrast to the science and method of Logic, which aimed at clear knowledge. Baumgarten (1714-62), wishing to complete the Leibnizian theory, therefore introduced the prior science of sensible or "obscure" knowledge which he called Aesthetic - the philosophic theory of perceptual knowledge which Kant developed in a logic of aesthetic judgment. The term 'aesthetic,' however, quickly lost its original narrow connotation - to perceive by a sense, and especially an external sense - Kant being the last to use it as its originator had intended. Its current use and connotation, though firmly established, is neither etymologically accurate nor historically justified. Properly speaking, Aesthetics is the science of sense perception, and although it has been mainly concerned with the study of the perception of the Beautiful regarded as the characteristic manifestation and prior principle of art, it has been found necessary to restrict it to its legitimate province and to establish a new field for the scientific study of art - the field now allotted to the Science of Art or Kunstwissenschaft.

Now, in contradistinction to the ordinary modes of perception (which, as Stout points out,⁽¹⁾ are also modes

(1) Analytic Psychology, Vol. II, p. 173.

of conception) aesthetic perception, in its purest functioning, is a mode of experience which is characterised by its objectivity, its preoccupation with the bare sensuous qualities of things rather than with their meaning and interpretation in terms of teleological or biological functions. To perceive a vase of flowers, in the ordinary manner of speaking, (i.e. with a greater or lesser degree of complacency), is to recognise it as belonging to a class of phenomena of which some previous experience has been acquired. The perceiving process may proceed by the recognition of the vase as a particular type of vase (e.g. cut glass) and the flowers as particular kinds of flowers (roses, carnations etc.). Further, the vase may be recognised as a particular make, displaying certain peculiar qualities or features which demarcate it from other types; and the flowers may be recognised as possessing special horticultural trade names. The perceiving process may continue thus until the object in all its dominant particularities is fully known sensuously and conceptually, the multiplicity of sense impressions being organised and reconstructed psychologically into the (now) recognised object. But to perceive a vase of flowers aesthetically (i.e. as a beautiful object) is to be more or less vividly aware of the existence of a particular grouping of shapes and colours, textures and masses, to

be absorbed, perhaps momentarily transported, by the sheer power of the apparition. The processes of abstraction essential to cognitive perception are arrested and, for the time being, held in abeyance.

Perception of this category is, of course, comparatively fleeting and ephemeral. And this is true even in the case of the man who is specially gifted with the power of aesthetic vision, because it involves the involuntary inhibition of those habitual modes of looking at things which are the direct result of biological or practical exigency. It may be a very rare experience in the life of the ordinary man, because, in the course of his biological history, man appears gradually to have lost his capacity for simple indulgence of his sense of sight - his power of merely looking at things. "The needs of our actual life are so imperative," states Roger Fry, "that the sense of vision becomes highly specialised in their service. With an admirable economy we learn to see only so much as is needful for our purposes; but this is in fact very little, just enough to recognise and identify each object or person; that done, they go into an entry in our mental catalogue and are no more really seen. In actual life the normal person really only reads the labels as it were on the objects around him and troubles no further... It is only when an object

exists in our lives for no other purpose than to be seen that we really look at it, as for instance at a China ornament or a precious stone, and towards such even the normal person adopts to some extent the artistic attitude of pure vision abstracted from necessity. (1)"

This simple mode of looking at things, which is the most characteristic feature of naïve aesthetic perception, implies no more than the mere apprehension of certain shapes and colours. The accompanying affect may be very mild and transitory. But a further and higher stage is reached when the perception includes the vivid awareness of a harmonious and unified system of relations of forms, colours, masses, textures and volumes. Perception of this order is, for some as yet obscure psychological or psychophysiological reason, always accompanied by a more or less

(1) Fry, Roger, Vision and Design, pp. 47-54. To determine exactly where aesthetic perception ends and cognitive perception begins is, of course, impossible. It would likewise be impossible to prove to a sceptical critic that aesthetic perception can exist without some degree of conceptual thought. Professor Spearman would certainly deny the reality of such a power of "naïve looking." But the fact that Professor Santayana and Roger Fry have in their respective theoretical expositions made serious and well-founded claims for its recognition is adequate justification for putting it forward here as a fairly well established psychological fact. Further evidence of course could be adduced, e.g. Bell, Clive, Art; Bullough, Ed., "'Psychical Distance' as a factor in art and an Aesthetic Principle," British Journal of Psychology, Vol. V, pp. 87-118; Britsch, G., Theorie der Bildenden Kunst; and Fiedler, K., Über die Beurteilung von Wirken der Bildenden Kunst, Schriften, Vol. I, pp. 3-79.

marked hedonic affect. Thus beauty has been variously defined as "unity in variety" by the Greeks, "that which being seen pleases" (*id quod visum placet*) by St. Thomas Aquinas,⁽¹⁾ and, quite recently, by Mr. Herbert Read, as "a unity of formal relations among our sense perceptions."⁽²⁾

Now a beautiful object may be either (i) a natural object (a flower, a crystal); or (ii) it may be a chance arrangement of heterogeneous elements; or (iii) a fabricated object produced by man (a motor car, an aeroplane, an efficient instrument, a piece of jewellery, a picture or a design.) But in the aesthetic perception of these objects there can be no discrimination as between one and another, for each yields in different degree the identical experience of beauty. This, however, may be coloured by associations of sentiment and emotion which have nothing to do with the aesthetic perception per se, but are really subjective secondary qualities deriving from the subject's past experience and psychological make-up. These elements in the total response are not mere additions to the primary aesthetic perceptual response; they are quite distinct

(1) Summa Theologica, I. q. 5 a 4 ad 1.

(2) The Meaning of Art, p. 2.

concomitants which may be described as secondary⁽¹⁾ qualities of the aesthetic experience; or, more shortly, secondary aesthetic qualities.

Aesthetic experience, however, is not limited to passive indulgence of the sense of sight; it has an active or productive aspect of no less importance than the one which has been discussed.

The productive aesthetic activity may be aroused either (a) by a desire to modify that which is perceived in order to render it more perfect to vision; or (b) it may be aroused in the course of a deliberate productive act. The first instance (a) is self-explanatory. The adjustment of flowers in a vase, the hanging of pictures, the arrangement of furniture or the lay-out of a table: these acts are typical of numberless manifestations of the productive aesthetic power, which occur almost every hour of the waking life of the ordinary man or woman. To many people the accomplishment of such acts occasions considerable pleasure, just as their omission may be the cause of much psychic discomfort or even pain. Aesthetic affective reactions, of course, vary immensely as between one individual and

(1) On the basis of these secondary qualities psychologists have distinguished four main types of aesthetic judgment: the subjective, the objective, the associative, and the character types. Vide C. W. Valentine, The Psychology of Beauty, pp. 29-31 and 81-83.

another, but psychologically the experience is precisely the same, whether it be the position of the clock on the mantelpiece that is altered or the arrangement of the flowers on the table; that is to say, all such productive acts arise from dissatisfaction with the "look" of things.

Where there is no practical motive at work, these alterations and appropriations from the environment are the direct manifestations of the aesthetic power; their goal is the satisfaction of the sense of beauty.

In the second instance (b) the aesthetic power may be aroused either (1) in the course of a deliberate effort to construct a beautiful object, or (2) it may be aroused spontaneously through the conative activity of the organism towards some ideal goal or satisfaction.

(1) That the production of an object capable of yielding pleasure to the aesthetic sensibility is possible by the mere intelligent application of a few mathematical principles is evident to everyone who has studied current textbooks of geometrical drawing. Aesthetically pleasing formal designs and patterns may even be produced as a result of an idle hour's play with compasses and ruler describing arcs and drawing curves and breaking up geometrical figures into their mathematical subdivisions.

Again, it is possible, by a suitable course of technical

discipline in the manipulation of pencil and paint such as may be obtained at any art school, to produce drawings and paintings of great beauty. The studies of art students are, from the purely aesthetic point of view, frequently of a very high order in a class of which, at one time, the Academy nude was the supreme type. Technical constructions of this kind are very often mistaken for works of art.

(2) The satisfaction of the sense of beauty may be said to terminate the purely aesthetic psychological process. It is therefore only by recognising the nature, function and psychological limitations of the aesthetic power that it is possible to speak of it as 'productive.' A great deal of confusion has resulted from the long-established habit of regarding art as the product of the 'productive' aesthetic power. The confusion, of course, is again traceable to the predominance of the Greek ideal in European art. Greek art was an aesthetic art; beauty was the inevitable result of its ideal mode of expression. But beauty was not its aim. Indeed, the pursuit of beauty in the so-called Hellenistic period was an outward sign of spiritual decadence. When it occurs the coöperation of art and beauty is purely fortuitous, and to regard them as constituting an inevitable partnership is to court a troublesome fallacy. The spontaneous conative activity of the organism which leads to the

production of art is a capricious will o' the wisp. It cannot be controlled or directed; its end is not beauty; and the experience it yields, though often aesthetic, is never merely aesthetic. It is often painful, but it is always powerful in its psychological effect.

Some light may be thrown upon the relation of the aesthetic sensibility to art by considering examples of art where it is possible to observe the effects of the operation of the aesthetic sensibility upon formal constructions, the existence of which cannot be traced either to an aesthetic or artistic aim.

It is well known that the art of primitive peoples is closely connected to what Dr. Kühn, a recent writer on Bushman art, guardedly calls "magical experience."⁽¹⁾ By the symbolic representation of an event the primitive tribesman believes he can bring about its actual occurrence. The desire for life after death, for successful sex experience, the exorcism or propitiation of inimical spirits - such cravings as these are known to constitute the motivating impulses behind the creation of many meaningful and expressive symbols upon which an enlightened modern criticism has bestowed the title of work of art.⁽²⁾ Now, many of these

(1) Kühn, Herbert and Obermaier, Hugo, Bushman Art.

(2) Cf. Loquet, G. H., "Le réalisme intellectuel dans l'art primitif," Journal de Psychologie, Vol. 24, 1927.

artistically significant symbolic representations are from the purely aesthetic standpoint very pleasing; they present to naïve perception a harmonious unity of formal relations. But this formal quality cannot be used as a criterion for a sheep-and-goat separation of the artistic from the less artistic or non-artistic examples of these productions. For their aesthetic character when present is merely the adventitious result of the felicitous operation of the aesthetic sensibility in combination with the deeper informing spirit, which might (and frequently does) achieve objective expression in a formal arrangement aesthetically indifferent or even ugly to Western eyes.

Or again, take Peasant art, which is manifested most characteristically in the decorative embellishment of commonplace articles of everyday use - pottery, dress, culinary and technical utensils, furniture, carpets and so on. Here, if anywhere, it might be expected, the authentic aesthetic sensibility would be found functioning in all its pristine glory, in the production of simple harmonious forms. But, while it may be granted that Peasant art is almost always charming in its direct visual appeal, the closer it is studied the more it becomes apparent that behind the outwardly simple decorative purpose there lies an informing spirit whose cosmic suggestiveness immediately

links it up with those profound world tendencies and styles, which give to art a continuity of life and universal human significance. Writing of the "Evolution of Ornament" Mr. A. H. Christie points out⁽¹⁾ that "It is difficult to find a word to define aptly this (earliest) phase of design. To speak generally of all primitive devices and patterns as 'ornament' would be misleading. Unqualified use of the term at once introduces irrelevant issues, begging the questions of origin and purpose by covertly suggesting that the first attempts at design were wholly instinctive reactions to aesthetic impulse. The assumption is widely prevalent, but hard to justify. The word 'ornament' puts undue stress upon decorative attributes, qualities which acquired so long ago an importance they did not always possess that they now seem to be the essential purpose of all designs... Our obsession with the 'ornamental' idea, leading us to read all designs solely as decoration, makes it difficult for us to imagine a pattern lacking decorative intention. It is easy, however, to cite examples in which decorative intention plays a part so subordinate that it cannot have been their express purpose." The aesthetic sensibility, in other words, is the servant and not the master of the art impulse.

(1) Traditional Methods of Pattern Designing, pp. 2-3.

The bearing of the foregoing thesis upon aesthetic theory will be apparent. It suggests certain limitations to the scope and work of the science, which indeed have already been recognised to a large extent and put into practice by the Science of Art school of thought, notably by A. Schmarsow, H. Wölfflin, W. Worringer, E. Utitz and M. Dessoir, all of whom advocate the separation of traditional aesthetics from the philosophy of art (*Philosophie der Kunst*) and the general science of art (*Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*). Traditional aesthetics, since it has confined itself almost entirely to the investigation of abstract beauty, verifying its hypotheses for the most part by the cold light of reason and by reference to nature and classical art, is patently inadequate, as Utitz maintains,⁽¹⁾ to the whole field of art. The science of aesthetics, as already pointed out, was conceived at the time of its inception as a science of sensations to which beauty was limited. It was primarily concerned with the immediate sensational reaction to the object perceived, with what Dessoir calls the "Sinnesgefühle" and the "Formgefühle." It would appear, then, not only by the circumstances of its origin, the historical limitations of its scope, and its obvious

(1) Utitz, E., Grundlegung der Allgemeinen Kunstwissenschaft.

inadequacy to the wider field of non-European art, that there are very sound reasons for limiting the field of aesthetics to the study of the beautiful, whether in art or nature, thus erecting a theoretical barrier between it and the objective study of art (Kunstwissenschaft or the Science of Art) on the one hand, and the philosophy and theory of art (die Philosophie der Kunst and die Kunstlehre) on the other.

Aesthetics as conceived by Baumgarten was concerned with what might be described in modern terminology as the act of intuitive apprehension - the subject of the *Aesthetica*, states Bosanquet,⁽¹⁾ "is 'obscure conception' qua obscure, that is knowledge in the form of feeling and remaining in that form." 'Obscure' as opposed to 'clear' knowledge meant a complex idea, such as a harmony of colour, which is incapable of linguistic reproduction. But, continues Bosanquet,⁽²⁾ "That the 'confused idea' can have an order of its own, which is appreciable to feeling, seems to be presupposed in the idea of beauty, and insisted on by Baumgarten in his discussion." The sphere of aesthetic might then be construed as "the parallel or parody of reason in the province of confused knowledge... But (again) it

(1) History of Aesthetic, p. 183.

(2) *Ibid.* p. 184.

is not quite clear from this point of view, not as a parallel in the form of feeling to logical processes, that the region of the obscure ideas pressed itself on Baumgarten's attention. Such a treatment would still make the excellence of sensuous perception consist in a form of truth - which can only exist in so far as the perception is after all interpreted into a judgment, a feeling that 'something is so and so. (1); Baumgarten maintained his distinction more

(1) Cf. Stace, W. T., The Meaning of Beauty, pp. 20-21. "It is true that the aesthetic experience has often been described, correctly I believe, as a feeling. It is not a judgment of the intellect based upon principles. It is immediate. But a feeling is not an emotion. A feeling, in this sense, is a cognitive act. Thus, in another sphere, we say that we feel that a ghost is in the room, or that someone is looking at us unseen, or that a man is to be trusted or distrusted, or that someone is hostile to us. We may explain such feelings as we will. They may be "intuitions," or they may be, as I believe they are, subconscious inferences. But they are certainly cognitive, since they contain implicit judgments. Instead of inferring, from observations or principles, the truth of the judgment that A. is not to be trusted, we think that we feel it as an immediate conviction. But what we feel convinced of is none the less the truth of a judgment and the feeling is therefore cognitive. This is quite different from a pure emotion, such as fear or anger, which, in so far as it is pure, contains no implicit judgment or cognitive element of any kind. Or, to put all this in a sentence, an emotion as such is not a state of awareness, whereas the feelings that a ghost is in the room, or that A. is hostile to us, are obviously states of awareness of those facts. It is precisely in this sense that the awareness of beauty is described as a feeling. It means that I do not infer, deductively from any general principles or inductively from any observed facts, that a sonata is beautiful. I feel that it is beautiful, that is, I am apparently aware of this fact by an immediate process. But since it is an awareness of something, it is cognitive."

thoroughly than this... and gives to the perfection of sensuous knowledge, i.e. of feeling or sensation, the name of beauty, as the manifestation in feeling... of that attribute which when manifested in intellectual knowledge is called truth.⁽¹⁾" In other words, beauty for Baumgarten is a manifestation of the perfect or the real, which, for him as for Wolff,⁽²⁾ means simply "the mere logical relation of the whole to part, or unity in variety;⁽³⁾" and, inheriting the Leibnizian view that the highest degree of perfection was that revealed in the existing universe, Baumgarten maintained that nature is the highest embodiment of beauty. The exact imitation of nature, as the revelation of perfection, must therefore be the supreme function of art. This demonstrates his preoccupation with the classical idea of beauty and art, an idea which despite its diversity of expression dominated the whole of aesthetic speculation both before and after Baumgarten in the great idealistic systems of the nineteenth century. Aesthetics, being thus preoccupied with intellectualistic conceptions of art as intuitive philosophy, was forced to ignore primitive and non-European art as so devoid of philosophical content and

(1) History of Aesthetics, p. 184.

(2) "Beauty may be defined as fitness for pleasing us or as obvious perfection." Empirical Psychology.

(3) History of Aesthetic, p. 185.

so inferior in respect of technical accomplishment (i.e. resemblance to animate beauty and nature) as to be unworthy of discussion alongside the magnificent art of Greece and of the High Renaissance.

A reaction against the abstract principle upon which these theories were founded was inevitable. It came about in the middle of the nineteenth century with the application of the methods of empirical science to the problems of aesthetics, and the revival, notably by Spencer and Taine, of hedonistic and utilitarian doctrines through biology and evolution. This, however, did not involve any breach with the traditional acceptance of the supremacy of the classical idea of art and beauty, as may be seen in the underlying hypothesis of formalistic aesthetic. "The world of Classical art," states Worringer, "and of the later art derived from it, has long (since) been the subject of a codification of the laws underlying its forms: for what we call scientific aesthetic is nothing but (such) a psychological interpretation of style applied to Classical works of art. The first requirement of Classical art was held to be that concept of beauty which aesthetics, despite the diversity of its methods of approach, is solely occupied in establishing and defining. But, because aesthetics applies its results to the totality of art, and believes that it has

explained also those artistic facts which have quite other presuppositions than this concept of beauty, its usefulness becomes detrimental, its authority becomes intolerable usurpation. A clear distinction between aesthetics and an objective theory of art is therefore the most vital necessity in a serious scientific investigation of art. To initiate and enforce that separation was Karl Fiedler's life task, but the habit of unjustifiably identifying the teachings of art and aesthetics - a habit which dates from the time of Aristotle and which has increased and spread through the centuries - this habit proved stronger than Karl Fiedler's clear arguments. He spoke to deaf ears.⁽¹⁾" The claim for the differentiation of aesthetics from the objective study of art, expressed by Fiedler and reiterated by Worringer, is the fundamental tenet of the Science of Art school of thought. E. Utitz⁽²⁾ and M. Dessoir,⁽³⁾ the most able exponents of the school, both insist on a sharp division being drawn between aesthetics and the philosophy and science of art.

Now, while the differentiation of art and beauty must be insisted upon, it does not appear to be necessary to go

(1) Form in Gothic, p. 8.

(2) Grundlegung der Allgemeinen Kunstwissenschaft.

(3) Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft.

so far as Utitz, Dessoir and Worringer in so restricting the field of aesthetics as to confine it to the study of the category of the beautiful, for it cannot be gainsaid that the pure aesthetic experience frequently constitutes a most important element in the experience of art, not only Classical but non-European. There is no apparently satisfactory reason why aesthetics, as a philosophy of beauty, should not enter the field of art, while confining its scope to the study and investigation of the phenomenon of beauty. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that such a discipline cannot possibly encompass as part of its work the essential nature and spirit of art, which may (and does) manifest itself in non-beautiful fabrications, unless beauty is divested of its traditional connotation and recognised as a fluctuating phenomenon revealing itself in diverse subtle and difficult appearances. It could not do justice to the totality of world art. Moreover, it would involve a complete reorientation of the science, necessitating its division into two distinct spheres of inquiry - the beauty of nature, etc., and the beauty of art - thus adding complexity to complexity and confusion to confusion. Besides, such a procedure would serve no apparently useful purpose, for the study of the phenomenon of beauty in whatever sphere it manifests itself is a legitimate and proper field of philosophic inquiry.

Aesthetics, then, must be regarded as the Philosophy of Beauty, in the most comprehensive sense of the term. Only the Science of Art (the objective study of art as a concrete formal achievement of man) and the Philosophy of Art (the subjective study of the nature and value of art as a characteristic aspect of the human spirit) can do justice to the wider and most fundamental aspects of the artistic activity.⁽¹⁾ For, through the agency of sense-perception, art stretches the mind beyond the range and limits of its own understanding to a supra-intellectual, transcendental realm of ideals, the intuitive apprehension of which brings "the simultaneous peace and delight of the mind and the senses." Contrary to the claim of Lord Listowel,⁽²⁾ this view of aesthetics would make it a tributary study to the Science and Philosophy of Art.

The objective approach to art has been fully justified by the achievement of the past seventy years. For it is only since its inception that the true path of art has been discovered. Untrammelled by the polemics of abstract philosophy, the rich possibilities of study have been brought within the range of complete accomplishment, and the horizon of art extended far beyond the limits of classical achieve-

(1) Vide Table II, p.91.

(2) Listowel, Earl of, A Critical History of Modern Aesthetics, p. 203.

ment. It may be asked: When the scientist and philosopher of art have passed out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge will the aesthetic philosopher be still groping in the mists and quagmires of metaphysical dialectics?

CHAPTER III.

The Historical Background of Contemporary Theory.

TABLE II.

Subjective.

Objective.

I. PHILOSOPHY.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| (a) The Absolute Aspect
(METAPHYSICS) | (a) The Phenomenological
Aspect. |
| (b) The Value Aspect
(PHILOSOPHY OF ART) | |
| (c) General Aesthetics
(PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY) | |

II. PSYCHOLOGY.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| (a) The General Psychology of Art. | (b) The Developmental
Aspect. |
| (b) The Psychology of Artistic Feeling. | (GENETIC AESTHET-
ICS) |
| (c) The Psychology of the Creative
Process. | |
| (d) The Experimental Psychology of
Beauty. | |
| (e) The General Psychology of Beauty. | |

III. KUNSTWISSENSCHAFT.

- (a) The Comprehensive
Study of Artistic
Evolution.

IV. KUNSTLEHRE.

- (a) The Abstract Theory
of the Artistic
Activity.

Table II.

CHAPTER III.

Prior to the middle of the nineteenth century the history of aesthetics followed an uneven and deviating course of philosophical and metaphysical speculation. The method of inquiry was, of course, predominantly deductive; that is, it started from a consideration of man's moral and intellectual activity, and by a process of deductive reasoning constructed a system of abstract universals comprising the Good, the True and the Beautiful as the fundamental and all-embracing realities. Philosophy assumes that the universe is accessible to mind as a rational and intelligible system; it is

"... the eye with which the universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine."

Hence the problem which philosophical aesthetics sets before itself is: "What is the ultimate nature of Beauty and what is its relation to mind?"

It is doubtful whether in ancient thought there was any clear recognition of beauty as a discrete and independent

mode of experience,⁽¹⁾ for although Plato leaves no doubt as to his conviction that beauty exists in itself as an "idea," he nevertheless subordinates art to morality and urges that art should be encouraged only because of its value as an instrument for the attainment of the ultimate purpose of existence - the idea of the Good.⁽²⁾ This confusion of values runs through the whole history of aesthetics.

Plato's aesthetic is both metaphysical and general. It is metaphysical in that it is concerned solely with beauty as a universal law operating independently of human existence; it is general⁽³⁾ in that it embraces the whole range of aesthetic feeling, artistic and non-artistic. He attempts, however, to formulate the notion of art, but, in regarding it as the mere imitation of physical appearances, he shows that he fails to grasp its true meaning as an independent and fundamental mode of human activity.

If art is accorded a relatively subordinate place in the aesthetic speculation of Plato, it receives independent

(1) Bosanquet, B., History of Aesthetic, pp. 10-11.
Knight, W., The Philosophy of the Beautiful, p. 19.
"Probably no nation ever felt that the True, the Beautiful and the Good are one, in the same instinctive way that the Greeks felt it..."

(2) Republic, Book III, pp. 96-97 (Trans. Davies and Vaughan)

(3) This term is used here to distinguish "General Aesthetics" from the Theory of Art (Kunstwissenschaft), a distinction which modern writers have found it necessary to make in order to separate artistic from non-artistic aesthetic experience.

consideration by Aristotle. Although he does not recognise a philosophy of the Beautiful, his recognition of art as an independent province of philosophical inquiry may be regarded as the first movement towards the foundation of an objective theory of art which foreshadows the more exact "Kunstwissenschaft" of contemporary aesthetics. For him art is imitation, but, contrary to the Platonic view, art is not the mere imitation of physical appearances, but of the "idea" of the universal and typical aspects of things. He also recognises the element of phantasy or imagination in art, regarding it as the idealising activity of the artist, but he is no more successful than Plato in establishing the right relationship between this and the imitating faculty. While he sees that the Beautiful and the Good overlap each other to a certain extent, he endeavours not to confuse them: the Good is realised in action only; the Beautiful, on the other hand, exists in repose. He further distinguishes the Beautiful from the Useful by pointing out that the contemplation of the Beautiful is disinterested and free from the desire to possess.⁽¹⁾ Aristotle's method is preëminently objective; and, although he "lacks an intimate personal relation to art," he investigates the works of art

(1)

Vide Kant's "form of teleology without the idea of an end."

themselves, skilfully analysing their concrete elements, technical peculiarities and psychological antecedents; he inaugurates a method of approach to be revived and developed by the English school of empirical psychology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In effect, his doctrine is an extension of the metaphysical treatment of the subject by Plato, but his actual theoretical achievement is little in advance of earlier speculation. Despite this, however, his psychological analysis of art a posteriori is a permanently valuable contribution to aesthetics and an important step towards the philosophic preparation of the ground for the fuller development of the science.

The first important departure from the moralistic standpoint inherent in Greek theory⁽¹⁾ may be attributed to Plotinus (c. 205-270), who rejects the Platonic conception of art as mere imitation of commonplace realities of

(1) "The moralistic criterion," states Bosanquet, (History of Aesthetic, p.11), "arose from the principle that an artistic representation could not be treated as different in kind or in aim from a reality of ordinary life."

sense-perception,⁽¹⁾ and recognises that behind the sensuous form there is something of deeper significance and value. He is interested both in the productive aspect of the artistic activity and the intrinsic value of pleasure,⁽²⁾ and refuses to renounce material beauty, regarding it as the physical (sensuous)⁽³⁾ embodiment of divine (objective) reason, which is the self-animating formative influence (the absolute beauty) that raises formless matter to form (beauty). Accordingly, art is not imitative but expressive; it is not the mirrored reflection of perception, but the symbolic embodiment of intelligence acting upon and unifying matter, in itself amorphous and

(1) "But if anyone censure the arts on the ground that their products only copy the originals of nature, we may reply that natural objects, too, are copies of an Original. And further, we must recognise that the arts do not merely copy the visible world, but ascend to the principles on which nature is built up; and further, that many of their creations are original. For they certainly make good the defects of things, as having the source of beauty in themselves. Thus Pheidias did not use any visible model for his Zeus, but apprehended him as he would appear if he deigned to show himself to our eyes." Enneads: Philosophies of Beauty, E. F. Carritt, p. 48.

(2) "What is it," he asks, "which opens the eyes of those who behold it, and attracts them, nay compels them toward itself, and makes them rejoice in the vision of it?" Enneads. Ibid. p. 44, Cf. Plotinus, On the One and Good, Trans. by McKenna and Page, VI, 7, 29.

(3) He also attributes a high value to the beauty of colour.

therefore ugly; and aesthetic interest consists in the soul's vision, by the "inward eye," of the ideal, the absolute beauty which the phenomenal and material world but dimly shadows forth. Further, art is superior to nature because it represents ideas of which natural things are the incomplete copies. (1)

This almost mystical theory - a reaction from the severe analysis of matter-of-fact experience of Aristotle - is clearly an advance towards a comprehensive theory of aesthetics. Behind it there is a recognition of the real meaning of art, and the necessity for some connecting link between material and ideal beauty. This link, however, Plotinus has been unable to supply. But his theory inaugurates a break-away from the moralistic criterion, Beauty being given a coördinate place with the Good in the system of ultimate realities. The contribution of Plotinus is, then, notable in that it marks the first fruitful attempt to escape from the limitations of Greek theory, foreshadowing the modern conception of artistic idealisation. "The definite antagonism of the sensuous and spiritual world," states Bosanquet, "... meant the disintegration of ancient thought, and the genesis of what on the grand scale of world

(1) A point of view revived in slightly different form by Schopenhauer.

history may fairly be called the modern mind. (1)"

The long period between Plotinus and Kant's immediate predecessors, embracing the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, is peculiarly lacking in any noteworthy contribution to aesthetic theory. That this hiatus is not due to any backwardness in the aesthetic sensibility of the age is patent from the immensity and the merit of its artistic productions. Rather is it due to the very strength of the creative impulse itself and the urgency of the other problems with which the mind of the period had to struggle in adjusting itself to the new conditions of life. The speculations of the Christian fathers bring no noteworthy contributions to the science; neither do the theoretical discussions of the great masters like Leonardo da Vinci, Cenninni and Michelangelo. Augustine's opposition to the things of the world led him, even more vehemently than Plato, to reject art altogether as detrimental to the higher life and spirit of man. But the period of the Middle Ages is not barren of import in the history of aesthetics, for, although the predominating cultural influence of the age was not favourable to the progress of creative activity, it nevertheless supported art by establishing the supremacy

(1) History of Aesthetics, p. 119.

of the Spirit over the Flesh and the Devil. And in supplying the material of art criticism it promoted and rendered possible the fuller development of the science in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Bosanquet shows⁽¹⁾ that two distinct tendencies, not fundamentally antithetic to each other, mark the early stages of philosophic speculation which prepared the aesthetic problem in its modern form: (a) a "universal" tendency, which asserts that the universe is essentially a rational system capable of abstract intellectual analysis, and (b) an "individual" tendency, which starts from individual feeling or sense-perception and requires that the theory of reality shall be derivative from what this is supposed to announce. The first, although emanating from Descartes (1596-1650) is preëminently characteristic of pre-Kantian thought in Germany represented in the systems of Spinoza (1632-1677), Leibniz (1646-1716), Wolff (1679-1764) and Baumgarten (1714-1762); the second is predominantly British, starting with Bacon (1561-1626), then Locke (1632-1704), Shaftesbury (1670-1713), Berkeley (1685-1753) to Hume (1711-1776). In earlier speculation both tendencies had asserted themselves as logical complements, but they were never clearly differentiated and did not come into

(1) Ibid. p. 170.

conflict either in the naturalistic thought of Greece or in the self-conscious reason of Christendom, in which the problems of the soul were brought into the focus of attention. But in modern thought the thinking, feeling and perceiving subject is the common point of orientation for both lines of thought which converge upon Kant (1724-1804), in whose hands aesthetics emerges from the cramping influence of an abstract intellectualism, on the one hand, and a no less abstract empirical sensationalism on the other.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries aesthetics passes through a new phase of development - in England under the influence of the empirical psychologists, who seek to analyse aesthetic feeling psychologically, and in Germany under the influence of Baumgarten and Kant.

The demarcation of Aesthetics from Logic and Ethics constitutes the principal contribution of Baumgarten to aesthetic science. Adopting the Leibniz-Wolffian theory of knowledge, he identifies the Beautiful with the Perfect and defines it as the apprehension of Perfection through the senses; or perfect sense - knowledge. Aesthetic judgment becomes an intellectual act. In the hands of Kant Baumgarten's theory of 'obscure' knowledge (*Verworrene Vorstellungen*) is developed into a logic of aesthetic judgment.

In opposition to the "dogmatic" philosophy of Wolff and Leibniz, Kant begins critically to examine man's rational faculties in order to establish the principles of knowledge on an a priori basis, since he holds that there can be no theoretic certainty about the ultimate nature of reality. He maintains that man has a knowledge of nature outside of himself and also knowledge of himself as a part of nature. The first is the concern of pure reason and its aim is truth (science); the second is the concern of practical reason and its aim is goodness (morality). In addition to these two forms of knowledge he recognises a judgmental mode (aesthetic), which judges independently of reason and produces pleasure from which practical desire and utilitarian conceptions are wholly excluded. In his three monumental works, the Critique of Pure Reason (1781), the Critique of Practical Reason (1788) and the Critique of Judgment (1790) he discusses the three equally important departments of philosophy, "each of which has its own a priori principles."⁽¹⁾"

The historical importance of Kant's aesthetic may be attributed firstly to his denial of the objective existence of beauty. "The judgment of taste is ... not a judgment of cognition, and is consequently not logical but aesthetical

(1) Letter to Reinhold.

by which we understand that whose determining ground can be no other than subjective.⁽¹⁾" Secondly, to his assertion that the beautiful pleases "ohne Interesse," because in perceiving it the mind is free from all thought of the real existence of the object and from practical relation to it. A beautiful object is not pronounced beautiful because of any desire to possess it, but only because of the desire to be in its presence and to enjoy it in an act of pure contemplation. "The satisfaction which we combine with the representation of the existence of an object is called interest."⁽²⁾ Such satisfaction always has reference to the faculty of desire, either as its determining ground or as necessarily connected with its determining ground. Now when the question is if a thing is beautiful, we do not want to know whether anything depends or can depend on the existence of the thing either for myself or for anyone else, but how we judge it by mere observation (intuition or reflection).⁽³⁾" Thirdly, to his claim that the subjective

(1) Kant's Kritik of Judgment, Trans. Bernard, pp. 45-46.

(2) The term 'interest' is defined as pleasure in the idea of the existence of the object and is contrasted with pleasure in the presentation or sensuous idea of the object. Vide Bosanquet, History of Aesthetic, p. 263.

(3) Kritik of Judgment, op. cit., p. 47.

validity of beauty is universal on the ground that the beautiful is the object of a universal pleasure, since the faculties of all men are essentially the same. "This merely subjective (aesthetical) judging of the object, or of the representation by which it is given, precedes the pleasure in the same, and is the ground of this pleasure in the harmony of the cognitive faculties; but on that universality of the subjective conditions for judging of objects is alone based the universal subjective validity of the satisfaction bound up by us with the representation of the object that we call beautiful... The pleasure that we feel is, in a judgment of taste, necessarily imputed by us to every one else; as if, when we call a thing beautiful, it is to be regarded as a characteristic of the object which is determined in it according to concepts; though beauty, without a reference to the feeling of the subject, is nothing by itself.⁽¹⁾" Fourthly, to his assertion that the judgment of beauty is independent of concepts. "The beautiful is that which apart from concepts is represented as the object of a universal satisfaction... This explanation of the beautiful can be derived from the preceding explanation of it as the object of an entirely disinterested

(1) Ibid. p. 65.

satisfaction. For the fact of which every one is conscious, that the satisfaction is for him quite disinterested, implies in his judgment a ground of satisfaction for all men. For since it does not rest on any inclination of the subject (nor upon any other premeditated interest), but since the person who judges feels himself quite free as regards the satisfaction which he attaches to the object, he cannot find the ground of this satisfaction in any private conditions connected with his own subject; and hence it must be regarded as grounded on what he can presuppose in every other person. Consequently he must believe that he has reason for attributing a similar satisfaction to every one. He will therefore speak of the beautiful, as if beauty were a characteristic of the object and the judgment logical (constituting a cognition of the Object by means of concepts of it); although it is only aesthetical and involves merely a reference of the representation of the object to the subject. For it has this similarity to a logical judgment that we can presuppose its validity for all men. But this universality cannot arise from concepts; for from concepts there is no transition to the feeling of pleasure or pain (except in pure practical laws, which bring an interest with them such as is not bound up with the pure judgment of taste). Consequently

the judgment of taste, accompanied with the consciousness of separation from all interest, must claim validity for every man, without this universality depending on Objects. That is, there must be bound up with it a title to subjective universality.⁽¹⁾" The predicate of the aesthetic judgment is the feeling of pleasure, but when the predicate is not this feeling but a relation to the idea of an end, the judgment is not aesthetic but teleological. And finally, to his insistence on the complete autonomy of the artistic mental power and his recognition of aesthetics as an independent philosophical science.

Kant's system is the culminating point of a long process of philosophic preparation, but it is to him more than to anyone else that a true and independent theory of aesthetics owes its existence. He owes much to the Leibnizian school of Baumgarten, to Mendelssohn and to Hume; but while these philosophers set him his problem he nevertheless brings to his task of reconstructing philosophy on an a priori basis a penetrating and original mind, which enables him to originate those major problems which occupy his successors up to the present time. The aesthetic question "How can a pleasurable feeling partake of the character of

(1) Ibid. p. 55-56.

reason?"⁽¹⁾ which urges itself upon him, is the direct antecedent of the more immediate problem of to-day, the problem concerning the aesthetics of form and of expression. This has run through the whole history of aesthetic theory, but it had not been clearly formulated until the appearance of Kant on the philosophic stage. If his answer is limited to a "negative and generic assertion of the beautiful," and if he is guilty of illogical inferences and inconsistency, he may nevertheless be credited with laying down once and for all the fundamental principles of a sound and comprehensive aesthetic theory.

But Kant only points out the way of aesthetics. In the hands of the formalists aesthetics leaves the narrow path of speculative philosophy and enters the field of psychology, where it becomes an observational and experimental science, aiming at precise analysis. The genesis of this movement may be traced (a) to the influence of the empirical psychologists in Britain, notably Francis Hutcheson (1694-1747), David Hartley (1705-1757), David Hume (1711-1776) and Edmund Burke (1729-1797); and (b) to Kant's own pupil, J. G. Herder (1744-1803), who vigorously opposed his master's idea of formal (objective)⁽²⁾ beauty, arguing

(1) Bosanquet, B., History of Aesthetic, p.173.

(2) Kant was not consistent in the exposition of his subjective view of beauty, for not only does he recognise an objective beauty - the beauty of form (cf. e.g. "Analytic of the Sublime," 48), but also introduces the idea of purposiveness, maintaining that the highest end of beauty is to symbolise the good.

that form as such is not of the essence of beauty but only the sensuous mode of expressing a deeper meaning. Herder's emphasis of feeling rather than reason gives an impetus to the movement of psychological analysis, but its development is early checked by the metaphysical aesthetic of the German idealists, especially Fichte (1762-1814), Hegel (1770-1831) and Schelling (1775-1854). With Herbart (1776-1841), however, the movement is revived. He is dissatisfied with the abstract aesthetic of the idealists, particularly Fichte and Schelling, and seeks a more precise and definite statement of the formal conditions of beauty in the work of art itself. As a follower of Kant he believes in the subjectivity of beauty and its universal objective validity, but since pure form consists of abstract relations, it is the work of aesthetic science to investigate these, first in their simplest and most elementary manifestations and then in their more complex and diversified compositions. The task of investigating these aesthetic elementary factors (*ästhetische elementaren Theile*) is first attempted by G. T. Fechner (1834-1887), who claims that the study of aesthetics ought to be prosecuted as an independent empirical science. Henceforward, in contrast to the traditional deductive and metaphysical treatment of the subject, aesthetics adopts a method which is preëminently inductive and psychological.

A purely speculative aesthetics based upon philosophical and metaphysical hypotheses belongs to the realm of pure knowledge; that is, it has no end beyond knowledge of the first principles of the aesthetic order as an aspect of being. Its limitations are therefore those of the speculative mind itself. It is abstract, reflective. Beyond the formulation of vague and highly disputable abstract hypotheses it cannot go. This is abundantly clear from the history of speculative aesthetics from Socrates to Croce, for, despite more than two thousand years of systematic inquiry, very little advance has been made since the early Greek thinkers recognised beauty as presenting a problem for philosophic investigation. A recent writer points out⁽¹⁾ that both in Germany and in England the following views may be found: (1) Beauty is a thing in itself and is not discoverable in an attribute of another thing. This view, originally expressed by Plato, was elaborated by Baumgarten, Kant and their followers in Germany and France and by the Intuitionists in England. (2) Beauty can be analysed into elements such as order, symmetry and definiteness. This view was set forth by Aristotle and enlarged by Herbart, Lessing and the Formalists in England. (3) Plotinus suspected that the ideas, or the intelligence, of the

(1) Bird, Milton, A Study in Aesthetics, pp.5-6.

artist had something to do with the expression of beauty. Schelling and Hegel agree with him. Throughout this long period beauty occupies the same threefold hierarchy as it did with the Greeks, and two thousand years later Bain's analysis of the aesthetic emotion agrees with Aristotle's. As these views are expressed, they are inconsistent with each other; the confusion remains, and the solution of the problem is yet to be found.

Throughout the long history of aesthetics repeated reactions have occurred against the quest a priori for first principles, as, for instance, in Aristotle against the idealism of Plato, and in Herbart against the idealism of Fichte and the absolutism of Schelling, and more recently in the aesthetics of the psychological school against the idealistic philosophy of the great post-Kantian systems. Prior to the beginnings of experimental psychology, in particular the experimental work of Fechner, these reactions failed to produce any permanent results. But the need of a psychological basis for aesthetic became increasingly obvious with the growth of the new psychological method and the rapid development of art research. In this connection the works of Lipps and Volkelt are by far the most important contributions which have as yet been made to psychological aesthetics.

The new aesthetics starts from the actual aesthetic experience of man as manifested in his spontaneous creative activities and his universal recognition and appreciation of aesthetic products. Instead of taking the object of art as its point of orientation, it begins on the one hand with the psychological antecedents of the productive artistic activity, the artistic psychic state in all its phases throughout the complete cycle of creative effort, and on the other, with the condition of mind in which the object is felt or recognised as belonging to that class of things known as works of art. It is concerned to investigate both the productive as well as the receptive aspects of the artistic activity, and it seeks to gather together and to probe all the relevant facts relating to the artistic activity, availing itself of the researches in ethnology, anthropology, folk-psychology, sociology and related sciences and aims at a complete psychological theory of art and artistic development.

But just as abstract metaphysical aesthetic produced a reaction which led to the foundation of the psychological school, so the psychological school caused a revolt which resulted in the foundation of the Science of Art school of research by the Bavarian architect G. Semper. The former is primarily concerned with the experiencing subject; the

latter with the material object. In contemporary theory the latter predominates. It is concerned to trace the fundamental factors which have produced the various historic world-styles and to reconstruct the essential motivating spirit of these different modes of artistic creation. It strives to disentangle the numerous determinants of art by an objective study of the actual conditions of life under which the great styles were produced, to relate these to individual productions by an objective examination of all the relevant facts, social, climatic, geographic, religious, technical, intellectual, psychological and philosophical, which operate on the creative mind, and to establish the underlying laws of artistic evolution. The Science of Art is, therefore, far wider in its scope and aims than Art History. According to Schmarsow, one of the foremost adherents of the school, the history of art merely furnishes Kunstwissenschaft with part of its data, the rest being supplied by the researches into the earliest⁽¹⁾ manifestations of art in the child and among primitive peoples.

One aspect of modern theory demands special notice: the distinction which it has been found necessary to make between all those non-artistic modes of aesthetic perception, such as feelings for tone, colour and shape, that are in no

(1) Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft, Bd. II, p. 307.

way connected with art, and the Theory of Art as the ordered expression of deep-seated feelings and intuitions. This distinction renders it possible to mark off two fundamentally different problems: the problem of general aesthetic perception, which is the concern of General Aesthetics, and the problem of artistic perception and creation, which is the concern of the Theory and the Science of Art.

In brief, while contemporary aesthetics, in contrast to the past, advances as an independent science having its own subject-matter, it comprises four principal branches of inquiry, whose subdivisions may be classified under the heads Subjective and Objective, according as they are concerned with the experiencing subject or the material object; Philosophical Aesthetics, which is purely speculative; Psychological Aesthetics, which is empirical and analytical; Kunstwissenschaft, or the Science of Art; and Kunstlehre, or the Theory of Art. (Table II). Although these different branches inevitably overlap each other, their boundaries are more or less clearly defined within the total field of theoretical discourse. Compared with the past, the scope and methods of the science have developed immensely as a result of the growth of the science itself and the vast additional knowledge furnished by research; but it is doubtful whether the very wealth of its resources and the

numerous divisions of inquiry do not constitute a danger to its inner unity, upon which its life and progress as an independent science depend.

This is a danger, however, that threatens the whole of contemporary science, which tends more and more to divide into numerous restricted sciences, each with its own concepts and special problems. Unless the progress of the various sciences is accompanied by a corresponding progress in philosophy, the complete disintegration of culture is inevitable. For, as Professor Whitehead has pointed out, "Philosophy is not one among the sciences with its own little scheme of abstractions which works away at perfecting and improving. It is the survey of sciences, with the special objects of their harmony and of their completion. It brings to this task not only the evidence of the separate sciences, but also its own special appeal to concrete experience. It confronts the sciences with concrete fact."⁽¹⁾ The vast and ever-increasing material of art researches, however, renders integration and coördination difficult of achievement. Specialised scientific research must continue in order to bring to light all the relevant facts; but these must be unified and harmonised in a single comprehens-

(1) Whitehead, A. N., Science and the Modern World, Cheap Edition, p. 108.

ive philosophic system embracing every aspect of the
artistic problem before aesthetics can be placed alongside
the greater systems of cosmology.

CHAPTER IV.

Approaches to the Problem of Artistic Creativity.

CHAPTER IV.

Hirn observes that in the palmy days of philosophical aesthetics conditions were eminently favourable to universal generalisations. Classical antiquity and the Renaissance - the great periods of art - were so remote that only their simplest and most salient features were discernable. Art had not yet manifested that bewildering multiplicity which later research was to reveal. Savage art was practically unknown. Beauty, art, the ideal - these and all other general notions were suggested with unsurpassable simplicity by the apparent uniformity of artistic achievement. The eagerness and delight with which the early aestheticians formulated laws and drew conclusions is therefore easy to understand. And it was inevitable that, as the province of art widened and its products became more differentiated, speculation would be checked by the recognition that many of the characteristic features of art could not be harmonised with the general formulae enunciated by speculative philosophy. (1)

(1) Hirn, Y., The Origins of Art, p. 5.

The advent of Modern Art, coupled with the rapid development of anthropology, sociology, modern psychology and kindred sciences in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, prepared the way for a new orientation in aesthetic inquiry. This began by a change of attitude and outlook, which resulted in the disparagement of abstract speculation based upon a priori beliefs and the inauguration of a method of inquiry which concentrated on concrete facts and first-hand experience. Scientific procedure replaced the dialectical treatment of the problem by the great philosophers. Art ceased to be regarded as something to be deduced from the fundamental principles of philosophy and metaphysics and was approached from the standpoint of psychology as a specific human activity of the first magnitude, deriving its power from the deepest sources of psychic energy and fulfilling a primordial need of life. As such, its title to be treated as a special sphere of scientific research could not be contested.

Unless art is an activity arising from the fundamental psychic needs of mankind, its existence would be nothing short of a miracle. Every investigation into the psychological nature of art must be founded on this fact. Ethnological and anthropological research show the close relation between art and the religious and magical life of primitive

peoples, and it is not difficult to discern in the works of the great masters the living substance of thought and experience which they embody. Yet this obvious fact is only the point of departure for a psychological study of art. The investigator must reckon with the immense variability of human experience and the diversity of styles and modes of artistic expression in every quarter of the globe and every stage of its history. He must study the manifold conditions of life which lead to artistic production, endeavouring to trace the connections between the subjective facts and the concrete products of art, and attempting to discover, if possible, from the mass of evidence, historical, social, technical and psychological, the fundamental determinants of artistic expression.

Such a task must involve numerous difficulties and encumbrances. In every aspect of his inquiry the investigator is hampered by the insufficiency of reliable evidence and the inadequacy of the technical methods of research at his disposal. The history of art is, for the most part, only a fragmentary and disjointed account of artistic products distributed over the face of the earth; it throws little light upon the conditions of which these products are the objective expression. The history of peoples is but the fringe of a vast domain which can never be fully explored.

Psychology is only beginning to establish its right of place alongside the great physical sciences, whose methods it is wont to employ and whose fundamental aims it shares. Its very subject-matter is still in dispute. Bullough points out that much detail, observation and record have been amassed, but that there has been little coördination of this material. Particularly has there been a lack of a "common stock" of knowledge; and he rightly emphasises that little progress can be hoped for without such a stock of common and accepted truths. (1)

The fugitive and capricious nature of the artistic impulse precludes the possibility of subjecting it to exact methods of psychological analysis. It cannot be produced at will. Although anything capable of inducing an emotional attitude or affective state in the artist may arouse the activity instantaneously, it may, on the other hand, be the culminating point of a long process of mental preparation, conscious or unconscious, in which a whole complex of emotions, strivings, and desires are brought to a conative climax in a passionate act of formal expression. The executive act itself may occupy only a few hours of frenzied spontaneous effort or many months of more or less painful struggle, during which the original motivation may undergo

(1) Bullough, E., "The Relation of Aesthetics to Psychology," British Journal of Psychology, Vol. X, Nov. 1919, p.45.

numerous metamorphoses. Additional factors, themselves non-artistic, are liable to invade the creative consciousness, modifying and colouring the whole character of the artist's activity and output.

Two ineradicable difficulties, however, handicap the investigator at every point: on the one hand, the fatal limitations of his own artistic creative endowment, which precludes the possibility of that sympathetic insight from which alone a true and penetrating understanding of the artistic process may be gained; and on the other, the artist's proverbial inability to furnish an exact and trustworthy account of his experience.

Usually a philosopher or a scientist, the investigator's outlook is that of the logician, the physicist, the chemist; his interests and attitudes are fundamentally opposed to those of the creative artist; he seeks to analyse and to understand, whereas the artist is content to enjoy appearances for their own sake, to contemplate and create anew. Unlike the artist, who is primarily concerned with intuitive perceptions of things, of the world, time, space and eternity, the scientist and philosopher are preoccupied with abstract ideas and ultimate realities, with concepts which can be expressed in words and conventional symbols and communicated to their kind. In order, therefore, to

investigate and describe - and it is the aesthetician's business to investigate and describe - the nature of art and the artistic activity, he must project himself, as it were, into the mind and body of the artist in an endeavour to comprehend the physical and mental experience accompanying the creative process, or else rely upon doubtful testimony and limited data. The degree of success attending this effort must depend in the long run upon the artistic insight and sympathetic rapport of the investigator, but unless he is unusually gifted his observations are not likely to carry much authority. For, apart from the diversity of individual experience, the immensity of the gap between the elementary artistic impulse and the supremest moments of creative activity must conceal ingredients which the elementary impulse cannot possibly bring to the threshold of consciousness; these must for ever remain part of the privileged experience of the artist.

The psychologist's source of evidence concerning the subjective aspect of the problem must always be the artist. He alone is in a position to speak of the higher creative activity at first hand. Yet it is just here where the experience is richest that the evidence is weakest, for few artists are by disposition and mental equipment capable of carrying out accurate introspective analyses of their mental

states. Their testimony, as Meumann shrewdly notes,⁽¹⁾ is usually psychologically inexact and too frequently coloured by prejudice. Adolf Hildebrand's Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst, for instance, is, according to Meumann, richer in reflection than exact observation and psychological insight. But, apart altogether from that, it is important to emphasise that immediately the artist turns from his creative activity to analyse his mental experience, the very thing he wishes to examine instantly vanishes. The creative experience is an all-absorbing one; it drains the mental energy into a single channel, leaving little trace of its operations in conscious memory. Consequently introspection, especially when it is unskilled, is an exceedingly difficult and clumsy affair: in the case of the artist it is liable to be little more than a mere account of what he thinks he ought to have felt rather than what he actually did.

Furthermore, the creative activity is an individual experience; it is an activity which manifests itself differently wherever it operates. No two artists enjoy identical experiences; no two artists go to work in the same way or in the same frame of mind. Each displays a tendency to react strongly to particular phenomena, to create a particu-

(1) Meumann, E., Ästhetik der Gegenwart, p. 101.

ar form and composition, a characteristic Gestalt; each has his own peculiarities of style, technique and orientation. Whereas one artist will proceed by slow progressive stages, during which his creation gradually unfolds itself before his vision, another will proceed as in a frenzy of passion and agitation, achieving his aim with spontaneous rapidity and directness.

There are works of art, Jung points out, ⁽¹⁾ which proceed wholly from the artist's intention and resolve to produce specific effects. The author submits his material to definitely directed and purposeful treatment, adding to it and subtracting from it, emphasising this and modifying that effect, constantly observing the laws of style and form. He brings to his labours his keenest judgment, regarding his material as subject to his will and purpose, an instrument in his hand; so that his artistic activity is identical with the creative process, whether he surrenders himself as the head of the creative movement, or whether the creative movement has seized upon him as a tool or instrument. There are other works of art, however, which flow more or less spontaneously and perfectly from the artist's hand. These works positively impose themselves upon their creators, bringing with them their own form, forcing the

(1) Contributions to Analytical Psychology, pp. 234-236.

artist to add what he would decline and withhold what he would fain include. Before his own production he stands disconcerted and amazed, yet secretly recognising the embodiment of his own thoughts and hidden utterances. He merely obeys an apparently alien impulse, feeling that his work is greater than himself. He is not identical with the creative process, he stands, as it were, a spectator - as though he were another person who had fallen within the magic circle of an alien will.

If there is anything, then, in psychological experience corresponding to the concept of a characteristic artistic impulse, it can only be a general human potentiality capable of manifesting itself in a multitude of ways, by means of the common psycho-physical mechanism with which mankind is endowed. The pure artist and the pure artistic activity are abstractions. Hence the most the investigator can hope to do is to track down, by means of the patient and sympathetic study of all the relevant subjective and objective data available, those common ingredients which constitute the essential psychological nature of the artistic activity, wherever it operates. He must try to discover, first, what is most characteristic of the individual creative experience before he can hope to discover what is fundamental to its universal manifestations.

In approaching the problem of the nature and functioning of the artistic activity the investigator may orientate from one or other of the following standpoints:

- I. Introspective Psychology.
- II. Objective Observation and Analysis.
- III. Genetic Evolution.
- IV. Sociological Psychology.
- V. Experimental Psychology.
- VI. General Psychology.

I. Despite its acknowledged difficulties and limitations introspection is the method par excellence of psychological aesthetics. Its supremacy is in part due to the fact that skilled introspection is one of the principal methods of orthodox psychological inquiry, but chiefly because of the subtle and capricious nature of the artistic experience, which still defies all endeavours to bring it under the exact procedure of laboratory technique. In all probability the introspective method of investigation has already reached its utmost limits of exactness. The unreliability of the artist's introspective testimony is a serious drawback which is not likely to be overcome; and for the artist, at all events as far as his productive creative experience is concerned, there is no adequate substitute. Nevertheless, the volume of evidence from

this source, if limited and of uncertain value from the standpoint of a scientific theory, must constantly furnish the investigator with material worthy of his closest scrutiny. Here the psychologist, aided by his own introspection and the results of researches in other fields of psychology pertaining to artistic activity, is in a position to weigh and check the varied individual accounts and to formulate tentative hypotheses. (1)

The ever-widening range of modern scientific research, particularly in the spheres of psychology, ethnology and anthropology, has immensely increased the possibilities of achieving a sound psychological theory of art. But unfortunately too many of the workers in these fields who have attempted to formulate aesthetic hypotheses on the basis of their own and others' discoveries have revealed themselves insufficiently acquainted with the phenomenon they are trying to elucidate. (2) Artistic insight and keen discrimination are absolutely essential to the proper sifting of evidence that may be culled from the immense data

(1) Vide American Journal of Psychology, XXXIII, 2. pp. 233-237, for an introspective report by the American musician Henry Cowell. This appears to be the only such report on record. The extension of this method could not fail to produce data of the utmost importance to the psychologist.

(2) One notable instance will be examined in a later chapter (Chap. VI), viz., Professor Spearman's theory expounded in his Creative Mind.

which modern research is daily accumulating. The formulation of theories which are not grounded on sympathetic understanding and direct art experience constitutes one of the gravest dangers to which the scientific study of art is only too open. "The attempt," states Mr. Bullough,⁽¹⁾ "has often been made to fathom the mystery of Beauty by research into prehistoric and Primitive art, but it has resulted in mere imaginings and wholly unsupported constructions of what the men of Altamira or Neolithic man or the bower-bird thought and felt and meant when producing their 'art.' It has proved to be an entirely unwarranted substitution of our own ideas and views of the men of the Stone Age and certain animals. It has been a vicious circle of the worst description and has meant the search after something which the searchers themselves neither knew nor were able to describe."

The appositeness of Mr. Bullough's criticism is by no means restricted to that aspect of aesthetic inquiry to which he particularly refers. That real insight is lacking behind a large amount of research work carried out during the past century in the name of research into the Psychology of Art is evident from the fact that much of it is concerned

(1) "The Relation of Aesthetics to Psychology," British Journal of Psychology," Vol. X, p. 48.

with processes which fundamentally have very little connection with artistic creation.⁽¹⁾ Many of the psychological investigations into artistic ability carried out during the past half century and more have proceeded on the assumption that in the last analysis art depends upon the artist's technical skill - which has merely meant skill in representing the appearance of things in terms of a particular medium.⁽²⁾ Primitive, Classic, Byzantine and Oriental concrete achievement, however, clearly refutes the assumption, and any research founded upon it contains a fallacy which might have been avoided had the investigators possessed a finer discrimination and deeper understanding of the

(1) Cf. Martin, L., "An Experimental Study of Fechner's Principles," Psychological Review, Vol. XIII, May 1906.

(2) It is only just, however, to point out in this connection that if most of those investigators referred to accepted the view that technical skill is fundamental to art, they were justified by the academic art of the period which strained after realistic representation based on classical ideals, which Winckelmann did so much to set up. Since the Impressionist revolt the view has daily gained discredit.

phenomenon they purport to be examining.⁽¹⁾ "The new psychology," states Thorburn,⁽²⁾ "has made its approach to art, knowing itself to be in the possession of a wonderful secret; in this knowledge it would explore the field of art in quest of more and more material for its own enlightenment and for its own purposes, extraneous to those of art. In some respects it may have gained those ends, but in others there is a danger that the very wealth and resources of its own knowledge and the security of its own standpoint should make it blind to some essential qualities of the experience it proposes to scrutinise. We need the new psychological method and its application to the artist's work, not primarily to explain the aberrations of his temperament, but

(1) Witness the data so patiently accumulated as a result of the labours of notable scientists like Albein ("Der Anteil der nachkonstruierenden Tätigkeit des Auges and der Apperception an dem Behalten und der Wiedergabe einfacher Formen," Zeitschrift für experimentelle Pädagogik, V und VI Bd. 1907.); Meumann ("Ein Programm zur psychologischen Untersuchung des Zeichnens," Zeitschrift für Pädagogik, 1912; also "Die Analyse des Zeichnens und des Modellierens," Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die experimentelle Pädagogik, 1914,); Katz ("Ein Betrag zur Kenntnis der Kinderzeichnungen," Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane, 1906.); Kerschensteiner ("Die Entwicklung der zeichnerischen Begabung," 1905.); and Levinstein ("Kinderzeichnungen bis zum 14 Lebensjahr," 1905.), which, despite its unquestioned importance from the wider point of view of psychology, has nevertheless proved of little positive value to the psychological theory of art.

(2) Thorburn, J. M., Art and the Unconscious, p. 5.

because it is worth while more deeply to understand the nature of art itself, and to see its value in true perspective with other values in life." Thorburn's warning cannot too often be repeated. The investigator cannot hope to elucidate the art experience until he has had it; he cannot know it until he has lived it and valued it for its own sake. For art does not exist until it has worked its effect upon the human mind.

II. The "objective" approach involves inter alia the study of the artist's behaviour during the act of creative production, his attitudes, gestures, facial expression, technical procedure, his methods of working and controlling his material, etc. In this way the investigator may gain insight into the purely physical processes by means of which he may be enabled to infer something of the kind of experience the artist is undergoing. The possibilities of such a method are obviously very limited; they must be supplemented by the artist's answers to carefully selected questions, directed with the object of elucidating his motives and feelings. The method may further be supplemented by the evidence of ethnologists, who have observed the creative process in operation among primitive peoples in different parts of the world and in different times and circumstances, and by the close study of the artistic activities of

children of different ages. In this latter field of research there exists a considerable literature of immense value to the investigator.⁽¹⁾ Foremost among the objective studies of child art may be mentioned the work of Ricci,⁽²⁾ Wulff⁽³⁾ and Eng,⁽⁴⁾ each of which is a rich mine of information, observation and analysis. Important also for the investigator are the autobiographies, biographies, diaries and obiter dicta of artists, which throw a flood of light upon their aims, methods and practical experience. Without this previous objective work the psychology of artistic creativity would be a hopelessly abstract and arbitrary theoretical construction.

By Objective Analysis is meant the empirical study of concrete art with a view to discovering among its diverse manifestations what is universally typical, general and fundamental in formal structure, plan and theme. This involves also the study of the materials of art, its technical instruments and processes, and their influence upon the concrete product. Foremost in this field is the work

(1) Vide Bibliography.

(2) Ricci, C., L'Arte dei Bambini.

(3) Wulff, Oscar, Die Kunst des Kindes.

(4) Eng, H., The Psychology of Children's Drawings.

of H. Wölfflin,⁽¹⁾ the eminent German historian. Professor Wölfflin is concerned to demonstrate the existence in European art since the Renaissance of certain clearly distinguishable forms or modes of "imaginative beholding"⁽²⁾ (vision). "The mode of vision ... of imaginative beholding, is not from the outset and everywhere the same, but like every other manifestation of life has its development. The historian has to reckon with stages of the imagination. We know primitively immature modes of vision, just as we speak of 'high' and 'late' periods of art. Archaic Greek art, or the style of the sculptures on the west portal of Chartres, must not be interpreted as if it had been created to-day. Instead of asking 'How do these works affect me, the modern man?' and estimating their expressional content by that standard, the historian must realise what choice of formal possibilities the epoch had at its disposal. An essentially different interpretation will then result."⁽³⁾

Of these modes of vision (the basis of style) there is a marked contrast between the linear "das Lineare" and the painterly "das Malerische;" whereas the former sees things

(1) Wölfflin, H., Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe: English translation. The Principles of Art History.

(2) Ibid. p. VII, Preface to the English edition.

(3) Ibid.

in outline - "the eye is led along the boundaries and induced to feel along the edges"⁽¹⁾ - the latter sees them in masses or volumes - the eye "withdraws from the edges," the outline becomes "more or less indifferent to the eye as the path of vision, and the primary element of the impression is things seen in patches."⁽²⁾ "The great contrast between linear and painterly style corresponds to radically different interests in the world. In the former case, it is the solid figure, in the latter the changing appearance: in the former, the enduring form, measurable, finite; in the latter, the movement, the form in function; in the former, the thing in itself; in the latter, the thing in its relations. And if we can say that in the linear style the hand has felt out the corporeal world essentially according to its plastic content, the eye in the painterly stage has become sensitive to the various textures, and it is no contradiction if even here the visual sense seems nourished by the tactile sense - that other tactile sense which relishes the kind of surface, the different skin of things. Sensation now penetrates beyond the solid object into the realm of the immaterial.

(1) Ibid. p. 18 et. seq.

(2) Ibid.

The painterly style alone knows a beauty of the incorporeal. From differently orientated interests in the world, each time a new beauty comes to birth."⁽¹⁾ But it is important to note that while the painterly mode is the later, it is not to be regarded as absolutely superior. "The linear style developed values which the painterly style no longer possessed and no longer wanted to possess. They are two conceptions of the world, differently orientated in taste and in their interest to the world, and yet each capable of giving a perfect picture of visible things."⁽²⁾ The primitives were essentially linear artists; so, for instance, was Dürer as opposed to Rembrandt and the Impressionists, whose art was fundamentally painterly in style.

Professor Wölfflin also recognises four distinct and antithetical developments of style. (i) Despite the fact that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries art possessed the means of representing pictorial space, the vision behind it was fundamentally planimetric, that is, it stressed consistently the dimensions of length and breadth. "The more art overcame the constraint of primitive beholding which, with the clearest desire to get free of the mere plane, still remained firmly held in it by one foot, the more art became capable of handling with perfect surety the

(1) Ibid. p.27.

(2) Ibid. p.18.

resources of foreshortening and spatial recession, the more decidedly does the desire make itself felt for pictures which have assembled their content in a clear plane."⁽¹⁾ (ii) In contrast to this, the desire for the illusion of recession and depth predominates in the art of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. (iii) Although every work of art displays a certain inevitability (self-containedness) in its composition, this quality may be achieved either by "closed" or "open" form. By "closed form" is meant the type of composition which emphasises the isolation of content from its surroundings - "makes of the picture a self-contained entity pointing everywhere back to itself."⁽²⁾ (iv) This type of composition is characteristic of the eighteenth century, the classical age.⁽³⁾

(1) Ibid. p. 101.

(2) Ibid. p. 124.

(3) "'Klassisch.' The word 'classic' throughout this book refers to the art of the High Renaissance. It implies, however, not only a historical phase of art, but also a special mode of creation of which that art is an instance." Note by translator, p. 15. Vide p. 126. "Classic art is an art of definite horizontal and vertical directions. The elements are manifested in their full clearness and sharpness. Whether it is a portrait or a figure, a sacred picture or a landscape, the picture is always dominated in all its parts by the opposition of vertical and horizontal.... In contrast to this, the baroque inclines, not to suppress these elements, but to conceal their obvious opposition."

Open form on the other hand means the type of composition which looks limitless and points everywhere beyond itself, but which yet appears through its "secret limits" self-contained in the aesthetic sense. "Although a hidden congruity ... continues to play its part, the whole is meant to look like a piece cut haphazard out of the visible world."⁽¹⁾ This mode of composition is characteristic of baroque art. Professor Wölfflin, however, does not stress the importance of these four stylistic developments.

In addition to the foregoing, two further distinctions are noted: the distinction between "multiple unity" and "unified unity" on the one hand, and on the other, between "absolute" and "relative" clearness of pictorial rendering. The difference between multiple unity and unified unity is illustrated by a comparison of classical and baroque art: in the former unity is achieved "by making the parts independent and free members;" in the latter uniform independence of parts is sacrificed in favour of a more unified total motive. In other words, in classical style there is coördination of the accents; in baroque style the accents are subordinated so that they lose their individuality and separate existence in an absolute and harmonious whole. "On principle, the baroque no longer reckons with a

(1) Ibid. p. 126.

multiplicity of co-ordinate units, harmoniously interdependent, but with an absolute unity in which the individual part has lost its individual rights."⁽¹⁾ As with the linear and painterly styles, multiple unity and unified unity are the offspring of different modes of vision. The styles of absolute and relative clearness of representation form a contrast to which the preceding concepts are parallel. They correspond to two radically different attitudes. Classical art bends every resource to the service of formal clearness as in Dürer and Leonardo; baroque seeks a beauty in an obscurity which swallows up form as in Rembrandt and the masters of the rococo. The difference is not one of capacity, but wholly a difference of vision and purpose.

III. The genetic method of attacking the problem involves the examination of the most primitive art of the pre-historic era as well as the study of the genetic development of fundamental attitudes and states of mind. Here the investigator may draw from the vast sources of evidence accumulated in recent years by ethnology, ethnography, folk-psychology and related sciences. For although biologists have rejected the theory that ontogenesis recapitulates phylogenesis, there is yet sufficient justification for assuming certain analogies between the mind and art of

(1) Ibid. p. 157.

prehistoric man and that of the extant savage.⁽¹⁾ Mr. A. H. Christie points out that "Comparison of ancient pattern-work with similar work current wherever conditions resembling those existing in prehistoric ages still continue leads definitely to the conclusion that, however far separate may be their occurrence in time and place, this art in both an ancient and modern community may be, broadly speaking, in the same stage of development."⁽²⁾ Perhaps Mr. Christie goes further than the evidence would warrant when he states in the next sentence that "The ways of life followed by the primitive peoples now living amongst us are much the same as those followed by their forerunners in the past, and their common needs are met by similar ways of thought and work." For, as Lord Listowel points out,⁽³⁾ "We cannot suppose that, when all things mortal have been touched by the hand of change, primitive peoples should have remained completely stationary and motionless during thousands of years." But, on the other hand, when Lord Listowel states that "It appears highly probable, indeed, that the comparatively unprogressive societies of the present day are only the weak and degenerate

(1) Schuwer, C., "La Signification de l'art primitif," Journal de Psychologie, Vol. 28, 1931, p. 140.

(2) Christie, A. H., Traditional Methods of Pattern Designing, p. 228.

(3) Listowel, Earl of, A Critical History of Modern Aesthetics, p. 228.

descendants of those Stone and Metal Age peoples from whose vigorous youth civilisation ultimately sprang," he seems to be thinking of those attributes of progress which issue in intellectual activities, overlooking the crucial fact that both prehistoric man and certain extant primitive peoples manifest an innate sense of form that is hardly inferior to that of their civilised descendants of the present day. Moreover, apart from this confusion of intellectual and artistic culture, it must be borne in mind that where artistic decadence has set in among living primitive peoples, it is not infrequently a comparatively recent phenomenon. Dr. Kühn points out,⁽¹⁾ for instance, that it appears highly probable that Bushman art was still at its zenith a few centuries ago, and that decadence began as a result of Negro and White influence, which undermined their native talent and destroyed a great part of their indigenous traditions and customs. A comparison of prehistoric or modern Negro art⁽²⁾ with that of the richest periods of world art appears to suggest that, while man's intelligence has developed immensely, his innate sensibility to form has remained

(1) Obermaier and Kühn, Bushman Art, pp.19 et seq.

(2) The comparison is a fair one. Mr. Clive Bell states: "Judging from the available data ... I would say that Negro art was entitled to a place among the great schools, but that it was no match for the greatest. With the greatest I would compare it." Since Cézanne, p.114.

comparatively static.⁽¹⁾ Hence the instinctive appeal of primitive art to the modern man of unsophisticated sensibility.

The art problem to which the psycho-geneticist must address himself is not, according to Bullough, "a question only or even predominantly of the origins of those objects which we call art. It is also and especially a question of the origins of the types and attitudes of mind that created those objects."⁽²⁾ In other words, how and when did a self-conscious art spring into existence? Anthropology has shown that the greater part of what is known as Primitive Art "was not art to the men who made it. And once this discovery had been made concerning primitive art, a good deal of what hitherto had been considered without question as Art, even in highly advanced stages of culture, has become similarly suspect" ... "Even the Greeks treated their architects as we treat our masons; we call Architecture the 'Mistress-Art' and in the Chinese Canon of the Fine Arts we find included therein Archery, Mathematics and Manners. Here again Aesthetics demands an aesthetically directed psychological research into those internal

(1) Whether this has any bearing upon the recapitulation theory is a question that may be left to the biologist.

(2) Bullough, E., "The Relation of Aesthetics to Psychology," British Journal of Psychology, Vol. X, p. 46.

developments of culture, whereby an originally undifferentiated system of traditional sentiments and conceptions became split into those separate strands of feeling, those distinct systems of ideas, which we have come to term Religion, Magic, Justice, Right, Truth, Craftmanship, Art. These developments must have taken place - within historical times they are known to have taken place - concomitantly with important external changes in the objects connected with these systems, under the stress of the division of labour, distinctions of craftmanship and public castes, guilds, priest and layman, the development of media of currency, imports and exports, the effects of war and travels, interferences of cultures and a number of other factors, which may perhaps all be considered as the outward manifestations of those inward changes which are the true objects of aesthetic research."⁽¹⁾

Camille Schuwer has also emphasised the fact that what to-day is regarded as primitive art was not art to the primitive man, when he states that "presque tous ces documents, qu'une ethnographie naïve interprétait comme des objets **de** beauté, créés pour produire un plaisir esthétique, une science mieux avisée reconnaît aujourd'hui leurs significations réelles, utilitaires, sociales, magiques

(1) Ibid. p. 48.

ou religieuses."(1) Yet in stressing the distinction between the unselfconscious attitude of primitive man and the fully conscious attitude of the modern artist there is a danger of interpreting the fundamental facts of art too abstractly. For, from the point of view of the universal fact of art, it is very doubtful whether mere selfconsciousness is of much importance - and especially does this apply to the vanguard of modern art. The artist of to-day, although fully conscious of his ability to produce art, does not deliberately set out to do so, however much he is bound by economic need and constrained by extraneous circumstances; like primitive man he is motivated by fundamental needs and aspirations and is guided by innate capacities, whose mechanism is to him a mystery only half revealed; he is conscious only of his technical means; he is the vehicle of a purpose which lies beyond the frontiers of his conscious experience. All art is the outcome of an emotional attitude to things. Ideally, the artist surrenders to this attitude, and under the stress of his feelings and guided by his innate sensibility to form, he constructs a formal equivalent to his emotion, thereby achieving a satisfaction which is enduring in space and time. From

(1) Schuwer, C., "Sur la Signification de l'art primitif," Journal de Psychologie, Vol. XXVIII, 1931, p. 125.

time immemorial art has fulfilled this rôle, answering the calls of man's spirit for something that is independent of the flux of existence. And it is doubtful whether the extended range of man's intelligence and cosmic understanding have materially altered this primordial fact. "However much the artistic impulse may become differentiated with the progress of culture," states Hirn,⁽¹⁾ "its innermost nature will always remain the same."⁽²⁾ Nor have the material products of art fundamentally changed in more than two thousand years of artistic achievement, for what to primitive man were perhaps merely propitiatory or magical symbols are yet capable of arousing the genuine artistic experience in modern man. Born either of fear or lust these symbols were nevertheless forged under the guidance of an unerring sensibility, which is the fundamental prerequisite of art.

IV. Since the artist, like the ordinary individual, is not an isolated and self-contained unit of society, shut off from all contact and intercourse with the life and thought of the community, art is not peculiarly a private and esoteric thing, but the common focus of individual and

(1) Hirn, Y., The Origins of Art, p. 100.

(2) "The concept of progress was first applied to literature in the seventeenth century, but at the very outset Pascal pointed out that a distinction must here be made between science and art; that science advances by accumulation of knowledge, while the changes of art cannot be reduced to any theory of progress." Spingarn, J. E., The New Criticism, Edited by E. B. Burgum, p. 23.

communal aspirations. The investigator has therefore to reckon with reciprocal relations of the individual and social factors, not only in art but also in the psychology of the artist. Now, prior to the last decade of the nineteenth century the social aspect of art had scarcely been recognised as a subject for special study, but under the influence of sociological research, especially in France, a new school of 'Sociological Aesthetics' has been established. This school regards art as essentially a social phenomenon, the achievement of the group, the product of society - a point of view which appears to be strongly supported by ethnological and anthropological research; for it is now generally accepted that in its earliest phases art was closely bound up with the rites and practices of the tribe and the race. This is also true of the art of primitive peoples of to-day. An exclusively sociological theory, however, cannot do justice to all the facts and aspects of the creative activity. By emphasising its social aspects it tends to underestimate the importance of other fundamental factors, thereby limiting itself to uttering hopelessly inadequate generalisations. It omits from its survey the individual and subjective character of the experience, the unique sensibility of the artist, his innate tendencies and dispositions, without which art could not

exist; it stresses what is merely conventional and objective, disregarding those inscrutable psychological attributes which distinguish the inspired genius from the competent mediocrity. The proper sphere of sociological aesthetics is the study of the combinations and interactions of individual and social factors and their effects upon the psychology of the artist and his work, and this, it need scarcely be emphasised, is a necessary and important branch of theoretical inquiry, but it cannot be regarded as furnishing the data for a complete theory of the artistic activity.

Historically the relations between art and society have undergone immense fluctuations; they have never been (and never can be) completely severed. C. Lalo,⁽¹⁾ in a detailed investigation of these from the historical standpoint, has attempted to trace the influence of the various aspects of social activity upon the life and development of art. He shows how organised and collective labour (especially in the life of primitive peoples), family life, economic and political conditions, cultural diffusions, war and religion have exerted influences, both directly and indirectly, upon the creative activities and productions of various peoples in different times and circumstances. Y. Hirn, in

(1) L'Art et la Vie Sociale.

his brilliant and immensely documented study of the origins of art,⁽¹⁾ has likewise dealt with its social aspects from the standpoint of its psychological genesis. For him, art is the expression of emotion which is both an individual and social phenomenon,⁽²⁾ always tending to manifest itself outwardly.⁽³⁾ Externalisation of emotional states both enhances its pleasurable concomitants and relieves its accompanying pain;⁽⁴⁾ and, in addition to those effects, it arouses in others who perceive it a sympathetic emotion which, in turn, intensifies the original emotion. "By the reciprocal action of primary movements, which mutually imitate each other, the social expression operates in the same way as the individual expression. And we are entitled to consider it as a secondary result of the general

(1) Hirn, Y., The Origins of Art, pp. 1-142.

(2) "The instinctive tendency to express overmastering feeling, to enhance pleasure, and to seek relief from pain, forms the most deep-seated motive of all human activity. We can therefore derive the distinctive qualities of artistic production from this impulse only when it has been proved that art is better able than any other kind of mental function to serve and satisfy the requirements which arise from this impulse when it occurs in its purest form... That this is the case is the fundamental hypothesis upon which this work is based." Ibid. pp. 73-74.

(3) Ibid. pp. 137-139.

(4) Ibid. pp. 43-55.

expressional impulse, that when mastered by an overpowering feeling we seek enhancement or relief by retroaction from sympathisers, who reproduce and in their expression represent the mental state by which we are dominated."⁽¹⁾ Of all human activities by means of which the expressional impulse seeks gratification, none is more efficacious than artistic production, for through this activity the artist attains both the satisfaction of his own emotions and their immortalisation in a form "capable of imparting to all men of every country and every age the same enhancement and the same rapture which he has himself experienced." Thus art, the highest manifestation of the expressional impulse, "can be fully explained only by reference to the enhancing and relieving power of social expression."⁽²⁾ The essential importance of sympathy is likewise the cornerstone of Guyau's aesthetic theory.⁽³⁾ Wundt regards art as one

(1) Ibid. p. 83.

(2) Ibid. p. 101.

(3) "En résumé, l'art est une extension, par le sentiment, de la société à tous les êtres de la nature, et même aux êtres conçus comme dépassant la nature, ou enfin aux êtres fictifs créés par l'imagination humaine. L'émotion artistique est donc essentiellement sociale; elle a pour résultat d'agrandir la vie individuelle en la faisant se confondre avec une vie plus large et universelle. Le but le plus haut de l'art est de produire une émotion esthétique d'un caractère social." Guyau, M., L'Art au point de vue sociologique, pp. 8-21.

of the fundamental modes of human activity whereby the individual and collective mind finds expression.⁽¹⁾ Customs, mythology, religion, language and art, although traceable to individual mental functions, "seelische Funktionen," derive their collective significance from the conditions of life obtaining in the social community to which they belong; they are not the accidental discoveries of an individual, but the products of the community of peoples.⁽²⁾ From the standpoint of psychology art stands between speech and myth (mitten inne zwischen Sprache und Mythos steht für die psychologische Betrachtung die Kunst),⁽³⁾ its earliest content being derived from the latter source. Like Hirn, Wundt recognises the close relation between outward gesture and art which is, indeed, the enduring crystallisation of expressive movements. Tolstoi's point of view "To evoke in oneself a feeling one has experienced, and having evoked it in oneself; then, by means of movements, lines, colours, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling that others may experience the same feeling - this is the activity of

(1) Wundt, W., *Völkerpsychologie*, pp. 3-5.

(2) *Ibid.* p. 2.

(3) *Ibid.* p. 5.

art"⁽¹⁾ - is in substance and import similar to those of Hirn and Wundt.

V. There exists no laboratory technique which can be regarded as being primarily concerned with the productive aspect of the artistic activity, although there is a considerable literature dealing with the results of experiments in appreciation. The special difficulties confronting the investigator have already been discussed, and it is not surprising that the leading contemporary aestheticians are agreed that the application of an exact scientific technique to the productive artistic activity is impossible. Psychology, however, is continually perfecting its experimental methods, but while it is not improbable that means will be devised whereby certain characteristic aspects of the activity may be more exactly examined, it is highly unlikely that the whole experience will ever be scientifically analysed.

VI. The psychological approach consists in the study of the artistic activity from the standpoint of the general principles of mental functioning. Among the first questions which the investigator must face in approaching the subject from this angle is whether the art impulse is fundamentally

(1) Tolstoi, L. N., What is Art, p. 50.

identical with other activities of mind and conforming to general psychological laws, or whether it is a special activity possessing unique psychological characteristics and independent laws. Guyau sees no fundamental difference between art and other manifestations of human activity nor between art and pleasure in general.⁽¹⁾ Freud likewise assumes that art can be explained in terms of the general laws enunciated by psycho-analysis. On the other hand Hirn, in accord with the standpoint of the majority of aestheticians, states that "It is evident that if artistic creation were in no wise different from other examples of autotelic manifestations, there would be no ground for considering the art-impulse as a separate or distinctive problem."⁽²⁾ Mr. Clive Bell goes so far as to postulate a special emotion peculiar to the artistic experience⁽³⁾ - a point of view which has been challenged by Ogden, Richards and Wood,⁽⁴⁾ who maintain that "Introspective analysis ... has not convinced psychologists that the postulated emotion can be

(1) Guyau, M., Les Problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine, pp. 15, 24.

(2) Hirn, Y., The Origins of Art, p. 20.

(3) Bell, C., Art.

(4) Ogden, Richards and Wood, The Foundations of Aesthetics, p. 56.

admitted. It is not otherwise known, has never been described, and is much in need of identification. It would be foolhardy to dogmatise at the present juncture in view of the absence of established criteria founded upon exhaustive and coördinated study, but until it is shown that there is no fundamental difference between art and other human activities the art impulse must be considered independently as constituting a special province of psychological investigation."

That the principles of general psychic activity apply to the art impulse cannot be questioned, and much is to be gained by observing them at work in the creative process; but what mainly concerns the art psychologist, however, is not the general laws of mental activity, but their particular manifestations in the artistic activity. Practically, it is more important to study the combinations of processes involved in creativity than to observe the activities separately. General psychology, for instance, can throw a great deal of light upon the purely technical aspects of art, but since technical skill is often possessed by artists of mediocre capacity it must be considered in combination with the artist's total psychology before the real artistic problem can be investigated.

CHAPTER V.

Croce's View of Art as Intuition-Expression.

CHAPTER V.

"From the beginning of days until now there has been a tremendous suggestion of creativeness in the dust of the earth... The dust of the earth, moistened - clay, chalk moistened - with water or oil - marble, bricks, stone, there is a principle of continuity and evolution here that begins in dust, but everywhere ramifies, diverges, and presents new possibilities. Whether you choose water or oil to moisten your earth is a point of divergence of extraordinary significance, indeed, but only typical of the branch-like divergencies that one finds on the 'technical' side of art. And there must be a primitive sensuousness and sensuality in the artist towards the medium - or there is nothing at all. It is the 'feel' of the wet clay, the 'feel' of the pianoforte keys that count."

J. M. Thorburn, Art and the Unconscious.

Author of one of the most widely favoured theories of art ever propounded, the name of Benedetto Croce is writ large over the pages of contemporary aesthetics. Although contradictory and obscure, his various publications in aesthetics abound in acute observations and striking passages born of a penetrating vision and rich experience, but they are spoiled by an uncompromising dogmatism and a too facile propensity to prescribe for a customary terminology meanings which would be hard to justify. Yet, despite the recognised defects and incompatible presuppositions of his theory, its flagrant disregard of plain psychological fact

and common practice, it has won a place in the history of contemporary theory that is quite inconsistent with its positive merit. Indeed, in Croce's theoretical exposition no more striking proof could be found of Pater's remark, that the value of aesthetic philosophy "has most often been in the suggestive and penetrating things said by the way."⁽¹⁾

Champion of the expressionist school, Croce has gained quite a notable following in this country. "I believe," declares Mr. E. F. Carritt, "that a greater amount of truth is contained in Croce's Estetica than in any other philosophy of beauty that I have read,"⁽²⁾ and elsewhere he states⁽³⁾ that "If I had to choose two authors who might give most insight into what is meant by aesthetic, I should choose one from each end of the series, Plato and Croce." Mr. R. G. Collingwood has likewise professed his allegiance to the Italian philosopher.⁽⁴⁾ On the other hand three Cambridge philosophers, Messrs. Ogden, Richards and Wood, state that "As there is no reason to doubt his sincerity

(1) Pater, W., The Renaissance, Introduction.

(2) The Theory of Beauty, p. 281.

(3) Philosophies of Beauty, Introduction, XVI.

(4) Outlines of a Philosophy of Art, Preface.

and as his literary, dramatic and historical writings are of such undoubted value, the most charitable explanation... would be that Croce, preoccupied with the metaphysics of creative idealism, is endeavouring to say in speculative language something exceptionally obvious - for which he has attempted to create a personal vocabulary by exploiting the suggestive powers of accepted phrases."⁽¹⁾ The theory has found little support in Germany, where the leading aestheticians are definitely hostile to it, Volkelt declaring it ambiguous, inexact and founded upon an exceedingly obscure psychology.⁽²⁾ And in Italy Croce's erstwhile follower Giovanni Gentile has so far renounced his allegiance as to formulate a theory of his own, which challenges that of his fellow-countryman.⁽³⁾

(1) The Foundations of Aesthetics, pp. 44-45.

(2) "Es gibt in Croces Buch kaum eine Seite, die nicht Unüberlegtheiten enthielte. Er arbeitet durchweg mit ungefahren, vieldeutigen, unanalysierten Begriffen. Der psychologische Boden, auf dem er sich bewegt, ist von einer Ungeklärtheit, wie man sie nun selten antreffen dürfte. Allen feineren Problemen gegenüber zeigt er eine auffallende Blindheit. Wenn Croce recht hätte, so würden die ästhetischen Fragen erstaunlich leicht und einfach zu lösen sein. Dabei herrscht in der Auseinanderfolge der behandelten Fragen eine Sorglosigkeit, die zum Gegenteil von aller Ordnung und allem Zusammenhang führt." Volkelt, J., System der Ästhetik, Vol. III, p. 368.

(3) Gentile, G., The Philosophy of Art.

The fundamental orientation of Croce's aesthetic is that language is identical with expression and that expression is the essential aesthetic fact.⁽¹⁾ Between aesthetics, the science of art (*scienza dell' arte*) and philology, the science of language (*scienza del linguaggio*), there is no distinction: what in general Linguistica is reducible to philosophy is simply Aesthetic. Philosophy of language and philosophy of art are therefore identical.⁽²⁾ Art and philosophy are the two fundamental theoretic phases of the spirit. But whereas art, which is prior, is independent of the concept, philosophy and all concepts depend upon art or intuition.

Art and Beauty are likewise coincident with each other; they are the spiritual experience of man in its primordial simplicity, disembarassed of concepts or logical knowledge and independent of truth and falsehood, reality and unreality. Art, however, is a form of knowledge, not logical knowledge but intuitive; it belongs to the theoretic as opposed to the practical aspect of man's nature. For knowledge is of two kinds: that which is obtained through imagination (*la fantasia*) and that obtained through the intellect (*l'intelletto*).⁽³⁾ In its true or philosophical form

(1) Filosofia dello Spirito, pp. 168-169; also p. 17.

(2) Breviario, p. 55.

(3) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, p. 3.

logical or conceptual knowledge is realistic inasmuch as it aims at distinguishing reality from unreality, or at reducing unreality by including it in reality as a subordinate moment of reality itself.⁽¹⁾ In intuition, on the other hand, the distinction between reality and unreality is extraneous and irrelevant, since what is important here is the image as mere image, that is, in its pure ideality, stripped of all those attributes attached to it by the reflective mind. A hypothetical individual having his first experience of theoretic life would have intuitions only; he would have a simple spiritual experience of reality devoid of all distinction between real and unreal images upon which conceptual knowledge of reality is founded. Such intuitions would indeed be no mere intuitions of the real or the unreal, nor yet perceptions, but pure intuitions. "Dove tutto è reale, niente è reale."⁽²⁾

Croce's hypothesis of a preconceptual phase of mind is indissolubly linked with the two coincident concepts of Intuition and Expression. These two terms are reiterated again and again, as if to emphasise their fundamental identity as descriptive of a single experience of the spirit -

(1) Breviario di Estetica, p. 23. Cf. Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, p. 6.

(2) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, p. 6.

the experience of art. Now art is nothing more nor less than vision (visione) or intuition (intuizione), which inherently and essentially is imaginative expression,⁽¹⁾ the ideal apprehension of things prior to their perceptual discrimination. It is not a physical fact, because physical facts are utterly unreal, mere constructions of the intellect for the purposes of science.⁽²⁾ It is not a utilitarian act which aims at achieving pleasure and avoiding pain. Pleasure, in so far as it accompanies art, must not be confused with pleasure in general, for aesthetic pleasure, l'accompagnamento edonistico of art is but a particular form of the pleasurable.⁽³⁾ It is not a moral act, for that belongs to the practical life as opposed to the theoretic life and is governed by volition. And since art does not issue from the will, it is not subject to moral judgment.⁽⁴⁾ Finally, it is not a form of conceptual knowledge, but pure intuition.⁽⁵⁾ Every true intuition, however, is also expression, for that which does not objectify

(1) Breviario, p. 14; also p. 52.

(2) Ibid. pp. 16, 18.

(3) Ibid. pp. 18-20. Cf. Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, pp. 111-112.

(4) Ibid. pp. 20, 23.

(5) Ibid. p. 23-24. Cf. Saggi Filosofici, Vol. I, p. 15

itself in expression is not intuition, but mere sensation or natural (mechanical, passive) fact.⁽¹⁾ Thus no experience which is incapable of being clearly formulated mentally in terms of actual or imagined verbal or non-verbal images can be art. For the fundamental condition of art is the ideal (non-conceptual) apprehension of an image, which is the expression of that which is presented to the mind by its own intuition. In other words, art exists only when the matter before the mind is given form, becomes indissolubly fused with its intuition; or, what amounts to the same thing, when the mind contemplates without judging its own expression.

The alogical character of art Croce regards as the most important affirmation, since the history of aesthetics is for the most part the history of "conceptualistic" theories, propounded and supported by the authority of great philosophers like Schelling and Hegel, who regard art as a special kind of philosophy. These theories are not without merit, recognising as they do the theoretic character of art and claiming to determine the relation between imagination (la

(1) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, p. 11. Cf. Breviario, p. 49, where reference is made to dell' indistinguibile, dell' intuizione in intuizione ed espressione; Vide also Saggi Filosofici, Vol. I, p. 11.

fantasia) and logic, between art and thought,⁽¹⁾ but they fail inasmuch as they confuse the mere arbitrary and incoherent play of images which is fancy (l'immaginazione) and the imaginative construction of a coherent image, which is the expression of a state of mind or of the spirit⁽²⁾ - in other words, pure imagination (la fantasia). Whereas fancy merely combines particular images in the spirit and is sterile, imagination is the true artistic faculty productive of pure images, expressions of states of mind, or intuitions. Fundamentally, intuition consists in this simple act of imagination. But it may be asked: What is the vital principle animating intuition-imagination, giving it unity and coherence? To this Croce replies that it is feeling (il sentimento), a state of the soul, an aspiration.⁽³⁾ Artistic intuition is therefore always lyrical (sempre lirica).⁽⁴⁾ And that which is truly admired in genuine art is the perfect imaginative form the state of the soul assumes: this is its life, its unity, and its fulness.

The problems of content and form in art, expressed in

(1) Breviario, p. 27.

(2) Ibid. p. 30-31.

(3) Ibid. p. 36-38.

(4) Ibid. p. 38.

Gestaltsästhetik and Formästhetik respectively, are dismissed by Croce as non-existent. That content and form in art must be clearly distinguished, he admits, but they cannot be separately qualified as artistic, because their relation only is artistic. This relation consists in their living unity, the synthesis a priori of the spirit. Content is not something which is to be given form, for content and form appear in the mind pari passu as a single creation, an expressed intuition. And apart from intuition, expression does not exist; apart from intuition, expression-content does not exist. Thus intuition-expression is both content and form. Art is a true aesthetic synthesis a priori (sintesi a priori estetica) of feeling and image in intuition, for feeling and image do not exist for the artistic spirit outside the synthetic spirit. They may exist in another sphere of knowledge, but feeling will then be related to the practical life, and the image will be an element of mere fancy. Feeling regarded as content in art is not a particular content, but the total universe apprehended sub specie intuitionis. Outside it there is no conceivable content which is not also a different form from that of intuition; not thoughts, which are the total universe sub specie cogitationis; not physical things and mathematical entities, which are the total universe sub

specie schematismi et abstractionis; not wills, which are the whole universe sub specie volitionis.⁽¹⁾

In order to remove possible misunderstandings two important distinctions must be emphasised: on the one hand, the distinction between intuition and perception, and on the other, between expression and impression. The term 'intuition' is employed specifically to denote the simplicity of the artistic vision and its priority in the life of the spirit. It signifies man's primary experience of the phenomenal world, prior to the development of perception (which presupposes the logical activity)⁽²⁾ and the discrimination of the real and the unreal. Intuition does not affirm; it merely feels, represents, or portrays; it is, in Croce's own words, l'unità indifferenziata della percezione del reale e della semplice immagine del possibile.⁽³⁾

The term 'expression' emphasises the peculiar quality of the true imaginative formulation by which the activity of expression is differentiated from the passivity of brute

(1) Breviario, pp. 44-45. Cf. Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, pp. 18-19.

(2) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. II, pp. 105-108.
Cf. " " " " Vol. I, pp. 5-6.
Also Breviario, p. 70.

(3) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, p. 6.

sensation or impression, the spiritual fact from the natural fact. The spiritual fact is expression in the 'aesthetic' sense (i.e. in images), whereas expression in physical material is merely expression in the naturalistic sense (senso naturalistico), and must not be confused with the former, because it lacks the very character of spirituality.⁽¹⁾

To speak of the words of the poet, the notes of the musician, and the figures and colours of the painter as expressions is to use the term only metaphorically, for words, notes, figures and colours are merely the physical facts, by means of which the preservation and reproduction of man's intuitions are rendered possible. And the production of these physical facts is a practical activity guided, as in all practical activity, by knowledge, and for that reason the productive process is called technical.⁽²⁾ "Everyone can experience," states Croce, "the internal illumination that occurs when he succeeds, and only up to the point that he succeeds, in formulating to himself his impressions and his feelings. Feelings or impressions then pass by means of words from the obscure region of the soul into the clearness of the contemplative spirit."⁽³⁾ Feelings, however, may

(1) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, pp.111-112.

(2) Ibid. p.114. (Cf. Breviario, pp.49-51.)

(3) Ibid. p.11.

also be expressed in line, colour and sound,⁽¹⁾ and this giving form to what is felt and suffered is expression. What is generally known as technique, as distinct from expression, is nothing more than the physical issue of a practical act, and as such is in no way connected with the theoretic character of art, being external to it. And since no object exists unless it is known, the physical work of art does not exist outside the knowing spirit, for in reality nothing is known but expressed intuitions. The physical work of art, like all physical objects, is simply a construction of the intellect.⁽²⁾

The fundamental implication of Croce's doctrine is that art or beauty is nothing more nor less than an experience of the human spirit, and, indeed, the most elemental of spiritual experiences, since it implies the existence of all other forms of the spirit. It is the focussing of the mind upon its own expression, the pure image and utterance of feeling. And the destruction of this primary function of mind would mean the complete negation of life and the inexorable darkness of oblivion. Art thus lives solely in the imagination, for whenever a man concentrates his whole state of being into an image, which is the perfect expression of

(1) Ibid. Cf. Breviario, p. 47.

(2) Breviario, pp. 47-48.

that state, the spirit of art is awakened. It is of no importance if he remains forever mute and uncommunicative, for the word 'artist,' far from indicating certain particular individuals only, signifies man himself. Every man is an artist, because of his humanity. He is an artist even if his art manifests itself merely in his ability to talk well of everyday life and to give correct expression to his elementary and most obvious sentiments. And, since art is nothing but imagination, beauty is simply imagination rejoicing in itself, which is the very essence of imagination. Genuine imagination springs from sentiments alone, from aspirations, inclinations, rebellions, affections, aversions. Art, then, may be defined as the reflective form of sentiment. In imagination, sentiments become mental images, life becomes contemplation, and the passionate impulse (itself mute) finds expression; in other words, sentiments are changed into consciousness - not logical or historical consciousness, but the spontaneous and immediate consciousness of intuition. This is the nature of art, and this is its proper and indispensable function in the life of the spirit. It is, in truth, a preparation for the logical life of thought or philosophy. And, since imagination and art are essential elements of the reflective life upon which activity is founded, the practical and moral importance of

art may be said to be revealed in the fact that art, while in no sense determining the mind, yet renders possible the further determination of perception and moral duty by presenting human sentiments and passions as a spectacle. (1)

Although Croce's aesthetic theory is preëminently metaphysical in orientation, its superstructure is in the main psychological, and for that reason, coupled with his world-wide reputation as the champion of the expressionist school, no justification is necessary for undertaking in this study a critical examination of his doctrine. And, in point of fact, it is precisely his psychology that presents to the reader the most glaring anomalies, for to say, as Croce in effect does say, that all expression is art, is to be guilty of the most flagrant misinterpretation of plain psychological fact. That there can be little doubt as to his sincerity will readily be granted, but it cannot be gainsaid that his uncompromising subjectivism and his zeal for synthesis have led him into committing the grossest errors, not to mention affronts to common sense.

From the standpoint of psychology the first stumbling

(1) Vide Croce's article in Ideals, Aims and Methods in Education, (New Educator's Library), pp. 48-49. Throughout this article Croce employs the word 'fancy,' but from the context it is clear that he means 'imagination.' Vide p.157 supra.

block to be encountered in a perusal of Croce's theory is his hypothesis of the existence of intuition as a fundamental function of mind. Psychology has not shown itself disposed to recognise this faculty, and the bulk of contemporary research appears to justify the scepticism of science as to its reality. It is, however, unnecessary at this juncture to raise the psychological issues involved in Croce's postulate. Let it suffice to point out (a) that he may claim the authority of a long and distinguished line of philosophic thought dating as far back as Descartes, the first philosopher to propound a definition of the meaning and function of intuition, and (b) that Mr. G. B. Dibblee, at the end of a detailed study of the problem psychologically and physiologically, concludes that an intuitive faculty does exist "outside the limits of conscious operation."⁽¹⁾ The deeper issues may therefore be waived in order to proceed to an examination of the wider implications of Croce's doctrine.

In consequence of the continuous reiteration of the term 'expression' throughout his writings, it is difficult to make out precisely what he means to convey by it, so manifold are the contexts in which it appears, so diverse the shades of emphasis and implication. That his use of

(1) Dibblee, G. B., Instinct and Intuition, p. 364.

the term differs radically from its everyday use is, however, quite clear. His distinction between expression in the 'aesthetic sense' and expression in the 'naturalistic sense',⁽¹⁾ is accompanied by an account of different uses of the term in common speech. For instance, the words of the poet, the notes of the musician, or the figures of the painter are frequently designated 'expressions;' likewise the external signs of shame, anger and joy. It is also used in respect of heat as the 'expression' of fever, barometrical readings as the 'expressions' of atmospheric conditions, Stock Exchange figures as the 'expression' of the market, and so on. Such uses as these are merely metaphorical. "One can well imagine," he states, "what kind of scientific results would be attained by allowing oneself to be governed by verbal usage and classing together facts so widely different." And he adds: "Darwin's book on the expression of the emotions in man and animals does not appertain to Aesthetic; because there is nothing in common between the science of spiritual expression and a Semiotic, whether it be medical, meteorological, political, physiognomic or chiromantic."⁽²⁾

Now it may be conceded that to class together such

(1) Vide p. 162 supra.

(2) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, p.112.

facts as those mentioned above as mere facts would indeed be a very strange thing to do, and it is more than doubtful whether even the ordinary man, unaccustomed as he is to adopt a scientific attitude, would be so utterly uncritical and obtuse as to class them together as expressions, however vague his concept of the term might be. Moreover, it might safely be asserted of any man who has attained such a degree of intellectual development as to be seriously interested in the abstract problem of expression at all, that he would be certain not to fall into the trap of identifying the obviously metaphorical with the more or less established use of the term, as indicating the outward manifestations of inner facts. But Croce is so obsessed with his own concept of expression that he fails to observe the weakness and puerility of the point he makes with such an air of profundity and scientific candour. It is hard to justify his attempt to waylay the reader by such an intrusion, the effect of which is to obscure the issue by raising obstacles that are at best purely fictitious. That it would be very unscientific procedure to accept without careful scrutiny the verbal usages of everyday language will readily be admitted; but surely it is equally unscientific to assume offhand that common speech is devoid of value to the scientific investigator. Yet this is precisely Croce's point of view, for he

does not deign to recognise that, underlying the manifold uses of the term 'expression,' there may be something fundamental to them all, a common core of meaning and implication. That this, however, is frequently lacking in various occurrences of a particular term, all of which constitute examples of well-established usage, is pointed out by Professor Ducasse. Nevertheless it is not advisable to assume a priori that in any given case there is no such core of common meaning. The procedure proper to a scientific method would not be to dismiss the possibility off-hand and to appropriate the word to individual purposes in defiance of such usages of the term as are already established, but to scrutinise carefully the manner in which the term is actually employed in established language, "and to formulate tentative definitions covering such usages or variety of usages, checking the correctness of such definitions by their capacity to cover not only the cases of which they represent an analysis but also other cases that were as yet unexamined."⁽¹⁾ Croce, however, sees no need for such a procedure, but cavalierly dismisses as merely metaphorical all usages of the term 'expression' other than he himself prescribes for it. And in doing so he courts the charge of violating the established usages of language, and of inventing arbitrarily

(1) Ducasse, C. J., The Philosophy of Art, p. 44.

a private language of his own, which he expects the reader to accept in the interest of scientific method.

It may be granted that the use of the term 'expression' with reference to the fluctuations of the barometer and to other phenomena of the outside world (especially those controlled by physical laws) is not particularly apt, but it is arguable that the variation in the Stock Exchange figures is in a sense (perhaps in the long run remote) an expression of the temper of those minds which constitute the concrete institution. In other words, the Stock Exchange figures are expressions of confidence or lack of confidence (i.e. states of mind), as the case may be. Likewise, the physical concomitants of fear, anger, love, joy and so on are expressions (outward manifestations) of psychic states, and to deny the accuracy of the term is to be guilty of verbal quibbling. The other instances quoted by Croce are ambiguous: he does not state whether he means the notes of the musician, the words of the poet, the figures of the painter, qua notes, words, figures, in isolation, as it were, from any apparent context or relation, or the same items regarded as elements of a coherent and ordered system. If the former, it is at least arguable that, in certain circumstances, such apparently bare *sensa* may nevertheless be expressions, albeit in an exceedingly low degree, as in the quiet sigh of

blissful contentment or in the mild ejaculation of surprise. As mere physical phenomena they cannot be regarded as expressing anything except what is imputed to them by the percipient. If, on the other hand, Croce means the notes, words and figures of the musician, poet and artist as such, that is, not as mere human beings but as artistic agents, then it may be asserted that these items are expressive (each in a contributory sense) of states of mind which brought them into existence.

Since Croce appeared on the speculative stage the term expression has been surrounded by a tangle of metaphysical mysteries, which have obscured the fundamental issues underlying the problem of the psychological nature of art, and no amount of hair-splitting will contribute one jot to its elucidation. The fundamental weakness of his hypothesis is nowhere more apparent than in his psychology, with which the present study is chiefly concerned and which will be examined presently. For the moment it will be instructive to glance at the literal meaning of the term expression, and to see how far the foregoing interpretation is justified by literal implication and common usage.

"The term 'expression,'" states Mr. L. A. Reid,⁽¹⁾
"means, literally, a 'pressing' or 'squeezing out.'" But in

(1) Reid, L. A., A Study in Aesthetics, p. 47.

any sense at all relevant to our discussion it is obvious that the phrase must be accepted not literally but merely as a vivid metaphor, and even then a metaphor to be used with caution, a metaphor perhaps to be rejected in the end as dangerous. Expression, we shall argue, implies 'embodiment' of some sort of a 'body.' This is the 'out' aspect. And in some sense something other than the 'body' must be 'embodied.' This will represent roughly what is 'squeezed out.' The 'squeezing' part of the metaphor must be taken with a very large dose of reserve indeed... But taking the metaphor for the little that it is worth, and for no more, one kind of what which is embodied or revealed in the outside world will be states of mind." Mr. Reid goes on to discuss in brief a few well-established and justifiable uses of the term, such as expressions of inner tension, expressions of satisfaction, and self-expression, all of which are external manifestations of mental states.

From this analysis two principal points emerge: (i) the term 'expression' implies the pre-existence of an inner something; and (ii) an outer something which in some way is the complement of the inner. In other words, expression takes place only when the inner fact is directly manifested in the outer, or, what in more concrete terms amounts to the same thing, when the outer encloses the inner in such a

manner as to constitute its external equivalent. A third and very important point emerges, however, from the fact that between (i) and (ii) a connecting link, an expressing agent, must exist, in order to facilitate the process of embodiment. Now, since mere dead matter of itself cannot function as an expressing agent, (although it may function as a medium of expression), to speak of the falling of the barometer "expressing rain" or the degree of heat "expressing fever" is to use the term only metaphorically, as Croce rightly maintains.⁽¹⁾ On the other hand, it cannot be admitted that Croce is right in regarding also as metaphorical those uses of the term which refer to the outer physical manifestations accompanying fear, anger, love and so on, for such manifestations are but the essential external embodiments of facts, existing in the mind of the expressing agent. All such manifestations in a living agent may be legitimately called expressions. Croce, however, is forced to deny this as a consequence of his peculiar psychology.

If this view be sound it will be apparent that the term expression might be applied alike to the outward

(1) It is, of course, arguable that even in the physical world there is an agent, a force at work, behind such 'expressions' as rain and heat. This, however, is a metaphysical question which need not be discussed in the present context.

manifestations of inner states in the animal, as well as the human sphere. But as the former lies outside the scope of the present topic, the latter only will be discussed, since art belongs to man alone. How, then, it may be asked, are ordinary or naturalistic expressions to be distinguished from those expressions which are called art? To Croce such a question would appear utterly absurd, for he maintains that there is but one expression, and one only, and that is art. The only difference between expressions is a quantitative one. Certain men have a greater inclination and aptitude than others to express complex states of mind, and in ordinary language these men are called artists. And some very complicated and difficult expressions are frequently achieved, and these are called works of art. "The limits of the expression-intuitions which are called art, as opposed to those vulgarly called non-art," Croce concludes, "are empirical and impossible to define."⁽¹⁾ Fundamental to his whole philosophy are those considerations, which lead Croce to enunciate this principle of singleness in expression, and it will be worth while at this juncture to examine his hypothesis in some detail, before attempting an answer to the question pointed above. It will be argued that the whole superstructure of his theory is seriously weakened

(1) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, pp.16, 17.

and rendered false by his ignoring two facts of crucial psychological importance: (i) the dependence of images upon percepts; and (ii) the importance of material in artistic expression.

"Everyone," Croce declares, "can experience the internal illumination that occurs when he succeeds, and only up to the point that he succeeds, in formulating to himself his impressions and his feelings. Feelings or impressions then pass by means of words from the obscure region of the soul into the clearness of the contemplative spirit."⁽¹⁾ Words, however, are not the only terms in which feelings and impressions may be formulated; they may also be formulated in non-verbal terms such as line, colour and sound.⁽²⁾ And this formulation, this giving form to what is felt or suffered, is expression. Elsewhere he states that clear expression is tantamount to clear inward vision before statement, and that is art, poetry, speech, writing, drawing, music.⁽³⁾

(1) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, p.11. (Already quoted).

(2) Ibid.

(3) Aesthetics and Education, Section IX, Ideals, Aims and Methods in Education, p.49. Vide also Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, p.13, where he states "Il pittore è pittore perché vede ciò che altri sente solo, o intravede, ma non vede." Cf. Problemi di Estetica, p. 251.

These definitions, it may be observed, cover one sense in which the term expression is used in everyday language, viz., internal or subjective (as opposed to objective) expression, which of course implies the use of images, as in inner speech, and the mental picturing of things not present to sense. And this is what Croce apparently means to imply by the above statements, for how else could formulation occur unless in terms of actual or imagined words, lines or sounds?⁽¹⁾ In other passages, however, he makes his meaning abundantly clear. For instance, he states that to no intuition, be it pictorial, verbal or musical, can expression in one of its forms (i.e. words, lines or sounds) be wanting, for intuition and expression are inseparable. And he asks how would it be possible to intuit a geometrical figure without possessing so accurate an image of it as to be able to represent it on paper or a blackboard.⁽²⁾ The significance of word-images, colour-images and sound-images is further illustrated by the following passages from his Breviario di Estetica.⁽³⁾

"In realtà noi non conosciamo altro che intuizioni espresse: un pensiero non è per noi pensiero se non quando sia

(1) "In fancy (i.e. imagination) sentiments become mental images." Ibid. p.48.

(2) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, p.11.

(3) Breviario di Estetica, p. 47.

formolabile in parole, una fantasia musicale se non quando si concreti in suoni, un' immaginazione pittorica se non quando sia colorita." It is unnecessary, however, that these word-images be declaimed in vocal utterance, that the sound-images issue in physical musical performance, or that the colour-images be translated into physical pigments; "ma è certo che, quando un pensiero è veramente pensiero, quando è giunto alla maturità di pensiero, per tutto il nostro organismo corrono le parole, sollecitando i muscoli della nostra bocca e risonando internamente al nostro orecchio; quando una musica è veramente musica, gorgheggia nella gola o freme sulle dita che scorrono su ideali tastiere; quando un' immagine pittorica è pittoricamente reale, siamo pregni di linfe che sono colori..."⁽¹⁾ Thus thought, music, art do not exist at all until expression in images occurs.

Croce's thesis, that, prior to the practical activity of producing his picture, the artist is in possession of an image of it so precise in all its details that he is able immediately to translate it into physical terms, is as impossible to admit as it is to construct the evidence upon which it is based. For, although there are a few cases on

(1) Breviario di Estetica.

record⁽¹⁾ which appear prima facie to support the thesis, Croce does not specifically mention any particular instance except that of Leonardo, from whose words spoken to the impatient Prior of the Convent of the Graces he infers the artist's possession of a precise image of the picture, which he ultimately transferred to the Convent wall.⁽²⁾ But even if it be granted that evidence of a sort may be adduced, it is nevertheless impossible to justify Croce's sweeping assertion that all artistic expression demands "clear inward vision before statement." Besides, the claim is unequivocally refuted by the testimony of living artists and by contemporary aestheticians of repute. Delacroix, for instance, points out "it is rare that the image arises complete in all its details,"⁽³⁾ and it may be recalled that Galton found that a number of Royal Academicians of his time reported little or no visual imagery.⁽⁴⁾ The fact

(1) Vide p.182-6 seq.

(2) There is no evidence at all that would justify the assumption that Leonardo possessed the gift of imagining his pictures in detail prior to painting them. It is true he recognised the value of imagery, but this does not justify the assumption that he always possessed clear mental images of his artistic creations prior to their execution.

(3) Delacroix, H., Psychologie de l'art, p.157.

(4) Galton, F., Inquiries into Human Faculty, p.61.

is that if the possession of a precise image of the projected work of art were a fundamental condition of all artistic expression, then very little art could be brought into being. For, as Professor Alexander very truly points out, the artist, far from having a clear mental image of his picture prior to its physical creation, does not know what he means to express until he has in fact expressed it.⁽¹⁾ And this fact Croce himself appears unwittingly to imply when he states that "However great the artist, however intense his work, he will never derive from it any real, direct satisfaction except that of seeing his sentiment fully and clearly unfolded and outlined in word, rhythm or line!"⁽²⁾ To reconcile this statement with those already quoted above is obviously impossible; and from the context it is apparent that he means not word-images, but "the words used by man not only in ordinary, but also in extraordinary and solemn moments." It is true, however, that in his later writings Croce tends to retract from his

(1) Alexander, S., "The Creative Process in the Artist's Mind," British Journal of Psychology, Vol. XVII, April 1927, p.311.

(2) Aims, Ideals and Methods in Education, op. cit., p.50. Cf. "... così chi s'illude sulla ricchezza dei propri pensieri e delle proprie immagini e ricondotto alla realtà, allorché è costretto ad attraversare il ponte dell' asino dell' espressione - Numerate - diciamo al primo:- parlate, eccovi una matita e designate, esprimetevi, - diremo all' altro." Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. 1, p.14. (Present author's italics.)

original ontological conception of the material media of art, dwelling more and more on the importance of physical embodiment, thereby imperilling the foundations of his theory. Nevertheless, he consistently denies that 'technique' has any connection with art, which is a state of the spirit requiring no physical embodiment, except as a means of making permanent the artist's spiritual labour. (1)

Croce's dilemma will be brought to a clearer focus in his psychology of imagery which will now be discussed.

If it be admitted for the sake of argument that expression consists essentially in giving form to what is felt, desired, suffered, aspired to; and further, if it be granted that the expression must be expression in terms of word-images, sound-images, colour-images and so on, it is obvious that no formulation could take place, independently of previous experience of the medium in which the images are constructed. For instance, it would be a sheer impossibility for a man to construct a clear mental image of a feeling which he desired permanently to enshrine in marble, without previously having acquired experience of its physical

(1) Vide p. 162 supra. It should be noted that Croce himself regards his Breviario di Estetica as the more mature presentation of his thought, and for that reason emphasis should be laid upon this work. (Vide footnote in Carritt's Philosophies of Beauty, p.233)

attributes and its plastic potentialities. And, in point of fact, to have an image at all in this sense implies having an image of a plastic material wherewith to form the image, (and an image without form is a contradiction), for clearly a feeling cannot be formed in terms of itself, unless all feelings manifest themselves as images; in which case, according to Croce's interpretation, all feelings would be art and would not need to be expressed. But even Croce would not admit this, for in his view mere feeling is nothing but brute sensation or impression, which must be given form (i.e. expressed) in order to become art. Aesthetic expression is expression in images. Croce, however, consistently ignores the plain psychological fact, which may be found in every elementary text book in psychology, that all images are images constructed on a basis of percepts, and that what really is imaged is material - stone, paint, colour, line, words, sounds and so on. And when he refers to the celebrated retort of Leonardo to the Prior of the Convent of the Graces, he overlooks the fact that the great artist could have no images at all relevant to his purpose, except those derived from his previous experience as a practical artist working in terms of a concrete medium. "According to Croce's doctrine," Professor Ducasse points out, (1) "Beethoven, had he lived two thousand years earlier,

(1) Ducasse, C. J., The Philosophy of Art, p.49, footnote.

could have composed all his music even then, since all art-creation takes place in Imagination, which needs no instruments or technique; but he could not have played it!" Criticising this, he continues: "The actual fact, however, is that the scope of the Imagination, although wider than past experience, is rather closely dependent upon past experience. For this reason the feelings which artists express, even in mere imagination, do not go very far beyond what they are able to embody in some perceptible medium - be it, perhaps, as tenuous as words. As new musical or other instruments are invented, artistic creativeness is made aware of new ranges of possibilities. Feelings which before had to remain unexpressed even in mere imagination now reach objectification, and so do the far more numerous ones which are the progeny of these, that is to say, the feelings which the artist comes to have at all, owing to the fact that he has already objectified others, and been able to contemplate the objective embodiment of those others." This criticism is both psychologically sound and consistent with the known facts of artistic creation.

The evidence in support of Croce's thesis is on the whole both scanty and ambiguous. Perhaps the most remarkable case is that of Mozart quoted by Mr. Carritt⁽¹⁾ "My

(1) Carritt, E. F., The Theory of Beauty, p.181 (footnote).

ideas come as they will, I don't know how, all in a stream. If I like them I keep them in my head, and people say that I often hum them over to myself. Well, if I can hold on to them, they begin to join on to one another, as if they were bits that a pastrycook should join together in his pastry. And now my soul gets heated, and if nothing disturbs me the piece grows larger and brighter until, however long it is, it is all finished together in my mind, so that I can see it at a glance, as if it were a pretty picture or a pleasing person. Then I don't hear the notes one after another, as they are hereafter to be played, but it is as if in my fancy they were all at once. And that is a revel (das ist nun ein Schmaus). While I'm inventing, it all seems to me like a vivid dream; but that hearing it all at once (when the invention is done), that's the best. What I have once so heard I forget not again, and perhaps this is the best gift that God has granted me." Less striking, however, are two cases quoted by Delacroix: the first, that of Richter, who says: "Quand le crépuscule survint et que je mis de côté le livre et m'approchai des vitres obscurcies, ma composition, à laquelle je n'avais pas songé le moins du monde, surgit d'un coup devant moi, toute terminée et comme vivante dans sa forme et sa couleur. Transporté de ravissement, je pris en hâte un fusain et

malgré l'obscurité envahissante je mis le tout sur le carton."⁽¹⁾ The second citation refers to Puvis de Chavannes' vision of the Ludus pro patria, which appeared to him from a train window:⁽²⁾ "La vision avait été pour moi si intense qu'il me semblait qu'une observation sur place en eût affaibli la sensation et m'aurait exposé à n'en retrouver, plus tard, qu'une image réduite, confuse et sans vie." Records such as these are obviously too vague to be ranked as valid evidence in a scientific investigation.

(1) Delacroix, H., Psychologie de l'art, p.157 (foot-note) from Richter, L., Lebenserinnerungen eines deutschen Malers, p. 165.

(2) Ibid. p. 158: from René Jean, Puvis de Chavannes. Delacroix also mentions relevant statements by (1) Ingres and (2) Rodin among others: (1) "Ayez tout entière dans les yeux, dans l'esprit, la figure que vous voulez représenter, et que l'exécution ne soit que l'accomplissement de cette image déjà possédée et préconçue." (2) "Quand un bon sculpteur modèle une statue, quelle qu'elle soit, il faut d'abord qu'il en conçoive fortement le mouvement général; il faut ensuite que, jusqu'à la fin de sa tâche, il maintienne énergiquement dans la pleine lumière de sa conscience son idée d'ensemble, pour y ramener sans cesse et y relier étroitement les moindres détails de son oeuvre. Et cela ne va pas sans un très rude effort de pensée." These statements, however, are of no special significance to the present issue, although they imply that their authors regard clear images as essential to the artist. Delacroix himself expresses doubt on the point, for although he says that "il est rare que l'image surgisse toute faite, arrêtée dans tous ses détails," he does not claim "que l'exécution matérielle soit toujours nécessaire à l'élaboration de cette image. Il se peut que l'élaboration reste tout intérieure et que l'exécution suive."

and must be taken cum grano salis. Besides, Richter's statement contains a contradiction, for he states that the composition rose before him "complete and alive in form and colour," and that with charcoal he put it all on paper! The case of Puvis de Chavannes is likewise too inadequately stated to be taken at its face value: and the same may be said of Mozart's. But be that as it may, the fact remains that neither Richter, Puvis de Chavannes nor Mozart could have any images, independently of their previous experience of the perceptible material, in terms of which the image is imaged. This, however, Croce denies, and thus comes into conflict with the facts of psychology, a position from which he cannot withdraw without abandoning the very foundations upon which he takes his stand. Croce's theory, states Bosanquet,⁽¹⁾ is deeply rooted in the "philosophic blunder" of thinking "that you can have them (things) completely before your mind without having their bodily presence at all. And because of this blunder, it seems fine and 'ideal' to say that the artist operates in the bodiless medium of pure thought or fancy, and that the things of the bodily world are merely physical causes of sensation, which do not themselves enter into the effects he uses." If he admits the importance of technique (and it has been shown that he does,

(1) Bosanquet, B., Three Lectures on Aesthetic, p.69.

but with important reservations which are tantamount to a denial of it), he contradicts himself; if he denies it (which he does in no equivocal terms), he commits a first-rate psychological error. Croce's dilemma is complete.⁽¹⁾

In consequence of the fact that proof is impossible, it is as unprofitable to deny as it is to assert that some artists, because of their special endowment, are able to imagine their pictures in complete detail before translating them into physical material. But on psychological as well as practical grounds the affirmative proposition is highly suspicious. Tracing the usefulness of sentience (affection) in thought, Spearman concludes "that even in the performances where introspection unanimously proclaims images to be useful, even there - and a fortiori in other performances - they really render little or no service. Against drawing such a conclusion," he continues, "only one objection seems to have been attempted. It has been suggested that images may render very great service, but still do so with equal efficacy even when they are of the poorest quality. For the best work is everywhere done with the best tools. If images are to serve as fixation points because of their superior stability, surely they ought to serve those

(1) Cf. Reid, L. A., A Study in Aesthetics, pp. 166-170, where Mr. Reid curiously puts forward a defence of Croce to the effect that Croce does not mean to deny the importance of physical embodiment!

individuals best with whom they are most stable." He then quotes from the experimental report of Martin: "The experimental subjects commenced with the traditional opinion, that the images would help them in reproducing the cards. In the course of the experiments, however, they became sceptical as to the power of images to inform. This doubtless arose from their fruitless efforts to produce a picture able to help them when they could not remember the card in a notional manner (unanschaulich). One subject said towards the end of the series:

"My opinion is that my images are only what I know, and that they do not always contain all that I know. So far as I am able to determine from these experiments, these images were of no use to me in any way."

From this he concludes that "this investigation, the most conclusive of all as to the efficacy of images, would appear to be the most adverse of all."⁽¹⁾

It is undoubtedly true that the majority of artists possess images of a sort. Such images, however, may or may not be relevant to the work of art as it will appear when created: they may be (a) images more or less connected with a particular subject-matter or theme, which is to be translated in artistic form; or (b) they may be images of

(1) Spearman, C., The Nature of Intelligence, pp.190-191. (Present author's italics).

technical procedure⁽¹⁾ (as when the artist visualises himself at work); or (c) they may be images of the picture or statue as it will probably appear when completed; or (d) a confused pattern of images comprising types (a), (b) and (c), intermingled with each other, but all associated with the artist's affective state and present creative mood.

The type or types of imagery which a particular artist may have will depend to a large extent upon his innate mental make-up, his acquired habits, training and past experience, and to assume like Croce that there is only one type of artistic imagery is palpably absurd. Further, it is as improbable that the same artist will always experience the same type of imagery; indeed, it is extremely doubtful whether the artist's work must pass through an imaginal phase prior to its physical creation. The artist, for instance, may be seized by a sudden onrush of creative energy, a sudden desire to paint, and, as not infrequently happens, he may put his picture directly on to the canvas, externalising all his imagery immediately, as it were, in the concrete without the aid of any images whatever.

"With Chopin," says Georges Sand, "creation was spontaneous, miraculous; he wrought without foreseeing. It would come

(1) Cf. L. Arréat's "images de traduction," Mémoire et Imagination, p. 28.

complete, sudden, sublime!"⁽¹⁾ Again, the artist may be literally compelled to draw or paint by the mere sight of a new canvas or the seductive surface of a Whatman board:⁽²⁾ in which case he may proceed directly to create as in the previous instance.⁽³⁾

Broadly speaking, pre-artistic images may be grouped into two main classes: (i) those directly called up by or associated with a particular subject-matter; and (ii) those related to the process of technical execution or the finished product - "images d'interprétation ou de traduction" - the work as it will appear when completed. The first class requires a word of explanation. Subject-matter sometimes signifies ideas or thoughts (concepts), which the artist conveys or means to convey in terms of representations of phenomenal forms; or, in other words, what the picture or statue is about, the 'idea' it portrays. At other times, especially when there is no apparent story or idea, it signifies only the things represented, as, for instance, in

(1) Ribot, Th., Essay on the Creative Imagination, p.52.

(2) An experience well-known to artists and probably due in part to a horror vacui and partly to the fascination of material.

(3) It is worth noting that Ribot's claim (Ibid. p.187) that for the painter images have a very high precision of details conflicts with the findings of Galton.

still life paintings. Such uses of the term are both useful and legitimate in everyday discourse about art, but they are apt to be misleading in aesthetics. For instance, there is a prevalent but palpably false view which presupposes that such subject-matter is absolutely essential to all great art. And this view is indissolubly bound up with another no less false, which regards technical finish and accuracy of rendering as fundamental attributes of crucial artistic importance. Neither of these views, though held with varying modifications by many distinguished writers,⁽¹⁾ merits serious discussion at this stage in the history of aesthetic theory, for not only do they fail to discriminate between artistic technique and mere manual dexterity,⁽²⁾ but they confuse all manner of irrelevant concepts which cannot be admitted into the aesthetic purview. But what is more to the point, they overlook the important fact that it is not ~~the~~ subject-matter the artist desires to portray - that can be done by photography - but feelings and intuitions aroused by the subject-matter which he desires to express in form. The subject-matter is only his point of departure, the flare which fires his imagination. And, although it may occupy an important place in the forefront

(1) Cf. Lalo, C., Introduction à l'Esthétique, pp.138-145.

(2) Cf. Maritain, J., Art and Scholasticism, p.13.

of his attention, as soon as he begins to work it fades into the half-light of memory and may rapidly pass beyond the range of his immediate conscious experience. With the first brush stroke on the virgin canvas a new and vital stimulus is called into being, the germ of a new reality of the artist's own creating, which gathers into itself all the diffused and indeterminate feelings and representations aroused by the original subject-matter, presenting them in clearer focus before the artist's vision. "When a subject comes into the brain of a creative writer," declares De Santis, (1) "it at once dissolves that part of reality which suggested it. The earthly images seem to fluctuate, like objects in a mass of vapour seen from above. The figures - the trees, the towers, the houses - disintegrate, become

(1) Santis, F. de, History of Italian Literature, Vol.I, pp.177-178. Cf. the following passage: "In so far as images arise within the perceptual process and fail to blend or to coalesce with the perception, but become detached from it, these images are useless and irrelevant. Perception, therefore, does not offer scope for images that begin to assume any kind of separate or individual existence. Imagery, as such, tends to destroy perception, and floods of imagery will change the entire process and take it altogether away from the perceptual. When, on the other hand, images rush in upon the artist as he watches the object transferring itself through his medium, these images are precious. They are the very content of his vision, or at least they may become such. The richer the flow of imagery, the greater at all events are the resources at his command." Thorburn, J. M., Art and the Unconscious, p.102.

fragmentary. To create reality, a poet must first have the force to kill it. But instantly the fragments draw together again, in love with each other, seeking one another, coming together with desire, with the obscure presentiment of the new life to which they are destined. And the first real moment of creation in that tumultuous and fragmentary world is the moment when those fragments find a point, a centre around which they can press. It is then that the poet's creation comes out from the unlimited, which makes it fluctuant, and takes on a definite form - it is then that it comes to birth." Such images as may have been aroused directly by the subject-matter will likewise fade and disappear, giving place to (ii) images of the picture (including technical operations) in advance of actual execution. The transition may be complete and immediate, or partial or gradual, according to circumstances, but it is of first-rate psychological significance. For it indicates the passage from imagination in the general sense of the term to creative imagination, the progress of man, as man, to man as

artist. (1)

All images of the technical activity of expression (the (b) type) are directly dependent upon previous experience of technical processes, the manipulation of paint, metal, stone and clay, and the handling of brushes, pencil, charcoal, chisel and modelling tools. Without such previous experience it would obviously be impossible for the artist to imagine his technical procedure in advance of actual execution. Although primarily visual, it is probable that these images will be accompanied by appropriate kinesthetic

(1) In passing it should be noted (a) that it is not here implied that it is essential the subject-matter should be actually present to sense; it may arise spontaneously in the artist's mind or it may be deliberately called up from past experience. But in general where the subject-matter is present to sense, such images as may arise in the artist's mind prior to the creative process will tend to be images directly connected with it, rather than images called up by free association. And (b): it is a debatable point whether subject-matter is absolutely essential to artistic creation. Picasso, for instance, declared to M. Zervos that "I put on canvas the sudden apparitions which force themselves on me. I don't know in advance what I am going to put on the canvas, any more than I decide in advance what colours to use. Whilst I work I take no stock of what I am painting on the canvas. Every time I begin a picture, I feel as though I were throwing myself into the void." (Quoted by Herbert Read, Art Now, p.123) But perhaps it is too early to pronounce judgment upon Picasso's paintings. The fact remains, nevertheless, that at least one artist of the front rank proceeds in this way, and it is a matter which psychological aesthetics cannot lightly dismiss. It can do so only at its peril. Cf. Alexander, S., Art and Material, p.12.

and tactile-motor⁽¹⁾ (perhaps even auditory⁽²⁾) imaginal concomitants; they may also be accompanied by incipient movements of hands and arms and bodily gestures aroused by empathetic responses to images of shapes, lines and postured figures which he proposes to execute in material. The painter, for instance, in addition to visualising the effect of the technical operation in advance, will 'feel' himself executing the appropriate movements, he will 'feel' the brush or charcoal in his hand and the quality of the surface upon which (in imagination) he is working; the sculptor will have a like experience, as he imagines himself chipping away the sparkling marble or manipulating his docile clay into form. To most artists images of technical procedure are invaluable, and to many they are indispensable accompaniments of creative production, since, by imagining operations and effects in advance, time and effort may be conserved and irreparable errors avoided. Few artists, however, trust to their imagery alone, and because of this the long established practice of "roughing out" a cartoon or scale model of the projected picture or statue is still

(1) Vide Ribot's essay on the Creative Imagination, pp. 187-188.

(2) For example, the rasping sound produced by drawing in charcoal or pencil on paper or canvas; the sound of the chisel on the surface of stone; the odour of paint; and all the other ingredients which together constitute the 'exciting' atmosphere of the studio.

the principal method of the majority.⁽¹⁾ But there is a more potent reason for this practice: it is literally the only way the artist has of discovering what he really means to express, and his only way of knowing how he is going to express it! "The urge that prompts them (works of value that will live) either by direct vision of nature or indirectly from stored knowledge drawn out by the imagination will be indefinite until its execution begins in the material adopted; then it clarifies itself slowly by the stern help of the material. The artist, in tackling his material, is searching not only for a means to express his vision, but for light upon the vision itself. What we call his technique is a means not only of re-creation but of creation. The vision, as well as the image that will be made of it, depends for its existence on this technique, and the whole - idea, manipulation and eventual object - grow together, always on the ultimate margin of the present."⁽²⁾ No

(1) "The revelations of inventors or of their biographers leave no doubt as to the necessity of a large number of sketches, trials, preliminary drawings, no matter whether it is a matter of industry, commerce, a machine, a poem, an opera, a picture, a building, a plan of campaign, etc." Ribot, op. cit. p.163. If artists as a rule had clear images of their work in advance of execution such a procedure would hardly have developed.

(2) Copley, John, "True and False Technique," Print Collector's Quarterly, Vol. XXI, No. 1.

matter how vivid and seemingly clear may be the artist's images and no matter how definite his intention, the natural qualities of his medium, its tractability or recalcitrancy, will materially and inevitably influence his concrete expression in a manner which it is impossible for the artist either to avoid or to foresee. In point of fact, it is extremely doubtful whether any artist, who depends at all upon the aid of imagery, ever executes a painting or a statue without encountering unexpected technical problems, the handling of which materially modifies the previously imagined formal character and quality of his work.⁽¹⁾ Material demands a treatment appropriate to itself, and for the artist the full recognition of this is always a significant factor in his procedure and aim.

To the painter the importance of the sympathetic exploitation of his material medium is perhaps not so fundamental to the success of his activity, but to the sculptor

(1) "The material chooses and modifies the images and the artist finds himself compelled by his material to fresh and altered imagination." (Alexander, S., Art and Material, p.30) Vide also the same author's Beauty and Other Forms of Value, p.67, where the following statement occurs: "... as the details (of the picture) are transcribed they affect and ^{are} affected by the rest of the composition, and either themselves must undergo change, or they alter the total. The sculptor I observed when he introduced a touch with his knife into the clay model's nose or eyes, found he had affected the unity of his model and so he was always working over the whole head at once." This is an experience with which every artist is familiar; it is inescapable.

wood and stone and metal appeal to something deep in his mental constitution. "If we would understand a visual art," states Mr. Adrian Stokes,⁽¹⁾ "we ourselves must cherish some fantasy of the material that stimulated the artist, and ourselves feel some emotional reason why his imagination chose, when choice was not altogether impelled by practical, technical and social considerations, to employ one material rather than another." It is often said that the sculptor thinks in stone, just as the poet thinks in words. This is no mere rhetorical embellishment, but a matter-of-fact statement of immense psychological significance. Croce, however, with his intransigent metaphysical outlook, entirely ignores the fact that the artist's affective responses to his material are actual ingredients of his creative mood, and in so far as this is satisfactorily expressed, these responses, these intuitive feelings for his material are embodied in his concrete expression. This is seldom recognised by philosophers and psychologists who write about art, and the fact cannot be too strongly emphasised. Professor Alexander, one of the most instructive and illuminating living British theorists, who has emphasised so cogently and with so much knowledge the

(1) Stokes, Adrian, Stones of Rimini, p.20. (Cf. Chapter I as a whole; also Kantor, J. R., Principles of Psychology, Vol. II, p.54: material as psychological stimulus.)

fundamental importance of medium in art, and Mr. Edward Bullough, are notable exceptions. No writers on art have shown so much insight and sympathetic understanding in their respective treatments of the problem of art and creative activity. Mr. Bullough with rare perspicacity insists that the artist's "attitude to medium and its technique forms an integral part in the creation of a work;" "the vision of the artist," he very rightly points out, "is profoundly affected by the medium, for unless the vision is conceived in terms of the medium, it would be almost an abuse of language to call it vision at all." The influence penetrates the vision in its minutest details, "in proportion to the perfection of the adaptation between the mind and the medium..."⁽¹⁾

So far no mention has been made of the special type of imagery known as eidetic, to which an increasing amount of attention has been given in recent years, mostly in Germany. Optical perceptual (eidetic) images, states Professor E. R. Jaensch,⁽²⁾ one of the foremost workers in this field of research, are phenomena which assume an intermediate position between sensations and images. Like ordinary physiological

(1) "Mind and Medium in Art." (IV). British Journal of Psychology, Vol. XI, p.37.

(2) Jaensch, E. R., Eidetic Imagery, pp. 1, 2.

after-images they are always seen in the literal sense. This property they have of necessity and under all conditions, sharing it with sensations. In other respects they can also exhibit the properties of images (Vorstellungen). In these cases in which the imagination exerts little influence, they are merely modified after-images, deviating from the norm in a definite way. When that influence is nearly or completely zero, they become slightly intensified after-images. In the other limiting case, when the influence of the imagination is at its maximum, they are projected, like after-images, outward and literally seen. Just as there are different shades of orange, all lying somewhere between pure red and pure yellow, so, too, the slightly intensified after-image and the projected, literally visible memory-image are the limiting cases between which the eidetic images lie.

Now the point of special importance to the present discussion is the supposed connection between the eidetic disposition and the artistic capacity. Although eidetic images are rare among average adults,⁽¹⁾ "there are to be

(1) Ibid. p.3. Most children, it is held, pass through an eidetic phase which gradually diminishes as puberty is approached. Jaensch's work was with subjects of ten years of age and over, but he mentions (p.84) that other investigators (Goss and Rossler) found the maximum period to be the sixth year of age.

found among artists numerous personalities that permanently keep the characteristics of the youthful eidetic phase of development."⁽¹⁾ The extraordinary successes of the painter Erwin Heckmann in the Deutsches Landerziehungsheim in Castle Ettersburg are due, he claims, "to his using and preserving the mental characteristics of the eidetic phase in the children." The work of O. Kroh,⁽²⁾ who made a study of a number of German poets and concluded from the evidence that many were eidetics, adds support to this thesis.

With the wider implications of the theory of eidetic imagery as propounded by Professor Jaensch and his collaborators, at all events as far as it bears on the psychological theory of art, the present discussion is not concerned. It is scarcely necessary, however, to emphasise that it would be absurd in the present stage of research to assume that all artists are either partially or predominantly of eidetic constitution. The immediate question is: What relation (if any) does eidetic imagery⁽³⁾ bear to the process of artistic creation? Is the eidetic artist's

(1) Ibid. p. 47.

(2) Kroh, O., "Subjektive Anschauungsbilder bei Jugendlichen," (mentioned by Jaensch.)

(3) It should be kept in mind that psychologists are not entirely in agreement as to the existence of eidetic imagery.

picture (as Croce would have it, if he recognised the existence of eidetic imagery) merely a copy of the image or images he sees (in the literal sense) before him? This question raises no point that has not been dealt with in the preceding argument. The only matter that requires to be settled is the question:- To which of the two groups does the eidetic image belong: those excited by or connected with the subject-matter of the picture or those connected with technical procedure or with the picture as it will probably appear when completed? There appears to be no evidence on the point upon which to found an answer, but, having regard to the generally accepted theory, which maintains that the phenomena of eidetic imagery are due to the psycho-physical constitution of the individual personality,⁽¹⁾ it is more than probable that the images of the eidetic artist belong essentially to the first group, i.e. those excited by or connected with the subject-matter of the

(1) Jaensch, op. cit., pp. 3 and 10.

picture he intends to produce:⁽¹⁾ in which case the eidetic artist's image, in common with other images, will undergo modification during the process of concrete artistic production. It may, therefore, be concluded with Professor Alexander⁽²⁾ that eidetic imagery is but an additional gift, possessed by certain artists in devising their subject-matter or in constructing their work.

Having dealt with fundamental psychological errors underlying Croce's conception of artistic expression - a conception which makes it impossible for him to recognise any distinction between the stage which precedes the act of

(1) This would correspond to what Jaensch designates (p.8) "an emotionally toned situation." ... "One should always note whether eidetic images occur spontaneously under special circumstances, particularly in emotionally toned situations. Even in the weak cases that have a conceptual component, such occasional, spontaneous images are hardly ever lacking, since emotional participation is an important factor in this component." The psychological situation is different, however, when the images are aroused by optical stimulation alone, for in this case the eidetic images will modify perceptions either by distortion of form or colour or both. But whether this modification is influenced by the artist's knowledge of the qualities of his medium is a doubtful point. In any event, this would not adversely affect the above argument: it would merely mean including such images among the second group.

(2) Alexander, S., Beauty and the Other Forms of Value, p. 69.

physical creation and the physical creation itself⁽¹⁾ - it will now be possible to resume the main argument, by attempting to define the psychological difference between these expressions which may properly be included within the concept art and these which may not: in other words, the difference implied by the terms ordinary or naturalistic expression and artistic expression.

It will be worth while at the outset to recall what Croce himself has to say on the matter, bearing in mind of course that he recognises one kind of expression and one only, and that is art. In his chapter on the "Physically Beautiful"⁽²⁾ he points out that, just as the existence of the hedonistic side of the aesthetic activity (the practical aspect of aesthetic value and disvalue)⁽³⁾ has led to the confusion of that activity with the useful and the pleasurable, so the existence of - or, as he is careful to emphasise - the possibility of constructing the physical side, has given rise to the confusion between aesthetic

(1) The distinction which common sense makes between the terms 'art' and 'artist' is likewise, according to Croce, impossible to maintain; art is an experience of the spirit and the artist is the spirit that experiences art.

(2) Filosofia dello Spirito, Vol. I, Chap. XIII, p.111.

(3) "Che sono come la risonanza pratica del valore e disvalore estetici."

expression and expression in a naturalistic sense. Expression in the latter sense, he states, is simply devoid of expression in the spiritual sense: which unfortunately is not particularly illuminating. Continuing, he recognises four stages in the complete process of artistic production: (a) impressions;⁽¹⁾ (b) expression or spiritual aesthetic synthesis, i.e. "the essential aesthetic fact,"⁽²⁾ giving form to (a), intuition; (c) hedonic accompaniment or aesthetic pleasure; (d) translation of the aesthetic fact into physical terms. Now, according to Croce, it

(1) It is not clear what Croce means exactly by impressioni. At one point he appears to identify impressions with sensations, at another point with feelings (sentimenti); for instance, (p.11), "Ciò che non si oggettiva in un' espressione non è intuizione o rappresentazione, ma sensazione e naturalità," and further on the same page: "Sentimenti ed impressioni passano allora..."; again, (p.16), "Ciò che comunemente si chiama, per antonomasia, l'arte, coglie intuizioni più vaste e complesse di quelle che si sogliono comunemente avere, ma intuisce sempre sensazioni e impressioni, è espressione d'impressioni, non espressione dell'espressione." A sensation is not an impression, nor is an impression (impressione) a feeling (sentimento). It would appear, however, from the following passage (p.14) that what he means by the term impressioni is simply brute sensation: "e quanto poco un pittore possiede delle intuizioni di un poeta, o di quelle anche di un altro pittore! Pure, quel poco è tutto il nostro patrimonio attuale d'intuizioni o rappresentazioni. Fuori di esse, sono soltanto impressioni, sensazioni, sentimenti, impulsi, emozioni, o come altro si chiami ciò che è ancora di qua dello spirito, non assimilato dall'uomo." Filosofia dello Spirito.

(2) Ibid. p. 168.

should be obvious to everyone that (b), which is absent from naturalistic expression, is the only stage that can be called aesthetic and truly real. It would be necessary to go a long way with Croce to be able to claim that these statements are in any way enlightening to the present topic; it simply amounts to saying in other words what he has already said, i.e. expressions which lack what aesthetic expressions have are not aesthetic but naturalistic, mechanical or passive facts. But what he apparently means to convey here is that 'expressions' which lack form (not expressed in images) are not expressions at all, not art, but mere impressions or sensations, feelings, impulses, emotions, or whatever is not echoed in the spirit, is not assimilated by man. And, since expression for him is essentially and solely a spiritual affair, having no reality outside the spirit, it is impossible for him to admit that there can be any such phenomenon as that which has here been frankly designated ordinary or naturalistic expression.

It has been submitted that all images immediately relevant to artistic production are images of perceptible material, and that this material imposes restrictions upon the artist which necessitate more or less modification of the images in the process of externalisation. Further, it has been claimed that the artist's reactions to his material

are essential ingredients in his creative mood, both prior to and during actual production, and that these ingredients are embodied in the final achievement. It has also been argued - and this cannot be too strongly emphasised - that the artist does not know exactly what he means to express until he has in fact expressed it: which means, contrary to the thesis advanced by Croce, that physical expression is absolutely essential to the very existence of art. It may now be submitted that all human expressions, which are in no way influenced by the inherent qualities of the medium of expression and ordered by the agent's innate sensibility to form, are not artistic but naturalistic. There is a wide abyss, Croce declares,⁽¹⁾ between a man who is the prey of anger and all its natural manifestations and another who expresses it aesthetically; between the cries and contortions of one, who is grieving through the loss of a dear one, and the words or song with which the same person portrays his suffering at another time; between the grimace of emotion and the gesture of the actor. The difference referred to here is due simply to the fact that in the one case (as, for instance, that of the man who is the prey of anger), the expression is unordered and undirected, whereas in the other it is ordered, directed and moulded, alike by

(1) Ibid. p. 112.

the agent's sensibility to formal relations and his intuitive awareness of the inherent qualities of his medium. In this concept of order lies the crux of the matter. Order, however, does not imply any fixed or rigid system of arrangement, but the perceptual result of manipulating plastic material in such a manner as to create a formal equivalent of an inner state of being.

No aesthetic writer has had a greater or more powerful following than Croce; no writer has shown keener insight into the esoteric realm of art, combined with greater ignorance of commonsense reality and plain fact. His influence has been immense; but he "belongs rather to the company of those who make the world interesting' than to the company of those who satisfy the mind's demand for intelligibility."⁽¹⁾

(1) Gilbert, K., Studies in Recent Aesthetic, p. 113.

CHAPTER VI.

Noegenesis and Artistic Creativity.

CHAPTER VI.

"The creative operations of the human mind, whether conscious or unconscious, are intrinsically orderly. Only through such psychic orderliness is there possibility of communication between the artist and him who appreciates the work of art."

F. J. Mather, Concerning Beauty.

The enthusiastic reception accorded in so many quarters to Croce's theory is symptomatic of the leaning towards the non-conceptual, alogical or intuitional aspects of the cognitive life which has marked the progress of philosophic thought during the past two or three decades. Exactly how far the recent revival in aesthetics may be attributed to this tendency it would be difficult now to determine, but it can hardly be gainsaid that as a result of the palpable failure of the intellectualistic theories of art the time was ripe at the inception of this revival for a new orientation based upon direct experience and psychological investigation. Psychology itself, turning more and more towards the study of the fundamental motivations of human activity, came to regard the study of art as one of the most fruitful fields of research, promising to yield results of far-

reaching importance to the science. The psychology of art thus acquired a new significance in the study of mental life. Anthropological and ethnological research in turn presented psychology not only with fresh material for investigation, but forced aestheticians to recognise the extreme narrowness of the traditional (intellectual) concept of art inherited from the academic aesthetic philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and to extend the connotation of the term by including within its scope all manifestations of artistic productivity, primitive and civilised alike. The way was thus prepared for a new approach to the problem, starting from the most elemental aspects of creativity lying beyond the fringe of rationality and conscious endeavour. From the point of view of contemporary theory the highest significance of Croce's aesthetic is precisely his insistence upon the directness of artistic experience and its complete independence of verbal concepts and syllogistic processes. But, as has been shown in the preceding chapter, in attempting to rescue aesthetics from the confused and nebulous heights of system-building philosophy, he has merely succeeded in casting it into the uttermost depths of psychological vacuity.

In direct opposition alike to Croce's standpoint and to advanced contemporary opinion stands the theory of

Professor Spearman, which purports to explain creative ability in terms of his celebrated doctrine of Noegenesis.⁽¹⁾

Were it not for the fact that Professor Spearman is one of the most distinguished of British psychologists, whose work in the field of intelligence and cognition has gained world-wide acknowledgment, it would scarcely be worth while stopping to examine a theory which tacitly accepts as its frame of reference the discarded artistic dogmas of the nineteenth century academies. Not only so; it is permeated by numerous dogmatic statements, doubtful hypotheses and false preconceptions as to the nature of art and artistic experience. The theory, however, demands respectful consideration for another reason than that of Professor Spearman's high professional standing: it is the only attempt to furnish a complete and systematic account of the fundamental psychology of creative ability that has yet been published. In any study of art, therefore, it has a legitimate claim to serious consideration.

At the very outset of his book⁽²⁾ Professor Spearman makes some curious statements, the effect of which is immediately to cast suspicion not, to be sure, upon his

(1) Propounded in The Nature of Intelligence and the Principles of Cognition.

(2) Creative Mind.

competence to deal with "the great realm of mental creativity," but upon his equipment to deal with mental creativity in so far as it issues in the production of works of art. For it should be pointed out that he is concerned not only with artistic creativity but with creativity in its "general sense," as signifying "much the same as originating, generating, producing, making and the like."⁽¹⁾ Thus he would include within the scope of his theoretical inquiry not only the fine arts but the physical and mental sciences, political systems, social organisations, engineering, commerce and conduct. In point of fact, however, the major portion of his book is devoted to the study of the fine arts, pictorial art and music. He leaves no doubt, then, as to what he has in the forefront of his mind when he speaks of the "great realm of mental creativity."

The first question that confronts the reader of Professor Spearman's book is whether he is justified in assuming that fundamentally there is little or no difference psychologically between originating, generating and producing on the one hand, and artistic creating on the other. In its most general sense the term 'creating' means, as Professor Spearman suggests, "bringing into existence of that which did not ever exist previously." And this in

(1) Ibid. p.1.

fact is one sense in which the term is not infrequently employed; that is, as a synonym for making or producing. But in everyday usage the term means much more than mere making; it carries with it the connotation of uniqueness, individuality, newness - in a word, what is vaguely called originality. In the field of art and aesthetics, however, the term connotes not merely the bringing into existence of something which did not previously exist, but the production of an external, visible, formal equivalent of an affective-intuitive experience, embodying immediate and universal value. This use of the term thus transcends all other attributes of creativity such as are implied by the word 'originality' and its synonyms, and to employ it as Professor Spearman does is to rob it of its most pregnant and significant content.⁽¹⁾ And, since Professor Spearman is primarily concerned with creating in the artistic sense, the connotation which he ascribes to the term is both inadequate and arbitrary, however well it may accord with the theory he propounds.

(1) It is worth noting that the term 'creation' is often used to denote some quality of excellence which other words such as originality and its synonyms fail to signify. Dresses by the foremost dress designers are frequently referred to as 'creations,' implying thereby something greater than originality, something, in fact, of the nature of art.

The fundamental psychological difference between creating in the general sense and creating in the artistic sense is easily demonstrated; one example will suffice. An aeronautical engineer sets out to build a new type of aeroplane - such a machine, for instance, as the one recently constructed for the Britain-Australia air race by Mr. de Haviland. Obviously his first business is to acquaint himself with all the necessary data concerning the particular requirements of a machine which is to do the journey satisfactorily. He must, that is to say, collate and study all the available facts before he can apply his practical experience and technical knowledge to the problem of designing and constructing the machine. His next business is to set about making tentative designs. In the course of this preliminary work he will encounter various unforeseen difficulties, each requiring special attention before it is overcome. As his experiments proceed he will be obliged again and again to refer to the fundamental facts and data, altering this and eliminating that, until he achieves a model that will conform as nearly as possible to essential requirements. Further experiment will thereafter be necessary, particular tests applied and detailed records of performance noted and critically examined, before the final design is decided upon and the machine constructed.

Here is an undoubted example of creating, embodying in a high degree all those attributes of creativity mentioned by Professor Spearman. To identify such a work of creative mind with a work of art is (1) to ignore certain crucial psychological facts and (2) to confuse others.

(1) In the first place it should be noted: (a) the engineer is moved to action by his recognition of a clearly defined practical⁽¹⁾ problem and his desire to solve it; (b) that the problem is not a purely private one, in that it does not exist solely for the engineer, but also for anyone else capable of recognising it and desiring to solve it; and (c) that its solution is not determined by subjective conditions but pre-determined to the extent that it is governed by immutable objective facts, such as are formulated in the great body of scientific laws and by the established conventions of technical procedure. Clearly, then, the more facts bearing upon the problem known to the engineer, the greater will be the probability caeteris paribus of his achieving his objective. The material which he has to manipulate (apart from the purely technical aspects of

(1) This word may present a difficulty: in one sense all problems are practical. But it is necessary to distinguish between those problems which can be solved only by the aid of reason and those which can be solved only by the construction of forms by a direct process. Here the word is used in its everyday sense, meaning "non-theoretical."

production) consists of facts - physical, mathematical, mechanical, climatological, meteorological, topographical and geographical - and the degree of success attending his efforts will depend upon his ability to manipulate these facts intelligently and, of course, imaginatively. With this Professor Spearman would, no doubt, in the main entirely agree. The facts are the fundaments, the given percepts or ideas; the relation of the facts to each other and to the problem as a whole exemplifies the principle of relation; the construction of the machine to meet the particular needs is the concrete exemplification of the principle of correlates - the eduction of the required correlates which, according to Professor Spearman, "is the utmost to which the human mind can under any conditions possibly attain."⁽¹⁾

Now, in creation of the artistic sort, instead of being motivated by a desire to solve an external⁽²⁾ problem in the face of certain pre-determined given facts, the artist is motivated by an urge emanating from within himself, over which he has no effective control⁽³⁾ and about which he can have no precise knowledge. No external conditions, except

(1) Creative Mind, p. 26.

(2) Condition (b) above.

(3) Granted he may by an act of will refrain from indulging the urge by inhibiting the appropriate active response, but he cannot adequately satisfy it, except by abandoning himself to its sway and submitting to its demands.

those inherent in his medium, govern his activity; he is beyond all laws except those of his own being. He may do with his material what he can make it do without violating its inherent nature; he may combine in one work anything he likes, irrespective of the laws of reason and the dictates of common experience, so long as he achieves the goal of his desire. This difference of orientation and the almost total absence of external restrictions are the fundamental differences between general creative activity and artistic creative activity. In the former the mental process involves the manipulating of previously given objective facts in the light of past experience, in order to solve a problem practical or theoretical; in the latter the process is one of manipulating a medium, in order to construct a physical (sensuous) object, which shall be the external equivalent of an inner state. Expressed in other words: the engineer orientates from given facts and achieves his objective by intellectual processes;⁽¹⁾ whereas the artist starts from an inner impulsion and reaches his goal directly, simply by the process of painting or sculpting as the case may be. "The inventive activity," Kantor points out,⁽²⁾ "represents

(1) Cf. "In all science ... we start from facts derived from observation and experiment." Ribot, Th., Essay on the Creative Imagination, p.252; "The question of art begins where the question of fact ends," Fry, R., Vision and Design.

(2) Kantor, J. R., Principles of Psychology, Vol.II, P.61.

an attempt to achieve some particular type of result based upon specifications supplied by the stimulus situation... In decided contrast with the mechanical, inventive type of imagination is the creative conduct of literary production. ... Very noticeable ... is the freedom and spontaneity of action that is checked very little by specification and indicated necessities." Substantially the same statement is made by Ribot:⁽¹⁾ "The mechanical imagination... is arbitrary neither in its choice nor its means; it is not a free creature having its end in itself. In order to succeed, it is subjected to rigorous physical conditions, to a determinism..." "We may say without exaggeration that the success of many mechanical creations depends upon the skilful manipulation of materials." From a more or less diffused feeling, agitation or excitement, the artist's psycho-physical state passes into a more or less determinate awareness, according as his activity approaches its desired end. What directs him is not apodeitic knowledge, but his inner urge operating through his sensibility for form. The impulsion, it is true, may be aroused by external facts or events; but, contrary to the procedure of the engineer, it is the impulsion and not the external facts and events that determines the course of his activity; and this impulsion is none other

(1) Ribot, Th., op. cit., pp.264; 264-265; 276-280.

than the urge to create a formal equivalent of what is subjectly experienced.

A painter of an historical picture, it may at once be conceded, must needs begin by acquainting himself with all the relevant historical facts of his subject, but unless the facts awaken in him the desire to form, to create something outside of himself, a work of art is impossible of creation. No matter how beautifully⁽¹⁾ and truthfully the artist may represent (the word is worth noting) the historical facts, his production is in no sense a work of art, unless the facts represented are subordinated to the feeling aroused by them and embodied in form. But the artist cannot produce feeling by an act of will. This cannot be too strongly emphasised. The engineer, on the other hand, may by sheer effort of will continue to work at his problem long after his interest in it has diminished to zero, and yet solve it satisfactorily and completely. That is to say, the engineer may direct and control his energy where and how he likes, without necessary detriment to his work; the artist, on the other hand, is entirely dependent for the success of his effort upon the spontaneity of his creative urge. On this point Professor Spearman's theory of creativity is seriously defective; for he fails to show what causes the artist's

(1) Vide Chap. II supra.

flow of energy and what controls and directs it into particular channels.

(2) Before attempting to deal with the second point it will be necessary to make a preliminary survey of the sources of human activity, with special reference to the points at issue. All human activity manifesting itself in external conscious acts is initiated by a striving towards a more or less clearly or dimly cognised goal, determined in the first instance by the particular predominating impulse in active operation, and in the second instance by the innate psychological constitution and established habits of the experiencing agent. Such striving may manifest itself, on the one hand, as a desire for a definite and more or less clearly cognised goal, such as sex experience or food; or, on the other hand, it may manifest itself as a more or less diffused tendency to act without reference to any specific object; in which case a state of agitation or mental tension ensues and persists, causing the agent to act this way and that way until complete or partial satisfaction is attained in appropriate activity. All striving, that is to say, tends towards an appropriate goal, the attainment of which brings about its fulfilment or satisfaction.

Now the fundamental springs of all human activity may conveniently be grouped into two principal classes: (a) those

that are chiefly bodily, arising out of organic or biological needs and tendencies, and (b) those that are purposeful in the sense that they imply some prevision of a goal, independent of and beyond the mere satisfaction of bodily needs and tendencies. Instinctive springs of activity, as more than one school of contemporary psychology has been at pains to emphasise, are perhaps the most potent (because the most elementary) of the organic group, since they embrace the most vital of human as well as animal impulses which are directly related to bodily needs. All such activity in man, however, has a mental aspect; the activity of food seeking, for instance, implies not only some consciousness of the need for food, but also the consciousness of the need for some particular kind of food. A further stage is reached when there is an awareness of various means of procuring food and alternative methods of treating it for consumption. When this is reached, the purely instinctive activity has already been sidetracked and other tendencies evoked, whose origins are no longer traceable to bodily need. But, in view of the predominance of the bodily as distinct from the mental factor in instinctive activity, it is theoretically convenient to mark off such activities by grouping them together in one principal class.

(b) The second group includes practically the whole

field of purposive endeavour and intelligent action, in which selection and discrimination as between one goal and another and one means and another are clearly manifest. Between this group and the former, however, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to draw a hard and fast line, since so many activities are in the long run traceable to bodily needs and tendencies. The dancing of primitive peoples is a case in point. Here it is difficult to say just to what extent this activity is due to the physiological processes and tendencies of the organism and to what extent it is due to psychological need. Both factors do, in fact, play an important part in this activity. A further difficulty arises from the fact that not all instinctive activities are directly related to bodily needs and tendencies. The instinct of curiosity appears to have only an indirect bodily function; yet it is capable of evoking a very imperious impulse to action exemplified, for instance, in the absorbing pursuit of scientific ends. Despite these difficulties, however, it may confidently be asserted that the whole history of art, science and religion bears eloquent witness to the fact that from time immemorial man has engaged in activities, whose springs cannot be attributed either to bodily or biological sources, but to something generic to the constitution of the mind alone.

From the standpoint of the present discussion the most significant of the purely mental sources of activity is the need for order among sense impressions, without which human experience would be nothing short of a "big, blooming, buzzing confusion." That this need exists as a fundamental fact of mental life will doubtless not be questioned, but it is important to point out that, owing to the intellectualistic bias of philosophic thought since Descartes' time, emphasis has been placed upon its intellectual implications to the almost total neglect of its bearing upon the purely sensory-perceptual aspect of experience. The Gestalt school has demonstrated that an object⁽¹⁾ is not merely an association of elements, but a total situation, and that organisation (configuration, Gestalt, form) is the fundamental sensory fact upon which all experience is essentially founded.⁽²⁾ Without 'configuration' perception simply

(1) Using the word in the widest sense as meaning any perceptible situation.

(2) Köhler, W., Gestalt Psychology, pp.148-186. It is too soon yet to formulate any systematic account of man's activity as artist on the basis of Gestalt theory, since as yet very little has been done in the field of conation. The probable explanation would be that since perception of configurations relieves brain tensions, those configurations which relieve brain tensions in the most efficient manner are most likely to be formed. This, however, leaves out of account the all-important question of values upon which Gestalt psychology has little to contribute.

could not exist; and, since art is first and foremost a sensory-perceptual experience, it may be submitted that the need for order among sense impressions constitutes the fundamental precondition of all formal expression.⁽¹⁾

Perhaps it would be well at this juncture to point out that, according to Professor Spearman, all configuration is simply an instance of his second quantitative law, the "reduction of relations," which states that "The mentally presenting of any two or more characters tends to evoke immediately a knowing of the relation between them,"⁽²⁾ and that further their unitariness (insisted upon by the Gestalt theory) is explained by his second qualitative principle of retentivity, which states that "The occurrence of any cognitive event produces a tendency for it to occur afterwards."⁽³⁾ The question, however, as to whether the unity of configurations is sui generis and unanalysable remains open. Spearman himself would agree that even at birth there may be some configuration, and therefore some awareness of relations, but he would deny that, because certain

(1) How it comes about that man seeks to objectify his formal impressions by expressing them formally is a metaphysical question, the discussion of which must be waived. But for the present it may be suggested, first, that it is because he finds himself by nature impelled to do so, and second, that it is because he finds such expression psychologically valuable.

(2) The Nature of Intelligence and Principles of Cognition, p. 63.

(3) Ibid. p.132.

configurations are not (even to the adult) introspectible into separate processes of relation eduction, they are therefore unitary.⁽¹⁾ In Spearman's view where no relations exist, no configurations can exist.

Be that as it may, it may be taken as established that there is in the human mind a generic propensity to extract order or form out of the multiplicity of sense impressions continually bombarding it. Whether this order manifests itself in configurations (Gestalt school) or as analysable relations (Spearman) is a problem, the solving of which may be left to future research. What is important from the standpoint of the present discussion is the fact that some sort of order is essential to the idea and existence of ~~the~~ mind, and that this order manifests itself in man's higher activities and particularly in his literary and artistic productions.

Now, in actual practice, order may be experienced either (aa) visually,⁽²⁾ as belonging to external concrete things, or appearances (called up by memory or by spontaneous imagination), or (bb) mentally, as belonging to abstract thoughts or ideas. Visual order is the fundamental condition of all visual art, including painting, sculpture,

(1) Ibid. pp.155-174.

(2) And, of course, auditorily.

architecture and all the arts of spatial form. Subjectively experienced order, on the other hand, is the fundamental condition of all literary art in the widest sense of the term, including not only literature and poetry, but also all philosophy and literary science; it is also the condition of all science both pure and applied. But between visually and mentally experienced order a further distinction must be drawn, a distinction which is of first-rate psychological significance for art. Visual order, as manifested in spatial art, is both an immediate experience and an end in itself, being independent of conceptual thought and practical purpose. It is an experience of pure vision,⁽¹⁾

(1) Cf. Schopenhauer's "Beschaulichkeit," Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, p.220; also the following: "Wenn man, durch die Kraft des Geistes gehoben, die gewöhnliche Betrachtungsart der Dinge fahren lässt, aufhört, nur ihren Relationen zu einander, deren letztes Ziel immer die Relation zum eigenen Willen ist, am Leitfaden der Gestaltungen des Satzes vom Grunde, nachzugehen, also nicht mehr das Wo, Das Wann, das Warum und das Wozu an den Dingen betrachtet; sondern einzig und allein das Was; auch nicht das abstrakte Denken, die Begriffe der Vernunft, das Bewusstseyn einnehmen lässt; sondern, statt alles diesen, die ganze Macht seines Geistes der Anschauung hingiebt, sich ganz in diese versenkt und das ganze Bewusstseyn ausfüllen lässt durch die ruhige Kontemplation des gerade gegenwärtigen natürlichen Gegenstandes, sei es eine Landschaft, ein Baum, ein Fels, ein Gebäude oder was auch immer; indem man nach einer sinnvollen Deutschen Redensart, sich gänzlich in diesen Gegenstand verliert, d.h. eben sein Individuum, seinen Willen, vergisst und nur noch als reines Subjekt, als klarer Spiegel des Objekts bestehend bleibt; so das es ist, als ob der Gegenstand allein da wäre, ohne Jemanden,

the direct sensuous awareness of the visual aspect of things stripped of all associative and rationalistic concomitants and practical significance, for when it is perceived, a goal is reached and an end fulfilled. In literature and science, on the other hand, the experience of order is conditioned by the awareness in thought of abstract characters, which must be thought of before the material for literature or science is made available for ordered presentation. Order is here the experience of unitary abstract characters with which objects are invested by the mind. The distinction is an important one, for it separates the world as experienced visually from the world as experienced conceptually - in a word, it separates the world of spatial art from the world of informative literature and science.

"der ihn wahrnimmt, und man also nicht mehr den Anschauenden von der Anschauung trennen kann, sondern beide Eines geworden sind, indem das ganze Bewusstseyn von einem einzigen anschaulichen Bilde gänzlich geföhlt und eingenommen ist; wenn also solchermassen das Objekt aus aller Relation zu etwas ausser ihm, das Subjekt aus aller Relation zum Willen getreten ist; dann ist, was also erkannt wird, nicht mehr das einzelne Ding als solches; sondern es ist die Idee, die ewige Form, die unmittelbare Objektität des Willens auf dieser Stufe; und eben dadurch ist zugleich der in dieser Anschauung Begriffene nicht mehr Individuum: denn das Individuum hat sich eben in solche Anschauung verloren: sondern er ist reines, willenloses, schmerzloses, zeitloses Subjekt der Erkenntnis." Ibid. pp.210-211.

Throughout the foregoing discussion it has been necessary, in order to keep the argument within proper limits, to pass over a considerable number of points, the intrusion of which would have introduced unnecessary difficulties and obscured the main issue; which was to show that order could be an end in itself as in visual art, or a means to an end as in literature and scientific procedure. No mention, for instance, has been made of the distinction between visual order (or form) in general and order as an artistic attribute. It is only when order is impregnated with value through its affective significance that it becomes artistic form. But to raise the whole question of artistic form would not only have been impossible but wholly out of place at this stage. For the same reason the relation of order to form in imaginative literature, poetry and music has likewise been passed over. Both imaginative literature and poetry involve special difficulties in view of their intimate connection with linguistics; and music is so inextricably bound up with the intricacies of instrumental technique and the conventions of musical structure that no discussion is possible without expert knowledge. But it may be submitted, pending more detailed discussion in a later chapter, that order or form is the ultimate goal of a fundamental psychological need, and that the satisfaction of this need is the

primary condition of all artistic achievement, since without order no art could exist.

After this prolonged - and, it is hoped, not unwarranted - preliminary discussion, it will now be possible to return to the submission that Professor Spearman in identifying the engineer's creation with that of the artist appears to confuse two distinct facts of psychology.⁽¹⁾

It was suggested (a) that the engineer is moved to action by his recognition of a clearly defined practical problem and his desire to solve it; (b) that the problem is not a purely private one like the artist's; (c) that its solution is not determined by subjective conditions, but predetermined to the extent that it is governed by immutable laws. On the other hand, it was suggested that the artist is motivated by an inner urge, over which he has no effective control, that he is not governed by any conditions except those inherent in his medium, and that he is outside the scope of any other restrictions than those of his own being.

Enough has been said to show that the engineer and the artist are each motivated by different impulses, and that each proceeds by different means towards radically different ends. It will now be argued that, whereas the engineer's purpose is privately to solve a public problem, the artist's

(1) Vide pp. 214-216 supra.

is publicly to solve a private one. What, then, it may be asked, is the nature of these problems?

It will be recalled that the engineer's problem - what he set out to do - was to construct a machine to fulfil a particular purpose under particular, previously known and unalterable conditions. His problem, that is to say, was a practical one in that it could not be solved merely by clear thinking, but by external action; it did not arise out of theoretical speculation, but out of the demand~~s~~ for something functional and useful. But his external action, in so far as it was directed to the solving of the problem, was to a very large extent governed and controlled by immutable and unalterable conditions. He was not free to make his own conditions, but had to bring his knowledge and experience to bear upon them before he could act at all in any way relevant to the purpose of solving the problem. His only freedom consisted in his selecting and inventing means. The problem, then, was not a private problem; it was not determined by him, or within him, but for him by an outside agency. For although he had his own conception of the problem, it was nevertheless only a private conception of a public problem - public in the sense that it was available for anyone capable of recognising it and desiring to solve it. But his solution was a private matter, the product of his private knowledge and experience. The product may be

publicly shared, but not his knowledge and his experience as such, for these must ever remain his private possession.

The artist's problem is in almost every respect the exact antithesis of the engineer's, for it is neither practical nor public, but formal (in the artistic sense of the term) and private. It is formal in that it demands for its solution form appropriate to the subjective need whose satisfaction is sought in external expression. What the artist strives for is, in effect, to produce, in terms of form, the equivalent of his inner state of feeling, agitation or emotional excitement; and when this form is produced he has achieved his goal and satisfaction. For form is an end, a "terminal object,"⁽¹⁾ the realisation and perfection of an artistic ideal. It is private in that he alone is aware of it; it is not like the engineer's, presented to him by public agency or held by him in the capacity of a public agent, but arises within himself spontaneously, and in him alone resides the power to solve it. The public aspect of the situation is the availability of the formal creation to public enjoyment, whereby mankind may publicly share and experience in varying degree what was and must for ever remain a unique private possession of the artist.

It may be well to interpolate here some remarks on the concepts 'public' and 'private.' Mr. Arthur Sewell in his

(1) Mr. L. A. Reid's term.

recent book, The Physiology of Beauty, propounds the view that since "Reality means nothing because it may mean anything,"⁽¹⁾ the term must be abandoned in philosophical discourse as "a concept without content, making no comment on nor contribution to our view of the external world."⁽²⁾ Reality for William James was what truths have to take account of: Mr. Sewell's proposition is that "publicity is what truths have to take account of." The division between the public and the private is capable of refinement: the public is the communicable; the private is the incommunicable. It is customary to think and hold views about the 'external' world; in Mr. Sewell's opinion it is more useful to think of a 'public' world, a world that may be talked about and communicated. But as he orientates from the biological standpoint, established by Pavlov in his Conditioned Reflexes, he states that this world is not 'public' merely to men and women; it must be public in the full sense of the term: to men, women, dogs, cats and all animate and inanimate things. This, however, is not to say that it is a so-called 'real' world, for the notions of reality and unreality do not enter into its consideration. "It is a world of happenings... It is the world not as it

(1) Sewell, Arthur, The Physiology of Beauty, p.6.

(2) Ibid. p.9.

appears to me: not as it appears to my colleagues: but it is the world that they and I may speak of and make ourselves understood. The test of a true judgment about such a world is that it should be public."⁽¹⁾ The notion of reality, then, must give place to the notion of publicity. And he argues that it is the business of science to make more and more refined generalisations about the public world. But these generalisations may introduce no addition to the happenings that are generalised: "they may concern, in the last analysis, particularity of structures and behaviours and they may concern or postulate nothing else but these. These are indeed enough for a complete refinement of the public world."⁽²⁾

The private is whatever may not be communicated. Language regarded in terms of human behaviour is a conditioned stimulus, the signal for a response, and the mechanism of the conditioned response is the mechanism of communication. The nature of language, Mr. Sewell therefore concludes, cannot be other than the nature of the complicated stimuli, which it is when regarded as human behaviour. Pavlov's dogs were alert both to a change in the incident stimuli operating upon their receptive organs and to the structure of that change. They 'discriminated' by means of their

(1) Ibid. pp.29-30.

(2) Ibid. p.49.

analysers the relevance of the change; they responded to behaviour and discriminated objects. Any conditioned stimulus, then, involves two operant elements, namely, behaviour (variation in circumstances or surroundings) and particularity. And it is these operant elements in a conditioned response which are public and capable of communication. The public world, then, must be a world of behaviour and particularities. "Names may refer publicly only to what is received by the receptor organs and analysed by the analysers. They refer, then, to things and happenings localised; they refer to particularities. If I discover the particular happenings or set of happenings that determine my particular response to a particular word or a particular conditioned stimulus, then I can discover also a public relation between the word and the stimulus. But until I can establish the chain of happenings publicly, that relation remains something private and enjoyed beyond the reach of my speculation." "With language, then, we do two things. We establish signs for conditioned stimuli: these are names that refer to discriminated objects in the public world. Such words stand in the place of the stimuli and recall to us the discrimination. We also establish signs for the responses; these are names that are themselves conditioned stimuli. They do not discriminate particularities in the

public world: they discriminate responses in the private world. And the confusion of language and of all thought is the confusion of these two, the stimulus and the response, the public and the private."⁽¹⁾

Mr. Sewell gives a striking instance which illustrates the distinction between the public and the private.⁽²⁾ In the University of Cape Town three men spoke into a voice-recording apparatus: when they heard their voices reproduced each said that the voices of the other two were perfectly recorded; but each asserted that his own had not been faithfully reproduced. Each man heard his own voice 'publicly' for the first time, not 'privately' as hitherto. The difference in reception is the difference between publicity and privacy. A similar distinction may be observed when one sees a photograph of oneself or looks at oneself in a mirror. In the mirror, as in a photograph, personal features are seen the wrong way round and the response is differently determined from the response to the features of others.⁽³⁾ Seeing them 'publicly' can only call forth a private judgment of this publicity; other may make a public

(1) Ibid. pp.61-62.

(2) Ibid. p.53.

(3) Cf. Bullough's concept of "psychical distance."

judgment. "All things," he concludes, "are private that are 'enjoyed:' all things are public that are 'discriminated.'"

This is not the place to offer any criticism of Mr. Sewell's behaviouristic thesis; but it will be admitted that the distinction between the public and the private is both important and useful. It does contribute something towards the solution of the reality dilemma and towards the study of 'conscious behaviour,' and if it does nothing more than offer a new orientation it will have served a useful purpose at a time when traditional philosophy is on the verge of dissolution.

In the preceding discussion such a distinction as Mr. Sewell makes was clearly necessary. The business of the engineer is the business of science in general; it is public business, and his function is to construct a socially shareable instrument on the basis of socially shareable facts and propositions. What he constructs is public to mankind and himself as a member of mankind; it is the embodiment of communicable facts and propositions; but his relation to the thing constructed is private and incommunicable. The artist's business, on the other hand, is private business; his function is to construct a unified form that will satisfy his private need and aspiration. What is public and communicable is this form in its particularity, not its

content, which is private and incommunicable. Hence the work of art is the public solution of a private problem.

It is difficult to see why so profound a thinker as Professor Spearman should identify artistic creation with scientific invention and discovery and adaptive behaviour in general. Both science and art, he maintains, are composed of precisely the same ultimate elementary processes, "both alike attain their supreme degree of creativity by virtue of the process which has been called the educing of a 'correlate'."⁽¹⁾ Apparently it did not occur to him that it might be worth while to examine the term 'creating' from the standpoint of everyday language, with a view to discovering whether or not there was any common core of meaning in its various uses. In many instances the established usage of a term may contain no such common core of meaning, but there is as much reason to assume a priori that there may be as to assume the contrary. At all events the philosophic scientist cannot afford to neglect the conventional meaning and connotation of common words. Had Professor Spearman carefully scrutinised the term, he would not have been content merely to say that the word 'creating' "signifies much the same as originating, generating, producing, making and the like." For in everyday language the term carries

(1) Creative Mind, p.110.

a specifically artistic connotation, which serves in practice as well as in theory to mark off in linguistic usage those objects and activities that pertain to art from those that do not. It is not usual to speak of the 'creations' of the engineer, the scientist and the philosopher: here the terms 'inventions' and 'constructions' constitute the accepted common usage. On the other hand, it is customary to speak of the 'creations' of the dress designer! The distinction is not a mere accident of usage. It is significant of something fundamental to the structure of thought and experience, and no one is entitled to ignore it. In identifying creating with originating and like terms Professor Spearman lays himself open to the charge of disrespecting the niceties of scientific language and of abrogating the principles of scientific method. And not only so; it has had serious theoretical consequences, for it leads him into thinking that he is explaining the process of artistic creation when, in fact, he is merely explaining the process of technical invention in art. The only charitable view of the matter is that his own intellectualistic orientation has foreclosed his mind to the possibility of a non-intellectualistic interpretation of art, and rendered his native sensibility impotent as a means of checking his theoretical speculation and guiding his concrete preference.

Before proceeding to a closer examination of Professor Spearman's theory, there is one further point about his orientation worth remarking, because it displays a curious unwitting confusion of thought. In approaching "the great realm of mental creativity," two alternative policies are available: one consists in surrender to the emotional excitement which the subject is liable to produce, the other is that of cold-blooded investigation. The first, Professor Spearman declares, "is easy to achieve, wins favour from almost everyone, and warms the writer with moral complacency; the second entails the arduous task of taking the creative faculties to pieces, "in order to find out the trick of them." And he quotes the well-known passage of Stevenson's about the "springs and mechanisms" of art,⁽¹⁾ adding that it is just these which are the object of his pursuit, for "In the end, a better understanding of how great works are created does not abate our sense of their greatness but only enhances it. Look at the artists themselves! Are they not day and night talking and thinking about their 'springs

(1) "There is nothing more disenchanting to man than to be shown the springs and mechanisms of any art. All our arts and occupations lie wholly on the surface; it is on the surface that we perceive their beauty, fitness, and significance; and to pry below is to be appalled by their emptiness and shocked by the coarseness of the strings and pulleys."

and mechanisms' without thereby incurring the least abate-
ment of their artistry... Why they so concern themselves
with the machinery, is, of course, because they desire to
gain more perfect mastery over it. And this is what all
science is really aiming at. If it so persistently analys-
es things into last elements and reduces events to ultimate
laws, all such activity is by no means disinterested and
solely for its own sake. The quarry it hunts is not
theoretical alone, but in still higher degree practical."
And he concludes: "If ever we should succeed in prying out
any secrets as to how the mind achieves its creativeness,
it will be in the hope that such a better understanding may
aid us to appreciate and to create the more effectively."⁽¹⁾
The point of particular interest is contained in the senten-
ces which have been italicised.

Owing to the ambiguity of the phrase 'springs and mech-
anisms,' it is impossible to make out what precisely Profess-
or Spearman means to convey by the passage just quoted.
The phrase in question is open to two distinct and equally
legitimate interpretations: it might be interpreted as mean-
ing either the formal structural principles and technical
devices underlying the physical work of art or the ultimate
psychological processes which govern the production of works

(1) Creative Mind, pp. 4-5 (present author's italics).

of art. What Stevenson was thinking about when he wrote the passage quoted by Professor Spearman is of no particular moment to the present discussion, but, having regard alike to the general context in which Spearman uses the phrase and to the avowed object of his study, there can be no question as to how the passage ought to be interpreted. But it is no less clear that he does not intend the passage to be construed with reference to the ultimate psychological processes governing mental creativeness, for he pointedly refers to the artists' 'talking and thinking' about their 'springs and mechanisms;' which can only mean structural principles and technical devices, since the artist qua artist is not concerned either from constitution or necessity with the psychological processes underlying his own creative ability, but with the exercise of that ability. It seems hardly credible that Spearman should be unaware of the vast difference between what the artist regards as his 'springs and mechanisms' and what the psychological aesthetician understands by the same term. It is no less difficult to believe that it is a mere oversight. But unless some such explanation is offered there appears no alternative means of accounting for what is undoubtedly an extraordinary piece of confused thinking.⁽¹⁾ And if artists concern themselves

(1) One is entitled to assume that Professor Spearman is acquainted with the 'studio talk' of artists, which is almost wholly concerned with technical means.

with the 'machinery' of their art in order to gain more mastery over it, it is emphatically not the kind of machinery with which Professor Spearman is concerned: it is technical, not psychological. But when, as it were in the same breath, he suggests that the artist's desire for mastery over his machinery is identical with that of the scientist (whose business it is to analyse things into last elements and to reduce events to ultimate laws), he strains almost to breaking point the reader's confidence and patience.

"Those who have mastered the wisdom of the scientific method and are able to think scientifically experience many charming temptations," declares Anton Tchekhov.⁽¹⁾ "Archimedes wanted to turn the earth upside down, and our present-day hotheads want to grasp what is scientifically ungraspable; to discover the physical laws of creative art; to detect the general laws and formulae by which the artist, who feels them instinctively, creates musical compositions, pictures, novels, etc. Such formulae probably do exist in nature. We know we can find in nature A, B, C, D, do, re, mi, fa, sol, and curves, straight lines, circles, squares, green, red, blue; we know that all this in certain combinations produces a melody, or a poem, or a picture, just as

(1) Life and Letters of Anton Tchekhov, (Trans. by Kotelian-sky and Tomlinson), pp.129-130.

simple chemical substances in certain combinations produce a tree, a stone, or the sea. We are aware that the combination exists, but the law of the combination is hidden from us. Those who possess the scientific method feel with their souls that a musical composition and a tree have something in common, that both are created in accordance with equally regular and simple laws. Hence the question: What are these laws? Hence the temptation to work out a physiology of creative art (like Boborykin) or, with younger and more timid men, to base their arguments on science and the laws of nature (Merezhkovsky). The physiology of creation probably does exist in nature but dreams of discovering it should be cut short at the very outset. If the critics insist upon taking their stand on scientific ground no good will come of it; they will waste a dozen years, write a lot of rubbish, make the question still more confusing - and get nowhere. To think scientifically is good in everything, but the trouble is that scientific speculation about creative art will sink in the end to searching for the "cells" or the "centres" which control the creative faculty; and then some stolid German will locate those cells somewhere in the temporal region of the brain, a second German will disagree with him, a third will agree, and a Russian will glance through an article on cells and reel off a paper for the Severny

Vestnik; the Vestnik Europa will criticize that paper, and a stupid craze will be hanging over Russia for three years, providing popularity and a living for blockheads and filling sensible people with nothing but irritation. For those who are inspired by the scientific method, to whom God has granted the rare talent of thinking scientifically, there is, in my opinion, but one way out - the philosophy of creative art. It is possible to gather together all the best that has been created by artists throughout the ages, and, employing the scientific method, to grasp that common element which makes them like one another and conditions their value. That common element will be the law. Works which are called immortal have a great deal in common; if that common element were excluded from each of them the work would lose its value and its charm. It follows, then, that that universal element is essential and forms the conditio sine qua non of every work that aspires to immortality." And William James has said:⁽¹⁾ "It strikes me that no good will ever come to Art as such from the analytic study of Aesthetics - harm, rather; if the abstractions could in any way be made the basis of practice. We should get stark things done on system with all the intangible personal je ne sais quaw left out. The difference between the first- and

(1) Letters (II), (Ed. by Henry James), pp.86-87.

second-best things in art absolutely seems to escape verbal definition - it is a matter of a hair, a shade, an inward quiver of some kind - yet what miles away in point of preciousness! Absolutely the same verbal formula applies to the supreme success and to the thing that just misses it, and yet verbal formulas are all that your aesthetics will give." Warnings such as these cannot lightly be brushed aside. Spearman's ideal is a practical scientist's ideal, but it is the ideal of a scientist whose philosophy of art is obsolete.

"The world of classical art, and the later art derived from it, has long ... been the subject of a codification of the laws underlying its forms: for what we call scientific aesthetic is nothing but ... a psychological interpretation of style, applied to classical works of art. The first requirement of classical art was held to be the concept of beauty which aesthetics, despite the diversity of its methods of approach, is solely occupied in establishing and defining. But because aesthetics applies its results to the totality of art, and believes it has explained also those artistic facts which have quite other pre-suppositions than the concept of beauty, its usefulness becomes detrimental, its authority becomes intolerable usurpation. A clear distinction between aesthetics and an objective theory of art is therefore the most vital necessity in a serious, scientific investigation

of art."⁽¹⁾ Worringer is not led to this utterance by any grudge against psychologists, but by his recognition of a serious scientific need. And it is unfortunate that Professor Spearman has not remarked its importance. For it is difficult to avoid the impression that underlying his theory of artistic creativity is the ancient fallacy that art and beauty inevitably co-exist; that what is beautiful is art and what is art is beautiful. Bound up with this fallacy is, of course, the beauty-pleasure fallacy, which maintains that a work of art must yield pleasure in contemplation and that a work of art (so-called) which does not yield pleasure in contemplation cannot be a work of art; or, at all events, cannot be a good work of art. Both fallacies have already been traced⁽²⁾ to the uncritical acceptance by most European philosophers up to recent times of the classical ideal of beauty as the one and universal criterion of artistic excellence, to which all artists must aspire and by which all art must ultimately be judged. It would be tiresome to go over the ground already covered in Chapter II; let it suffice to reiterate that it is no longer possible for investigators to assume, without laying themselves open to serious criticism, that in investigating the

(1) Worringer, W., Form in Gothic, p.8.

(2) Chapter II supra.

problem of the production of beauty in art they are ipso facto investigating the problem of artistic creativity.

Nowhere, however, does Professor Spearman specifically declare his acceptance of the classical concept of beauty; but, without taking into account diverse direct and indirect references to certain technical devices and principles, such as unity, variety, repetition and balance, characteristic of traditional pictorial composition, and classical theory, it may be submitted that the impression just referred to is more or less confirmed by certain definite statements⁽¹⁾ contained in his analysis of "the main achievements of pictorial art" under the headings of Truth, Beauty, Emotionality, Exaggeration and Self-expression.⁽²⁾

According to Spearman, in so far as pictures attain to likeness they possess their first supreme virtue, that of Truth - truly a classical doctrine! But since the artist is not limited to the bare service of imitating nature, he must have some further aim or function; and this, according to "a wide consensus of opinion" is the production of an object which will give "delight simply on being contemplated." "Pursuing their explanation most writers go a little

(1) Cf. Creative Mind, p.88. "The beauty sought by the painter is, in the main, that of his medium itself; his aim is not so much to represent beautiful nature as to represent nature beautifully."

(2) Ibid. Chapter V.

further" and "attribute the delightfulness of the artistic object or scene to its 'beauty.'" But "trouble descends on them when they try to agree as to what this word beauty is intended to signify." Most definitions no doubt have some truth on their side, but for the "most comprehensive and fundamental explanation" of the "delight in contemplating" beauty, Spearman believes that recourse must be taken to Aristotle, who wrote:⁽¹⁾ "Pleasure is attendant upon every sense, as it is also upon every act of intellect and contemplation. But the most perfect is the most pleasant; and the most perfect act is that whose energy is well-disposed with reference to the best of all the objects which fall under it." And on the basis of this he proceeds to apply his doctrine of noegenesis to five pictorial works of art, three of which belong to the classical tradition - Madame Récamier by David, Dreamers, by Moore, and Golden Stairs by Burne-Jones - and two to the Renaissance - Birth of Venus by Botticelli, and Descent from the Cross by Rubens.

It should be pointed out, however, that Professor Spearman does not confine his analysis to what he calls 'orthodox' art,⁽²⁾ but includes within the scope of his exposition

(1) Nicomachean Ethics, Book X., Chap. IV.

(2) "That which rests on the philosophical doctrine of the plain man." Op. cit., p.62.

the whole field of modern art. His attitude to the new movements beginning with impressionism, however, is such that he is unable to conceal his undivided adherence to the ideal of beauty and his utter contempt for the "astonishing harvest," "not indeed of beauty but of emotion-play," that has been produced by the modern schools, who "wanted to do something new" in order to "escape from comparison with masterpieces of older times," and vied "with one another in the licence they permitted themselves." "But along this path of subjectivity," he continues, "the new artists soon came upon what might almost be called unfair competition. The fantasies introduced into visual appearance by even the most skilled among them found more than a match in those which were introduced without effort by certain persons suffering from schizophrenic insanity. From this embarrassing situation two remedies were found. One was for the artists to follow the insane. The other was for the insane to become artists. Both solutions have had their followers - with honours divided."⁽¹⁾ This from a scientist whose avowed policy was to be "cold-blooded analysis" is surely a travesty of scientific procedure! If what has been given here were all, it might be passed over as a temporary lapse, but his analysis of Braque and Picasso⁽²⁾

(1) Ibid. pp.65-66. (Present author's italics.)

(2) Discussed on pp.282, 283.

reveals a lack of sensibility and knowledge of fundamental artistic principles that is equalled only by his prejudice and his intolerance of any art that does not set forth in an acceptably idealistic manner the average greengrocer's vision of the world.

Pursuing his examination of pictorial art Professor Spearman asks: (1) "Under what conditions ... will the 'energy' of art be more 'well-disposed' or 'perfect'?" And, as current psychological text books are unable to furnish even the basis of an answer, it is necessary to turn to the doctrine of noegenesis, particularly that part which announces that "Every mind tends to keep its total simultaneous cognitive output constant in quantity, however varying in quality." (2) In art this law "bids the artist eliminate everything irrelevant to his aim" - everything that is 'meaningless,' or 'catches the eye' or anything that disturbs 'balance.'

This energy, however, in conformity with the quantitative process of clearness-variation, (3) "tends to adopt a

(1) Here it has been considered desirable to maintain as far as possible Spearman's own phraseology. The following account has therefore been summarised from his own chapter. No further apology need therefore be offered for overloading the text with quotations.

(2) The Nature of Intelligence, p.131.

(3) Ibid. pp. 139-140.

unified mode of distribution, namely, that of a single intense focus shading off into a less and less intense background. To obtain the perfect energising required by pictorial art, then, one primary requisite is that the aesthetic interest of the picture should be adapted to such a uni-focal distribution of the energy." And this psychological fact, Professor Spearman finds, has been taken into account "in all good paintings," differentiating them from "inartistic photographs." The device of linking "the focus of aesthetic interest" to a "single principal light" is well-known in pictorial art and reaches its climax in the works of Rembrandt.

Also contributing to perfect energising is the principle of retentivity, which states: "The occurrence of any cognitive event produces a tendency for it to occur afterwards."⁽¹⁾ All mental acts are facilitated or 'perfected' by repetition, which "is in good truth one of the foundation pillars of pictorial composition." In Moore's Dreamers each time one glances from one of the three figures to another "the facilitation by similarity and the feeling of this facilitation gives to the spectator a fresh shock of joy." But an important distinction must here be made between the mere occurrence of similarity (or any other relation) and its being perceived to occur. That the one can happen without

(1) Ibid. p.132.

the other is obvious from the fact that innumerable similarities occur which are never noticed; but when the act of perceiving them does occur, it "affords a further and often greater joy on its own account. To distinguish between these two different sources of delight is of greater importance even for ordinary practical purposes, since the two require different mental attitudes. The bare facilitation is best enjoyed by a passivity which merely lets the perceiving of the picture take its idle course. But the other joy, that of perceiving the similarities, can only be secured in highest measure by an activity which goes keenly in pursuit of them." Botticelli's Birth of Venus, because of its "delightful repetitions," affords a splendid opportunity of comparing the passive and active attitudes in perceiving similarities.

Now, in addition to the facility for repetition produced by the principle of retentivity, it also produces the process of anoegenetic⁽¹⁾ reproduction, whereby "items are brought into the cognitive field in a manner which postulates their having been there previously."⁽²⁾ It might be expected, then, "that the energy of an act of perception would be well-disposed by the fact of its objects being

(1) "In the sense that they neither have the nature of self-evident propositions nor generate any new items in the cognitive field." Ibid. p.137.

(2) Ibid.

intimately related with one another." Art furnishes a "close conformity" to this principle. The intimate inter-relation of the figures in Rubens' Descent from the Cross "renders the picture an intelligible unified whole," yielding delight not only by facilitation and the realisation of its cause, but "by actively perceiving the relations and the unity they constitute. Once again, then, each kind of aesthetic reward has its own most favourable road of approach: by way of indolence, and by that of diligence."

Mere repetition, however, is by no means aesthetically pleasing, because of the operation of the principle of fatigue: "The occurrence of any cognitive event produces a tendency opposed to its occurring afterwards."⁽¹⁾ The principle of retentivity which demands repetition must, then, be supplemented by the principle of fatigue which requires variety. Again, the aesthetic reward is twofold: "variety not only brings a passively enjoyable recovery from fatigue, but also furnishes material for delightful activity in perceiving further relations." In the Golden Stairs, by Burne-Jones, the many repetitions do not produce fatigue, because every figure presents its own distinct individuality. Repetition and variety are not loosely interlarded, but intimately wedded together. "The very

(1) Ibid. p.134.

arrangement of likeness and difference is itself continually repeated with variations; and all this again, in rising order of relativity; such is the essential nature of degree of 'organisation.' Out of these two virtues, variety and repetition ... there springs the miracle that is multiplicity in unity; differentiation with integration," from which "derive harmony, rhythm and balance."

The fourth quantitative principle states that "The intensity of cognition can be controlled by conation." Not by rendering the flow of energy more perfect does this principle function in art, but rather by indicating how far it is so. A person who feels his energising well disposed towards a picture does not base this evaluation on "the absolute amount of the stream," but on the ratio of this to the effort he makes. And he evaluates the energising of the artist himself in a similarly relative fashion. "To such an origin may in part be attributed ... the usual high appreciation of slight sketches." Now "Every manifestation of the preceding four quantitative principles is super-imposed upon, as its ultimate basis, certain primordial but variable individual potencies."⁽¹⁾ Hence, in order that the energy of any person should be well disposed towards its object, it must be available in sufficient amount; otherwise

(1) Ibid. pp.136-137.

the result will be failure, which is the reverse of perfection. A picture which elicits perfect energising in the sophisticated expert may produce only confusion and pain in the spectator, whose capacity and training belong to other spheres.

These five principles have been concerned only with the perfecting of the energy in respect of its flowing with the least possible hindrance. For energising to be perfect it must be obedient to the person's want. The deeper aspects of this proposition raise, however, the whole problem of motives as well as that of the relations between knowing, striving and feeling, which Professor Spearman begs leave to pass over lest "that way madness lies." But the conational factor in its more specific references cannot well be ignored. So, for the sake of argument, he assumes that "all persons do always want their energy to spring forth as unimpeded as possible, and that they find their pleasure in its doing so." It remains true, however, that they differ as to which channel they wish it to follow. "Applying this to the case of painting, it may be inferred that if any person, whether by conviction, tradition, or mere habit has adopted any particular artistic theory, then any contrary instance will thwart his conation and vitiate his energising. For him at any rate the beauty will be

defective. And there would seem to lie the most prolific source of discord between rival artistic schools."

In the light of the qualitative laws of noegenesis Professor Spearman begins his psychological analysis⁽¹⁾ with the simplest activity, that of imitating nature, "serving the cause of truth." Suppose a person is confronted with two sheets of paper, the one on his left (A) presenting a horizontal straight line and the other blank(B).

A

B

He is then asked to imagine on sheet B a line similar to that on A. In such a situation, then, he is given two things: (i) the horizontal line on A; and (ii) the relation of similarity, which he remembers from experience of it between things that, in general, were not such lines. His task is, then, to displace this relation from the things where it was really discovered to quite a different thing, the line A. By doing so, he creates mentally (and afterwards physically) the correlative line on B (the 'correlate')

A more complex case arises where the object has not to be

(1) Summarised from Chap. VI, Creative Mind, pp.67-68.

copied absolutely, but relatively. The subject, for instance, may have been asked to make his new horizontal line on B in the same ratio to the vertical line on B as the horizontal on A is to the vertical on A:



Here two essential processes are involved: first, the person perceives the relation of the vertical to the horizontal line on A; and second, he transfers the relation to the vertical line on B. The first is an example of the second quantitative principle; the second a case of the third.

Now in turning from "such bare production of truth" to the production of beauty, the form of the process is similar. It may be recalled that primary among the needs of beauty was repetition. And this, at its simplest, is nothing more than what has just been illustrated; the figures B were repetitions of those on A. But, in order to bring in the indispensable complement of repetition - variety - the form of the process is unchanged; only the relation of likeness has to be replaced by that of unlike-

ness. The form merely becomes more complex, not essentially different, when the likeness and the unlikeness have to be intimately blended together, and, furthermore, are extended to wholes of higher and higher order.

Rubens' picture, the Descent from the Cross, is an example in which the relations are other than those of likeness or unlikeness. Professor Spearman sets forth his 'analysis' as follows: "Now, by the time that Rubens had decided upon his general theme, he naturally must have known the appearances of the principal personages in their normal attitudes. Accordingly, he would now have to ask himself: how will their normal appearances be modified by their helping in the drama of the Descent? To solve this problem, the general form of the mental process cannot well be other than that which occurs in the ordinary test, where the subject is shown a folded piece of paper with a notch cut in it and is asked how the paper will look when unfolded. In either case a situation is given (the normal appearances of persons, or the folded paper). So is also a relative character (the taking down of a heavy object, or the being unfolded) which has really been known in different circumstances. The task, then, is to transfer the given relative character to the given situation, thus educing the 'correlative' situation. Once more, clearly, the third principle

is called into play."

It will be convenient to deal with Professor Spearman's arguments seriatim, as they have been presented in the preceding summary.

Theoretically every act of artistic creating comprises two aspects: (1) the subjective, characterised by the impulsion to create; and (2) the objective, characterised by the actual process of physical creative production.⁽¹⁾ The first includes, presuppositionally, not only those more or less enduring elements of the artist's past experience, which constitute the subjective background of his being at any given moment of his life as an ordinary member of mankind, but also those special elements which, at the particular moment of his experiencing the impulsion to create, make him what he is and cause him to desire what he desires. The second includes, in addition to the foregoing, all those elements of experience derived from the production and contemplation of works of art in the past as well as those arising out of and involved in the present activity of creative production. In actual practice, however, at all

(1) Art "is not practised in order to communicate to others thoughts and fancies which otherwise the poet must keep to himself and remain as much a poet; he is not a poet till he has spoken or a painter till he has painted, and produced something outside of himself." Alexander, S., "The Creative Process in the Artist's Mind," British Journal of Psychology, Vol. XVII, pp.306-307.

events in the typical case, the two aspects are so intimately blended organically as to present to the artist a single indivisible experience:⁽¹⁾ that is, when technical ability functions pari passu with artistic need, or when the flow of energy is perfectly divided between the different psychological "engines"⁽²⁾ involved.

Now if the total simultaneous cognitive output is constant in quantity, it is obvious that the greater the amount of 'energy' usurped by the purely subjective, psychical part of the artistic creative experience, the less there will be available for the objective physical part; and, conversely, the greater the amount usurped by the physical part, the less there will be available for the psychical part. Such a proposition, however, requires both amplification and clarification: indeed, as Professor Spearman

(1) "The work of art consists of materials which assume a form, two things which are separable only in thought and not in reality." Alexander, S., Beauty and Other Forms of Value, p. 54.

(2) "But if this term (energy) be adopted, we must remember that mental just as much as material energy is incapable of acting in a vacuum. There is absolute need of the supplementary concept of a system of psychical, or at least psycho-physiological "engines" into any one or more of which the energy can alternatively be diverted; for the theory to be rational, this second factor is as necessary as the first. On the psychological side, a different engine must be allowed for every different kind of mental operation." The Nature of Intelligence, p.132.

admits, this matter of the disposal of energy "opens up a pretty vista of metaphysical dialectics"⁽¹⁾ and raises questions of the utmost importance to the psychology of art. Merely to assert that the law of constancy of cognitive output bids the artist eliminate everything irrelevant to his aim is not particularly illuminating, for this matter of aim contains the crux of the whole problem of art.

But, supposing for the sake of argument that the artist's sole aim is to produce a beautiful object, the above assertion, true as it probably is, gives no indication whatsoever as to what controls and directs the flow of energy into those channels underlying the production of beauty. It does not say how the artist arrives at the most perfect or the 'best-fitting' relation. It cannot be purely a matter of successful energising, according to Professor Spearman's theoretical explanation of the process. Nor, indeed, does it follow that perfect energising on the part of the artist necessarily leads to the production of beauty in the classical (i.e. Spearman's) sense of the term. If, on the other hand, the artist's aim is to produce a form appropriate to his desire, it may not demand beauty at all, but something radically different, yet none the less valuable artistically and psychologically. An attempt

(1) Creative Mind, p.51.

must therefore be made to deal with the problem of the relation of the purely psychical part of the artistic creative process to the physical or technical part.

It is at once obvious that if the artistic creative process is regarded as purely mental (i.e. taking place in the mind alone) it follows that what is known as 'technique' must be a separate process involving a different 'engine' or set of 'engines.' It also follows that the artistic creative process - since ex hypothesi it does not include the physical part - must be a different manifestation of creativity from technical expression. Or is technique, as Croce maintains, merely the mechanised reproduction of what has already been created in the mind?⁽¹⁾ In other words: if it is a fact that the artist first creates in his mind, then translates into physical terms what he has created, technique must be either a further creative process of educating new correlates from the previously created fundamentals or a purely mechanical act. But since any mechanistic theory of activity is not only incompatible with Spearman's fundamental hypothesis but with the very idea of creativity, the latter may be ruled out as irrelevant. There remains the first, which involves the complete separation of artistic creation from technique; and this in turn involves

(1) Vide Chap. V supra.

the division of the total energy available for art into two independent streams.

Waiving the second part of the proposition pro tem., the question arises: Can artistic creation take place independently of technique - that is, independently of physical expression? Since this question cropped up in a slightly different context in dealing with Croce's theory, it will not be necessary to go over the ground a second time. The answer is an emphatic negative, for, as Professor Alexander has rightly emphasised, the artist is not an artist until he has produced something outside of himself. No artistic creation exists independently of real (or imagined)⁽¹⁾ physical material. The notion of artistic creation, apart from the living (or imagined) artistic reality, is a meaningless psychological abstraction.

(1) It may be objected that this is a tacit admission of the whole case against which the argument is directed. Not so; for in the first place an imagined work of art (if such could exist) is not a work of art until it is translated into physical material; and in the second place the idea of an imagined work of art includes of necessity the imagined technical manipulation of material. And this simply means that both the creative process and the technical process have been carried out in the mind prior to the act of physical construction. But as has been argued elsewhere an imagined work of art can at best be only a partial or incomplete work of art: its completeness is imaginary. Vide footnote p.202 supra.

That such an abstraction appears to lie at the very foundation of Spearman's theory of artistic creativity is evidenced in particular by the following specific statements: "the final and most highly 'creative' act of the artist derives from transposing relations from their original fundamentals to others, thereby creating (mentally) the correlative fundamentals."⁽¹⁾ But here it is important to proceed with caution, for the word 'final' is ambiguous. The discussion leading up to this declaration might suggest that Spearman is referring to the artist's final brush stroke, but the parenthesis in the sentence rather suggests the contrary construction, namely, the final mental act. And this latter interpretation seems to be the correct one, for he states at the beginning of the chapter from which the quotation is taken that his main task "is to examine how far and in which way the mind displays the power to create,⁽²⁾ and again at the end that "our examination has resulted in

(1) Creative Mind, p.72. (present author's italics). Cf. the following from The Nature of Intelligence, p.92.

"Just as by virtue of the second principle a person hearing two tones may immediately know that the relation between them is a musical fifth, so also by virtue of the third principle when a single tone has been sounded and the relation of a fifth (as an abstract concept) has been mentally presented, the person may immediately have a presentation of the further tone which bears such a relation to the one given. He may furnish a palpable proof of such a presentation by actually singing the correlative tone."

(2) *Ibid.* p.67.

showing that the final act in creativity must be assigned to the third noegenetic process; that of displacing a relation from the ideas which were its original fundamentals to another idea, and thereby generating the further idea which is correlative to the last named, and which may be entirely novel." Thus willy-nilly he has committed himself to the Crocean view of the relation of technique to artistic creation - a view which has already been condemned as untenable,⁽¹⁾ not only on the ground that it is psychologically false, but also because it ignores the fundamental importance of material to all artistic production.

Throughout his whole discussion of artistic creativity there is hardly anything to indicate that it has ever crossed his mind that artistic creation is always creation in physical material and not merely a mental act. Thus, when he appears to be explaining artistic creation, he is merely explaining the mental aspect of technical invention, which precedes the actual production of physical beauty. There is therefore nothing anomalous about the proposition stated above, namely, that if the artistic creative process is regarded as purely mental, then technique must be a separate inventive process involving a different 'engine' or set of 'engines.' But, because artistic creation is not

(1) Chap. V supra.

a purely mental act, Professor Spearman's theory of creativity is totally inadequate as an explanation of the creativity of the artist (as distinct from the mere producer of beauty). The purely mental aspect of artistic creation is nothing but the preliminary stages of it, which precede the real artistic creative achievement. Artistic creation "is generated in and through the expression itself."⁽¹⁾

To some extent the foregoing discussion has prepared the way for an answer to the question of the relation of the mental part of the artistic creative process to the technical part. In view of what has just been said, it is impossible to regard technique merely as the means of objectifying what is already created mentally, something supervening upon and independent of the mental creation. For such a view either reduces art to a metaphysical abstraction, or if not this, it implies that any mental creation which has not been objectified in physical terms is incomplete to the extent that it requires material objectification to realise it fully - which is tantamount to saying that it is not an artistic creation at all, but merely an imaginative experience. This, however, would be a refutation of the thesis that the final and most highly 'creative' act of the artist derives from transposing relations from

(1) Alexander, S., Art and ^{the} material, p. 17.

their original fundamentals to others, thereby creating mentally the correlative fundamentals. From this dilemma it is difficult to see any means of escape which would not undermine the whole foundation of the theory.

Professor Spearman's difficulty arises from his (perhaps) unwitting acceptance of an all too prevalent and utterly false assumption that 'art' and the 'technique of art' are separable phenomena. (1) "We often hear," states

(1) To trace the historical background of this dichotomy would involve a too lengthy digression from the immediate topic, but it is worth remarking that it was Lessing (1729-1781) who first originated the idea of technique in fine art, and it is closely associated with the question of 'form' and 'content' which has occupied such an important place in modern theory. For Lessing one art differed from another only in respect of medium, and believing that the end of fine art was to give pleasure he adopted three criteria of aesthetic excellence: (a) the beauty of the subject portrayed; (b) the accuracy of the representation; (c) the technical skill of the artist. Prior to the latter part of the eighteenth century the distinction between 'art' and 'technique' hardly received notice, although there was much disputation about the 'kinds' of art and their relationships. During the Renaissance the common denominator of painting and sculpture was drawing and their sole aim was the accurate representation of natural phenomena. No consideration was given to technique in the modern sense of the term as meaning (according to the Oxford English Dictionary) the "mechanical skill in art." This originated in the metaphysical dialectics of the eighteenth century aesthetic philosophers. It became a cardinal point in the philosophical speculations of the nineteenth century and strongly influenced the academic art of the period. Vide Chambers, The History of Taste, passim; Bosanquet, History of Aesthetics, pp.217-229; Wilenski, The Modern Movement in Art, passim.

Mr John Copley,⁽¹⁾ "that this or that man would be a great artist if he knew what to do with his skill; that he has every resource of his medium at his command but no purpose to which to put it; or, conversely, that a man is a great artist though he lacks the technique to execute his conceptions." If these assertions were sound "We should be able to separate creative design from executive skill and to find men perfect in one but wholly lacking the other. It would be so simple ... but it would not be true... There is a skill that grows with the need of it, as a work of art develops; and there is a 'skill' that exists by and for itself. The latter kind is easy to see and wears badly, the former is harder to find and endures. True technical skill and false technical skill are as distinguishable as great art and bad art, with which they are intimately allied. Great art begets great skill; and bad art may be the vehicle for clever tricks... Execution cannot be detached from design." Mr. Copley's argument is sound; it is as impossible to separate technique from art as it is to separate art from the material of art. Art and what is spoken of as the 'technique of art' are merely different aspects of a single phenomenon; art is creation in material and technique is simply "that which appertains to material

(1) "True and False Technique," Print Collectors' Quarterly, Vol. XXI, No. 1, January, 1934.

in art."(1) Artistic creation is possible only through the manipulation of material in such a manner as to reveal the creation to the creator, the artist. And even if the creative process took place in the mind alone (which it cannot) it would necessarily include the imaginary manipulation of the medium of expression. The term 'technique' therefore has no meaning in the theory of art except as the vehicle of the artist's state of mind producing the impulsion to create; take away technique and nothing remains that has any artistic significance; and take away "the living spring which rises by its own power in pure and abundant jets" and nothing remains but manual dexterity.(2) The relation of the purely psychical part of the creative process to the physical part is such therefore that it is impossible to disengage one from the other without mutilating both. The artist "can bring up between himself and the object that medium of his vision that he thinks will most intensify it

(1) Copley, John, op. cit.

(2) Cf. Maritain, J., Art and Scholasticism, p.13. "Manual dexterity therefore is no part of art, but merely a material and extrinsic condition; the labour by which a virtuoso who 'plays the harp' acquires agile fingers does not increase his art itself or produce any special form; it merely removes a physical impediment to the practice of the art: non generat novam artem, sed tollit impedimentum exercitiiejus: art remains entirely by the side of the mind." Also pp.7-8. "The work of art has been pondered before being made ... before emerging into matter... Its formal element ... is its being controlled and directed by the mind. If this formal element is in the least lacking, the reality of the art becomes correspondingly dissipated."

in its imaginative character and that will most completely make it vision indeed. This bringing up of the medium we might almost regard as the authoritative gesture, as the act of psychological command, that exorcises the sterile spirit of the practical intellect and liberates the creative forces of the imagination."⁽¹⁾

It may be submitted, then, that Professor Spearman's 'final and most highly creative act,' far from being the final act in the artistic creative process, is merely the preliminary and more or less inchoate part of aesthetic incubation.⁽²⁾ For, as has already been indicated, even when the agent's sole aim is the production of a beautiful object, the transposing of relations by means of the second and third noegenetic processes cannot present to the mind the correlative fundament in any determinate sense; it requires the further process of physical production before the precise correlate is established. In producing his picture Lines Expressive of Storm all Crane had to do (according to Spearman) was to increase the bending of the trees beyond his previous experience and thereby produce the appearance of a storm that also transcends experience.

(1) Thorburn, J. M., Art and the Unconscious, p.101.

(2) In the limited sense of the term, i.e. pertaining to beauty.

Here the relation is the relation of "more so" - "the simple device of exaggeration." Surely Professor Spearman would not insist in suggesting that in educing this required relation Crane had achieved in his mind the whole creative process by apprehending the precise correlate he required? Yet that is what his theory implies. The relation of "more so" is simple; but just how much more so is the real question. And that cannot be determined in the mind but in material. "The essence of the work of art is that in it creative mind and the material are indissolubly fused. That this fusion is the meeting of two separate beings, the man who creates and the material which receives from him its form, is indeed vital to the artistic situation, but arises from the finitude of the creator and his material."⁽¹⁾ Thus, where his theory seems soundest, as in its application to creation of the non-artistic sort, it may break down in practice just as it has broken down here, through his failure to recognise the fundamental importance of material to all aesthetic and artistic production. And this failure, it is only charitable to suggest, is probably due to lack

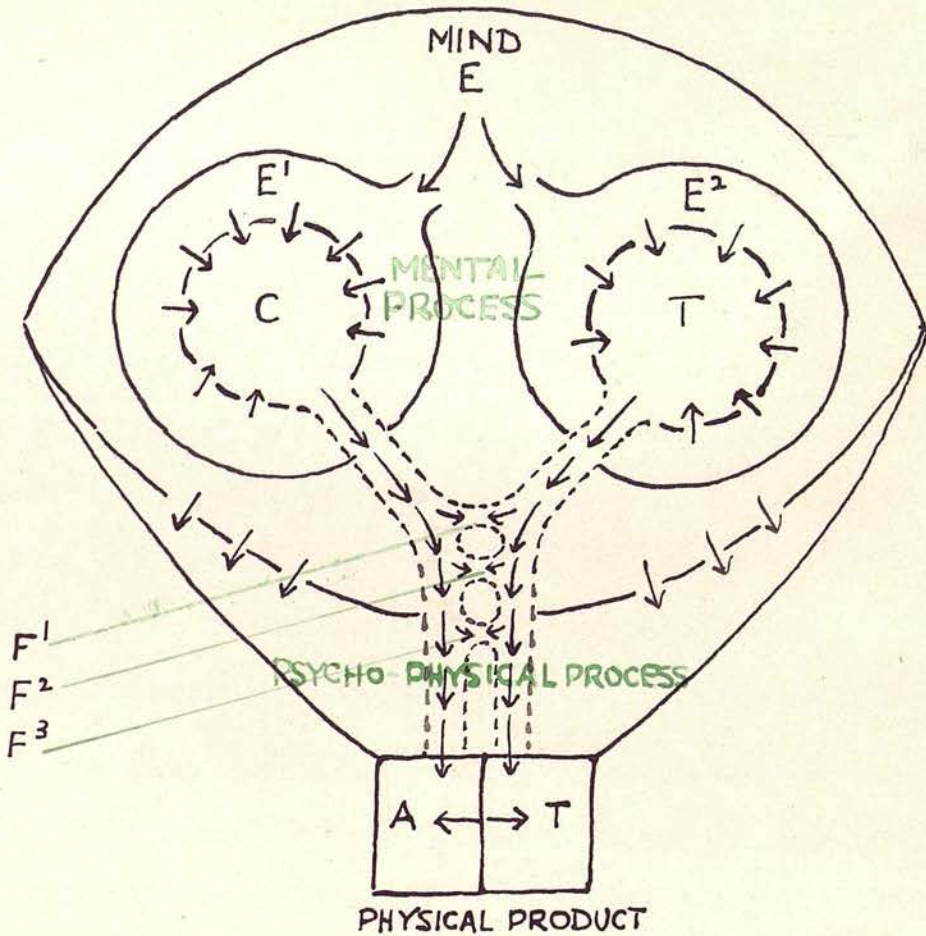
(1) Alexander, S., "Artistic and Cosmic Creation," Proceedings of British Academy, Vol. XIII, p.259. Cf. also: The "physical material work is organic to artistic creation. Artistic production is on a line with the other organic actions by which we become aware of physical things in perception... (pp.252-253) ... the material of the work of art is no mere technical ingredient but vital..." (p.257).

of knowledge and practical experience, which he could not reasonably be expected to possess.

The bearing of the foregoing discussion upon the question of the disposal of the artist's energy will be obvious. It was contended that Professor Spearman's theory involved the division of the total energy available for artistic creation into two independent streams, as it were, one serving the process of mental creation, the other serving the process of physical expression or technique. Now if it were true that artistic creation proceeded in the manner suggested by Spearman, it would be necessary to postulate such a twofold distribution of potential energy. The whole process may be symbolised by a diagram. (Fig. 1).

It will be observed that the energy absorbed by C and T flows in two parallel but independent streams, between which at F^1 , F^2 and F^3 there are possible points of confluence. These are intended to represent the possibility of imagining the physical manipulation of the medium in advance of the actual process of execution. This, however, does not occur in every instance; the streams are therefore represented as flowing direct, through the agency of the body, to the physical product where they become interfused.

Now, since it has been shown that in artistic creation the creative process and the technical process do not derive



E - Total Energy.

E^1 - Energy absorbed by Mental Creation.

E^2 - Energy absorbed by Technical Processes.

C - Creation.

T - Technical Ability.

F^1 , F^2 , F^3 - Inter-mental Paths.

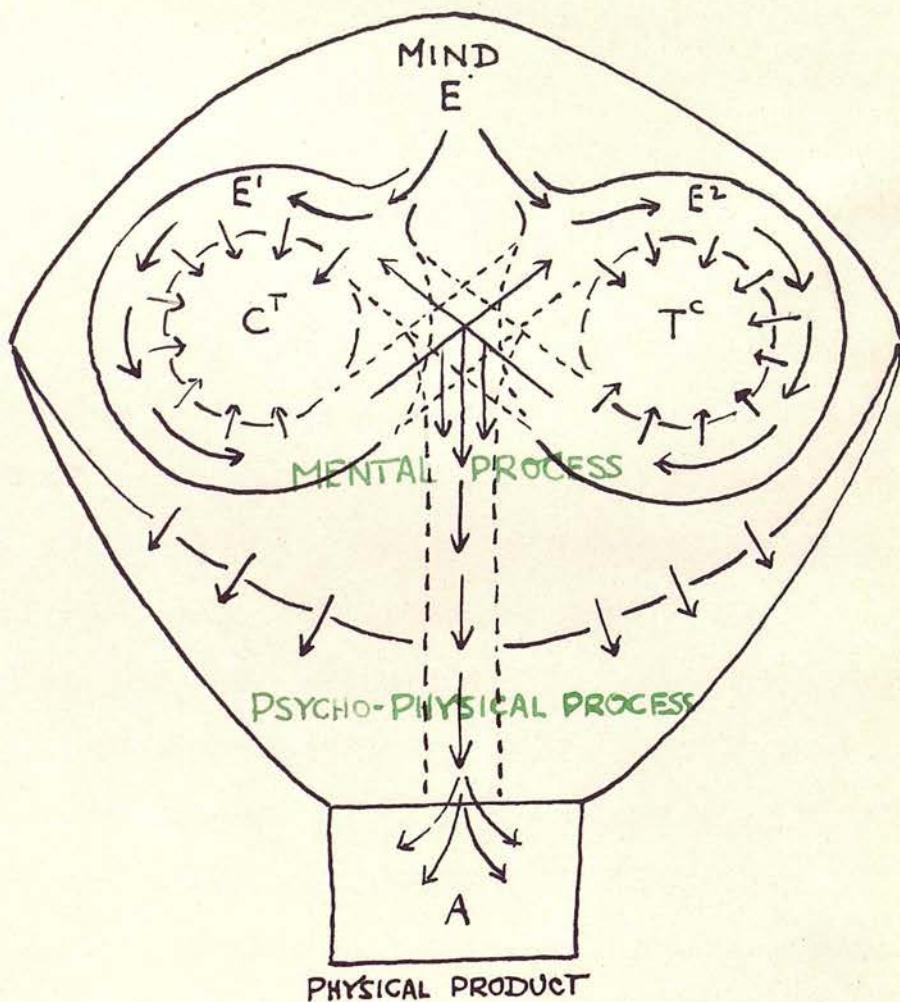
A - Artistic Content.

T - Technical Content.

from independent functions but from one function (the immediate artistic exigency), it follows that no such absolute division is possible. The available energy does not circulate, as it were, in a constantly moving pool, but presses out here and there into different channels of coördinated activities both physical and mental, according to the inherited or acquired dispositions of the individual. Artistic activity is such a coördinated activity involving complementary mental and physical functions.⁽¹⁾ "The urge that prompts" the production of works of art, states Mr. Copley,⁽²⁾ "either by direct vision of nature or indirectly from stored knowledge drawn out by the imagination, will be indefinite until its execution begins in the material adopted; then it clarifies itself slowly by the stern help of the material. The artist, in tackling his material, is searching not only for a means to express his vision but for light upon the vision itself. What we call technique is a means not only of re-creation, but of creation. The vision, as well as the image that will be made of it, depends for its existence on this technique, and the whole - idea, manipulation and eventual object - grow together, always on the ultimate margin of the present..." Without technique artistic creation simply could not take place. This

(1) "Every time I paint a picture," says Manet to Mallarmé, "I throw myself into the water that I may learn to swim."

(2) Op. cit. (present author's italics).



E - Total Energy.

E^1 - Energy absorbed by Mental Artistic Incubation (pre-creative)

E^2 - Energy absorbed by Technical Processes.

C^T - Creative Impulsion associated with Technique.

T^C - Technical Ability associated with Creative Impulsion.

A - Work of Art.

process may be symbolised by a further diagram. (Fig. 2).

Comparing this diagram with the preceding one the following points of difference may be noted: (a) In Figure 1 the purely creative act is represented as taking place in C independently of T, which must be regarded as a latent capacity until stimulated by an act of will (the will to execute); whereas in Figure 2 C^T and T^C are complementary to each other. (b) In Figure 1 the energies emanating from C and T flow in parallel but (more or less)⁽¹⁾ independent streams to produce (via the agency of the body) a physical product invested with two values, namely, artistic idea or content and technical skill or form; whereas in Figure 2 the energies emerging from C^T and T^C flow into each other and emerge again into a single stream to produce (via the bodily agency) a physical product invested with a single value - form-content or an artistic creation. In other words, Professor Spearman's theory of creativity involves two different abilities, creative ability and technical ability: whereas the present one involves not two but one, which is Art.

"The topic or subject," as Professor Alexander has said, "interests or agitates the artist and throws him into an excitement in which we can discriminate two sorts of

(1) Because of F^1 , F^2 and F^3 .

elements, the passions appropriate to the subject and the passion proper to the artist... I shall call these respectively the material passions and the formal passions. The formal passion ... is fed and controlled by the passions aroused by the subject, but is, though dependent on them, superadded to them, as their fine flowering into something they do not themselves contain."⁽¹⁾ And again,⁽²⁾

"The poem is not the translation of the poet's state of mind, for he does not know till he has said it either what he wants to say or how he shall say it. The imaginative experience supposed to be in his mind does not exist there. What does exist is the subject which detains him and fixes his thoughts and images and passions and gives his excitement a colour and direction which would be different with a different subject-matter. Excitement caused and detained by this subject, and at once enlarged, enlightened and inflamed by insights into it, bubbles over into words or the movements of the brush or chisel. When the artist has achieved his product, he knows from seeing it or hearing it what the purpose of his artistic effort was. He makes the discovery of what were the real directive forces of his action. All that he was aware of before, so far as he was

(1) Beauty and Other Forms of Value, pp. 54-55. Vide also pp. 75 to 83, Chap. V, Form and Content.

(2) Ibid. pp. 59-60.

aware of them, was the thoughts and emotions of the subject-matter directly produced or indirectly suggested, and doubtless often presented in imaginative form. These combine with, or in part are identical with, the more or less unconscious movings and emotions yielded by his 'visions and faculty divine' and with the gathered expertness of his technical flair, to guide his hand or his voice or his speech into the movements which end in the material work of art.

"Two conclusions follow from this statement, which have been anticipated. The external work being an organic part of the creative process, it ceases to be possible to hold that the external material is needed merely in order to communicate the artistic experience to others. That experience would not exist except for material embodiment... Next, it follows that Wordsworth was, I must believe, mistaken when he said that there are many poets in the world, who have "the vision and the faculty divine; yet wanting the accomplishment of verse;" as if verse were a charm superadded to the real poetic gift. His own words about the poet give a truer view: "he murmurs by the running brooks a music sweeter than their own." Poets and all artists, it will be admitted, are more sensitive to things and persons than ordinary men. Such greater sensitiveness

does not, however, make them poets. You have only to compare the magnificent lines describing the mystical absorption of the youth in the spectacle of nature, in the same poem, with Spinoza's scientific account of the 'intellectual love of God' in order to recognise that two great men may have like emotions and the one be a poet and the other a philosopher, and the expression of each be perfect in its kind, but that of the one a poet's work, and that of the other a philosopher and scientific man's. In the second case the words only catch fire from the subject-matter, in the other the words themselves are on fire."

Before concluding, it will be well to pass in review quite briefly Professor Spearman's examination of pictorial art under his remaining headings of Emotionality, Exaggeration and Self-Expression.

The affective aspect of artistic activity which lies in a peculiar way at the very foundation of the problem is treated as a matter of very minor importance: it is regarded as merely a further means of making pictures more delightful, consisting at bottom in exciting emotions over and above those which derive from beauty and reality.⁽¹⁾ These emotions are of a 'make-believe' sort and afford another channel for perfect energising through feeling rather than

(1) Creative Mind, pp.53-55.

perceiving. Real emotions also may play a part both in the creating and the enjoyment of art. But, because these emotions are apt to derive from unpleasant situations, frequently involving laborious and disagreeable responsive behaviour, they may seriously thwart the perfection of energy. Make-believe emotions, on the other hand, are facile and 'cheap;' they rise up spontaneously by associative reproduction. "For innocent recreation they have not their match. And our enjoyment of them even achieves, by some strange twist of thought, the surplusage of titillating our vanity."

In pictorial art 'make-believe' emotions adhere to their objects; they tend to be projected from the subject to the object. "Instances are when a vast abyss shows signs of antiquity and power; or armies suggest the cruel shedding of blood; or a smile gives token of gaiety and friendliness. Even the simplest constituents of a pictorial object, its curves, its colours, and so forth, are rich in such associative emotions." "In general the artists giving more support to this second kind of aesthetic work are those of the vague, mystical, and storm-tossed, 'romantic' school," and their preference is for "what is vague and indefinite, such as imperceptible gradations rather than sharply cut lines." Here again Professor Spearman shows

his complete lack of sensibility to the most fundamental aspect of the problem of artistic creativity, namely, the formal aspect, which derives primarily not from emotional responses to 'real' objects and sensations but from emotional responses to real or imagined forms (including colours) or from emotional situations which demand form for their release and appeasement. And such emotions are just as real as the real emotions cited by Spearman. Indeed all emotions aroused directly by the artistic situation (whether in its creative or its receptive aspect) are real emotions; the real and 'make-believe' emotions referred to by Spearman are quite irrelevant to art, and he is quite right in calling the latter facile and cheap! But when he states that the simplest constituents of the pictorial object, such as its curves and colours, are rich in associated emotion, he misses the whole artistic significance of form.

Enough has already been said to show the weakness of his examination of exaggeration in pictorial art.⁽¹⁾ His analysis of "Self-Expression" displays the same failure to grasp fundamental issues. "The abandonment," states Spearman,⁽²⁾ "of plain correspondence between the picture and what is depicted results only in introducing some

(1) Vide p.270 supra.

(2) Creative Mind, pp. 70-71.

further and more complex relation between the two. Commonly, this further relation is one which may be described as that of 'best-fitting.' This becomes an appreciable factor even in what is called painting with breadth; here the exceedingly numerous gradations in the original objects are replaced by a small number in the picture; clearly these few have at any rate to be made to 'fit' as best they can. And with those schools of painting where the departure from the original grows more extravagant, then the use of this relation becomes more and more conspicuous." The first instance he gives is that of a picture entitled The Ship by Friesz, "where natural hard angular rocks are replaced - to carry on the motif of sex - by best fitting soft pulpy masses." The second is Picasso's Lady, where each natural projection is represented in the picture "by the best fitting prismatic body." Now, apart from the very doubtful validity of Spearman's interpretations, the relation of 'best-fitting' is exceedingly vague; it might mean anything. As an explanation it is valueless - indeed, misleading, for it implies a process which is foreign to the artist's experience. His third instance is a Still Life by Braque, to which reference has already been made. In this picture he states "the original material is supposed to have been some tiles or sheets of metal on either side

of a beam of wood, together with fragments of musical instruments. Those in the picture are mingled higgledy-piggledy, superposed on one another as if partially transparent, and mixed up with abstract designs. Indeed, the fitting of the picture which the artist has chosen as the best possible might perhaps to other persons appear more like the worst possible." And he adds "It may be compared with the picture by a schizophrenic patient."! Had Professor Spearman been able to overcome his own aesthetic preconceptions and prejudices he might have been enabled to perceive in this picture not a higgledy-piggledy arrangement of heterogeneous materials, but an exquisitely organised and coherent structure of shapes and textures producing a formal effect at once fascinating and satisfying.⁽¹⁾ But Professor Spearman is so enslaved by the doctrine of the logical coherence of pictorial content that he is unable to see in modern art any form whatever, only symbols of insanity. Any theory of artistic creativity which fails to include within its scope the idea of abstract form must be condemned at the outset as totally inadequate and falsely conceived.

Finally, it may be remarked - in amplification of the statement regarding Professor Spearman's competence to deal

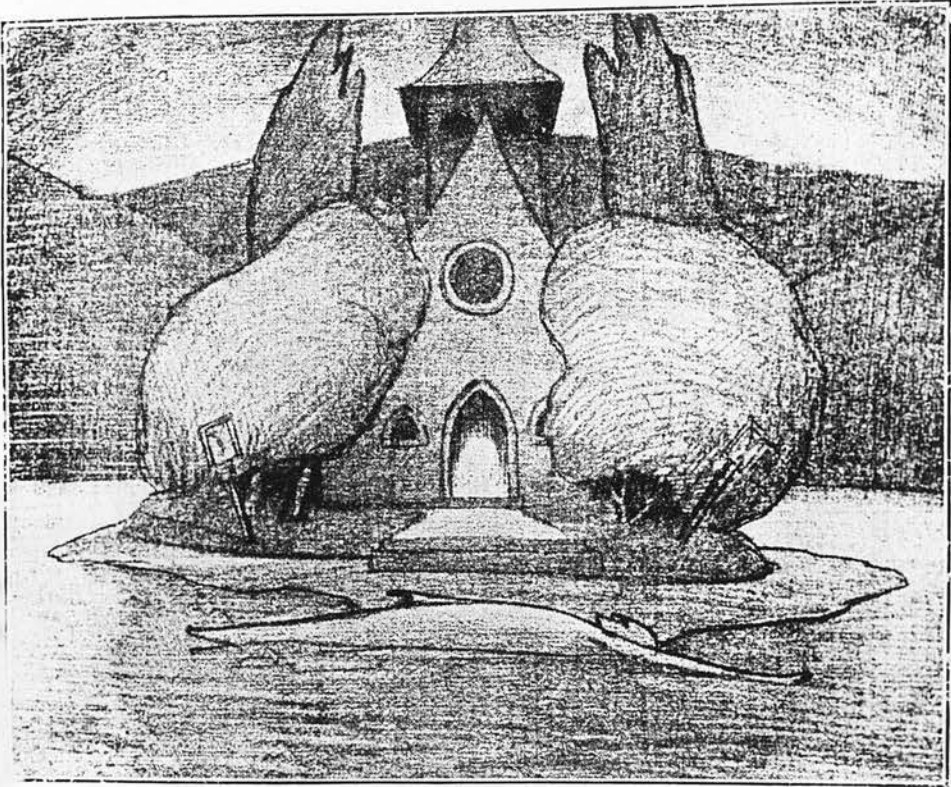
(1) Vide Art Now, by Herbert Read, pp.121-132, for an analysis of the problem underlying Picasso's art.

with artistic creativity - that if the preceding criticism of his theory appears to be unduly severe and lacking in respect for authority, it may be claimed, with regard to the first, that in the exigencies of the case such censure could not very well be avoided; and with regard to the second, it may be urged that any impression of disrespect is neither intended nor implied. It is merely claimed that his theory, however adequate to an explanation of invention, origination and so on, is totally inadequate as an explanation of artistic creation. That there may be an inventive aspect of artistic production is not denied; this, however, refers not to the fundamentally creative part of art, but rather to technical procedure - the eduction of satisfying or beautiful relations. These, it has been shown, not only may be produced mechanically, but belong to beautiful art such as the art of Greece and all classical derivative art, but not necessarily to art in its generic manifestations. The production of beauty can be learned; the production of art can only be fostered by sympathetic guidance and encouragement. The work of art is not an invention, but a discovery of value beyond the range and function of intellectual cognition. Had Professor Spearman established his fundamental assumption that there is no essential difference between creativity of the general sort

and artistic creation, his theory would have been of immense importance to the theory of art. As it stands, the most that can be said of it is that it offers an ingenious explanation of certain aspects of the psychology of technical procedure. From the point of view of the Theory of Art it is a psychological throw-back. Already it has earned a considerable measure of discredit, and it may be expected to go the same way as all intellectualistic theories have gone.

CHAPTER VII.

The Hidden Soul: the Psycho-Analytic View of Art.



REQUIEM

Plate III.

A.



SELF-PORTRAIT

Plate III.

B.



MADNESS

Plate III.

C.

CHAPTER VII.

"Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark; every man in the chamber of his imagery."

Ezekiel, VIII, 12.

"A great statue or picture grows under the power of the artist as a child in the mother's womb: and the very mind which directs the hands in formation is incapable of accounting to itself for the origin, the gradations or the media of the process."

Shelley.

I.

"'Imagination' shares with 'beauty' the doubtful honour of being the chief theme in aesthetic writings of enthusiastic ignorance." Professor John Dewey's statement expresses a lamentable truth.⁽¹⁾ That art depends in the last analysis upon the imaginative power of the mind is probably the tritest of all ideas propounded in the literature of art and aesthetics. It is a commonplace observation that art could not exist at all were it not for this peculiarly mysterious power. A recent writer⁽²⁾ declares

(1) Art as Experience, p. 267.

(2) Gordon, Kate, "Imagination: A Psychological Study," Journal of General Psychology, Vol. XII, No.1, January 1935.

there is hardly to be found in the realm of literary criticism a more important category. From Philostratus (reputed to be the first writer to use the term)⁽¹⁾ to Croce and Santayana scarcely an aesthetic philosopher of any significance has failed to attribute to imagination a premier place in artistic creation, or to refer to the fundamental importance of the power in one or other of its many appellations. Yet it is a remarkable fact that although the term is used glibly, both in scientific and everyday discourse, as if it possessed a clear-cut meaning, there exists no common agreement as to what imagination is or what the term really signifies.

(1) "'Are you going to tell me, then,' said Thespesion, 'that your Pheidias and Praxiteles went up into heaven and took casts of the gods' features and then fashioned them artistically, or had they any other guidance in their modeling?' 'Yes,' said Apollonius, 'a guidance pregnant with wisdom.' 'What was it?' said he; 'surely you cannot mean anything but imitation?' 'Imagination,' replied the other, 'fashioned these works, a more cunning craftsman than imitation. For imitation will fashion what it has seen, but imagination goes on to what it has not seen, which it will assume as the standard of the reality. And imitation is often baffled by awe, but imagination by nothing, for it rises unawed to the height of its own ideal. If you have envisaged the character of Zeus, you must see him with the firmament and the seasons and the stars, as Pheidias strove to do in this statue; and if you are to fashion Athene, you must have in your mind strategy and counsel and the arts and how she sprang from Zeus himself.'" Quoted from Philosophies of Beauty, Carritt, E. F., pp. 42-43.

Most critics from Webbe to Johnston affirm that the object of poetry is the pleasure of the imagination. The word, however, is used very ambiguously. In Bacon's view history is the product of memory, philosophy the product of reason, and poetry the product of the imagination - a submission or adaptation of the shows of things to the desires of the mind. In Locke, and almost every other English psychologist down to Herbert Spencer, the imagination is disregarded and treated as mere illusion. Most commonly it is described as a department of memory. For the Greeks the muses were the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne. Aristotle attributes memory and fantasy to the same region of the mind. In like manner Wolff, in his Rational Psychology, treats of memory in his chapter on imagination; in his Empirical Psychology he treats of imagination and memory in separate chapters; in his Rational Psychology he would treat them both as phases of the same power. In a word, philosophers have never been in agreement as to whether it is better to treat imagination as a department of memory like Locke, or memory as a department of imagination like Malebranche, or to regard the one as identical with the other like Hobbes. Wordsworth, on the other hand, identifies imagination with reason - a view which may be traced back to the speculations of the early logicians, who

divided their science into two compartments of invention and judgment. In the language of the Schoolmen dragons were described as beings of reason - entia rationis. For Richter, "Die Phantasie ist die Weltseele der Seele, und der Elementargeist der übrigen Kräfte." The imagination in Coleridge's view is either primary or secondary. "The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former." In words which "come from his mouth like emperors from the purple,"⁽¹⁾ Ruskin expresses the view that the faculty of imagination is inexplicable.

"'Imagination,'" states Mr. Livingston Welch,⁽²⁾ "is a term which has figured largely in the analyses of human nature made during the last two hundred years, and has a history that goes back to Greek thought. To-day the preponderance of usage designates by 'imagination' a power resident in the human mind of producing something new, and it is generally agreed that there is a fairly definite activity which can be so distinguished in human nature. The term 'imagination,' however, has not always had this meaning;

(1) Vide Dallas, E. S., The Gay Science, Vol. I, pp. 164-193.

(2) Imagination and Human Nature, p. 9.

nor have analyses of human nature always singled out for attention such a distinctive power. The term itself has been employed to represent a variety of things in different types of thought; and the synthetic power which contemporary thinkers find in the mind has been frequently not recognized at all, and frequently when recognized it has been attributed to other faculties, functions, or processes of mind. Thus imagination is not a term with a content that has remained stable; nor is the power which contemporary usage denotes by that term a definite mental process that can be isolated and described. It is indeed clear that the concept of 'the imagination' is but one member of a set of distinctions which have been used in various ways to analyse the common subject-matter of human nature; and that the terms representing these distinctions receive definite meaning only as a part of a particular psychological scheme."

As long ago as 1866 Dallas declared that the "power of imagination is so vast and thaumaturgic that it is impossible to lift a hand or move a step in criticism without coming to terms with it, and understanding distinctly what it is and what it does. On the threshold of every inquiry, it starts up, a strange and unaccountable presence that frights thought from its propriety and upsets all reason." But "when we come to ask what it really means, we are

amazed at the woful deficiency of the information which we can obtain about this all sufficient power." And he complained that "Those who give up a rounded theory of imagination ignore half the facts;" and "that those who recognise nearly all the facts are driven ... to confess that they are a mystery inscrutable ... or throw up their pens with a sigh ... because their explanations would be unintelligible..."⁽¹⁾ Forty years later Ribot states⁽²⁾ that "contemporary science" has studied with great eagerness and success the reproductive imagination, but has "almost entirely neglected" the creative or constructive imagination. "Treatises on psychology," he asserts, "devote to it scarcely a page or two; often indeed do not even mention it." Substantially similar statements have recently been made by an American investigator: which is indeed a curious comment on the progress of a science of such immense human importance. "The word imagination," the investigator points out, "is used in many different ways; and the various meanings seem at first sight unrelated to one another... Some writers of important texts in the field of psychology do not treat the subject at all." And it is roundly asserted that "what a man imagines is the most significant thing

(1) Op. cit., pp.167-173.

(2) Preface to his Essay on the Creative Imagination.

about him."⁽¹⁾ Very little has been done to improve the deplorable state of knowledge concerning this, perhaps the greatest of human powers; to-day, despite the progress of psychological research and the vast accumulation of data, the position is much as it was thirty years ago, when Ribot published his celebrated essay.

Hollingworth remarks⁽²⁾ that, along with memory, the concept imagination has been very loosely used in the history of psychology, and "is often applied to diverse situations which have at most but few common features." And, without professing to offer anything more than a mere sampling of its different applications, he recounts six examples.⁽³⁾ Titchener⁽⁴⁾ points out that "Two hypotheses

(1) Gordon, Kate, op. cit., p.194.

(2) Hollingworth, H. L., Psychology: Its Facts and Principles, p.278.

(3) The first is used to indicate the mere presence of mental imagery; second, it is used to denote any mode of symbolising or representing past or absent events; third, it is used to contrast it with memory; or fourth, to indicate any "uncontrolled play of symbols;" fifth, the term is frequently employed to denote "extreme subjective events, unconfirmed by the reports of other observers;" and finally, the term is applied to those instances in which prompt and animated responses follow upon subtle clues.

(4) A Textbook of Psychology, p.442.

of the nature of the imaginative consciousness are sharply opposed in current discussion. According to the one, the imaginative idea or constellation comes as if from without, by inspiration; the poem sings itself, the painting groups and colours itself to the mental ear and eye; imagination is a native gift or endowment that finds rather than seeks expression. According to the other, the imaginative consciousness is profusely imaginal; associations throng about the focal process; and the product of imagination is the result of choice and arrangement of these associated ideas. On the former hypothesis, the imaginatively gifted individual is the dreamer of dreams and the seer of visions; on the latter, he is the planner, the moulder, the constructor. So imagination appears now as the typically passive and now as the typically active temperament... And witnesses can be brought on both sides. We have not the data for a final characterisation."

More forceful are the comments of R. G. Collingwood, who remarks⁽¹⁾ that in Professor McDougall's Outline of Psychology imagination is not even mentioned in the proper sense of the term. "The very paragraphs," he states, "which deal with 'imagining' define it as 'thinking of

(1) The Mind, ed. by McDowall, R. J. S., p.239, footnote.

remote objects,' i.e. objects not affecting the senses at the moment of thinking of them. To call the meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne 'an object not affecting our senses at the moment of thinking of it,' apart from the misuse of the word 'thinking' would be a suppressio veri; to call it 'a remote object' would be a suggestio falsi, as encouraging a confusion between existing somewhere else and existing nowhere at all. The object of imagination in the proper sense of the word is not remote; it is non-existent. Until that fact is faced not a single step has been taken towards a theory of imagination."

Every investigator, then, is hampered from the beginning by the bewildering mass of complexities and contradictions which the history of imagination contains. "The importance of the subject is, however, equalled only by its difficulty. The chief difficulty is that 'imagination' belongs to a class of words, unhappily tending to increase, that have been used in so many meanings that they have almost ceased to have any meaning."⁽¹⁾ Another, and yet more troublesome and embarrassing handicap arises from the fact that psychology has no theory of imagination as a normal function of the mind to propound. There is a lack even of a commonly accepted theoretical groundwork. Indeed,

(1) Babbit, I., On Being Creative, pp.101-102.

as Miss Gordon points out,⁽¹⁾ some writers of important texts do not even mention the term. Thus Köhler does not speak of imagination in his recent book,⁽²⁾ for, although he deals with "organisation" in connection with sensation and perception, he has not so far made any attempt to treat the problem of creative productivity. But what other psychologists have called imagination is really a series of configurations or traces of previous configurations. Indeed, anything which other psychologists have included in reason or imagination is contained, for Köhler, in his concept of insight.

The failure of psychology to provide any satisfactory account of the nature of creative imagination is a serious matter from the point of view of the art psychologist. For rightly or wrongly imagination has lain at the root of the problem of aesthetics from the classical age onwards. Not only does this failure hinder progressive research in this field, but it has tended in recent years to give psychoanalysis a quite false position in relation to the psychology of a wide, immensely important and vaguely demarcated province of human activity. For, apart from idealistic

(1) Op. cit. p.293 supra.

(2) Gestalt Psychology.

metaphysics, psycho-analysis is the only branch of theoretical knowledge which can lay claim to offering an explanation of imagination as a vital, creative force. One writer of the new school of aesthetics goes so far as to suggest that "The new psychology would seem to have been specially designed to explain the poet."⁽¹⁾ Psychologists are apparently divided as to whether imagination is essentially or mainly imaginal and reproductive or essentially or mainly synthetic and creative. To-day the predominating tendency is either to regard imagination and reason as fundamentally the same type of mental activity, or, instead of speaking of imagination, to employ such terms as Geist, Esprit or Intelligence, including within their scope and meaning those functions and attributes usually connected with imagination and reason.⁽²⁾ The distinction between mere imaginal propensity and the ability to create out of three sounds not a fourth but a star, which is fundamental to any psychological theory of art, has been tardy in gaining recognition by psychologists as offering a fruitful field for research. Psycho-analysis stresses the generative rather than the reproductive aspect of imaginative activity

(1) Baudouin, C., Psycho-Analysis and Aesthetics, p.16.

(2) Cf. Spearman.

and purports to account for its origin and mechanism. It is therefore in line with the needs and outlook of the art psychologist and may well claim his serious attention.

The fundamental importance of drawing a clear distinction between imagination as a universal mode of intrapsychic experience (ranging from the "airy gratifications" of the greengrocer to the sublime unexpressed dream experiences of the artist) and imagination as an artistic element or attribute cannot be too strongly stressed in any discussion of the problem of the meaning and nature of imagination in art. "The most important distinction made by Joubert," says Irving Babbit,⁽¹⁾ "is that between an imagination that does not rise above the impressions of sense and an imagination that gives access to the supersensuous, that is, in short, an organ of insight." Between the 'imaginative' activities of the genuinely 'imaginative' layman and those of the creative artist there is a world of difference. This difference, it may be submitted, is of far greater psychological significance than is generally recognised. Merely to say that one is 'passive' and the other 'active' is not particularly illuminating. This distinction, nevertheless, is of great importance. For the very distinguishing feature of the artist is not so much

(1) Op. cit., p.122.

the kind or quality of his imagination, but his peculiar activity. He is moved by imperious needs to act in a particular manner in response to an inner urge. Unlike the ordinary individual in his greater moments or the greater individual in his ordinary moments, he is not content with the mere psychic experience, the mere "illusion of a higher reality," however fascinating, exalting, bemusing his experience may for the moment be, but is driven on to definite external acts of behaviour which have as their goal the satisfaction of a need to realise fully potentialities but vaguely foreshadowed.⁽¹⁾ The artist's mind is active, but it has no focal point of rest, no object upon which to train its energy, which is the ultimate need of the inward eye. Hence the urgency of his activity to create - to create that eternal value which his mind alone can neither produce nor apprehend within the limitless confines of its own horizon. The ordinary man - and the artist in his ordinary moments - remains in his subjective shell, alert perhaps but passive, unproductive.

"Complete imagination demands externality... Hamlet as a poem in Shakspeare's imagination is already a fusion and incarnation of Shakspeare's spirit in features of the external world, forms of verse, forms of language: 'ringing

(1) Cf. pp. 329-330.

words' as Croce well says... A Hamlet which is less than this is not Hamlet. A Hamlet which is as much as this has sprung from an imagination wedded to the spoken language of England, schooled and inspired by its energy and sonorousness. A poem without its sound, I must maintain, is incomplete as a work of imagination. Shakspeare was taught and disciplined by the spirit which lived in England and in English speech. Without this externality there could be no Hamlet. To say that externality as a category of spirit involves a dualism is to say that it is a dualism when the musician's work is interpreted by the full orchestra... To treat this performance as a practical means for ensuring the preservation and communication of an imagined beauty separate from it, is surely the very feeble expedient of a philosophy which finds itself trying to put asunder what the universe has joined together."⁽¹⁾

Between the 'imaginative' activities of the scientist and the artist there is likewise a wide gap. Attempts have been made to show that in the last analysis they are alike.⁽²⁾ That this is not so was argued in some detail in the preceding chapter. The scientist is concerned with

(1) Bosanquet, B., "Croce's Aesthetic," Mind, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 214-215.

(2) For example: Spearman (Creative Mind); Titchener (Outline of Psychology); Paulhan (Psychologie de l'invention.)

facts relating to the structure of the physical universe and the organisation of these facts into universal laws; whereas the artist begins, as Roger Fry insisted, where the scientist ends. "The difference between the mind of Homer and the mind of Aristotle - the mind of art and the mind of science - is not the difference between less and more in the amount of hidden action, but it is the difference between possessing and being possessed by it - the difference in proportion of energy between the known and the unknown halves of the mind."⁽¹⁾ Questions of fact do not concern the artist, qua artist; that is not his province; he is concerned exclusively with his relationship to the world, to men and things, to space, time and eternity, with the outward expression of his deepest moods and intuitions in terms of plastic material. His imagination is untrammelled, it does not operate within the limited framework of his intellectual knowledge, but ranges beyond into worlds where the moon may be blood and the stars leopards' eyes, where he knows not the constraint of laws except those of his own being and those inherent in the medium which he employs and patiently bends to his will. In his own world the artist is the freest of mortals. "The value of the imagination that is . . . free to 'wander wild,' that is not in other words

(1) Dallas, E. S., op. cit., pp. 263-264.

disciplined to any norm, is precisely the problem raised by the whole modern movement."⁽¹⁾ If imagination means anything other than a general originative power inherent in the nature of mind, then psychology must face the difficult task of explaining why one man's imagination issues in the production of art and another man's remains latent and unproductive.

"There is a saying, as old at least as Horace, that the mind is most vividly impressed through the eye, and it is but natural that when left to itself it should dwell most on the shows of vision - images - whence arises the name of imagination. According to any and every theory of imagination which has been propounded, the name is of less extent than the faculty, and takes a part for the whole."⁽²⁾ The word imagination by its very etymology appears to imply the co-existence of images, with something that is imageless, yet mentally significant (psychic tension,

(1) Babbit, Irving, op. cit., p.91.

(2) Dallas, E. S., op. cit., p. 261.

intuition, imageless thought?); (1) and an image is a mental

(1) "The word 'imagination' comes from the Latin imaginatio, which like the verb imaginor appears first in the post-Augustan era, in Quintilian, Pliny, and Tacitus, to translate a conception already familiar in Greek thought. The Latin term was constructed from the older imago, long used to mean a copy or likeness of almost any sort, and found in Plautus, Virgil, and Cicero, for example, with meanings as diverse as statue, signet, shade, and spirit. Cicero, however, under the influence of Greek thought, employs it also more technically to stand for "an image of a thing found in the mind, a conception, a thought, an idea," although he did not use the more abstract imaginatio. Imago is a close equivalent of the Greek Εἰκών, signifying image, copy, or likeness; and thus the Latin imaginatio was formed on the analogy of the Greek term εἰκασία (from εἶκω, "to be like.") Greek also possesses another term, φαντασία (from φαίνω, "to appear, to be apparent"), and after Aristotle φαντασία rather than εἰκασία is the term technically employed in the analysis of the processes of knowledge. Thus imaginatio, though formed on the model of εἰκασία, is really the translation of the Greek φαντασία.

Both these Greek terms φαντασία and εἰκασία had originally no special psychological connotation; yet when there grew up a distinction between the stimulus and the resulting sensation, for which Democritus seems to have been largely responsible, the term φαντασία came to be associated with sensation and impression as a process of the ψυχή, rather than with a kind of object to be known as existing objectively in the world. Εἰκασία, on the other hand, failed to acquire any such subjective connotation, and is used quite objectively in Plato to denote a certain type of object of knowledge. It would be interesting to trace the genesis of this new usage of φαντασία in the discussions of the Sophistic period, but we hardly find adequate materials for analyzing any distinct and definite form of a theory of knowledge until we come to the so-called later dialogues of Plato." Livingston Welch, op. cit., pp.25-26.

(The present writer is indebted to Miss E. Lindsay for the following comments: although εἰκασία and εἶκω have the same fundamental root, it seems relevant to point out that εἰκασία has its immediate derivation from εἰκάζω, a factitive verb form which means not to "be like" but to "represent, by an image or likeness;" similarly φαντασία is derived from φαντάζω which means not to "seem" but to "make visible.")

picture or representation of an object, action or situation not present here and now to sense or direct perception.

So it happens that in the term there is implicit the notion of co-existing images. But the mere existence of images in the mind cannot be regarded as imagination in any very significant philosophical or psychological sense. Besides images there must needs be some sort of coherence, some unifying principle linking one image with another, producing a meaningful, emotionally valuable or logical configuration. The highest general sense of the term appears to postulate an intellectually or emotionally integrated image-pattern. At the other end of the scale imagination implies a mere riot of imagery, mere phantasy which is but a step from psycho-pathology.

There is, however, another and deeper sense in which the term is employed, mostly in humanistic and pseudo-philosophical literature: the sense which implies an extension of the ordinary range of human perception, a species of insight into the unknown, a revelation or apprehension of meaning and value beyond what is immediately given or apparent - that "illusion of a higher reality" which for Joubert was "an integral part of reality." "Often you find in men an absolute incapacity to realise an unfamiliar situation, to grasp conditions which are not immediately

visible, to recognise facts which to others are a plain and patent element in their lives. That incapacity springs from a dull and uncultivated imagination... A House of Parliament without imagination is a dangerous House."⁽¹⁾ This particular use of the term, taken from a speech by Goschen, does not appear to imply the existence of an integrated image configuration: emphasis rather falls upon the character of intuitive apprehension than upon purely imaginal characters. "Wordsworth claimed imagination as his supreme gift, but at the same time he bestowed on the word 'imagination' a new meaning almost entirely opposed to the ordinary one... In his loftier moods, he used 'imagination' as a synonym for 'intuition,' of seeing into and even through reality..."⁽²⁾

The historical use of the term in reference to art - at all events since the publication of Addison's articles on the imagination in the Spectator (1712), when the phrase 'creative imagination' first began to gain currency - appears to have implied both an imaginal and a rational ingredient. The work of art, that is to say, was regarded as the product both of imagery derived from sense impressions of the real world and of reason or philosophic

(1) Quoted by Spearman, C., Creative Mind, p.8.

(2) Irving Babbit (quoting M. Legouis), op. cit., p.94; cf. Dewey, J., Psychology, p.50.

reflection. To-day the term 'imagination' when applied to art appears to imply almost similar psychological ingredients - images and a binding element, intuitions, feelings, affections, etc. - co-existing with one another. It is so vague, however, that it defies accurate analysis. Whether, considering the historical preponderance of opinion and usage in favour of the 'image' concept of imagination, the aesthetic connotation of the term is justified by the psychological facts of artistic creation is a question that will have to be left to future research. For the present it may be claimed that there is a good body of evidence (some of which has been brought forward in the two preceding chapters) in support of the contrary view that artistic imagination is not necessarily imaginal and is frequently not so. Mr. E. Bullough writes:⁽¹⁾ "In spite of much writing on the subject we can hardly be said to have advanced beyond the fringe of the unknown. The chief obstacles to progress seem to me to have been a long standing confusion of imagery with imagination and the attempt to deal with imagination on far too narrowly intellectualistic a conception of novelty and originality as a characteristic feature of imagination." T. E. Lawrence, it may be noted

(1) "Mind and Medium in Art," British Journal of Psychology, Vol. XI, p.39.

not inappositely, remarks in his Introduction to the catalogue of Eric Kennington's Arab Portraits in 1921: "I saw him doing one of these things and can testify that he did not know why he was working, or how he was working. When he felt that he knew, things went badly."

Any attempt to give a more or less complete historical survey of the aesthetic use of the term would not only involve an unwarrantable digression into the history of aesthetic philosophy, but such a survey would require a considerable volume to itself, since the term has never acquired any stability of meaning. But in any study of the problem of the nature and place of imagination in the psychology of art, the distinction between imagination regarded either as a synthetic or analytic faculty of mind and imagination as an artistic element or attribute is of prime importance. Imagination and art are not synonymous terms; indeed, when a sound psychology of imagination comes to be written, it may be revealed that there is little or no connection between what is vaguely termed 'artistic imagination' and artistic procedure. The present position seems to be this, that there are three alternatives: either (A) imagination may be regarded as a general function of mind, which may manifest itself in diverse ways independently of any extra-psychic productive activity; or (B) imagination

may be regarded as a general function of mind, which manifests itself essentially in productive activities of all kinds, from the scribblings and mutterings of the child to the monumental creations of great artists, architects, engineers, scientists, mathematicians and philosophers; or (C) imagination may be regarded as a special function of mind manifesting itself solely in the artist and his works.

Just as the aesthetic concept content apart from form is without meaning, so from the point of view of the psychology of artistic production imagination has no meaning, apart from the physical fact, the picture, statue, or other work; the physical fact is indeed the only evidence there is of the existence of the power. A disembodied imagination is no less a psychological abstraction than a bodiless content. There can be no fruitful discussion of creative imagination apart from its product; unless it be assumed that purely intra-psyche activities, such as phantasy and day-dreaming, are synonymous with it, but less intensive. To proceed on such an assumption, however, would immediately remove the discussion beyond the ambit of psychology. Imagination cannot function in vacuo, as Bosanquet rightly insists; to discuss it in the abstract is to abandon the field of psychology for the intangibilities and "transcendental tautologies" of metaphysics. The only sound and

legitimate psychological approach to the problem is through lived experience as manifested and revealed in artistic products. What, then, is to be understood by imagination in art?

One of the earliest and most acute studies of imagination in the English language is that of Eneas Sweetland Dallas, student of Sir William Hamilton, "The Times" reviewer of Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, Enoch Arden, Great Expectations, Silas Marner and many other classics of his time. His work is particularly interesting in the present connection, not only because of the general soundness of his standpoint and the light he throws upon the problem, but because he anticipated much that is now current in the psycho-analytic literature of art and aesthetics.

Imagination, in Dallas' view, is not a special faculty of the mind, but a special function. "It is the name given to the automatic action of the mind or any of its faculties - to what may not unfitly be called the Hidden Soul." His automatic action takes place unawares; "and when we come to analyse the movements of thought, we find that to be quite sure of our steps we are obliged very much to identify what is involuntary with what is unconscious."⁽¹⁾ Dallas' purpose, as he himself states, "is not so much to

(1) Op. cit., Vol. I, pp.194-195.

identify imagination with what may be called the hidden soul, as to show that there is a mental existence within us which may be so called - a secret flow of thought which is not less energetic than the conscious flow, an absent mind which haunts us like a ghost or a dream and is an essential part of our lives. Incidentally, there will be no escaping the observation that this unconscious life of the mind ... bears a wonderful resemblance to the supposed features of imagination... To lay bare the automatic or unconscious action of the mind is indeed to unfold a tale which outvies the romances of giants and ginns, wizards in their palaces and captives in the Domdaniel roots of the sea... The hidden efficacy of our thoughts, their prodigious power of working in the dark and helping us underhand, can be compared only to the stories of our folk-lore, and chiefly to that of the lubber-fiend who toils for us when we are asleep and when we are not looking."⁽¹⁾

The notion of the unconscious mind had been recognised, as Dallas points out, by Leibniz. It had already taken root in the German system of thought, had "grown ... fructified and run to seed," and expanded into all the "absurdities and extravagances of the transcendental philosophy." Though much of that philosophy is "mere folly" and though

(1) Ibid. pp. 199-200.

most of it is "unintelligible," it "has a foundation of fact," which is "recognised by our most sober thinkers" who "at least never quit the ground of common sense." That they "admit the principle" is for Dallas "the great point."⁽¹⁾

"Outside consciousness there rolls a vast tide of life, which is, perhaps, even more important to us than the little isle of our thoughts which lies within our ken. Comparisons, however, between the two are vain, because each is necessary to the other. The thing to be firmly seized is, that we live in two concentric worlds of thought, - an inner ring, of which we are conscious, and which may be described as illuminated; an outer one, of which we are unconscious, and which may be described as in the dark. Between the outer and the inner ring, between our unconscious and our conscious existence, there is a free and constant but unobserved traffic for ever carried on. Trains of thought are continually passing to and fro, from the light into the dark, and back from the dark into the light. When the current of thought flows from within our ken to beyond our ken, it is gone, we forget it, we know not what has become of it. After a time it comes back to us changed and grown, as if it were a new thought, and we

(1) Ibid. pp.201-202. The sober thinkers are Sir William Hamilton, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer.

know not whence it comes."⁽¹⁾

The unconscious or hidden soul may be divided like the conscious soul into three faculties of memory, of reason, and of feeling, each of which secrets its own knowledge and performs its own hidden action. Summarising the evidence for these powers, he points out that the mind never forgets: "Thus beams upon us the strange phenomenon of knowledge, possessed, enjoyed, and used by us, of which nevertheless we are ignorant - ignorant not only at times, but also in some cases during our whole lives."⁽²⁾ And the memory of things not understood may be vital within us; we may be "unconscious of the automatic energy within us until its work is achieved and the effect of it is not to be resisted. We see the finished result; of the process we know nothing."⁽³⁾ Out of these unconscious mental ongoings there emerges "the fact that the mind keeps watch and ward for us when we slumber; that it spins long threads, weaves whole webs of thought for us when we reckon not. In its inner chamber, whither no eye can pierce, it will remember, brood, search, poise, calculate, invent, digest, do any kind of stiff work for us unbidden."⁽⁴⁾

(1) Ibid. pp. 207-208.

(2) Ibid. p.211.

(3) Ibid. p.222.

(4) Ibid. p.227.

The extraordinary similarity of these views to contemporary psycho-analytic theory needs no emphasis. Dallas is fully alive to the fact, that the activities and ways of the conscious mind can be accounted for and explained only by assuming that it is frequently fulfilling desires of which the agent is entirely oblivious. His recognition of the relation of dreams to the unconscious is also strikingly modern. "Like those heavenly bodies which are seen only in the darkness of night," he says, ⁽¹⁾ "the realities of our hidden life are best seen in the darkness of slumber." With a wealth of illustration he shows how the unconscious mind works and overtakes results that the conscious mind would either fail to approach or would approach with faltering steps. Coleridge, for instance, composed the following lines from Kublah Khan during sleep induced by opium:-

A damsel with a dulcimer,
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on a dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.

Although it can hardly be said that Dallas completely anticipated the premises of psycho-analysis, there is little doubt that he recognised the existence of the facts and phenomena upon which the psycho-analytic doctrines of condensation, transference and substitution are founded. His

(1) Ibid. p.229.

recognition, too, of the role of instincts in stimulating the unconscious mind is another example of the acuity of his psychological insight. "The mere existence of such forces as instinct and passion is," he says, "a vulgar fact which to those who read it aright will at once tell a tale of the hidden soul."⁽¹⁾ Again, his view of the mind as a functioning whole contrasts markedly with the compartmental psychology of his contemporaries. "The most royal prerogative of imagination is its entireness, its love of wholes, its wonderful power of seeing the whole, of claiming the whole, of making whole, and - shall I add - of swallowing whole... Left to itself ... the mind acts more as a whole, and takes more to wholes;"⁽²⁾ "it is like the cloud that moveth altogether if it move at all."⁽³⁾ Precisely the same claim is made by the Gestalt psychologists. Take a quotation from Köhler:⁽⁴⁾ "According to the most general definition of Gestalt, the processes of learning, of reproduction, of striving, of emotional attitude, of thinking, acting, and so forth, may be included as subject

(1) Ibid. p.237.

(2) Ibid. pp. 269-270.

(3) Ibid. p.305.

(4) Gestalt Psychology, p.193.

matter of Gestalt-Theorie in so far as they do not consist of independent elements, but are determined in a situation as a whole."

But it is with his exposition of the relation of the hidden soul to art that the present discussion is principally concerned. The great source of all art is "the felt existence within us of an abounding inner life that transcends consciousness. We feel certain powers moving within us, we know not what, we know not why - instincts of our lower nature, intuitions of our higher, dreams and suggestions, dim guesses, and faint, far cries of the whole mind."⁽¹⁾ Imagination looks for resemblances rather than for differences: there is the one half of his doctrine. It looks for the resemblances of wholes rather than of parts: there is the other half. "It is because imagination looks out for resemblance rather than difference that it leaps to wholes. It is because imagination keeps to wholes and avoids analysis that it overlooks difference and seizes on resemblance."⁽²⁾ The mind's habit of catching likenesses, Dallas points out, has been assigned to fancy; its power of discerning unity and grasping wholes has been allotted to imagination. But for him the

(1) Ibid. p. 246.

(2) Ibid. pp. 270-271. Cf. Irving Babbit's definition of imagination as the power "that reaches out and seizes likenesses and analogies." Op. cit., Introduction xxx.

distinction is of little importance; there are not two faculties, one going by the name of fancy, the other by the name of imagination. The imagination, he concludes, "is the automatic action or play, not of any special faculty, but of any and every faculty ... in one word, the play of thought."⁽¹⁾ The true artist recognises, however dimly, the existence within us of a double world of thought, and his object is, by "subtle forms, tones, words, allusions, associations, to establish a connection with the unconscious hemisphere of the mind and to make us feel a mysterious energy there in the hidden soul."

This is as far as Dallas goes. Of form he has little more to say than what is contained in the following quotations, except that the wholeness that marks all the work of the imagination is due to the wholeness of the mind's functioning. Although the painter's art is evidently tied to fact more strictly than that of the poet, mere accuracy, mere matter-of-fact representation is no better than photography. "It is the artist's business, by the capture of evanescent and almost impalpable expression, by the unfathomable blending of light in shadow, by delicacies of purest colour, by subtleties of lineament, by touches of a

(1) Ibid. p.272.

grace that is beyond calculation ... to convey to the imagination a something beyond nature... 'The light which never was on sea or shore.'" A man may paint a picture well, and yet his picture for all the clearness and fulness of knowledge it exhibits may not be art, "because it wants something which a great artist once described by snapping his fingers. 'It wants,' said Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'it wants that!'"(1)

From Dallas' exposition several highly important points emerge, which must be regarded as fundamental to any satisfactory theory of imagination as a crucial factor in artistic productivity. In stressing the fact that imagination is not a special faculty of mind but a special function he enunciates in principle an established contemporary doctrine. "The imaginative experience such as the artist in particular lives in," states Bullough,⁽²⁾ "is more nearly the imaginative counterpart of actual experience than imaginings wholly outside the range of normal experience - which is true rather of people generally called 'unimaginative.' The novelty and originality of the artistic imagination lies far less in its excentricity to normal life than in its

(1) Ibid. pp.331-332.

(2) "Mind and Medium in Art," op. cit., p.39.

being the reflexion of an intensely and intimately individual experience, transferred to the sphere of imagination, thereby removed from its personal reference and rendered accessible to and effective for the sympathy, understanding and appreciation of others." Dallas fails, however, to show that he understands the essential nature of the relation of the automatic working of the mind to the productive creative activity, being content to establish the nature of the imaginative activity itself, without reference to "the circumstances under which the tendency is exerted." It is not sufficient to establish the nature of the imagination; imagination alone never produced a work of art. A work of art is first and foremost a physical object, the material result of an activity of the whole mind-body complex, and any theory which is supposed to cover the imaginative activities of the productive artist must take into consideration the crucial fact that any imaginative experience which the artist may have prior to expression is psychologically inferior to its externalised equivalent. In other words, imagination must be regarded as a function of mind which manifests itself essentially and characteristically in extra-psychic activities of all kinds, and ideally in the creations of artists. The difference, then, between the imagination of the ordinary man, who in numberless

ways is continually operating on and changing his physical environment in order to bring it nearer to his "heart's desire," and the artist who rejects the real world for the time being in order to construct a new reality shut off from practical reality, is not fundamentally a difference in kind, but a difference in quality and intensity of experience. The day-dreaming and reverie types of "imaginative" experience do not constitute imagination (they are unproductive, uncreative) but mere phantasy. If the artist were able fully and clearly to 'imagine' his profoundest apprehensions and aspirations within the confines of his own psyche, he would have no need to paint unless as a means of producing a permanent record of a private psychic event or process. Art would thus be reduced to a state of mind - which, save to a thorough-going subjectivist like Croce, is absurd. The artist's imagination requires a medium for its highest activities, a means of expressing itself; it does not manifest itself in external activities and events, but in external productive acts; and it is in and through these acts that the artist solves the mystery of his "divine unrest," finding thereby the form that expresses himself to himself, lighting up the "night side

of his soul."⁽¹⁾ The creative act is, therefore, a real enlargement of his total field of consciousness. Not only so; it is the focal point of all the most vital forces of a single life - "those faint, far cries of the whole mind" of which Dallas speaks - and a precious addition to the world of psychologically valuable objects - in a word, the revelation and expression of a rich personality.

II.

Before the rise of modern psychology it was possible to regard imagination as a comparatively harmless impediment

(1) Cf. Professor Dewey, Art as Experience, p.268. "There is a conflict artists themselves undergo that is instructive as to the nature of imaginative experience. The conflict has been set forth in many ways. One way of stating it concerns the opposition between inner and outer vision. There is a stage in which the inner vision seems much richer and finer than any outer manifestation. It has a vast and enticing aura of implications that are lacking in the object of external vision. It seems to grasp much more than the latter conveys. Then there comes a reaction; the matter of the inner vision seems wraith-like compared with the solidity and energy of the presented scene. The object is felt to say something succinctly and forcibly that the inner vision reports vaguely, in diffuse feeling rather than organically. The artist is driven to submit himself in humility to the discipline of the objective vision. But the inner vision is not cast out. It remains as the organ by which outer vision is controlled, and it takes on structure as the latter is absorbed within it. The interaction of the two modes of vision is imagination; as imagination takes form the work of art is born."

to knowledge. Philosophers like Descartes and Spinoza objected to the imagination because it was an obstacle to truth. Truth, as they conceived it, was achieved only by abstract reasoning. Pascal attacks it in the name of religion, calling it a "proud power" and a "mistress of error, which overwhelms reason." But with the advent of psycho-analysis, imagination has acquired a new significance. Far from being a mere harmless impediment to the acquisition and formation of knowledge, it is regarded by the psycho-analytic school as a manifestation of fundamental drives which govern the whole field of human activity, whether it be scientific investigation, political propaganda, social reform, art or religious devotion.

It is not within the scope of the present inquiry to examine the fundamental hypothesis of psycho-analysis in so far as it pretends to offer an account of the sources and mechanisms of human activity in general. But it will be advisable to glance at the theory in so far as it bears upon the topic under discussion, sketching at the same time the main outlines of psycho-analytic theory as developed by Sigmund Freud and his disciples during the present century.

The keystone of psycho-analytic theory, it will be remembered, is the idea of a perpetual conflict between primitive sexual drives and the demands imposed by the

social conditions into which every child is born. This "conflict" leads to the "repression" of libidinous wishes into the "unconscious" mind, wherein are created complicated systems of drives or impulses known as "complexes," which manifest themselves in diverse ways, particularly in dreams and phantasies associated with all forms of neurosis and mental disease. Imagination, then, according to psychoanalytic theory is a pathological phenomenon arising from ungratified libidinous wishes, which have been repressed into the "unconscious" as a result of the internal conflict between opposing psychic exigencies. These wishes are imprisoned there by repressing forces collectively termed by Freud the "Censor." But, during sleep and sleeplike states such as reverie and day-dreaming, the Censor is less vigilant, with the result that the repressed tendencies find a means of escape in dreams and dreamlike occurrences such as phantasies and imaginings. These manifestations of repressed tendencies are not direct expressions of the original wish or wishes, but transposed, camouflaged and distorted "representations." This disguising of the real meaning of the wish is necessary in order to evade the action of the Censor. The "manifest dream content," as distinct from the dream product, thus reveals itself as a compromise between the conflicting forces. Further, the censorial

function is itself entirely unconscious and works under the control of the "Super-Ego," which is regarded as a definite entity within the mind. The Super-Ego acts as a kind of unconscious moral force, but its morality differs from that of the conscious Ego in that it is probably of very much earlier origin and more severe in its demands.

In addition to dreams and dreamlike manifestations, in which the real motivations of the repressed tendencies are disguised in order to elude the Censor, there are other means whereby these expressions reveal themselves: for instance, in "free association" and art. Of the indirect modes of manifestation the most important is that of symbolism, by means of which inhibited wishes and impulses are revealed in a manner not immediately comprehensible. Symbolism is held to be a general characteristic of the working of the human mind, whereby repressed tendencies find an outlet and attain at least partial satisfaction. Behind all symbolism there is a meaning, a mental relationship between the symbol and what is symbolised.

In the course of man's mental development the primitive innate tendencies hidden in the unconscious mind are "displaced" by means of the process of "transference," whereby an emotional attitude is transferred from one idea to another. According to psycho-analytic theory the displace-

ment mechanism is of immense importance in the development of mind. In the course of the development certain displacements are produced which are of great social and cultural value. Thus, the whole of what is called civilisation is dependent upon these deflections of libidinous energy into desirable channels through sublimation.

According to Freud, it is by just such a process of sublimation that art comes into existence. For him art is the means whereby the artist finds relief from the mental tension arising from his inner conflicts. The work of art, that is to say, is nothing more nor less than one of those day-dreams in which men seek (through the imagination) fulfilment of ungratified libidinous wishes. "There is ... a path from phantasy back again to reality, and that is art," says Freud. "The artist has ... an introverted disposition and has not far to go to become a neurotic. He is one who is urged on by instinctive needs which are too clamorous; he longs to attain to honour, power, riches, fame and the love of women; but he lacks the means of achieving these gratifications. So, like any other unsatisfied longing, he turns away from reality and transfers all his interest, all his Libido, too, on to the creation of his wishes in life ... he understands how to elaborate his day-dreams, so that they lose that personal note which grates upon

strange ears and becomes enjoyable to others; he knows, too, how to modify them sufficiently so that their origin in prohibited sources is not easily detected."⁽¹⁾ Freud thus makes it quite clear that from the psycho-analytic point of view imagination is the crucial factor in artistic production.

In recent years there have been attempts to develop a theory of art on the basis of the Freudian postulates. The work of art is regarded as the outward projection of the artist's unconscious drives in the form of symbolic images translated into terms of form and colour. Charles Baudouin has propounded such a theory of art, first in his Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics and, more recently, in his

(1) Introductory Lectures, p.314. Cf. the following statement from his Autobiography (An Autobiographical Study, 1935): "The realm of imagination was evidently a 'sanctuary' made during the painful transition from the pleasure principle to the reality principle in order to provide a substitute for the gratification of instincts which had to be given up in real life. The artist, like the neurotic, had withdrawn from an unsatisfying reality into the world of imagination; but unlike the neurotic, he knew how to find a way back from it and once more to get a firm foothold on reality. His creations, works of art, were the imaginary gratifications of unconscious wishes, just as dreams are; and like them they were in the nature of compromises, since they too were forced to avoid an open conflict with the forces of repression. But they differed from the asocial, narcissistic products of dreaming in that they were calculated to arouse interest in other people and were able to evoke and to gratify the same unconscious in them too."

Psychanalyse de l'Art. Two classes of complex are postulated by Baudouin: "les complexes personnels," situated in the subconscious and determined by the individual's environment and past experience, and "les complexes primitifs," situated in the most primitive unconscious and common to the whole human race.⁽¹⁾ For him, as for Freud, art is the imaginative gratification of unconscious sexual drives.

Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics is primarily a psycho-analytic study of the poet Verhaeren: the poet's work is "analysed with the same rigorous method as that employed in the analysis of dreams" - "by unravelling the condensations of ... imaginative creation, and disentangling displacements and repressions." In this study Baudouin claims also to "have laid the foundations of the psychology of art, of a science of aesthetics which shall be genuinely scientific."⁽²⁾

Another writer of importance in this connection is Otto Rank, who, in two remarkable works,⁽³⁾ has advanced a theory of art of Freudian orientation. Rank regards the artist as "Der Typus des ideel schöpferischen Menschen," the type of the imaginatively creative being as distinct

(1) Psychanalyse de l'Art, p.6.

(2) Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics, p.33, Introduction: vide also Psychanalyse de l'Art, Introduction.

(3) Der Künstler and Das Inzest Motiv in Dichtung und Saga.

from the practically creative type, "Der praktisch schöpferische Typus." The former includes the religious man, the philosophic thinker and the researcher; the latter, the man of action.⁽¹⁾ Art, like myths, legends, fairy tales, religion and philosophies is the manifestation of deep-seated libidinous drives, but, because of the artist's special gift of "sublimation," he is able to transform his libidinous impulses in such a manner as to render them acceptable to cultured society.⁽²⁾ Thus the artist, although a neurotic, is distinguished by virtue of this gift from both the mere neurotic and the dreamer.

Freud himself has never attempted to formulate a complete psycho-analytic theory of art. Indeed, it is doubtful whether he would recognise the possibility of such a theory. In his Autobiography he states that "What psycho-analysis was able to do was to take the interrelations between the impressions of the artist's life, his chance experience, and his works, and from them to construct his constitution and the impulses at work in it - that is to say, that part of him which he shared with all men." It was from this point of view he embarked upon his celebrated study of Leonardo da Vinci, which, as he himself declares,

(1) Der Künstler, p.7.

(2) Ibid., pp.51-81.

"is based upon a single memory of childhood related by him and which aims chiefly at explaining his picture of St. Anne with the Virgin and Child. The layman may expect too much from analysis ... for it must be admitted that it throws no light upon the two problems which probably interest him most. It can do nothing towards elucidating the nature of the artistic gift, nor can it explain the means by which the artist works - artistic technique."⁽¹⁾ Freud is, therefore, under no delusions as to the value of psycho-analytic theory and technique to the psychological theory of art.

.

One of the most noteworthy theoretical expositions of art based on the psycho-analytic doctrine of wish-fulfilment is that of Professor De Witt Parker,⁽²⁾ Professor of Philosophy in the University of Michigan. Apart from the question of the merits of the theory, Professor Parker's graceful style and insight, his obvious candour and sensibility, his enthusiasm and able argument render his book at once pleasant to read and instructive to study. No more important contribution to the theory of art has been published in the English language, but its underlying

(1) Leonardo da Vinci, pp.119-120. (Present author's italics)

(2) The Analysis of Art.

hypotheses are so unstable as to render the whole theoretical superstructure weak and precarious to a degree.

The core of Professor Parker's theory is that "art is the imaginative expression of a wish."⁽¹⁾ Thus he declares his adherence to Freudian psychology. Art belongs to the sphere of imagination, and the purpose of imagination is to provide satisfaction for moods and desires. In support of this contention he invokes the name of Freud. There are two ways in which wishes may be gratified: (a) the real or practical way in which what is wished for is appropriated from the environment; and (b) the dream way in which "the wish is satisfied by something that occurs entirely within myself, within my own mind and body, in the realm of phantasy."⁽²⁾ What occurs within the self is, nevertheless, believed to be real; the dream mode of satisfaction of a wish is as genuine as the other; for the time being, at least, the wish is fulfilled. This reality, however, is never absolute; a part of the self believes while another part disbelieves, and it is this equipoise between belief and unbelief, this "as if" attitude, which characterises those dreams called art. But, whereas ordinary dreams exist entirely within the imagination, art dreams assume

(1) Ibid. p.19.

(2) Ibid. p.4.

sensuous form. "A work of art is born only when imaginative vision is wedded to sensuous shape... To be an artist always involves being more than a dreamer or seer; it involves mastery of a material as well; the mere dreamers are only half artists... The artist must be able to create, in the external world, something to charm the senses as well as to speak to the mind. It is as if the artist were not content to realise his wishes in the closed room of his imagination, but desires to step out into reality and find satisfaction there.⁽¹⁾ Yet the artist never does .. achieve reality ... he submits the mere shows of things to the desires of the mind. He takes the senses into the imagination, he does not leave the world of the imagination." The work of art "is a play not of images merely, as in a dream, but of sensations." Thus the sense medium is itself a part of the (artist's) dream and an expression of his desire.⁽²⁾

Between the dream expressed and a mere dream there is a difference: the dream expressed "possesses a poignancy, an objectivity, an additional tang of reality, while remaining nevertheless a dream. Through its connection with the sense world, it is partly dissociated from the rest of the

(1) Cf. p. 299 supra.

(2) The Analysis of Art, pp.21-22.

self, and so seems to be external, like the colour or sound in which it is embodied. It belongs to the outer as well as to the inner world; it confronts us; it draws attention to itself; we are awake to it, not asleep in it, as we are in a dream," and "its purpose is the clarification and communication of imagination, with its values."⁽¹⁾

In brief: "Art, like the dream and many forms of play, is a mode of imaginative realisation of desire. This is the primary source of its value and the initial motive to creation. But in art this impulse is connected with the impulse to express and communicate, so that art may be regarded as a mode of expression or language. It is expression for the sake of expression, because in the process of expression a dream is embodied, a wish satisfied. Moreover, when expression becomes an end in itself, it tends to assume a harmonious, delightful form - design. Finally, through expression, the dream is clarified and socialised, and instead of remaining a purely private possession, becomes the dream of all men and the surcease of superabundant desire."⁽²⁾

Throughout Professor Parker's whole study, and particularly throughout his first chapter, of which the preceding

(1) Ibid. pp.23-24.

(2) Ibid. p.30. Vide also p.48.

is a brief summary, three concepts of vital importance in his theory continually recur: "imagination," "reality" and "wish." He states "that the imagination itself, including all its forms, not excepting art, is no independent autonomous thing, functioning according to mechanical laws of similarity or contiguity, but is, in a sense, secondary, being always under what, without too much misunderstanding, we may still venture to call a 'wish.' The imagination exists for a purpose, to provide satisfaction for moods and desires."⁽¹⁾ Wishes, it will be recalled, may be satisfied either the "real" way or the "dream" way, by appropriating from the environment what is wished for, or by giving way to the play of phantasy. The mode of satisfaction is as efficient and "genuine" whichever way is adopted: for the time being, at least, the wish is fulfilled and a state of contentment is achieved. In a dream it is "as if" things and situations were real; indeed, they must seem to be real, or the wish would not be able to fulfil itself in them!⁽²⁾ In accordance with the terms of this hypothesis Professor Parker maintains that, since works of art are products of imagination, the "as if" attitude dominates the appreciation

(1) Ibid. p.3. (For the definition of the term wish, the reader is referred to E. B. Holt's The Freudian Wish.)

(2) Ibid. p.5.

of the normal types of painting and sculpture. In Cézanne's landscape, The Poorhouse on the Hill, it is for the spectator as if the hills and trees were there in reality evoking the interests and feelings called forth by real things. Indeed, he asserts that there is absolutely no test of good drawing or painting except the capacity of the artist to make people believe in the image which the artist creates in the semblance of reality!

From Professor Parker's use of the term 'imagination' it would appear, first, that imagination provides experience of reality in an imaginary (as if) way; it creates a semblance to reality and yields the satisfaction which reality normally gives. Thus he argues that the spectator, in watching a dancer, enjoys the spectacle fully only when it is as if he, too, were dancing; when, in the imagination, he moves with the motions of the dancer and experiences vicariously her ease and her joy. Watching the dance, he maintains, "is clearly an imaginative experience" - in other words, a wish-fulfilment. But, in the second place, imagination is contrasted with reality. Reality is the "practical" world from which the necessary appropriations may be made in order really to satisfy wishes; whereas imagination is an inner world in the semblance of the outer practical world. "The artist must be able to create in the external

world something to charm the senses as well as to speak to the mind. It is as if the artist were not content to realise his wishes in the closed room of his imagination, but desires to step out into reality and find satisfaction there. Yet the artist never does ... achieve reality.... He takes the senses into the imagination, he does not leave the world of imagination. His work remains a show, a make-believe, to the end; or rather it makes of reality itself a show. It is a play, not of images merely, as in a dream, but of sensations."⁽¹⁾ Reality here denotes the sensuous physical actual world of things and events - the practical life; imagination, on the other hand, is the dream world of things and events, a world in which things and events are withdrawn from the influences and restrictions of practical life and physical causation. In the third place, it would appear that the work of art, or, at all events, its sensuous appearance - while being a bit of reality, a number of sensations, is yet, "despite its sensuous side," a piece of imaginative experience. The paint and canvas, the objects represented, are merely make-believe objects, "only visual sensations in the mind of the beholder; they might as well be hallucinations."⁽²⁾ It will be convenient to discuss

(1) Ibid. pp.21-22.

(2) Ibid. p.22.

these three points before proceeding to investigate the significance of the term "wish."

Professor Parker's case is that imagination creates a semblance to reality and yields the satisfaction which reality normally gives. The first point, then, raises two questions: (a) whether the dance as viewed by the spectator is, as Professor Parker maintains, only a simulation of reality, a make-believe, or whether it is a part of reality like any other observed event or situation taking place in the outside world; and (b) whether the satisfaction of the wishes, which according to him takes place, is a real and effective satisfaction or only an imaginary one - a hallucination - and whether an imaginary satisfaction effectively satisfies the wish or wishes from which the imaginative experience is supposed to emanate. The answer to the first of these questions (a) is clearly this: that the dance is to the spectator a part of reality, a part which is capable of being regarded as a work of art or experienced as part of the reality called art. It is emphatically not a simulation of reality, but is itself a part of reality, since the spectator could have no awareness of it whatsoever did it not exist in terms accessible to sense. There is no other sense in which the dance can be said to exist at all unless reality be regarded as consisting entirely of art: which is absurd. Professor Parker's whole case is founded

on the antithesis of reality and imagination. Reality for him is the actual; imagination is a substitute, reality existing entirely within the self and the offspring of deep-seated unconscious wishes. From the dancer's point of view, it may be submitted, the dance is likewise a real experience, an experience of the reality called life, of which dancing is to the dancer a very real element. It is, as Professor Parker himself declares, "a satisfaction of impulses through occurrences within her own mind and body."⁽¹⁾ But why such a satisfaction should be denied the status of reality and regarded as possessing "the essential (make-believe) character of imagination" is difficult to comprehend, unless the terms "imagination" and "reality" are emptied of the commonsense content and given a wholly hypothetical and arbitrary meaning. And this, of course, is what Professor Parker does. All he says in justification of his conclusion that the dancer's experience is essentially an imaginative experience is that "For the moment it is as if she were having her own way, only not through some purposive adjustment to her environment, but through action within her own self."! Thus, from the standpoint adopted by Professor Parker, any external activity arising from the

(1) Ibid. p.7.

desire to satisfy impulses occurring within the mind and body is an imaginative experience, if it does not involve "purposive adjustment" to the environment or appropriation from the environment of that which is essential to the real (practical) gratification of the impulse or impulses causing the activity. For him the essence does not consist in physical movements of the body, but in the inner experience of which the physical movements are but the overflow into the body, and (as is the case with colours in painting) might as well be hallucination. Who, asks Professor Parker, has ever set the limits of the mind or the body? - and leaves the question at that. Surely the occurrences which he alleges take place within the dancer's own mind and body must of necessity be dependent upon the physical movements of the dance. How else could the occurrences take place unless in a dream? - and a dream, he insists, is not art. To assert, as he does, that the satisfaction derived by the dancer in the act of dancing is a substitute satisfaction for some other desired satisfaction, whose real nature is hidden from the conscious mind, is merely a wild hypothesis. It is not a substitute satisfaction, not a satisfaction occurring in the "dream" way, which ought more appropriately to be achieved in the "practical" way, but a genuine satisfaction of the dancer's impulse to dance. And this,

despite Professor Parker's clever argument, is surely the very essence of the art of dancing. His antithesis of reality and imagination is refuted time and again by his own expositions.

The question of satisfaction leads on to the second point (b): whether the 'satisfaction' of the unconscious wishes is a real and effective satisfaction or only an imaginary one, and whether an imaginary satisfaction can effectively dispose of the wish or wishes from which the imaginative experience is supposed to emanate. Professor Parker states quite definitely that "the artist never does achieve reality." This ought to be an adequate answer to the query. It is impossible, however, to square this statement with a previous one, to the effect that the "dream" mode of satisfaction of a wish "is as genuine as the other."⁽¹⁾ The word "genuine" here presumably means real, effective. Yet he maintains that the artist never does achieve reality; which may fairly be construed to mean that he never does achieve adequate satisfaction of his wishes. This, no doubt, is perfectly true, as it is probably also true of every individual. But, from the point of view of the immediate topic, it is clear that the "imaginative"

(1) Ibid. p.4.

satisfaction of which Professor Parker speaks cannot be a "genuine" satisfaction at all; it can only be a hallucination, a make-believe. And if the satisfaction is make-believe, so also, on his hypothesis, is all art, since art is "the imaginative satisfaction of desire."⁽¹⁾ But here Professor Parker is entirely consistent: the work of art "remains a show, a make-believe, to the end."⁽²⁾ "The pigments and the canvas are ... physical objects, as real as sun and moon... Yet the paint and the canvas are relevant to the aesthetic experience only through what can be seen of them in the picture; as parts of the aesthetic object, they are only visual sensations in the mind of the beholder; they might as well be hallucinations." As long as the spectator - and for that matter the artist - believes in the presentation, that presentation is a work of art and the experience he undergoes is the experience of art. Moreover, the colours in a picture - for instance, in Vermeer's Young Woman with a Jug, which he reproduces - "are the colours of the woman's face, of her garments, of the casement and the map. Now, admittedly, all these things are not real; despite the convincing art of the painter they are a make-believe, that is all. And, notwithstanding their

(1) Ibid. p.48.

(2) Ibid. p.21.

intrinsic beauty, the colours are, for aesthetic appreciation, constituents of these make-believe objects, nothing more."⁽¹⁾

Could any doctrine be further divorced from plain fact? Professor Parker reduces art to a state of mind; but apparently he overlooks the fact that the state of mind could not exist unless the work of art, which is its expression, also existed. The expression is as essential to the state of mind as the state of mind is to the expression; the one could not exist without the other. His position is not unlike Croce's. Paint and canvas "might as well be hallucinations," merely means of enabling the artist to behold his own dream steadily and clearly, means of repeating experience.⁽²⁾ It is likewise open to the same objections. It implies, for instance, that the work of art is merely a copy of what already pre-existed in the mind of the artist - a proposition which is as false as it is ridiculous. That he does, in fact, hold this view is clear from the following statement. "It (the work of art) is a play; not of images, as in a dream, but of sensations. They are chosen partly for their ability to embody the dream, but also for

(1) Ibid. p.22.

(2) Ibid. p.177.

their own intrinsic beauty. Thus in a song, like Der Erbkönig, the musical tones are merely an embodiment in sound of Goethe's ideas as Schubert made them his own; but independently, as mere sound, they are an expression of vague moods and desires; and the colours in a painting are not only the right colours from the point of view of representation, but beautiful on their own account, apart from any representation. A picture is first of all a pattern of expressive colours and lines, just as music is first of all an arabesque of beautiful sound. Thus the sense medium is itself a part of a dream and an expression of the artist's desire."⁽¹⁾ The italicised words clearly indicate that he holds that the work of art is a mere copy of a dream (in images) pre-existing in the mind of the artist prior to his productive act. This passage, however, is worth quoting for another reason: it contains a complete refutation of his statement (quoted above) to the effect that the colours (of the woman's face, garments, etc.), "notwithstanding their intrinsic beauty," are for "aesthetic appreciation" constituents of these make-believe objects, nothing more. For he states that the musical tones and the colours in a painting as mere sound and colour are

(1) Ibid. p.22. (Present author's italics.) Cf. also: "In life aesthetic expression is casual and transient; in art it is made permanent for all who can understand its language." (p.26.)

expressions of "vague moods and desires," and for that reason are "beautiful on their own account."!

If the work of art is a mere make-believe, it is because Professor Parker recognises one type of art and one only: representational art - art which is concerned solely with the representation of the phenomena of the internal world in terms of the external. The work of art, he states, must yield a "feeling of reality." Painted hills must give the illusion of real hills. In his own words: "There is absolutely no test of good drawing or painting except the capacity of the artist to make us believe; his work may be realistic or highly stylised, either method is good as art, so long as it creates an image in which we believe." Yet in another connection he declares that "art is never reality, nor is it ever mere representation of reality as such; it is an expression for the imagination of the values of reality."⁽¹⁾ For Professor Parker the highest manifestations of art are those which generate in the beholder the strongest feelings of reality, and the best work of art is that which engenders in the spectator the strongest belief in his experience regarded as an experience of reality. "Painting is a language which fulfils its function when it

(1) Ibid. p.90.

creates in the spectator's mind an interesting dream of nature."⁽¹⁾ If these statements are true, if art must yield a vivid feeling of reality, it is difficult to understand precisely what Professor Parker means by the term "reality." On the one hand he has denied that art is ever reality; on the other, he asserts that art must yield a vivid feeling of reality.

There appears to be only one interpretation: reality is the actual world of things and events, the "practical" world. "A work of art," he states,⁽²⁾ "is a fragment of sensuous experience, given meaning for imagination and become an image of desire." If, then, reality means the practical, sensuous world, there is no valid reason why the work of art should not be regarded as a fragment of that world, and the experience derived from contact with art, as an experience of that reality. For Professor Parker, however, the work of art can be no part of reality, because reality is its subject-matter, and its raison d'être is to simulate reality. To regard the experience of art as an "imaginative" experience - a substitute wish-fulfilment - is to do a monstrous injustice not only to art, but also to

(1) Ibid. p.71.

(2) Ibid. p.64.

a very valuable part of life itself. It makes of art a fake reality, a secondhand experience of reality; and it makes of that part of life which is lived in the presence of art a sham and a delusion. The work of art is the concrete embodiment of a state of mind and body, it is the focal point of lived experience and the means of enlarging that experience. As such, it is a part of man's physical and spiritual environment just as much as trees and fields, sun, moon and stars. A large part - perhaps, indeed, the most significant part - of man's environment is a man-made reality; to call his reactions to that immense field "imaginative," a semblance to reality, is to strip reality of the accumulated wealth of centuries of human effort and creation, and to reduce it to a mere "state of nature." In a word, reality for Professor Parker is nothing but "nature in the raw." Likewise, for Freud "Art does not seek to be anything else but illusion. Save in the case of a few people who are, one might say, obsessed by art, it never dares to make any attacks on the realm of reality."⁽¹⁾

The utter inadequacy of the psycho-analytic concept of reality to which Professor Parker has committed himself has been noted by the former Dean of St. Paul's in a recent lecture delivered before the Institute of Medical

(1) New Introductory Lectures, p.205.

Psychology.⁽¹⁾ In this lecture he states that "the prejudice that nature is 'real' while nothing else is, rests upon the dogmatic assumption that sense experience is the only contact we have with reality. In fact, the procedure of psycho-analysis in this matter of religion appears to be an elaborate example of the fallacy of 'begging the question.' Religion is represented as the product of the Pleasure Principle which succeeds in covering reality with fantasy. But it is assumed that the nature of reality is known, at least that it is known by the psycho-analyst." Here the Dean quotes from Mr. Lawrence Hyde (The Learned Knife, p.129), who states in reference to psycho-analysts, that "Their pages are filled with endless descriptions of the ways in which the pleasure principle is capable of gratifying its desires. But the nature of Reality is simply taken by them for granted. All we can find about it is that it is neither art nor religion, but something which contrives at the same to be 'actual facts' and 'the pressure of education in the widest sense.' On turning, however, to the actual analysis performed by these psychologists, one has little difficulty in seeing that what they really mean by reality is the world as it is presented to

(1) "Psychology and the Future of Religion," published in Psychology and Modern Problems, (Ed. Hadfield), pp.223-225.

the consciousness of the unimaginative, unaesthetic, materialistic type of man. It is to this world that the patient is called upon to adapt himself."

"It would seem," continues the Dean, "that many exponents of the psycho-analytic theory of religion and art have never troubled to ask themselves how they arrive at the concept of reality which they assume, and have never understood what philosophy is all about, or why there is such a thing as the philosophical problem. The real point of controversy between those who believe that religion is a pathway to reality and those who do not is precisely the question: What is reality? Art, no less than religion, has claimed to be something more than a merely subjective reaction or the expression of purely private emotions. The great artists, poets and composers have believed themselves to be in contact with reality, and to be not only creators, but interpreters; and religion has promised to open the eyes of the spirit to the supreme Reality which is behind the every appearance of things. The conception of reality with which the psycho-analytic theorists on religion work excludes from the outset all these claims. It is not surprising, then, that the conclusion is easily drawn that they are nothing but the play of fantasy."

To discuss the question from a philosophic point of

view would be an irrelevant undertaking here. It has been claimed, and with some justice, that art is no mere "simulation of reality," but is itself a part of reality, philosophically as well as psychologically speaking. "A spontaneous creation of mind," states Santayana,⁽¹⁾ "can be more striking and living than any reality, or any abstraction of realities. The artist can invent a form which, by its adaptation to the imagination, lodges there, and becomes a point of reference for all observations, and a standard of naturalness and beauty. A type may be introduced to the mind suddenly, by the chance presentation of a form that by its intrinsic impressiveness and imaginative coherence acquires that preëminence which custom, or the mutual reinforcement of converging experiences, ordinarily gives to empirical percepts... This method of originating types is what we ordinarily describe as artistic creation."

The term "wish" as used by Professor Parker is likewise ambiguous and unsatisfactory. For a definition of the term the reader is referred to Professor E. B. Holt's book, The Freudian Wish, from which the following excerpt is taken. "This 'wish,' which as a concept Freud does not analyse, includes all that would commonly be so classed, and also whatever would be called impulse, tendency, desire, purpose,

(1) The Sense of Beauty, p.180.

attitude and the like; not including, however, any emotional components thereof... An exact definition of the 'wish' is that it is a course of action which some mechanism of the body is set to carry out, whether it actually does so or does not. All emotions, as well as the feelings of pleasure and displeasure, are separable from the 'wishes'... The wish is any purpose or project for a course of action, whether it is being merely entertained by the mind or is being actually executed... We shall do well if we consider this wish to be, as in fact it is, dependent on a motor attitude of the physical body, which goes over into overt action and conduct when the wish is carried into execution."⁽¹⁾ In no place does Professor Parker attempt to define the concept; he uses it as though it possessed a clear-cut meaning and connotation, although, as Professor Ducasse shows,⁽²⁾ it may mean quite a number of different things in the analysis of art which he propounds.

In the first place there is the artist's wish that expression shall take place rather than not take place. This wish, however, has clearly nothing to do with what is to be expressed. From Professor Parker's point of view it is the wish that a dream will find appropriate expression. But it

(1) The Freudian Wish, pp.3-4.

(2) The Philosophy of Art, pp.63-66.

is not this wish that is expressed; the "wish" that, according to Professor Parker's theory, is expressed is the "wish" which emanates from some unconscious motivation. The wish that a "course of action" be carried out is not expressed; it is indulged, satisfied practically, just as the wish to eat food is satisfied by eating. In this sense of the term, then, art cannot be defined as "the imaginative expression of a wish." The wish that a "wish" shall find appropriate aesthetic satisfaction cannot itself be satisfied aesthetically; it can be satisfied one way and one only, namely, practically. In the second place, there is the wish that expression shall be complete and unimpeded; there is the wish implicit in every creative act, that the "ecstatic moments" may endure as long as ^{is} necessary; there is the wish that the appropriate colours shall be found and the right form achieved. All these are wishes entering into the productive artistic situation, and for the same reason as that already stated, none of these wishes can be expressed aesthetically; they can only be expressed practically.

What, then, it may be asked, does Professor Parker mean when he defines art as the imaginative expression of a wish? If he accepts (as it must be presumed he does) Professor Holt's view that a wish "is any purpose or project

for a course of action dependent on a motor attitude of the physical body," he fails to show how this purpose or course of action can be expressed in any but a practical way. Supposing, for instance, the "artist" is motivated by a wish for love, then the "expression" of that wish would take the form of an imagined situation in which his love was satisfied in a practical way; that is to say, he would not imagine a situation in which love was only imaginatively satisfied. In other words, the "artist" would imagine a real situation in which he had his own way. But this, it should be noted, is to relinquish his status as an artist and to become a dreamer like any other imaginative layman. To retain his status as an artist he must concern himself (perhaps imaginatively in the first instance) with artistic situations, composed not of "real" objects, but symbolic objects so arranged as to satisfy his sensibility, not merely to produce an illusion of reality. And this again is to satisfy his wish (the wish to produce a work of art) in a practical way.

The distinction, then, which Professor Parker makes between the dream way and the practical way of achieving the satisfaction of wishes is entirely erroneous; there is, in fact, only one way of satisfying wishes and that is the practical way - by appropriating from the environment what

is necessary or by altering the environment in a manner appropriate to the satisfaction of the wish. If the wish is for love, then the appropriate satisfaction can be gained only by appropriating from the environment the requisite means; if the wish is to paint a picture about love, then the appropriate satisfaction is to be found only in painting the picture. Both are practical satisfactions. The satisfaction of a wish may occur really or else it may only be imagined to occur.

When analysed, Professor Parker's theory of wish-fulfilment by the imagination turns out to be no genuine satisfaction at all, but merely a process of imagining that the wish is genuinely satisfied - which, as Professor Ducasse points out, is quite another thing! To imagine that the wish is genuinely satisfied may dispel the wish, but its dissipation cannot be called its satisfaction. It is the sublimation of the wish. And in this sublimation, what is sought or wished for is not really achieved; something else is achieved and enjoyed, namely, the act of dreaming as distinguished from the situation dreamt. The wish which is satisfied, not fictitiously in the dream, but really by the act of dreaming, is simply the wish to dream, whereby the original wish is sublimated.

But there are further weak points in Professor Parker's

armour, and it will be worth while drawing attention to them before leaving this topic. Although again and again he is at pains to drive home his argument that art is the imaginative expression of a wish, he frequently declares in important passages that art is also the expression or "embodiment" of feelings and emotions. For instance: "What, then, can be the truth which all artists say they are seeking? We can answer this question only if we keep in mind the fundamental nature of art as the expression of the imagination, and remember that the imagination itself exists for the sake of satisfying some wish or emotion. Emotion is, therefore, the basic thing in art, and what the painter and the sculptor are trying to do, above all things else, is to communicate the way they feel about things." ... The artist "is superior to the common man only in that his ways of feeling are new and powerful, and that he can communicate them to others."⁽¹⁾ Again he states: "But the artist, as aiming always at the expression of feeling, is not interested even in the primary qualities of nature for their own sake, but only in so far as they are embodiments of emotion."⁽²⁾

(1) The Analysis of Art, pp.69-70. (Present author's italics)

(2) Ibid. pp.78-79. (Present author's italics.)

Other instances could be given,⁽¹⁾ where he unwittingly comes into conflict with Holt's definition of 'wish' and with his own confident pronouncements. It cannot be that he regards feelings, emotions and wishes as identical psychological entities. Yet that is the only apparent explanation of his blunder. "All emotions," as Professor Holt points out, "as well as the feelings of pleasure and displeasure, are separable from the 'wishes.'"

So far the discussion of Professor Parker's theory has been limited to the "content" of art. His discussion of "form" must now be examined, since he maintains that content and form "are inseparable not only in fact but in origin"... and "come from precisely the same source, from desire."⁽²⁾

He begins with a curious statement: "It is a remarkable fact, challenging to the curiosity of every student of art, that not only is design a universal characteristic of all art, but that its fundamental structure is the same everywhere. If, for illustration, you place alongside of

(1) E.g. "Consider any work of art as an example of pure design, and a more careful consideration will show that it is an expression of feeling as well," p.33; also p.26 and p.178, where he states that "art is never - or seldom - the simple expression of emotion, but rather an expression of emotion as transformed by thought."

(2) Ibid. p.33. Cf. Herbert, S., The Unconscious in Life and Art, pp.159-190, where a similar view is expressed.

each other the most diverse examples of the sculptor's art: works proceeding from antiquity and modernity ... different as they are, you will find them all alike in respect to their underlying design. Or if you choose a series of paintings or buildings or oriental carpets or musical compositions or poems; or even if you select at random for comparison a statue, a painting, a poem, a sonata, a beautiful vase; the same observation would hold: all these so diverse works would be the same in form." He continues: "Of course, when I say that the form of all art is the same, I refer only to the most abstract aspects of form" not "with the characteristic or unique quality of any species of form or of any individual form ... despite the varieties of form, there is a common structure, law, or pattern in all aesthetic form."⁽¹⁾ This statement is curious, because few people would subscribe to it. It is a generalisation, the very comprehensiveness of which renders it extremely suspect and totally unsuited as the foundation for a dogmatic hypothesis. But it will be as well to examine his case.

Aesthetic form, he states, is "the form which a thing should have if it is to be in fact the imaginative satisfaction of desire."⁽²⁾ It is "desirable form" and is

(1) Ibid. pp.31-32.

(2) Ibid. p.48.

reducible to six principles: (1) the principle of organic unity, or unity in variety; (2) the principle of the theme; (3) the principle of thematic variation; (4) balance; (5) the principle of hierarchy; and (6) evolution.

(1) The principle of organic unity means that each element in a work of art is necessary to its value, that it contains no elements that are not thus necessary and that all that are needful are there. This unity, however, is the unity of a counterpart within the experience of the beholder and presumably the artist; it is the embodiment of the artist's imagination and the spectator's as well; and it is the master principle of aesthetic form, for all the other principles serve it.

(2) First among these is the principle of the theme, Taine's idée mère. In every complex work of art there is at least one preëminent shape, colour, line, melodic pattern or meaning, in which is concentrated the characteristic value of the whole; this is the theme - the work of art in little.

(3) The mere statement of the theme, however, is not sufficient; it must be elaborated and embroidered. And one of the prominent ways of doing so is to repeat it with a difference - by transposition, inversion and so on.

(4) Balance is equality of opposing or contrasting

elements. It is a species of aesthetic unity. Generally speaking, painting exemplifies three types of balance: horizontal, perpendicular, and radial or diagonal - between the upper and lower portions, and between what may be roughly called the corners.

(5) Many works of art, however, are superficially considered rhythmical rather than balanced. But rhythm is really built upon two fundamental aesthetic forms, namely, thematic repetitions and balance. Every rhythm is a motion of waves, all of relatively constant or lawfully varying shape and temporal and spatial span, with balancing crests and troughs. When balance appears to be replaced by rhythm, balance is nevertheless present, only it is not the simple type of balance, but balance as an element in the complex structure of rhythm. This type is found in "open" compositions where the ordinary mode of balance is rejected.

(6) The final type of unity Professor Parker calls evolution: by which he means "the unity of a process when the earlier parts determine the later, and all together create a total meaning." The course of a well-fashioned story is a typical example. Or, in the sphere of plastic art, any line which appears to have a beginning, middle and end, and any composition of figures in which the spectator is led from one figure or group of figures to another; for

there, although the figures be physically static, appreciation of them is a process in time, and through the process the meaning of the whole is evolved. El Greco's paintings, Professor Parker thinks, provide the best illustrations of evolution.

Evolution, though allied with rhythm, is not the same as rhythm. For, unless it is combined with evolution, there is no obvious development, no tendency toward a goal. Furthermore, a distinction must be drawn between dramatic and non-dramatic evolution. In the former there is present an element of overshadowing importance, the climax or goal; in the non-dramatic type this element is lacking. Thematic variation, balance and evolution are the fundamental and irreducible types of aesthetic unity. The principle of hierarchy is not so much a mode of organic unity like these types, but rather a species of organisation of elements in each of these modes.

Professor Parker's analysis is nothing if not ingenious, but it suffers from a strong academic bias and arbitrariness, and it abounds in nebulous conceptions. When he states that aesthetic form is "desirable form," he says nothing affording the slightest enlightenment. The statement is a mere truism. His analysis is equally nebulous and follows for the most part those "rules" practised and

formulated by the academic writers and painters of the nineteenth century, out of which have evolved the rather vague conceptions of artistic structure known as the "principles of composition." It is, of course, unnecessary to point out that these "principles" sprang from an exclusive study of classical models, which, after all, belong to one of the great world art styles, and which, for good or for ill, has dominated practically the whole history of European art and the speculations of most European aesthetic philosophers until modern times. Classical form is essentially beautiful form, and, as has been shown in an earlier chapter, art and beauty are not identical phenomena.

A theory of art which regards all art as the manifestation par excellence of beauty is a theory whose limitations render it totally inadequate to explain the phenomena which constitute its subject-matter. It is true that a work of art must have unity, a theme, balance and so forth; but all these terms, despite Professor Parker's ingenious analysis, are so utterly vague that it is quite impossible to demonstrate the existence in art of the phenomena they are supposed to denote. How is it possible, for instance, to say with any degree of finality what makes for the unity of Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" in the Sistine Chapel, or El Greco's "The Conversion of St. Maurice" in the Escorial?

What are their respective themes? What gives each its balance? Such questions, it may be submitted, are unanswerable. Formal analysis is almost useless as a mode of criticism; psychological analysis is speculative; ontogenetic analysis is scientifically impossible. In a word, scientific criticism is as yet an unrealised ideal, and until such terms as Professor Parker employs are scientifically defined, their use only leads to confusion and empty polemics.

But Professor Parker is not afraid to enunciate principles and to demonstrate their connection with his theory that aesthetic form is precisely the form that things must possess in order to constitute that imaginative satisfaction of desire which is art. Not only does he set himself up as a critic as well as a theorist - and this is a great mistake, as Mr. Wilenski maintains - but he uses his terms without defining them, thereby obscuring his meaning and embarrassing his reader. His use of the word 'rhythm,' for instance, is challengeable; it certainly would not be accepted by Professor Sonnenschein nor by Professor Percy Gardner, both of whom are agreed as to the lack of propriety in applying the term to static art.⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, he apparently does not recognise the distinction between the

(1) Vide Sonnenschein, E. A., Rhythm, p.16 and p.202.

physical organic unity of the work of art and its psychological unity, or between its physical organic evolution and psychological evolution. The perception of the work of art is not always governed, as he appears to assume, by its structural character; perception may be determined solely by the immediate apprehension of its vital subjective principle, by its psychological "togetherness," its affective wholeness, its symbolic unity. When he says,⁽¹⁾ "Notice how we do not view the picture (Inter Artes et Naturam by Puvis de Chavannes) from a vertical central axis, but rather from left to right, taking each group of figures in turn as an element in a rhythmically disposed sequence of filled and empty spaces"⁽²⁾ he is merely stating what he thinks happens when he looks at the picture. The fact is that the ways of perceiving the same picture are infinite; they are not reducible to definite modes. This has been clearly demonstrated by Professor G. T. Buswell,⁽³⁾ who examined under exact experimental conditions the eye movements of subjects in the presence of works of art. His

(1) Op.cit. p.42.

(2) Cf. p.43: "in (El Greco's Crucifixion)... we follow an intensely dramatic movement from the lower to the upper part of the picture."

(3) How People Look at Pictures.

findings expose a common fallacy upon which many glowing appreciations have been founded. That Professor Parker should proceed to elaborate his thesis on such doubtful - not to say demonstrably false - assumptions, reveals a weakness in his critical acumen that ill accords with his comfortable assurance and easy style.

In order that art may achieve its purpose two conditions, according to Professor Parker, must be satisfied: first, the utter plasticity of the materials of art; and second, the isolation of the experience in which the wish is fulfilled. These conditions are perfectly realised only in the dream and in those voluntary constructions of the imagination which, embodying dreams, are called works of art. The materials of the dream are images, things freed from the laws and conditions of reality, perfectly plastic to the dreamer's desire. It follows that, since a work of art is a dream objectified and clarified, it is the translation of images into concrete substance. In Professor Parker's opinion the conditions of complete wish-fulfilment are the exact counterpart of the principle of organic unity (the master principle of aesthetic form) and the principle of organic unity is itself a derivative of the wish. This completes his thesis: the remainder of his book is, for the most part, concerned with its

amplification and elucidation.

Two points call for special notice. In the first place, his statement that the materials⁽¹⁾ of art (the items or data in which dreams are expressed) are images, perfectly plastic to the artist's desire, is not only at variance with other statements of his (already noted), to the effect that art is the expression of feelings and emotions, but it is also at variance with the psychological facts. In the second place, the statement implies that the work of art is merely a copy of the images, which, in his view, are images representing the wish fulfilled - "as if" they were reality. Here once again it must be urged in criticism of this view that, even if it were true that the "materials" of art are images, he has failed to take into account the impossibility of copying exactly an image of reality (using the term in his own sense as meaning nature); it is only in so far as the image is an image already made to conform to the demands of a material medium that it is possible to copy an image;⁽²⁾ and, as has been emphasised in an earlier chapter, a copy

(1) From the context it is clear that the word "materials" here means content.

(2) If, for example, the image comprised a group of coloured bottles or a bowl of fruit, and the artist's medium were charcoal or red chalk, it would be impossible to copy it exactly.

of such an image, apart from the psychological question of the relevance of images to creative procedure, is bound to differ in various important ways from the original. But, according to Professor Parker's own account of the nature of art, the image already modified in terms of the artist's medium would not be an image of reality (since all art is illusion), and ipso facto could not form part of the materials of art at all!

His statement that the conditions of complete wish-fulfilment are the exact counterpart of the principle of organic unity could be regarded as probably true only by construing the term "wish" in a sense radically different from that upon which he seems to proceed. That is to say, it could be regarded as probably true if by the term "wish" were meant the desire to paint rather than not to paint, for then the wish would be to achieve a pictorial arrangement which was the formal equivalent of a valuable psychic experience, and the images (provided the artist worked by their aid) would be images which had already been moulded to the demands of his medium. (1)

(1) This statement requires qualification. The fulfilment of this wish would not necessarily comply with Professor Parker's architectural notion of form. For form, contrary to his claim, does not manifest everywhere the same fundamental structure and is not founded upon demonstrable abstract rules or principles: it is the offspring of the artist's individual mind and sensibility and of the spirit of the period in which he lives and works.

Again, his statement that design⁽¹⁾ is a universal characteristic of all art means no more than that all objects have form. But to assert that all form reveals the same fundamental structure implies an experience and knowledge of art that could not be encompassed within the limits of a single lifetime of travel, study and research. The assertion may, therefore, be dismissed as unworthy of serious discussion.

What Professor Parker apparently means when he says that the conditions of complete wish-fulfilment are the exact counterpart of the principle of organic unity is that since every psychic experience is bound to have a beginning and an end, is bound to cohere, the formal expression of that experience, provided it is complete and precise, is bound also to manifest unity in the arrangement of its data. This may be granted. But the experiences from which art springs are wishes, and wishes are always manifested in or are accompanied by images representing ideal satisfactions. So, in applying his theory, it follows that a dream in which this ideal satisfaction is achieved and objectively expressed in sensuous form is a work of art, and as such is bound to be an organic unity. This, however, does not prove his contention that the unity of the dream experience determines

(1) He uses the word 'design' as a synonym for form.

the unity of the form assumed by the work of art; it merely begs the question by assuming or implying that the images form a unified constellation, which, if translated into sensuous terms, would constitute an organic unity. And from Professor Parker's point of view an organic unity is merely "desirable form," an organisation of dream items freely constructed by the imagination "under the dominion of a wish." It entirely ignores the artist's sensibility to form per se and the influence of material upon his work and experience; so that his fundamental hypothesis, that art is the imaginative expression of a wish, and his theory of form must be rejected as not only unsupportable but fallacious.

Many of the objections which have been put forward in criticism of Professor Parker's theory are mainly attributable to his acceptance of psycho-analytic postulates and preconceptions as to the nature of artistic productivity. The wish-fulfilment theory when analysed reveals inconsistencies and ambiguities, which render it useless as a foundation of a scientific investigation of artistic activity and phenomena. The term "wish" itself is ambiguous; Freud himself, Roger Fry has pointed out,⁽¹⁾ takes liberties with his own definition, and is inconsistent in his use of the term. Further, any theory of art which fails to distinguish

(1) The Artist and Psycho-Analysis, Hogarth Essays, p.17.

between imagination which has to do with wishes (in the Freudian sense of the term, i.e. mainly sexual) and imagination which has to do with the production of original objects, or between images of "real" objects (objects not present to sense) and images of potential future objects not yet in existence, displays a crucial psychological omission, which renders it totally inadequate to account for the existence of art. Such an omission is one of the fatal psychological blunders of Professor Parker. Other defects could be shown - for instance, no explanation is offered (nor could be on his postulates) of the phenomenon of style, which constitutes the vital qualities of form and line⁽¹⁾ - but it was mainly with his fundamental ideas that the preceding examination was concerned.

III.

There is one aspect of the psycho-analytic theory of art which is of peculiar importance because of the place it holds in the general Freudian theory of mental processes - the theory of symbolism. It will be recalled that

(1) His only reference to style shows that he has not understood its meaning: "It is the theme which gives to life, as well as to art, what we call style, distinctive pattern, and clarity." Ibid. p.54. Distinctive pattern and clarity, indeed!

symbolism is regarded as a general characteristic of the functioning of the human mind,⁽¹⁾ whereby libidinous tendencies find an outlet from behind the screen of consciousness and attain symbolic (imaginative) satisfaction on the conscious level. "The artist," states Freud, "understands how to elaborate his daydreams so that they lose that personal note which grates upon strange ears... he knows, too, how to modify them sufficiently so that their origin in prohibited sources is not easily detected."

It is important to be clear about the meaning of the

(1) "Now the unconscious is the region of symbolism par excellence, and wherever we have regression into the unconscious there we find symbolism at play. In order, therefore, to understand the working of the unconscious mind we must first of all free ourselves from the habit of judging it by the canons of logic, but must learn rather to attach full value to symbolic thinking. Symbolic reference has the same meaning and value for the unconscious as logical thought has for the fully developed conscious personality. The difficulty of making this distinction is the great stumbling-block for all those who for the first time encounter the problem of the unconscious. The unconscious seems absurd and meaningless only if we apply to it rational standards brought from the conscious. Judging it from the rational point of view we naturally find it wanting. It is as if we were to try and appraise a picture by its appeal to our logical faculty. Symbolism has a value all its own and must be appreciated on its own merits as a fundamental activity of man." Herbert, S., The Unconscious in Life and Art, p.167.

word 'symbol.'⁽¹⁾ A symbol is a "Thing regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing or recalling something by possession of analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought: a mark or character taken as the conventional sign of some object or idea or process..."⁽²⁾ This sense of the term covers a wide field. It includes all symbols used in mathematics, chemistry, musical notation, shorthand, etc. Symbols of this kind are fixed conventions and have the same meaning for all who employ them. They are signs whose meaning is apprehended by the rational intellect; they point beyond themselves to something extrinsic.

There is, however, another kind of symbol distinguished by the emotional associations with which it is invested - the emblem. The cross, for instance, is the emblem as well as the symbol of Christianity. Certain mystical or emotional qualities appear to belong to emblematic symbols in the same way as scent belongs to a rose. The swastika is to the mass of the German people an emblem of Hitlerian policy and ideals; to the French it is a symbol of aggressive

(1) For a careful analysis of the term see Jung's Psychological Types, pp.601-610.

(2) Concise Oxford Dictionary. See also Pfister, The Psycho-Analytic Method, pp.273-302.

militarism. The heart shape is the emblem as well as the symbol of love. Both these types of symbol have a public significance or character and may conveniently be termed "public"⁽¹⁾ symbols.

There are other types of symbol less easy to differentiate, and because of their esoteric character they may conveniently be classed as "private." The private symbol does not point beyond itself, does not - to borrow an idea from Sir William Mitchell - does not express itself as in a casket, but is itself the personal symbol made visible and tangible - "c'est une manière d'organisme vivant, et en qui nous sentons la chaleur de la vie."⁽²⁾ Constable's landscapes, for instance, are symbols of his affective and critical reactions towards the English landscape; they are the symbols of his private reactions to a public possession. But they are also public symbols to the extent that their significance is capable of being apprehended and shared publicly; and that is precisely to the extent that it is possible for a plurality of sensitive people to experience them at the same time, thereby sharing Constable's meaning as well as finding in his symbol a meaning expressed which has remained mute and inarticulate.

(1) Corresponding to Jung's "Semiotic:" Psychological Types, p.601.

(2) Baudouin, C., Psychanalyse de l'art, p.221.

It is therefore possible theoretically to distinguish between fixed conventional symbols and emblems, and those private visible and tangible constructions, which appear to be embodiments of a vital principle like a living organism.

The field of art is obviously that of the private symbol. The work of art has an organic life of its own. It is the living symbol of a vital experience; it is a fragment of life itself brought to rest in sensuous material.

From the psychological point of view a symbol, as Baudouin points out,⁽¹⁾ is a system not of two terms like the allegory, but a system of several items. It is always a concretion of affectively significant items; a general emotional tone suffuses the whole, linking one item with another in such a manner as to mean the total affective experience of which it is the visible and tangible sign. In Baudouin's view a symbol is "la représentation d'un complexe, c'est la projection - comme sur un écran - du dynamisme du complexe sur le plan statique de l'image."⁽²⁾

A further point: The items of a symbol may assume different forms; they may assume the recognisable forms of the ordinary corporeal world as in the case of Constable's landscapes and in the so-called representational art

(1) Ibid. p.221.

(2) Ibid.

generally; they may assume quite arbitrary or "abstract" (subjective-ideal) forms as, for instance, in the more recent compositions of Picasso and in many of the "abstract" paintings of modern times; or they may assume forms which are combinations of subjective abstractions and physical appearances as in the so-called Surréaliste art. The representational symbol, it should be observed, is not the same as the symbol which possesses a representational value. The representational symbol is first and foremost a representation, a likeness; it stands for or symbolises something else. The symbol which possesses a representational value is not primarily a representation of a "real" object, though it may be so incidentally; it is characterised by its pronounced emphasis of something other than representational truth and accuracy. In other words, what it represents is not phenomenal character but psychological character. Symbols of the "abstract" type may be abstractions from "integral"⁽¹⁾ visual experience or they may be pure subjective abstractions emanating from the deepest recesses of the mind.

(1) The term is used by Herbert Read, Art Now, p.77.

A psycho-analytic symbol is a disguised wish-fulfilment,⁽¹⁾ "la représentation d'un complexe,"⁽²⁾ as Baudouin declares. The work of art is the symbolic manifestation of deep-seated libidinous drives residing in the artist's unconscious mind, the libidinous forces having been "transferred" or "displaced" from the real object of desire and centred in the symbol. The symbol, it should be noted, however, is not a representational symbol; psychologically it is not the visible likeness of an object or situation, but the symbolic manifestation of "set" unconscious desires and motivations, which present to the conscious⁽³⁾ mind of the artist a concatenation of affectively relevant images all suffused with the same affect, but varying in their

(1) Cf. Pfister, Oskar, The Psycho-Analytic Method, p.274. "I ask that provisionally the expression 'symbol' be allowed to apply to all events in which a symbol represents the pictorial representation of an idea related by content but still aiming at something else ... : under symbol I understand provisionally the veiled, masked expression of a thought in a phantastic form which contains an analogy." Also p.278: "The symbol includes not only reality as it is. It embraces all possible characteristic elements borrowed from reality, also such as correspond to our wishes. On a basis of analogies existing in reality, the symbol makes a comparison in which the traits which are undecided in reality are decided according to the wish." Passim.

(2) Baudouin, C., Psychanalyse de l'art, p.221.

(3) By what mechanism this is achieved psycho-analysis gives no clue.

affective significance or stress. In psycho-analytic terms the symbol is primarily a "condensation," the items of which vary in importance according to their affective significance at any given moment. It is a synthesis, the act par excellence of creative imagination, "le mode par lequel la vie intérieure se reconstruit et se renouvelle sans cesse."⁽¹⁾

The work of art is a private symbol; but it is a private symbol with a public aspect. For, according to psycho-analytic theory, especially the theory of Jung, many wishes, especially those emanating from the primitive sexual level, are common to all mankind, and are supported by symbols which possess a universal significance (social symbols).⁽²⁾ Hence the artist's symbol is both private

(1) Ibid. p.225.

(2) "The living symbol shapes and formulates an essential unconscious factor, and the more generally this factor prevails, the more general is the symbol; for in every soul it touches an associated chord. Since on the one hand the symbol is the best possible expression of what is still unknown ... it must proceed from the most complex and differentiated contemporary mental atmosphere. But since, on the other hand, the living symbol must embrace and contain that which relates a considerable group of men for such an effect to be within its power, it must contain just that which may be common to a large group of men, hence this can never be the most highly differentiated or the highest attainable, since only the very few can attain to or understand it; but it must be something that is still so primitive that its omnipresence stands beyond all doubt. Only when the symbol comprises this something, and brings it to the highest possible expression has it any general efficacy." Jung, op. cit., p.604.

and public, personal and impersonal, the dream of the artist and of mankind objectified and clarified. "L'art s'efforce de généraliser constamment à toutes les régions de l'esprit - y compris les plus hautes.... L'art s'efforce de faire vibrer à l'unisson, dans un symbole donné, toutes les couches superposées de l'esprit: l'idée et l'image, la pensée et le sentiment, l'aspiration supérieure et l'instinct adoptent le même rythme et confondent un instant leurs démarches... Le symbole ainsi conçu est une construction, qui, certes, s'inspire du symbole spontané, qui même adhère constamment à lui, mais qui en prolonge singulièrement l'étendue et la portée... Le symbole de l'art établit, entre les diverses régions de l'esprit, une harmonie qui n'existait pas avant lui."⁽¹⁾

The psycho-analytic view of art as symbolism is open to three principal criticisms. In the first place it is no more than an ingenious hypothesis founded upon assumptions which are highly speculative and vulnerable. A symbol is a condensation of images or representations which are the product of libidinous impulses - the ultimate source of all mental phenomena, conscious or unconscious - the representations constituting the connecting link between

(1) Baudouin, C., op. cit., p.228.

the organic (sexual) processes of the body and the mind. If this is so, then it may be asked, as Allers⁽¹⁾ does, how the impulses, being simply functions of the organism and closely related to organic processes (such as changes within the sexual glands) can become contents of "lived" experience. The nature of the impulses themselves does not involve anything that would cause representations to arise, but the transformation must take place somewhere. Either psycho-analysis is forced to introduce a further set of impulses producing mental phenomena from the others, in which case it becomes an infinite regress; or it must concede that beyond the organic functions and structure, and therefore beyond the impulses, there exists yet another region within the personality. In short, like any other monistic conception, psycho-analysis must contradict itself or the plain facts.

In the second place: If a symbol is a phantastic "representation" in the conscious mind which promises the "imaginative" satisfaction of an impulse (or wish); and if the work of art is (as evidently it must be) a translation of the symbol into concrete sensuous form, psycho-analysis must either (a) commit itself to the thesis that

(1) Allers, Rudolf, The New Psychologies, (Essays in Order, No. 9), p.13.

the peculiar form assumed by the physical reproduction of the symbol is of no value in the artistic situation - a thesis which is as essential to the symbolic theory of art as it is untenable in the face of the plain facts observable in the responses of people of sensibility to the beauty of proportion exemplified, for example, in architecture; or (b) it must undermine its own foundations by conceding that the form assumed by the inner symbol (the original of the outer symbol or work of art) is defective, in that it is inadequate to fulfil the immediate psychic need in every respect; for in order to account for this other requirement it must concede the existence of another region within the human personality: which is, in fact, the requirement of design or form.

Professor Parker, it will be recalled, emphasised the fundamental importance of form in art and tried to show that form and content sprang from the same source - desire. He failed, however, to prove his contention. Dr. S. Herbert has made a similar claim. But, whereas Professor Parker makes an honours-even division, Dr. Herbert stresses the importance of form, but fails utterly to account for it psychologically. "In art the manner is more important than the matter," he declares.⁽¹⁾ "It is only by the

(1) The Unconscious in Life and Art, p.182-3, (Present author's italics.)

fusion of the idea with an adequate form that a true work of art is created. It is poetic form that raises the content to the appropriate artistic level. If the work is the manifestation of the artist's unconscious, then the mode in which the artist expresses himself must be similarly significant of his deepest personality. Translated into psychological language this means that expression is the outward symbol of the inner emotion. Indeed the artist has only symbolic means by which to express his most inward feelings. Whether in poetry, music or the plastic arts, he can only paint his own soul by symbolisation... There are certain devices by which the artist achieves the desired result... In modern painting we have the Cubist school that cuts up the objects of nature into geometrical patterns and juxtaposes them in order to create an impression which is intended to represent not so much a picture of nature, but a picture as seen by the inner vision of the artist."

It is hardly necessary to point out the futility of this kind of argument; it is a first-rate example of the psycho-analytic aesthetic dilemma - a dilemma which Freud himself recognised, when he states towards the end of his

Autobiography⁽¹⁾ that it must be admitted that psycho-analysis throws no light upon the two problems of elucidating the nature of the artistic gift and of explaining the means by which the artist works.

The only criterion of value which psycho-analysis can apply to art is that of symbolism: which means in practice that the greater the libido there is expressed in a work of art, the higher it must be ranked in the artistic scale. Jung states⁽²⁾ that the symbol is always an extremely complex creation, since data proceeding from every psychic function are woven into its composition. Its nature, therefore, is neither rational nor irrational; one side accords with reason, another side is inaccessible to reason. "The living symbol cannot come to birth in an inert or poorly-developed mind, for such a man will rest content with the already existing symbols offered by established tradition. Only the passionate yearning of a highly-developed mind, for whom the declared symbol no longer contains the highest reconciliation in one expression, can create a

(1) pp.119-120. Cf. also his Leonardo da Vinci, p.124, where he states that "if after accomplishing these things (tracing the artist's work to an Oedipus situation) I should provoke criticism from even friends and adepts of psycho-analysis, that I have only written a psychological romance, I should answer that I certainly did not over-estimate the reliability of these results."

(2) Psychological Types, pp.606-608.

new symbol. But inasmuch as the symbol proceeds from his highest and latest mental achievement and must also include the deepest roots of his being, it cannot be a one-sided product of the most highly differentiated mental functions, but must at least have an equal source, in the lowest and most primitive motions of his psyche... Through the activity of the unconscious, a content is unearthed which is constellated by thesis and antithesis in equal measure, and is related to both in a compensatory relation. Since this content discloses a relation to both thesis and antithesis, it forms a middle territory, upon which the opposites can be reconciled. Suppose, for example, we conceive the opposition to be sensuality versus spirituality; then by virtue of its wealth of spiritual associations, the mediatory content born from the unconscious offers a welcome expression to the spiritual thesis, and by virtue of its plastic sensuousness it embraces the sensual antithesis. But the ego rent between thesis and antithesis finds in the uniting middle territory its counterpart, its reconciling and unique expression, and eagerly seizes upon it, in order to be delivered from its division. Hence, the energy created by the tension of the opposite flows into the mediatory expression, protecting it against the conflict of the opposites which forthwith begin both about it and within,

since both are striving to resolve the new expression in their own specific sense. Spirituality tries to make something spiritual out of the unconscious expression, while sensuality aims at something sensual; the one wishing to create science and art from the new expression, the other sensual experience. The resolution of the unconscious product into either is successful only when the incompletely divided ego clings rather to one side than the other."

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In conclusion, a word or two must be said about the value of the psycho-analytic contribution to the elucidation of the problem of the psychological nature of art. It cannot be gainsaid, as Dallas maintained, that "It is in the hidden sphere of thought, even more than in the open, that we live and move and have our being;" that there is within us a "felt existence" transcending consciousness, "instincts of our lower nature, intuitions of the higher, dreams and suggestions," that there is in all art a "latency of meaning beyond the simple statement of facts." But, in emphasising one aspect of human personality to a point of distortion, which makes man's whole life fundamentally gross and bestial, psycho-analysis goes far beyond the range and relevance of available scientific evidence.

The vice of the psycho-analytic view of art, as Lord Listowel points out,⁽¹⁾ "is precisely the same as that of the entire Freudian psychology, the exaggeration of a true principle to a degree that verges on absolute erotomania, its shining merit a humble but scientific contribution to our understanding of art forms and the delight they afford." The mere 'imaginative' gratification of unconscious desire is not art; art demands a formal organisation and quality - la ligne de l'artiste - which psycho-analysis is entirely unable to account for or to value. Freud recognises this difficulty, but it does not deter him from illustrating his wish-fulfilment theory by reproducing an artistically worthless picture of a prisoner dreaming that an elf is sawing away his prison bars.⁽²⁾ Pfister likewise reproduces three pictures, all of which are from the artistic standpoint quite puerile, though obviously well suited to the purposes of his exegesis.⁽³⁾ (Plates III, A, B and C). Compared with a work of art like Cosimo Tura's St. Gerome (Plate I), they obviously belong to a different technical genus, and a different spiritual world. Whereas in the St. Gerome there is a vitality, an organic coherence, and

(1) Op. cit., p.164.

(2) Introductory Lectures.

(3) The Psycho-Analytic Method.

a moving principle in every inch of line, there is in the three pictures of Pfister's patient nothing but commonplace shapes and nerveless, turgid masses. The choice of such illustrative material does not win confidence; it points either to the psycho-analysts' lack of sensibility or to their preoccupation with problems which have little relevance to the phenomena which they purport to be elucidating.

Their accounts of what is supposed to go on in the artist's mind are also very wide of the mark. "Nothing," declares Roger Fry,⁽¹⁾ commenting on Jung's chapter on the artist - "Nothing that he says corresponds to any kind of experience which I or, I suspect, any of the artists I have ever known have ever had." In their preoccupation with fundamental impulses they have sought to account for the origin of art in the dynamic functions of the organism, "but it must be borne in mind that the discovery of the origin is not an explanation of the phenomenon... The alimentary canal and the brain both have their origin in the epithelial tissue, but one would give an enquirer a strange idea of the functional importance of the brain in the economy of the body if one only stated that it was originally part of the skin." Thus, if it be argued with the psycho-analysts that art originated in the sexual cravings of

(1) The Artist and Psycho-analysis, Hogarth Essays, p.13.

primitive man and that all art to-day emanates from the same primitive impulses in modern man, not a glimmer of light is thrown upon the problem of the nature of art here and now. As the late Dr. Henry J. Watt pointed out,⁽¹⁾ "the study of mind from the biological side has in the primates had to recognise beyond hunger, love and play a delight in mere sensuous or intellectual effects, as when a monkey plucks at a vibrating pin or a child beats a drum indefinitely, so the science of art must rise above the biological cant that was natural in a recent generation and restore even to popular favour the idea that art is one of the three supreme ends of the spirit... After all biology now claims loudly that an organ is first formed and then, may be, finds a use... Well, then, art and knowledge and morality have first been formed and have been put out on loan. No amount of ... mere 'need' would ever have brought them into being. And so no matter out of what actions or organs they arise and no matter how they are used, they are values essentially independent of these attachments." By perversely distorting the ontogenetic perspective, and bringing into the foreground of attention elements which properly belong to the remote distance, the psycho-analytic writers have obscured their own vision by viewing art from

(1) "Mind and Medium in Art," (III), British Journal of Psychology, Vol. XI, p.24.

the wrong end. That a vast amount of art may have originated in the "faint, far cries" of the soul need not be disputed, but in the process of expression the fundamental primitive factors come into contact with other needs and powers of later development, whose ends they are made to serve. If what is to be expressed is a pathological sexual craving and nothing more, a few symbolic or representational scribbles may be adequate; but if the thing to be expressed is a vast and momentous intuition, it will demand a formal arrangement of an order, which only the true artist is capable of constructing to the point of perfection, and only the man of high sensibility is capable of appreciating. So that art, far from being merely a means of gratifying libidinous wishes, becomes the highest means of expressing the whole personality.

CHAPTER VIII.

Return to Expressionism.

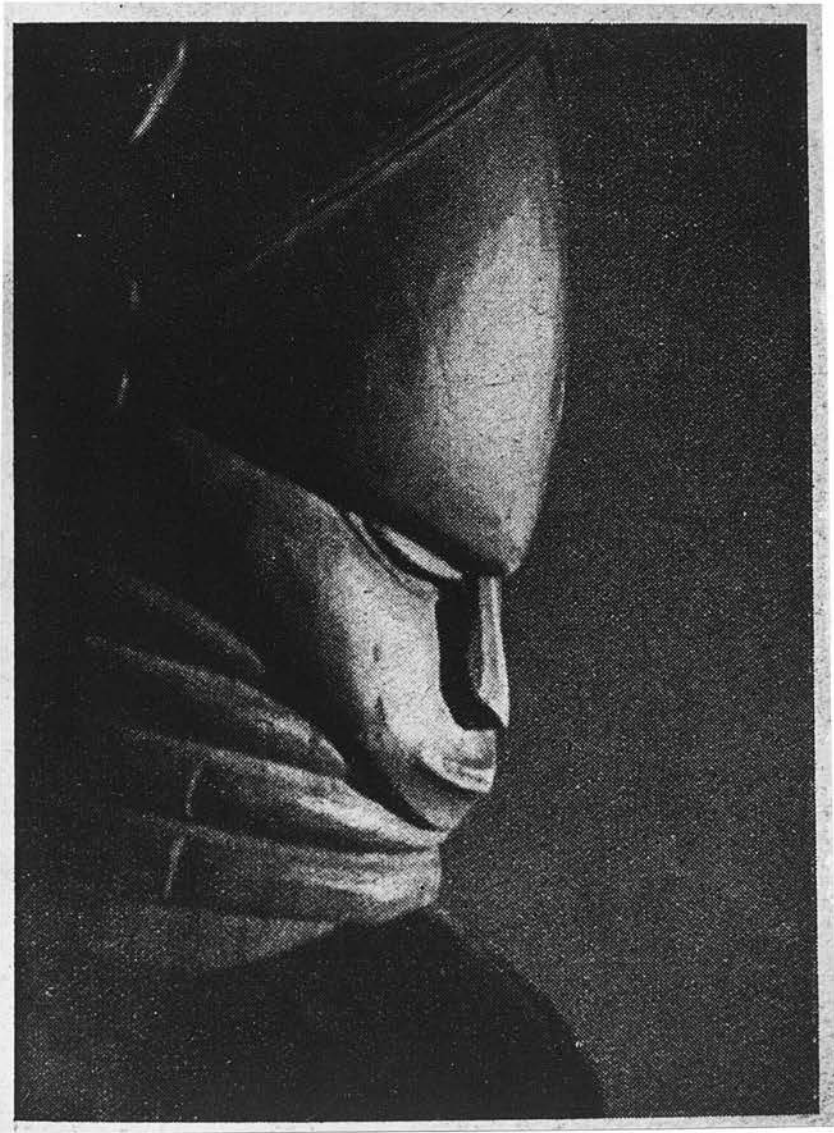


Plate IV.

CHAPTER VIII.

"As in a dream everything is uncertain, meaningless and contradictory except the feeling that directs the dream, so in this communion of ideas, apart from every law of reason, what is clear and consecutive is not what is said, but the feeling that prompts the words."

Tolstoi, War and Peace.

The best-known aesthetic theories, Professor Valentine has pointed out, ⁽¹⁾ err in that they mostly take one aspect of aesthetic experience, or one or more characteristics of certain selected beautiful objects, give quite convincing illustrations, and then generalise as to beauty or aesthetic experience as a whole. Thus art and beauty have been variously defined as "imitation," or as "the characteristic use of tools and materials," or as "feeling become plastic," or as "pleasure regarded as a quality of a thing," or as "significant form," or as the "expression" of feeling, emotion, the ideal and so forth. In the long run probably all theories have some fundamental truth in them; the difficulty is to find a point of orientation from which the

(1) "Mind and Medium in Art," V., British Journal of Psychology, Vol XI, p.47.

essential truth of each may be viewed and given its proper setting and due formulation.

Of all theories perhaps the most persistent and most widely held is the expressionist theory. Mr. E. F. Carritt is convinced that when Plato said that music and shapeliness 'imitated' states of mind he was simply at a loss for a word;⁽¹⁾ and he makes out quite a good case for regarding the expressionist view as the golden thread of aesthetic theory, the via regia to the secret of Parnassus. Its modern formulations, however, have suffered from the inevitable defects of extreme subjectivism and the obscurities of psychological mysticism in which it has become involved and from which, despite the dialectical skill of its protagonists, it has been impossible to extricate it.

It is not the object of this chapter to enlarge upon the criticism of Croce's theory as the formulation par excellence of the expressionist doctrine, but to examine more closely certain obscure points, mostly psychological and not necessarily peculiar to Croce's exposition, and, if possible, to make some suggestions whereby the more obvious flaws of its current formulations may be amended and made to conform with psychological fact and common experience.

Beauty is the expression of feeling: this, in simple

(1) What is Beauty? pp.108-110. Cf. Theory of Beauty, pp.284-287.

terms, is the core of the expressionist theory. Mr. Carr-
itt, for instance, a staunch advocate as well as a careful
critic of Croce, is convinced that the 'expression' of any
feeling is beautiful.⁽¹⁾ This is at once an extension as
well as a refinement of the doctrine of the Estetica.
Signor Giovanni Gentile, on the other hand, affirms that
beauty is the feeling which accompanies every mental act,
"not the expression or intuition of feeling but feeling
itself."⁽²⁾ Either to agree or disagree with these state-
ments is obviously impossible, until the meaning and psycho-
logical significance of the term 'feeling' is defined and
analysed. For Croce feeling is that part of experience
which is capable of lyrical representation, it is simply a
state of the soul;⁽³⁾ for Gentile it is something ultimate
and indefinable, a je ne sais quoi,⁽⁴⁾ yet identifiable in
the pleasure, "the feeling which is the essence of art."⁽⁵⁾
At other times and places, however, apparently when these

(1) Theory of Beauty, p.287 (footnote).

(2) Philosophy of Art, p.201. Cf. Abercrombie, Lascelles,
Toward a Theory of Art, pp.33-34, also p.26.

(3) Saggi Filosofici, Vol.I, pp.22-23. (Vide supra p.161).

(4) Op. cit., p.179.

(5) Op. cit., pp.294-295.

writers are off their guard, they speak of emotion as being the thing that is expressed, as though emotion and feeling were identical modes of experience. Thus Mr. Carritt states that "all beauty is the expression of what may be generally called emotion, and that all such expression is beautiful."⁽¹⁾ If words are to be strictly construed, then this statement can hardly be said to be consistent with the one quoted above from the same source.

Now it may be suggested that it is of little use attempting to define beauty or art in terms of feelings expressed until the significance of the term 'feeling' is cleared up and demarcated from its psychological sister 'emotion.'⁽²⁾ As such a task has already been attempted by Professor McDougall (among others) it will be worth while to note his pronouncements and conclusions.⁽³⁾

Orientating from the position that the primary forms of animal striving were food-seeking and aversion from the noxious, he propounds the view that all modes of experience called feeling and emotion are incidental to the striving activities, the conations of the organism, and that feelings and emotions may be distinguished by their functional

(1) Op. cit., p.296.

(2) Cf. Claparède, Ed., Wittenberg Symposium, p.124.

(3) McDougall, W., Wittenberg Symposium, pp.200-205.

relations to the conative activities which they accompany and qualify. There are two primary modes of feeling, pleasure and pain. These colour and qualify all strivings. Pleasure is the consequence of success; pain the consequence of failure. With the growth of the cognitive powers, whereby diverse aspects of objects and situations are simultaneously apprehendable, there develop corresponding complications in the modes of feeling, blends and fusions of pleasure and pain, such as hope, anxiety, despair, regret and sorrow. Hence with the mature mental structure of adulthood come those pleasures struck from pain which Dallas recognised as somehow fundamental to all art experience; desires become complex and long range, and the simple alternation between pleasure and pain gives place to a perpetual ranging through the scale of complex feelings which, in common speech, are known as emotions. Such "derived emotions" must be differentiated from emotions proper, which have their origin in specialised bodily strivings and corresponding bodily adjustments of varying degrees of complexity. Each system of bodily adjustments is reflected in the experience of the striving organism, giving to each specialised mode of striving a peculiar and distinctive quality. As mental development progresses two or more of the specialised impulses may come into play simultaneously,

conflicting or coöperating, the primary characters of which are experienced in the complex blendings and qualities, such as embarrassment, shame, awe, reverence, reproach.

Comparing the complex feelings, which arise from the degree of success and failure of the striving organism, with emotions proper, McDougall points out that whereas the former modify the further working of the generating impulses, strengthening and sustaining or checking and diverting them according as the balance of feeling-tone is on the positive or negative side, the qualities of the latter are prior to and independent of success or failure, springing to life with the evocation of the corresponding impulses and continuing to colour the experience of striving each with its distinctive tone. The true emotional qualities have no direct influence upon the course of striving. The complex feelings, then, are dependent upon and secondary to the development of the cognitive functions, and probably peculiar to man. The true emotions, on the other hand, may be supposed to have appeared very much earlier in the evolutionary scale, and then as mere by-products of the impulsive strivings of animals. In man alone they become an important source of self-knowledge and self-direction.

Setting aside for the moment the aesthetic question involved, it will be instructive to contrast McDougall's

point of view with that of the philosophical aesthetician, Mr. W. T. Stace.⁽¹⁾ The aesthetic experience, Mr. Stace believes, is correctly described as a feeling, not an emotion. It is not a judgment of the intellect, but an immediate awareness. A feeling, however, is not an emotion; it is a cognitive act. When a person states that he feels that a ghost is in the room, or that a man is to be trusted or distrusted, he is performing a cognitive act. "Instead of inferring, from observations or principles, the truth of the judgment that A is not to be trusted, we think that we feel it as an immediate conviction. But what we feel convinced of is none the less the truth of a judgment and the feeling is therefore cognitive. This is quite different from a pure emotion, such as fear or anger, which, in so far as it is pure, contains no implicit judgment or cognitive element of any kind." In other words, an emotion as such is not a state of awareness, whereas the feeling that a ghost is in the room, or that A is hostile, are states of awareness of these facts. And it is in this sense that beauty is described as a feeling. Emotions possess no cognitive nor intellectual element. They are possessed by animals as well as by men, and to confuse feelings such as those just mentioned is an unpardonable error.

(1) The Meaning of Beauty, pp.20-21; 168-169.

Between these two views there are many points of congruity which need not be discussed here. From the limited point of view of the present topic all that need be noted is that both are agreed on the importance of drawing a clear line of demarcation between feeling and emotion and that both recognise the cognitive character of feeling and its essential relation to cognitive functions. But when the theory of art as the expression of feeling is construed in the light of what they each enunciate, the conclusions they point to are very different.

In Professor McDougall's opinion (and here he may claim the support of the majority of psychologists) all modes of experience called feeling and emotion are incidental to the striving activities of the organism, evoked either by impressions from the environment or by metabolic processes taking place within it; they are, that is to say, necessarily and intimately connected with the degrees of success and failure attending the functionings of fundamental appetites and aversions. As mental structure develops, however, experience on the feeling side is no longer limited to simple pleasure and simple pain, but embraces complex blendings of pleasure and pain, the offspring of long-range "prospective and retrospective" desires. This, apparently, is as far as Professor McDougall would go in suggesting the relation

of feeling to the purely cognitive functions of the organism. The "expression of feeling" would thus involve nothing higher in the scale of cultural values than those complex blendings of pleasure and pain arising from long-range desires, which psychologists and others call hopes, anxieties, regrets, sorrows, joys, surprises.⁽¹⁾ Mr. Stace, on the other hand, maintains that feelings are in essence cognitive and intellectual. "We speak," he says, "of our feeling that a thing is evil, that disaster is coming... So, too, in religious music we feel the divine presence, or in lyrical poetry we feel the gaiety, sadness, or melancholy of the poet's mood. In the drama or the novel we feel rather than think, the artist's attitude to life. Such feelings are ... conceptual cognitions. We do not think them as concepts just because we are not in the presence of science but of art." Feelings, then, are in essence cognitive and intellectual.⁽²⁾ His view of the nature of feeling thus admits of a much wider range of spiritual

(1) Cf. Croce, Saggi Filosofici, p.19; Problemi, p.23; Logica, p.154; Pratica, p.187.

(2) Op. Cit., p.169. In Mr. Stace's view concepts may be either free or submerged. "A free concept is one which we think about abstractly, as a concept, as when we speak generally of unity, or civilisation, or whiteness, without referring to any particular object which is one, or civilised, or white. This thinking of free concepts is the peculiar function of the abstract intellect. But concepts, as well as being free, may also be unrealised and submerged in

(intellectual, psychological) material than may be expressed by art: indeed, it would include almost everything that Croce and his adherents would specifically exclude. In art (according to Mr. Stace) man fashions an external medium with the definite aim of making it express his intellectuality; indeed, what is known as the content of art may be so rich as to embody in its different forms practically the whole of human culture.⁽¹⁾ And the greater the wealth and profundity of the intellectual content the greater will be the value of the aesthetic experience. For the intellectual content consists in the total intellectual reaction of the artist upon the world as exhibited in the work of art. The artist possesses his own peculiar attitude to the world, to life, to things, to people. Man's view of the world may be summed up in a very general and approximate way by such words as pessimistic, optimistic, hedonistic, resigned, gay, sullen, cynical, joyful, tolerant and so forth.⁽²⁾ But

perception. When I see an object and recognise it as a man, I must, in this act of recognition, make use of the general concept or class-idea of man. For without the concept of the class I could not recognise the object as a member of the class. And this is true even of the perception of animals. But in the act of perception, the concept, though implicit and present, is not held free before the mind as an abstraction. It has not yet been abstracted or separated from the matrix in which it is fused." pp.22-23.

(1) Op. cit., pp.134-136.

(2) Ibid. pp.163-164.

at bottom any man's attitude is the product of his intellect; it is founded upon concepts, composed of concepts.

Now these views have been cited not in order to compare or to discuss their merits, either from the point of view of psychology or aesthetic theory, but to show, by taking representative views of feeling and emotion, the difficulties and ambiguities involved in the theory of art couched in terms of expressed feelings. The term is as yet much too vague and altogether too convenient and susceptible of dialectical manipulation to be of any service in scientific discourse. (1)

So much for the 'feeling' ingredient of the expressionist formula. There is the other much discussed 'expression' part. It will be recalled that, for Croce, beauty (and art) is simply expression, the expression of an intuition. And, since no intuition can take place apart from expression, it is of no matter whether it be said that art is intuition or that art is expression. Intuiting is the giving form to the mere raw material of consciousness - sensation, which

(1) The most fundamental problem - that of the relation of sensation to feeling - cannot, of course, be discussed here. It is worth noting, however, that Croce's view of sensation is not supported by contemporary psychology. Apart from factors of motive or valuation nothing can exist in consciousness or experience that is recognisable. Vide Harts-horne, C., The Philosophy and Psychology of Sensation, p.108 et seq.

is outside the knowing spirit and formless. To intuite is to express, to have an image, an individual image of a feeling. This image, of course, is not an image in the ordinary sense of the word, which is based on external perception, but the precise inward expression of a state of the soul. And it is this inward expression, this giving form to raw material of consciousness, that is art, beauty. Beauty is an experience of the spirit, it is art, it is intuition, it is form all at once. For Mr. Carritt, on the other hand, expression is the embodiment of feelings in sensible form.⁽¹⁾ What is beautiful, however, is not the sensible form but the contemplation of it, "without practical interest, without scientific abstraction, and without existential judgment, as the pure expression of emotion."⁽²⁾ But Mr. Carritt is not quite clear as to what really constitutes expression: "We may read the poem or watch the dawn coldly; and in that case, like other symbols, they may ^{indeed} remind us of certain feelings, ... but they do not actually embody them. This is the reason why it is not the written or spoken poem ... which must strictly be called beautiful, but only a particular way in which at any given moment any individual expresses himself in them."⁽³⁾ As to the 'particular way'

(1) Op. cit., p.298.

(2) Ibid. p.288.

(3) Ibid. p.298. (Present author's italics.)

Mr. Carritt gives no clue.

Thus in the hands of those distinguished philosophers the doctrine of aesthetic expressionism becomes a texture of tautologies, a sonorous philosophic rejection of the world of plain fact and everyday experience in favour of a bodiless world of empty abstractions.

But must the expressionist theory of art be abandoned because of the failure of its advocates to say precisely what art does express and how? Surely not. For, despite the manifold obscurities and defects of its present and past formulations, no other theory appears to be better constituted to explain the phenomena of art and artistic experience. Already throughout the preceding discussion various hints may have revealed a leaning towards this conclusion. And in Chapters V, VI and VII reasons were set forth which indicated the lines along which the weaknesses of current formulations might be rectified. An attempt will now be made to state these a little more concisely.

The reasons which led to the rejection of the Crocean view of expression were (1) that his definition of expression is both arbitrary and empty. It is arbitrary in that it limits the term without sound reason to aesthetic expression, "spiritual aesthetic synthesis;" it is empty in that he fails to establish and define the nature of this

synthesis, Croce being content with a "judicious interchange" of strict synonyms;⁽¹⁾ (2) it ignores the fundamental importance of material to all art: expression is the giving form to sensation - the raw material of consciousness - but the nature of this form is unknown and unrecognisable, the only examples being the expressions themselves; (3) Croce's hypothesis of a raw material of consciousness (sensation) is also unknown and unrecognisable; it is philosophically and psychologically meaningless - in other words, the material or spiritual substance which must be formed (intuited) and expressed cannot be shown to exist.

Towards the end of Chapter V the view was advanced that expression cannot take place except in terms of a physical medium (the actor cannot act unless he employs his body as his medium of expression; the artist cannot function unless he manipulates a physical medium and creates something outside of himself); that the artist's reactions to his medium are an essential ingredient of his creative mood; that physical expression is the only means whereby the artist can

(1) "The keystone of Croce's method consists in a skilful application of the Law of Identity combined with a partial denial of the Law of Contradiction. Thus when Intuition is identified with Expression it may be asserted that all intuitions are expressed without any further necessity of proof. Then if Intuition-expression be identified with Art, it follows that all intuitions are works of art." Ogden, Richards and Wood, The Foundations of Aesthetics, p.43.

discover what he wants to express; and the conclusion was reached that if expression means the outward embodiment of inward states and events (and it was argued that this was the truest meaning of the term), then it is possible - contrary to Croce's view - to differentiate between expressions which are 'naturalistic' and expressions which are artistic, by showing that in the former the medium is ignored and that in the latter the medium, because of its inherent qualities and the expressing agent's (i.e. the artist's) cognitive and affective relations and reactions to it, becomes a crucial factor in determining the manner and the final form of the expression. In Chapters VI and VII, where it was found necessary to go into the question of technique in art and its relation to the purely psychic process and vice versa, this conclusion, it may be claimed, was substantially supported. To round off these studies two questions must be asked: first, if the expressions called art are determined in part by the artist's cognitive relations and affective reactions to his medium, what constitutes the other parts?; and second, what does art express? - for it was found on examination that the formulation of the expressionist theory as the expression of feeling (Croce and Carritt) was both ambiguous and inadequate, according as the term 'feeling' was interpreted in the light of one or other of representative

current theories. These questions, it need hardly be stated, raise the most vital issues with which the psychologist of art must be expected to deal. It cannot, therefore, be hoped to offer anything more than tentative answers.

To some extent the ground on which the answer to the first of these questions will be founded was prepared in Chapter I, where some suggestions were made as to the nature of the artist's sensibility to form. For in the long run what distinguishes the true work of art from other forms of plastic expression is the quality of line and formal structure it exhibits. This quality, however, does not reside in the mere line and structure as such, but in their power of evoking strong affective reactions both in the artist and in the spectator. It must, therefore, be ultimately traced to the artist's total state of mind (and body, since so much of man's conative activity is bound up with somatic processes) throughout the period during which creation is proceeding. The line and structure are precisely expressive of the phases of affective experience through which the artist passes as he works, and unless his hand and vision are completely responsive to every minute change and tremor taking place within him and outside him on the canvas, he will never be satisfied with his work. Herein lies the secret of his formal sensibility, his acute responsiveness

to those manifold subtleties of line and rhythm, which a truly vital work of art possesses. Herein, too, lies the secret of that peculiar all-pervading quality of liveliness and organic coherence that may be found in every inch of canvas of a masterpiece. The same spirit of nervousness is manifest in the smallest leaf or twig in a painting by Botticelli as there is in the tenderest fold of his diaphanous drapery. Whence the miracle of this oneness in life and expressiveness if not in his exquisite sensibility? Whence that elegant flow of abundant and resistant energy of a Picasso or a Matisse drawing?

In his most excellent book of critical and speculative essays⁽¹⁾ the late Roger Fry has a great deal to say which is much to the point in this discussion. Fry is dealing with modern drawings; and it is in drawing that the operation of sensibility is best demonstrated - though, to be sure, it is not generally in drawing that its grandest revelations are manifest. In dealing with what he calls the "unconscious mechanism" of execution he points out how practice makes for perfection. "But there is another method by which the artist may withdraw his consciousness from his gesture sufficiently to allow of his line being rhythmical. This is attained if, before an actual appearance, he becomes

(1) Transformations.

so concentrated upon the interpretation of a contour as to be unconscious of what goes on between his hand and the paper. The ideal of such a situation is that he should actually never look at the paper. This, of course, is a counsel of perfection, since, under such circumstances, although the hand is likely to express the rhythm admirably it will fail to do so with correct proportions. Nevertheless, some artists do make admirable notations in this way. Or, if the vision be one aroused in the 'inner eye' by the artist's imagination, he may draw with his eyes shut. Here, again, the rhythmic quality is likely to be excellent, but the proportions are almost sure to go astray."⁽¹⁾ The important point in this quotation is, of course, the fact that the hand is completely responsive to the mind's activity though the visual mechanism is shut off. The sensibility is at work through the exquisite mechanism of the hand alone. It may then be that sensibility is ultimately a matter of cerebro-neural structure, something operating at what Köhler would call the psycho-physiological level.⁽²⁾ But until both psychology and physiology have progressed far beyond their present limits it would be dangerous to propose any more specific explanation.

(1) Ibid. p.202. (Present author's italics.)

(2) Cf. Langfeld, H. S., "Conflict and Adjustment in Art," Problems of Personality, p.379.

But compare, for example, the line of Rubens' drawing with a careful tracing of it (Plate V) and the miraculous power of the productive sensibility will be seen most remarkably. Notice the nervous, reticent vitality - the expressiveness of the original compared with the flaccidity of the tracing and its complete lack of life and distinction. Roger Fry tells⁽¹⁾ how an indignant spectator at the Post-Impressionist exhibition was moved to send to the papers his own version of a Matisse drawing. "The result was, to any sensitive eye, as far removed from Matisse as it was from Ingres!"

Sensibility, of course, will be influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the artist's chosen medium of expression - a point upon which some emphasis was laid in another connection in an earlier chapter. All the drawings of Eric Gill, for instance, are clearly influenced by the artist's feeling for stone. The paintings of Signorelli have a sculptural quality which derived from that master's study of the antique. On the other hand, the drawings of the sculptor Maillol (who was a painter before becoming a sculptor) have none of that too positive assertion of the tactile as opposed to the visual aspects of form that

(1) Op. cit., p.206.



usually marks a sculptor's drawings.⁽¹⁾ Perhaps this factor lies near the psychological root of Wölfflin's stylistic dualism - "das Lineare und das Malerische" modes of vision. This is a suggestion, however, which cannot be followed up here.

The artist's sensibility to form and medium, it may be concluded, is the primary condition of his achievement. Without this gift of sensibility he would never become an artist, never attain that "inward peace," which is the ineffable reward of adequate expression. (Plate IV.)

The question, What does art express? is the most difficult, because the most comprehensive and far-reaching question which the psychologist must face; for not only does it raise crucial psychological issues for the very discussion of which psychologists have as yet not even prepared a proper setting, but it involves more or less directly almost every department of the science of man. In fine, it raises the whole problem of the psychology of the personality, a branch of psychology which even to-day has barely won due recognition as being entitled to isolation for special departmental treatment and study. Any answer to the question as to what art expresses can, therefore, be put only in the very vaguest of terms.

(1) Ibid. p.209.

No more suitable point of orientation could be found than the following remarks from the pen of a famous critic, Mr. R. H. Wilenski.⁽¹⁾ "At the present time there is a wide-spread notion that an artist when he paints a picture or carves a statue etc. is not a man but only part of a man - a group of art-producing elements. It is assumed that, in the process of his work, he can somehow or other get wholly or partly outside himself; that he can shed for the purpose a part of the complexity which he is; that he can go away for a week-end, as it were, from himself and leave behind him the whole of himself except one set of organs - the organs used in the art-producing activity. And there is evidence that many artists in recent times have entertained this singular notion.

"But reflection, I submit, will make it manifest that no man can perform this feat. A man can take off his clothes and take out his false teeth before he goes to bed because they are not and never have been really part of him; but he cannot take off his stomach and take out his memories and range them on the dressing-table to prevent them disturbing his night's rest. A man's stomach and all his memories are with him all night whether he choose to admit it or not; both are also with him when he starts a game of poker or

(1) The Study of Art, pp.19-20.

when he goes off to Brighton to play golf or to his studio to paint a picture; and both remain with him all through the game or the painting. Every artist like every other man is a changing complexity at every moment of his life. But at any given moment he is a complete indivisible whole." This view is in complete accord with the modern conception of mind as an organically integrated functioning unit, and with certain notions prevalent in contemporary art criticism which imply that art is the expression of the artist's personality.

Now although the word 'personality' is tossed about in most reckless fashion by all and sundry, it does stand, albeit in a vague way, for the idea of a whole individual, a complex of traits, dispositions, memories and mental capacities. Such a 'whole' is obviously what Mr. Wilenski had in mind when he wrote the words which have just been quoted. The term, however, is far too hospitable and elastic to be of very much service in a field of discourse where exactness and consistency are above all things necessary. Nevertheless, it appears to be the most suitable, because the most suggestive, of the many terms in current use, which are intended to denote the unique totality implied in the idea of man as a living and acting organism. It does stand for those essential 'personal' aspects of an individual, which

mark him off from his fellows, making him what he is in their eyes, the living embodiment of a set of ideals and values.⁽¹⁾ Disembarrassed of the ambiguous accretions which have become attached to it in current usage, it might be made to perform useful work in the service of a science which is much in need of a precise terminology of its own - the science of art. But the difficulty is to know where to begin. The concept 'personality' is so inextricably bound up with other comprehensive concepts such as 'character' and 'temperament,' with which it is frequently identified, that any attempt to clear the ground must involve far more than a survey of present opinion and achievement; it means going back to fundamentals. Such a task is far beyond the scope of this study, and may be left to those who are competent to deal with it in future research. For the present it will be worth while to refer to a recent essay⁽²⁾ by Mr. Herbert Read, in which he has attempted to "introduce a few definitions" into the study of what he calls "the creative

(1) "In what a man sees value, especially in what he sees the highest value of his life, that value, in fact, which makes life important to him, that is what we must know if we are to be capable of understanding his personality." Stern, E., "New Ways of Investigating the Problem of Personality," Psyche, Vol.III, p.364.

(2) Form in Modern Poetry.

functions of the personality."

Mr. Read's purpose is to show that artistic form depends upon the artist's personality. There is in every individual "a coherent organisation of mental processes" called the ego, he states, (quoting from Freud's The Ego and the Id); "and this may serve as the preliminary definition of 'personality' of which I am in search."⁽¹⁾ This ego, he goes on to point out, is identical with the flow of conscious thoughts, impressions received and sensations experienced, and from it proceed the repressions "by means of which an attempt is made to cut off certain trends in the mind not merely from consciousness, but also from their other forms of manifestation and activity." The conduct of the ego throughout life is essentially passive - the individual is 'lived,' as it were, by unknown and uncontrollable forces - the reserve of instincts and passions which are normally repressed and beyond the complete control of the conscious reason. This reserve, the impersonal aspect of the 'Ego' Freud calls the 'Id.' Personality Mr. Read associates with the ego. Character, which is so often identified with personality, he regards as "a disposition in the individual due to the repression of certain impulses which would otherwise be present in the personality;" it is

(1) Ibid. p.12.

"the result of certain fixities or negations imposed on the flow of consciousness." In ordinary usage it implies a man moulded to a pattern, firm, consistent, dependable. Quoting from Dr. Roback (Problems of Personality), he defines character as "an enduring psycho-physical disposition to inhibit instinctive impulses in accordance with a regulative principle" - the will to hold in check, which implies an element of self-determination. "Character, in short, is an impersonal ideal which the individual selects and to which he sacrifices all other claims, especially those of the sentiments and emotions. It follows that character must be placed in opposition to personality, which is the general-common-denominator of our sentiments and emotions."

In the mood of creative activity the artist stands face to face with his personality. "He stands fully conscious of the wavering confines of his conscious mind, an expanding and contracting, a fluctuating horizon where the light of awareness meets the darkness of oblivion; and in keeping aware of that area of light and at the same time watching the horizon for a suggestion of more light, the poet induces that new light into his consciousness; as when, at twilight, no stars are visible to a casual glance, but shine out in answer to a concentrated stare. Such lights come, of course, from the latent memory of verbal

images in what Freud calls the preconscious state of the mind; or from the still obscurer state of the unconscious, in which are hidden, not only the neural traces of repressed sensations, but also those inherited patterns which determine our instincts. But it is not inspiration alone - not the sudden ingress of light - which makes the poet; that is only the intermission which, if isolated, leads to an easy despair. The essential faculty is an awareness of one's own personality, and the capacity to cultivate its inherent activities 'without division or inner revolt...' (1)

The scientific value of such an analysis depends, of course, upon the value of the psycho-analytic theory upon which it is founded; but, viewed in the light of Mr. Read's illuminating illustrations, it is both suggestive and plausible. There is no gainsaying the fact that in his so-called inspired moments the artist achieves contact with a self that is normally hidden, and that this self is closely connected with the deeper levels of his psyche. But whether it is scientifically possible to identify the personality with the ego is a question which present-day psychology is unable to answer. The nature and function of the so-called "unconscious" is still in dispute, and until psycho-analysts are able to posit more convincing evidence than they have so

(1) Ibid. p.31.

far brought forth, little progress is likely to be made. "The term 'unconscious'," states Dr. Goddard,⁽¹⁾ "may have justification if it can be used in the right way. It may also be useful to designate that part of the so-called unconscious which is more easily recalled as the fore-conscious or co-conscious. When the psycho-analysts will ... translate their explanations into neural terms, or terms consistent with the known facts of brain physiology, much of the objection to it and many of the difficulties now encountered will disappear, and we will be on the road to a true science of psycho-analysis and the unconscious." But taking Mr. Read's suggestion for what it is worth, there can be little quarrel with the assumption that the secrets of personality are not to be found in any theory which disregards the existence of the hidden self and its essential function in the inspiration of the artist. Art, then, may be defined as the expression of personality in terms of a chosen medium controlled and directed by sensibility.

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"Our little life is rounded with sleep; our conscious existence is a spot of light, rounded or begirt with a haze

(1) Goddard, H. H., "The Unconscious in Psycho-Analysis," Problems of Personality, p.329.

of slumber - not a dead but a living slumber, dimly-lighted and like a visible darkness, but full of dreams and irrepressible activity, an unknown and indefinable, but real and enjoyable mode of life - a Hidden Soul."

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APPENDIX I.

APPENDIX I.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS OF AESTHETIC APPRECIATION.

(From the Scottish Educational Journal, Volume XVIII,
Nos. 51 and 52, 1935.)

I. Preliminary.

Art education is a two-fold process: on the one hand, the cultivation of the child's productive creative ability; on the other, the development of his capacity for passive or receptive artistic experience. This view is expressed in the Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers (Board of Education, 1927) and reiterated in the Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School (1931), where the aim of Art education is defined as follows: "To cultivate in the children sufficient skill to enable them to express their own ideas in some form of art, and also to stimulate the growth of such sympathy and sensitiveness as may lead to aesthetic appreciation."

II. Mainly Historical.

1. The increasing amount of time and attention accorded to the appreciation lesson during the past few years is a reliable indication of the importance now attached to it in pedagogic practice. Indeed the perceptual illiteracy of the general public has occupied the minds of educationists for a considerable time, and in most progressive schools serious efforts have been made to devise ways and means of dealing with the problem. To-day its solution is probably the most significant issue before those charged with the preservation and development of our artistic culture. Administrative bodies are voting considerable sums of money for the provision of necessary facilities and equipment and for the improvement of class-room amenity. Responsible officials seize every opportunity to urge the necessity for sustained effort and experiment. Educational journals regularly devote space and attention to the subject; and outside this limited field of publicity, in the Press and Wireless Broadcasting, unmistakable signs point to a growing public consciousness of the need for guidance and instruction in the exercise of the aesthetic faculties. On all hands there is evidence that the development of the powers of appreciation and discrimination is no

longer merely an aspiration of the educational idealist but a practical exigency of the highest importance to the economic and material well-being of the nation.

2. The appointment of the Council for Art and Industry was the first serious step towards the study of public taste and appreciation from the national or economic point of view, and, although the first Reports have called forth a measure of criticism in some quarters, it cannot be gainsaid that the Council deserves the support and approbation of every responsible educationist. It would be well to keep in mind, however, that the outlook of a Council sponsored by the Board of Trade must be material rather than academic and that the scope of its deliberations is necessarily circumscribed by the nature of its mandate. Fundamental questions underlying the theory of art education, although extremely pertinent to the topic of public taste, cannot therefore be regarded as coming within the Council's province of investigation and research.

3. The primary purpose of this essay is to examine the wider question from the educational point of view, in order, if possible, to discover whether current practice is based on sound assumptions. There is reason to suspect that it is not. For, if the larger public was really sensitive to the finer qualities of design and construction,

it would refrain from purchasing goods of inferior artistic merit and workmanship. Manufacturers would thereby be forced to maintain a minimum standard of design in the articles offered for sale: in short, the nature of the demand would determine the nature of the supply.

4. This line of argument, however, has frequently been attacked on the ground that it is based on a naïve economics. Many people maintain that the standard of design of manufactured wares is not a simple question of demand and supply, that the manufacturer merely supplies what he knows from experience the public wants, and that his experience shows that good designs are all too frequently commercial failures: which is an oblique way of asserting that it is not the manufacturer who is responsible for the low standard of design of manufactured articles, but the debased state of public taste. The discriminating public - and it must be admitted that this is a comparatively small part of the public at large - maintains, in its turn, that, willing as it is to pay a slightly higher price for better designed products, these are not procurable in the ordinary markets patronised by the middle classes. It claims that the manufacturer sets his standard by the success or failure in the larger market which caters for the less discriminating buyers. The public is blamed in the one instance and the

manufacturer in the other. But from whatever angle the problem is examined, the general standard of public taste appears the main factor to be considered. (1)

5. There seems to be general agreement that the average standard of public taste and aesthetic discrimination is unnecessarily low. Attempts have been made to account for this by asserting that good taste is a special endowment accorded to the few. This argument, however, is no longer tenable. It is completely refuted by the existence of a very high level of taste among extant primitive people and among young children whose vision and sensibility have not been warped by 'education.' The capacity for artistic experience and discrimination is, without doubt, the possession of every normal individual. And that capacity is capable of being developed by the right kind of environment and right teaching and stunted by the wrong kind of environment and wrong teaching. Industrialism, it is true, must bear a large share of responsibility for the devitalised and debased sensibility of the man-in-the-street. But it would be as unjust to charge industrialism with all the blame as to foist entire responsibility upon the daily press for the indifferent literary taste of the

(1) A point of view quickly realised by the Council for Art and Industry.

greengrocer. The fault, I submit, lies mainly - I shall not say exclusively - with the educational system, which until now has failed to achieve its ultimate aim, namely, the development in every child of a discriminating sense of artistic values.

6. A detailed examination of the causes of this failure would involve an unwarrantable excursion into the history of social life and culture in this country during the past two centuries. Here it will be sufficient to attribute the failure in part to the fact that in the earlier systems of art education the distinction between the active and the passive aspects of artistic experience was not recognised, and in part to the inherent defects of the systems as then practised. These defects have, to a large extent, been remedied, but, as the general public standard of artistic taste and sensibility remains unsatisfactory, it will be worth while to scrutinise current practice in so far as it aims specifically at developing art appreciation. This scrutiny, I suggest, will reveal two things: first, that the diversity of opinion professed and of methods practised by art teachers is considerable; and second, that behind this admittedly important branch of pedagogic practice there exists a confusion that is astonishing in the face of the glib utterances of educationists.

III. The Development of Art Appreciation: Current Practice.

1. Broadly speaking, there are two points of view, two schools of thought. One school believes that the best way to learn to appreciate art is to learn something about its production by actual creative experiment. It maintains that the highest form of appreciation is the appreciation achieved by the artist himself and that any improvement in creative ability must produce an improvement in appreciative capacity. There is, therefore, no need for a separate course in appreciation, since all children receive at least eight years' art instruction, irrespective of their creative endowments. Allied with this school are those who, while believing in the primary importance of practice, yet would combine practice with some form of theoretical instruction or passive contact with art. This school may conveniently be called the Practical School.

2. The other or Theoretical School of thought maintains that appreciation does not necessarily involve practical creative experience and knowledge, that it is possible fully to appreciate a work of art without being able to produce one. It believes in giving appreciation an independent status and attempts to develop it by one or all of four principal methods:-

(a) The Historical Method. By teaching the history of art, thereby giving the children an introduction to its historical evolution.

(b) The Analytical-Historical Method. By teaching the history of art and analysing important examples with a view to emphasising their structural and thematic components, thereby (it is claimed) providing the basis of theoretical knowledge essential to the highest appreciation.

(c) The Analytic Method. By analysing selected works of art from the standpoint of the so-called rules of composition (rhythm, balance, harmony, proportion, unity, etc.) and the elementary principles of aesthetics.

(d) The Comparative Method. By comparing items of differing artistic merit, thereby (it is claimed) providing the training in discrimination necessary for the attainment of a sound personal scale of values.

A fifth, but rather vague practice consists in discussing works of art in the light of historical and biographical facts which relate to their production and creators.

3. Prima facie it appears quite reasonable to assume that creative ability must be highly correlated with appreciative capacity, that the artist's appreciation must be fuller and richer than the layman's. The assumption

rests upon a very doubtful hypothesis. For no evidence has ever been produced to prove that the artist's appreciation is one whit better than that of the cultured and sensitive layman. Indeed, it would not be difficult to establish a strong case in support of the contrary argument. It may be true, however, that some experience of producing art is accompanied by a fuller appreciation⁽¹⁾ of art in general, but the fact remains that there are thousands of people with little or no productive artistic capacity who yet possess a discriminating sensibility of a very high order and are capable of genuine enthusiasm in the presence of meritorious work. If the needs of these people are neglected, then art education is not fulfilling its proper function. The case for the teacher who maintains that practical instruction is the only real training in appreciation falls to the ground when he has to deal with the pupil whose endowment does not include productive creative ability in the plastic arts.

4. The validity of the hypothesis upon which the Theoretical school proceeds is beyond dispute, and for this reason it occupies by far the stronger position. But when they advance beyond their primary postulate that

(1) I use the word here in its strictly etymological sense - to estimate, judge, appraise. Vide Section IV.

practice in artistic production is not essential to complete artistic appreciation, its adherents show little or no unanimity either of precept or of practice. Each teacher makes his own theoretical assumptions and follows his own pedagogic method; there is no common understanding or agreement about fundamentals, no body of accepted principles. In actual practice, however, the analytico-historical method - the teaching of the history of art coupled with the analysis of selected works in order to display their historical setting and to bring to light the main elements of their structure and content - appears to be the most favoured one. It appeals to prevailing opinion on theoretical grounds and accords with the long-established practice of historical and technical analysis adopted in teaching the appreciation of literature. Next should be mentioned the teaching of art history alone, which by many teachers is believed to be an adequate and satisfactory method of dealing with the problem. Whether this is so or not depends, of course, upon the view taken of the meaning and scope of art history. In its most thorough-going form the analytical method is practised mainly in America, where it has attracted favour, both in the art curricula of high schools and in the courses of the university art departments. The method of comparison is

one of the newer approaches which has many advantages, since it appeals directly to the artistic sensibility through first-hand visual experience. The biographical approach is not generally recognised as adequate in itself; it is used oftenest in association with the other methods, as providing a desirable supplement to analytical and historical study.

IV. Theoretical Considerations.

1. The analytico-historical method, it may now be noted, is adopted on the theoretical assumption that "art appreciation" is essentially a rational process which involves historical and technical knowledge, or is founded, at least, on rational processes of mind such as those which precede the judgments of Kunstforscher, connoisseurs and historians. Which brings me to the central points of my argument: That (i) the experience commonly known as "art appreciation" is a relatively superficial experience of the real import of meritorious art, and (ii) that there is a more fundamental and potentially richer mode of artistic experience which is independent of historical and technical knowledge, being founded on the capacity for immediate apprehension of universal art value. But, as I desire to proceed cautiously, I shall turn aside for a moment to

examine briefly the history and meaning of the term "appreciation." And, since I make no claims to philological expertise, I shall have recourse to the authority of the Oxford English Dictionary.⁽¹⁾

2. Unfortunately, no mention is made of the specifically aesthetic connotation of the term. "Appreciate," meaning etymologically "to form an estimate of worth, quality or amount" appears first to have been introduced into the language about the year 1769. In 1798 it took on the connotation "to estimate aright" and in 1820 the further connotation "to perceive, to be sensitive to;" not until 1833 did it acquire the meaning "to be sensitive to, or sensible of, any delicate impression or distinction" - which probably suggested its relevance to aesthetic experience, philosophy and discourse. Its specifically aesthetic connotation is, therefore, a comparatively modern linguistic phenomenon, not unconnected, as I hope to show, with the history of modern⁽²⁾ aesthetic philosophy and the history of the philosophy of European education.

The gradual expansion of the meaning and connotation attaching to the term, it will have been observed, is

(1) Shorter Edition, 1933.

(2) As distinct from contemporary aesthetic philosophy.

centrifugal in nature; it spreads outwards, as it were, from an unambiguous centre to a vague and diffused periphery, but it has never lost its literal and etymological significance, namely, "to form an estimate of worth, quality or amount." Consequently, the term "appreciation" in one of its principal applications is normally held to imply a weighing-up process, a judgmental act of a rational kind: in other words, a species of logical judgment. For instance: "I appreciate your argument;" "I appreciate your desire to go abroad;" "I appreciate the difficulty of your situation;" "this poet is not easy to appreciate."

3. The term "art appreciation" carries with it the same connotation; the concepts worth, quality, value are essential constituents of its linguistic history. To appreciate a work of art is to know its merits and demerits, to appraise them, and in the process of knowledge and appraising, to enjoy. Hence "art appreciation" is regarded as a special and somewhat exalted form of pleasure, depending upon a peculiar amalgam of a priori and empirical knowledge and sustained by a more or less effortless act of will. That is to say, in the act of appreciating a work of art, the agent, aided by his knowledge, intelligence and reason and supported by his past experience, uplifts himself (or rather finds himself uplifted) for a time from

the unblessed valley of the prosaic world into a higher world of rare experience and intense awareness. An examination of everyday language, however, shows that three different, but not very clearly defined, senses of the term "art appreciation" are current:-

(a) Expert Appreciation. It is used (as above) with reference to the capacity to judge and enjoy the work of art in the light of experience and specialised knowledge of art in general.

(b) Naïve Appreciation. It is used (to a very limited extent) with reference to the capacity to derive artistic satisfaction and enjoyment from art independently of specialised knowledge.

(c) Learned Appreciation. It is used to denote a composite kind of "artistic" experience resulting from the influence of learning upon direct experience, superior importance being attached to the intellectual ingredient.

Any general analysis, however, is almost bound to prove inadequate, since the term "art appreciation" may mean anything in the form of art experience, from the a priori judgment of the expert to the naïve enthusiasm of the peasant. But in most usages (except b) the primary importance of knowledge (as distinct from direct intuitive experience) appears to be firmly established. And this

is just as might have been expected, considering the literal and etymological history of the term and the circumstances in which it was absorbed into the vocabulary of aesthetic philosophy and discourse - a point of view I wish now briefly to consider.

4. Prior to the emergence of the contemporary (psychological) standpoint, the history of European Aesthetics is mainly the history of philosophic inquiry into the nature of beauty as the essential criterion and quality of Art - Art itself being regarded as a species of knowledge capable of rationalistic explanation and abstract intellectual analysis. Spinoza, Leibniz and Wolff, it will be recalled, had all recognised an "obscure" kind of knowledge associated with the passions and sense perceptions and available to mind through feeling. This type of knowledge was in direct contrast to the science and method of Logic, which aimed at clear knowledge. Baumgarten, wishing to complete the Leibnizian theory, therefore, introduced the prior science of sensible or "obscure" knowledge which he called Aesthetic - the philosophic theory of perceptual knowledge which Kant developed into a logic of aesthetic judgment. The term "aesthetic," however, quickly lost its original narrow connotation - to perceive by a sense, and especially an external sense - Kant being

the last to use it as its originator had intended. Its current use, though firmly established, is neither etymologically accurate nor historically justified. Properly regarded, Aesthetics is the science of sense perception - "the science of perceptual knowledge," as Baumgarten defined it. It excludes from its purview the rational, the conceptual, and all mediate awareness and experience. Philosophical aesthetics, however, has tended to uphold the concept in relation to artistic experience and, because pedagogy has looked more to philosophy than to psychology for its theoretical sanctions, the term "art appreciation" has taken on a predominantly intellectual colouring.

V. Pedagogical and Psychological Considerations.

1. The conception of art as painted or sculptured philosophy, however, only partly accounts for the intellectualistic connotation attaching to the term "art appreciation;" there is the prior influence of philosophy itself. European philosophy has consistently exalted intellect and reason above feeling and intuition, and since the doctrines and institutions of educational practice have always been dependent on current philosophies, the "educated" view of art and art appreciation is rationalistic, intellectual. To admit that the source of art might be found in the more

"obscure" functions of mind would be, according to traditional standards of culture, a degradation of it and a gratuitous insult to world-recognised genius. The great philosophic systems, wherein the conception of life underlying the prevailing culture is clearly reflected, for the most part see in some form of logic the deepest and finally directive discipline. "The conception," declares Jaensch,⁽¹⁾ "appears in two substantially different forms. In the one, the thought process as conceived by the science of logic is regarded as giving to our whole method of acquiring knowledge, and, therefore, to our whole specifically human conception of the world, its deepest basis and final justification. At the same time it lays down the forms that reality has to assume in order to become an object for knowledge (logic as a system of "innate ideas" or "rational truths" or even as "transcendental logic.") But the rationalistic hypothesis also appears in a second and more far-reaching form. Thought as conceived by the science of logic is not only regarded as laying down the forms and foundations for our methods of acquiring knowledge, and therefore for our conception of the world: Being and the world are themselves regarded as the products of thought ("metaphysical logic" and "logical Idealism.") The systems

(1) Jaensch, E. R., Eidetic Imagery, pp.43-45.

of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel and the Neo-Kantians conform to one or other of these types, or both." Educational practice has thus modelled itself upon the science of logic. Subjects are taught logically; "they appear as a framework of logic filled in with facts. Inner participation is not directed to the subject but to the form of thought (formula, rule) which it expresses." Throughout every department of education the logician's ideal predominates; intellect - "the faculty of knowing and reasoning" as opposed to the faculty of imagining or intuiting - is the final criterion of "education." Training in art appreciation has therefore come to mean only one thing: training in estimating, appraising and judging art.

2. Now, it may be agreed, having regard both to the evidence of etymology and the sanction of common usage, that the term "art appreciation" is peculiarly appropriate to at least one aspect of the experience or process it is intended to denote - weighing-up, estimating, judging. But in all genuine art experience there is a satisfaction gained that is independent of any intellectual judgmental act and more than a mere response to the sensuous phenomena of art. For the sensuous phenomena hold a vision of life that demands an extension of the normal range of human perception for its apprehension. Common usage, however,

appears to imply some sort of satisfaction of this kind, but the emphasis upon the judgmental act is so strong that it is generally assumed that without it appreciation in any real sense cannot be said to take place. In other words, the work of art cannot be "appreciated" unless it is appraised - which is assuredly not the case, since nothing could be more immediate and instantaneous than the satisfaction appropriate to artistic experience. Common usage of the term appears, then, to confuse or regard as one, two separate processes and two independent experiences: on the one hand, the intellectual (judgmental) process and the resultant satisfaction (the judgment); on the other the artistic apprehensive process and the satisfaction which accompanies it. This distinction, I submit, is fundamental to the whole problem underlying the psychology and pedagogy of art appreciation and until it is established in the minds of those responsible for the education of public taste little real progress is likely to accrue. The term "art appreciation" means nothing more than Clive Bell's "enthusiastic analysis,"⁽¹⁾ a conversation between a work of art and an aesthete about the work of art and the aesthete. Prior to this, however, there is the experience of "aesthetic ecstasy," the first brilliant

(1) Enjoying Pictures, p.21.

shock of artistic awareness.

3. Responsible exponents of the theory of art are for the most part in agreement as to the directness, the immediacy of the art experience and its independence of the rational intellect. This view is not the result of the recent philosophic trend towards the exploitation of the alogical, but to a deeper understanding of the nature of art itself. Contemporary theory looks not to philosophy for its cue, but to psychology, ethnology, anthropology and kindred sciences. Recent researches into the origin and significance of primitive and savage art have thrown a flood of light upon their fundamental nature and upon the path which future investigators must follow. The philosophic approach, though pursued with earnestness and hope, has led to an arid and melancholy wilderness swept by every wind of the spirit. Attention is now directed to origins, to the psychology of the artist himself, whether he be a Polynesian potter, a child in the kindergarten or a member of the Royal Academy. The question of ultimate values alone is left to philosophy.

From the contemporary psychological standpoint art experience has nothing to do with knowledge or the rational intellect or academic culture; it begins with a stirring of the senses, an acute responsiveness to subtle qualitative

differences of line, of form, colour, texture, rhythm, pattern. At a higher stage it means an enrichment of life through intuitive apprehensions of meaning and value, a quickening of the pulse, a stretching of the mind beyond the normal range of experience. This, I submit, is the type of art experience which should be placed, not, indeed, in opposition to the appreciative experience just discussed, but prior to it or above it; and its development should be the central aim of every scheme of art instruction. In the course of its history, art has assumed appearances that are not of its essential nature. The traditional worship of the rational intellect has forced it into moulds that have warped and deformed its features. A return to the original paths of primitive perception must, therefore, precede any serious effort to understand art and explain its nature; and an exhaustive psychological study of the modes of perception must be the first step towards the formulation of those pedagogic principles without which no system of art education is either secure or satisfactory.

4. Sensibility is the foundation of artistic experience whether that experience be productive or receptive. The term is admittedly a vague one, capable of diverse interpretations, but its significance from the standpoint

of the theory of art lies precisely in the stress it lays upon the feelings and senses. In artistic discourse it denotes acute responsiveness to the formal elements of art and to the state or states of mind, of which the formal elements are the objective equivalents. It implies a psycho-physical organism susceptible, in more or less degree, to acute stimulation by the pattern and rhythm of form, and through and beyond that to the fundamental universal moods and emotions that supply driving force to life, making it not an isolated and individual phenomenon but an expanding continuum of experience. The rational intellect provides a mode of experience apart: it is interpretative, explanatory, systematic, scientific. Its function is to order our concepts, to systematise our knowledge. The function of the artistic sensibility, on the other hand, is to order our visual percepts and systematise our feelings. Knowledge of the rational kind is, therefore, irrelevant to artistic experience as such; it is always knowledge about not knowledge of which is the primary condition of living art value.

To round off this topic I should like to quote two passages which seemed to me to be peculiarly relevant to the foregoing argument. The first is from Sir William Mitchell's Structure and Growth of the Mind: "Absorption in an object consists in attending to it, and so thinking

it fully, from interest in the object itself. The last words distinguish the experience from others where we are absorbed, but not absorbed in the object... In absorption in or with (an object), in all great attention, we prevent our thoughts from wandering: we hold the object before us with or without effort, and with less effort the more we are absorbed. We may do it in order to understand the object better, or in order to act in view of it. Our interest is then cognitive, however fascinating the problem, or practical, however exciting the occasion. But when we attend to the object for nothing but the interest in itself, then the more it interests, fascinates, possesses, carries us away - the words are worth observing - the more we are absorbed in it. We may at the same time have a purpose to understand it, and a practical purpose with it, but so far we deal differently with the object in attending to it. For then we are absorbed not in the object, but in our purpose with it; we take a critical attitude towards the object, or we make it merely a means; its value, the satisfaction we find in it, is not on its own account; we are not absorbed in it, but only absorbed or occupied with it. It is when we have no ulterior consideration or purpose that we can freely indulge in experience of it...

"When absorbed we are said to lose ourselves, meaning

that we lose thought of ourselves. There is no more mystery in this than in our ignoring the things about us of which we usually take thought on slight occasions. But confusion is certain, if the self as subject is not distinguished from the self as object of experience. It is not always subject, but it is only an object when we set it before us. When we are speaking of self-forgetting or losing ourselves in thought, we simply mean that the distinction between ourself and other objects is not before us.. The self-forgetting is usually greater when our absorption is in the object than when it is in a purpose to understand it, or to act regarding it. For the sense of something to achieve, the criticising, the choosing, indeed the mere looking forward, all tend to drive us from indulgence to take thought of our going. But to be absorbed in an object is all indulgence; and, when the object is experienced as individual, we live it."⁽¹⁾

Out of its proper context the passage loses much of its richness, but, alike in the profundity of its thought and the precision of its statement, these words give added significance and meaning to a distinction, the full implication of which it is impossible to follow up.

(1) pp. 164-192.

The second passage is from Henri Bergson's Laughter.⁽¹⁾

"From time to time, in a fit of absent-mindedness, nature raises up souls that are more detached from life. Not with that intentional, logical, systematical detachment - the result of reflection and philosophy, but rather with a natural detachment, one innate in the structure of sense or consciousness, which at once reveals itself by a virginal manner, so to speak, of seeing, hearing, or thinking...

"One man applies himself to colours and forms, and since he loves colour for colour and form for form, since he perceives them for their sake and not for his own, it is the inner life of things that he sees appearing through their form and colours. Little by little he insinuates it into our own perception, baffled though we may be at the outset. For a few moments at least, he diverts us from the prejudices of form and colour that come between ourselves and reality. And thus he realises the loftiest ambition of art, which here consists in revealing to us nature. Others, again, retire within themselves. Beneath the thousand rudimentary actions which are the outward and visible signs of an emotion, behind the commonplace, conventional expression that both reveals and conceals an individual mental state, it is the emotion, the original mood, to

(1) Quoted by Herbert Read, Art Now, pp. 54-56.

which they attain in its undefiled essence. And then, to induce us to make the same effort ourselves, they contrive to make us see something of what they have seen: by rhythmical arrangement of words, which thus become organised and animated with a life of their own, they tell us - or rather suggest - things that speech was not calculated to express. Others delve deeper still. Beneath these joys and sorrows which can, at a pinch, be translated into language, they grasp something that has nothing in common with language, certain rhythms of life and breath that are closer to man than his inmost feelings, being the living law - varying with each individual - of his enthusiasm and despair, his hopes and regrets. By setting free and emphasising this music, they force it upon our attention; they compel us, willy-nilly, to fall in with it, like passers-by who join in a dance. And thus they impel us to set in motion, in the depths of our being, some secret chord which was only waiting to thrill..."

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5. Before concluding I should like to mention one further influence which has contributed towards the establishment of the intellectualistic interpretation of art appreciation. I refer to the preëminence of the classical tradition in the system of European art values. Greek art

is an intellectual art, in that it was concerned with the plastic representation of philosophic ideals, but it is great not because it is intellectual, but because it is the apotheosis of one great world style. Too much earnest scholarship has been directed by classical enthusiasts towards the interpretation of Greek art, and too little by critics of sensibility. Its defects and limitations have scarcely been noticed; it has been worshipped as the type of all art, the zenith of artistic achievement. In the hands of a critic like March Phillipps, Greek art is set in a new perspective. Writing⁽¹⁾ of the transition from the immobility of Egyptian and Assyrian art to the animated art of Greece, he pictures the figures of men struggling into reality and life as the new intellectual faculty is brought into action. This, however, remarks only half the interest derivable from the study of Greek sculpture, for, if it reveals the dawn of intellect, it reveals also the nature, proportions and limitations of intellect. Greek sculpture is a definition and therefore a criticism of intellectualism; in defining what it is it indicates what it is not. In spite of its sculptured clearness Greek thought has proved inadequate to human needs. Its very perfection is its greatest defect. Pure form denotes exact definition, and

(1) The Works of Man, pp. 94-96.

exact definition involves limitation. The consciousness of limitation in Greek literature and art is, perhaps, produced by the inherent tendency of the Greek mind to rely solely on the rational and intellectual faculties, and to ignore as much as possible the spiritual aspects of experience, whose mode of procedure is pure receptivity and contemplation. The exquisite lucidity of Greek thought and the purity of form of Greek sculpture are due to the exclusion of those vague and indefinite ideas characteristic of inward vision and enlightenment. This "spiritual prompting" cannot be permanently ignored, because it constitutes that "something" beyond intellectualism which we demand and which the ancients "can never give."

Narrow

The heart that loves. The brain that
Contemplates...
One object, and one form.

VI. Conclusion.

If the foregoing thesis is sound, two conclusions are possible: First, that the preëminence accorded to the rational intellect in the concept of "art appreciation" has tended to obscure the primary importance of artistic sensibility in artistic experience, and that certain prevalent methods of teaching designed to develop the love of art are founded upon false hypotheses as to the fundamental

nature of art experience and are calculated to hinder its proper development by creating a wrong orientation. The kind of knowledge imparted by current courses in art appreciation is for the most part knowledge about art; it is as irrelevant, as Ducasse⁽¹⁾ points out, to artistic experience as knowledge about wines is to the enjoyment of fine wine. For the enjoyment of fine wine all that is necessary is the capacity to taste. But if we desire to enjoy the fineness as well as the taste of the wine we require knowledge, since the pleasure we seek is not merely sensuous but also intellectual. To the connoisseur the knowledge that the wine he tastes is old and rare and famous is a source of keen pleasure. That pleasure, however, is quite distinct from the taste of the wine, which any man, untutored in the history and the lore of wines, may enjoy quite as keenly as the connoisseur, if he but have a tongue sensitive to the subtle qualities of blend and flavour:⁽²⁾ his pleasure may, indeed, be keener than that of the connoisseur, since his attention to the sense of taste is not distracted by any irrelevant factors. But this analogy, for a very obvious reason, must not be pressed too far; mind and

(1) Ducasse, C. J., The Philosophy of Art, p.227.

(2) This, it may be at once conceded, involves training; but it is not a training of the mind, but of the tongue or sense of taste.

matter are categories of opposite philosophies; yet it expresses in a somewhat crude form an important psychological truth, which has been too easily obscured. Knowledge about art is essential to the expert, the historian, the critic - all men of science; but "The fact that someone makes confident judgments concerning the aesthetic worth of various works of art, and supports his judgment by impressively technical reasons, is ... no more a proof that he possesses any capacity for aesthetic feeling or aesthetic pleasure than is Helen Keller's ability to say when she is among trees a proof that she possesses the capacity to see them."⁽¹⁾

The second conclusion is that the time is ripe for a thorough examination of the whole field of aesthetics, with a view to re-orientating the pedagogic theory of art and the consideration of the problem of how best to develop artistic sensibility. That this is an immense problem need hardly be stated, but if once it were isolated and studied the desired methods would no doubt be forthcoming. At present the only hope, so far as the school is concerned, lies in the provision of a proper environment, the intelligent exploitation of the Method of Comparison and the inculcation of a proper attitude. From the pedagogical point

(1) Ducasse, C. J., The Philosophy of Art, p.228.

of view appreciation should be regarded solely as a branch of theoretical study, embracing the framework of art history, the outlines of the theory of art, and the elementary principles of aesthetics.

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APPENDIX II.

APPENDIX II.

THE CRITERION OF ACCURACY IN REPRESENTATIONAL ART.

(From the British Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol.III
Part II, June, 1933.)

I. Introductory.

The opinion which this paper will express, and attempt to substantiate, is that the criterion of accuracy employed as a means of estimating drawing ability and accepted as an aim in the teaching of representational drawing is psychologically unsound and detrimental to the development of true artistic ability. It will be concerned to show that the aesthetic and educational theory underlying the teaching of representational drawing is not only at variance with the historical development of world art, but is out of touch with modern tendencies in art and with the findings of modern psychology.

II. Definitions.

At the outset it will be advisable to define several

terms which will appear frequently throughout the paper. A clear understanding of these terms will materially aid in following the argument.

(1) Drawing. The term "drawing" will be employed to connote (a) the act of reproducing upon paper or canvas in an artistic manner, the appearance of an object or objects as observed from a particular point of view, by means of lines, colours, tones and masses; and (b) the product of such an act.

(2) Representational Drawings. This term will be employed to connote (a) the act of reproducing as accurately as possible, upon paper or canvas, the supposed appearance of an object or group of objects as observed from a particular point of view; and (b) the product of such an act.

(3) Art. This term will be employed to connote (a) a fundamental activity of man exercised for its own sake, issuing in the creation of sensuous objects, each of which expresses or embodies in its wholeness the psycho-physical state of its creator and yields him an immediate and unique satisfaction; and (b) the products of such an activity, generally called "works of art."

III. Historical Résumé.

(a) It has long been recognised that the aim of art

teaching is twofold: (1) "to cultivate in the children sufficient skill to enable them to express their own ideas in some form of art, and also to stimulate the growth of such sympathy and sensitiveness as may lead eventually to aesthetic appreciation." In the past, the executive, as distinct from the receptive, aspect of the artistic activity has been given undue preëminence in the course of instruction. This may be attributed partly to the original utilitarian purpose of 'art' education, as prescribed by the Department of Science and Art, and partly to the failure of educationists to observe the distinction between the productive and the receptive aspects of the artistic activity to which I have just referred.

(b) A long period of experimentation followed the introduction of 'art' instruction into the school curriculum. At first the course was very limited and, strictly speaking, could not be described as art instruction at all.

(1) Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School. Board of Education. (H.M. Stationery Office,) p.189. Vide also Curriculum for Pupils of Twelve to Fifteen Years (Advanced Division), Scottish Council for Research in Education, University of London Press, 1931, Section VII, Art and Craftmanship, p.184. Aim, "To develop in the pupil a consciousness of beauty, the habit of acquiring and expressing knowledge in form and colour, and the practice of critical judgment in aesthetic products; to stimulate the creative impulse to Art, and improve construction by inculcating the idea that beauty and fitness for purpose are inseparable."

The syllabus "took no note of the natural instincts and interests of children - being based upon that used for the training of adults engaged in industrial occupations."⁽¹⁾ Gradually, as educationists began to recognise the true nature of art and its significance in life and education, the aims of instruction were modified and extended. In the absence, however, of a sound theory of art education, and in deference to a stubborn conservatism, the old methods were continued, with various modifications, to meet the wider ideals. The main purpose of the course was to enable the pupil to represent with reasonable accuracy anything he saw. Despite the advancement of a more enlightened view of the artistic activity, representational drawing "at present occupies the first place in most schools for older scholars."⁽²⁾

IV. Assumptions underlying Present Theory and Practice.

Three main assumptions underlie present theory and practice in art education: (a) That all children are educable as graphic executants, and that this is desirable;

(1) Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers, Board of Education, p.270.

(2) Ibid. p.272 (ii.) Vide also (a) Circular 30 (1932), Scottish Educational Department, p.18, Section VII, Art. "Each course should be well balanced and should be based on a foundation of sound representational work;" and (b) Curriculum for Pupils of Twelve to Fifteen Years (Advanced Division), University of London Press, pp.189-190.

(b) that representational drawing supplies the disciplinary training in technical skill necessary for complete artistic expression;⁽¹⁾ (c) that technical knowledge and practical experience are necessary for complete appreciation of art.⁽²⁾

(a) Regarding the first of these assumptions, it will generally be agreed that all children (excepting physical and mental defectives) are educable in a practical, artistic sense within certain limits, but as these limits depend upon the original endowment of the pupil, it is very doubtful whether continuous executive training, as presently understood, is desirable in all cases. It may be noted, first, that only a small proportion of pupils attending school will ever be called upon to create (graphically), and that only those specially endowed will create out of spontaneous impulse. In the second place, the present system of executive training, being based upon skill rather than art, does not, I submit, lead to the development of true ability in graphic art. And, in the third place, by giving precedence to these aspects of the productive artistic activity which are concerned with graphic processes, the

(1) Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers, p.272 (ii).
Representational drawing "supplies the technical skill which forms the practical basis of art."

(2) Ibid. p.273. "Persons who have some degree of practical skill in any of the arts appreciate that art more fully than those who have none."

present practice tends to overlook the true artistic and educational significance of craftsmanship. These objections point to a new conception of art education, which will provide greater facilities for the development of its receptive aspect, and for the inclusion of a greater amount of craft and handwork than present practice allows.

(b) With regard to the second assumption, that representational drawing supplies the disciplinary training in technical skill necessary for complete artistic expression, it cannot be admitted that this is a valid base upon which to found a theory of art education. The assumption is open to three main objections. First, that the type of technical skill developed by representational drawing is altogether different from that required in art. Technical skill involves (i) the manipulation of a medium and (ii) a motive or purpose. When the former is adequate to the demands of the latter, technical skill is functioning at its highest level of efficiency. In this sense it would be right to describe as a good technician a juggler whose manipulation of his material was adequate to his motive; but it would be wrong to describe him as a good artist. This is not to assert that the juggler may not be an artist, but his claim to this designation can only be upheld if his motive is to express an artistic purpose, and not to juggle,

and only in so far as he successfully achieves that purpose. Similarly, a painter who manipulates his medium in order accurately to represent the visible appearance of an objective fact may be described as a good technician, if his manipulation of his medium is adequate to his representational purpose, but he can claim to be an artist only by abandoning his representational purpose and manipulating his medium in a manner which adequately expresses an artistic one. Thus the process of manipulating a medium towards the end of representation cannot be regarded as an exercise of the artistic activity, but a mere exercise of technical skill; and from the point of view of art education the exercise of the artistic mental power is fundamental. In the second place, representational technical skill can only secure literal transcription of what is supposed to be the visible appearance of objects; which is, properly regarded, not an artistic, but a scientific achievement. I have italicised the word "supposed" because it has been experimentally demonstrated⁽¹⁾ that there is considerable divergence between what the eye actually sees and the shapes and sizes in plane projection which are determined by the laws of perspective. There is, therefore, no objective criterion of visible

(1) Thouless, R. H., "Phenomenal Regression to the Real Object," British Journal of Psychology, Vols. XXI, XXII.

appearance. Representational drawing must accordingly be judged by mathematical standards (the spatial properties of the plane projection); and this, from the point of view of art education, is absurd. And, in the third place, the assumption is at variance with the evidence of history; in point of fact, it is refuted alike by Classic, Oriental, Gothic and Modern art. To indulge in a detailed argument here in support of this contention is unnecessary; the statement is justified by established historical fact. It is sufficient to point out that the history of Classic art shows that when representation became an end in itself, as in the Hellenistic period, the quality of art deteriorated. Oriental art has never embraced representationalism; and the finest manifestations of Gothic art are as far removed from representation as day is from night. Modern art likewise refutes the assumption. The naïve art of Le Douanier Rousseau,⁽¹⁾ who began serious painting late in life without any technical knowledge, in particular may be cited in justification of my contention that modern art refutes the

(1) Le Douanier Rousseau (1844-1910) was at one time an excise officer. In his spare time he played the violin and painted pictures. When over forty years of age he gave up his post to devote the rest of his life to art. He "knew nothing of drawing as it was taught in the art schools, and nothing of impressionism," but "his hand did exactly what his mind, his spirit and his imagination willed." (Wilenski R. H., French Painting, Medici Society, pp.327-329).

aesthetic and educational theory underlying the teaching of representational drawing.

(c) The validity of the third assumption depends upon the meaning attached to the term "appreciation." In aesthetics this term is used in two not very clearly defined senses: first, with reference to the capacity to estimate or judge the work of art in the light of previous knowledge and experience; second, with reference to the capacity to derive aesthetic satisfaction and enjoyment from art, independently of previous knowledge and experience. The term is employed in a third sense, which partakes of both meanings, but this usage is so vague and unscientific as to render its discussion here impossible. In its essence, art appreciation is, as McDougall asserts,⁽¹⁾ "an attitude in which we are content to contemplate without belief or doubt; we accept and enjoy the appearance without enquiring into the reality of that which appears, just because the appearance yields an immediate satisfaction." Such an attitude is, I submit, psychologically incompatible with the intellectual process of estimating, judging, and criticising implied in the first and third of these usages. If this view be accepted, then the validity of the third assumption underlying the present theory and practice of art education

(1) McDougall, W., An Outline of Psychology, p.376.

cannot be admitted.

V. 'Drawing' and 'Art.'

From the standpoint of art education, the distinction between 'drawing' and 'art' is of fundamental importance. As a consequence of the teaching practice of the past, the term 'drawing' has acquired a meaning in everyday language which limits its application to representational drawing, as defined in Section II of this paper. In recent years, however, as a result of a change in fundamental ideas concerning the artistic activity, the course of instruction in art has manifestly altered. The introduction of imaginative drawing, design and craftwork has been an important forward step in the history of art education. But current practice, with its insistence upon representational drawing, suggests that educationists have not yet fully realised the true significance of the change in terminology now generally employed in educational discourse.⁽¹⁾ Contrary to current

(1) Witness (a) the fact that "drawing" is the official designation applied to the subject by the Board of Education (Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers); and (b) that "drawing and elementary art" is used in the Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School (1931), as if to draw a distinction between these two activities. While admitting the relevance of technical studies to art training, the committee is careful to issue a warning against possible dangers: "By training mere technical skill it is possible to foster the desire to draw, but it is essential that the

opinion, representational drawing is, I submit, neither a desirable nor an essential discipline for the attainment of artistic expression. Technical skill in art is not a matter of routine learning, but a personal quest and discovery of the means necessary for the expression of artistic feeling; and this can be developed only by the constant exercise of the artistic mental power. If my thesis is right, then what passes as art education at present is not true art education at all, but mainly (though not wholly), training in scientific technical skill.

VI. Ability in Representational Drawing.

(a) Broadly speaking, there may be distinguished three main classes of executants, graded according to their representational drawing ability. In estimating this ability

art should remain within the child's natural understanding and ability, and should not assume an artificial and sophisticated quality because undue emphasis is laid on technique." (p.190). Again, in the publication Curriculum for Pupils of Twelve to Fifteen Years (Advanced Division), issued by the Scottish Council for Research in Education (1931), the distinction between 'drawing' and 'art' is noted (p.189), but the need for realistic representation is admitted, because it leads to the acquisition of "technical skill in various media and the development of appreciation" (p.183; the italics are mine), and because "representational drawing is undoubtedly suited for school work, in that it is less affected by interruption... and further, it lends itself admirably to the compiling of full and orderly portfolios for presentation." (p.189; italics mine).

the criterion will be that of accuracy in representation, based on perception of the following characteristics:-

- (1) Perception of the particular object or objects as distinguished from other similar objects.
- (2) Perception of the position of the object in relation to the observer and to other objects coming within the particular field of observation.
- (3) Perception of the precise character of the object or objects in respect of all these qualities (colour, texture, etc.) which distinguish it (or them) from other similar objects.

First, the lowest grade: those whose representations are so inferior as to render (1) and (2) impossible or extremely doubtful, and (3) definitely impossible. Second, the middle grade: those whose representations are sufficiently accurate as to render (1) quite certain, but (2) and (3) doubtful. This will be the largest group. Third, the highest grade: those whose representations are more or less accurate in respect of all three characteristics. As a certain amount of overlap is inevitable, these groups will not, in practice, be clearly defined; but for present purposes the three groups may be taken as corresponding to the more general classification of poor drawers, average drawers, and superior drawers.

(b) It is self-evident that of the total number of pupils receiving training in representational drawing the ability of those in the lowest grade will not improve to any

considerable extent by continued instruction and practice,⁽¹⁾ and that their drawings will have no practical value as representations of physical facts. With regard to the second grade, this group will be educable only up to the standard attained by the "average pupil," whose drawings are neither accurate enough to be of any practical value as representations, nor poor enough to be wholly devoid of representational value. But if, as I have submitted, representational drawing is fundamentally a scientific activity, it is obvious that there is not justification for the teaching of representational drawing to pupils whose productions fail to satisfy the practical test of scientific accuracy. And with regard to the third grade, the superior drawers, it may be pointed out that the only result to be gained by continued training in representational drawing will be more accurate representations.

(c) In his presidential address at the Conference of Educational Associations, Sir William Rothenstein said that "we are all equipped by nature to go as far as possible in

(1) This is not to deny that some improvement in technical skill may be produced by special training designed to remedy specific partial disabilities (for instance, disabilities affecting the motor-graphic or optical-perceptual processes,) which may interfere with drawing ability; but, as the application of therapeutic methods lies outside the orbit of ordinary school work, the statement (and the one which follows it) may stand unchallenged.

some practical direction," and that he was doubtful "of the value of making all children draw or learn music."⁽¹⁾ As Sir William is a teacher of long and wide experience, his statement cannot be brushed lightly aside. For clearly a scheme of education which ignores the existence of a relatively uneducable class of executants, by insisting on making its members try to do something which, in virtue of the limitations of their natural endowment, they are unfitted, is wasteful and badly-founded. Indiscriminate insistence on executive work of a representational kind instils in many pupils a prejudice against art, which only a particularly happy set of circumstances can eradicate.

VII. The Psychology of the Drawing Act: Ayer's Analysis.

Ayer has pointed out⁽²⁾ that "the complete act of drawing is composed of two major processes which are quite distinct. It consists of an optical-perceptual process and a motor-graphic part, each of which is composed of subordinate partial processes. In the optical-perceptual process the eye receives the sensory stimuli from the object in view, and the mind assimilates the perceived impression on the basis of previously acquired experience with sensory

(1) Times Educational Supplement, January 9th, 1932.

(2) Ayer, The Psychology of Drawing, p.87.

material. In the motor-graphic process the hand is set in motion to reproduce the perceived and more or less worked-over image of the original object." Analysing the optical-perceptual part of the drawing activity, Ayer distinguishes the following characteristics: (1) The purely optical process; (2) the sensational process; (3) the awakening of percepts which tend to be present and apperception; (4) assimilation; (5) secondary reproduction of earlier associations; and (6) preconceived observation. Three main characteristics are recognised in the motor-graphic part: (1) Drawing by optical image; (2) kinaesthetic control; (3) control by watching results. Ayer bases his observations on the experiments of Albein,⁽¹⁾ who emphasises the fact "that the preceding optical-perceptual process of drawing varies individually in its composition, its components and the significance for the whole process"⁽²⁾ - a fact which explains in part individual variations in drawing ability. Accuracy in executive ability, therefore, may depend upon very varied factors. A child, for instance, whose optical-perceptual processes are highly developed

(1) Albein, Behalten und Wiedergabe einfacher Formen, 1907.

(2) Ayer, The Psychology of Drawing, p.90.

might be a bad executant as a result of defects in his motor-graphic processes, and vice-versa. (1)

VIII. Recent Experimental Research.

(a) Recent experimental research into the psychology of perception by Dr. Thouless, of Glasgow University, brings new evidence bearing on this point, which is of the very utmost significance. Dr. Thouless states: "If a subject is shown an inclined circle and is asked to select from a number of figures the one which represents the shape seen by him, he chooses without hesitation an ellipse. This ellipse, however, is widely different from the one which represents the shape of the inclined circle indicated by the laws of perspective, being much nearer the circular form. The subject sees an inclined figure neither in its 'real' shape nor in the shape which is its perspective projection, but a compromise between these." (2) Clearly to understand his experiments, it will be necessary to define Thouless's terms. By "real" shape he means "true physical shape;" "perspective shape" means the shape of the object

(1) Meumann (Experimentelle Pädagogik) draws attention to the interesting fact that he found subjects possessed of excellent visual acuity and manual dexterity who could not draw.

(2) Thouless, R. H., "Phenomenal Regression to the Real Object," British Journal of Psychology, Vol. XXI, p.339.

in accordance with the laws of perspective; and "phenomenal shape" means the actually seen shape of the object. Thouless has been able to show by experiment that phenomenal regression applies to the perception of shape, parallel line, brightness, hue and size. "Under ordinary conditions of binocular vision, the actually experienced character of the object (or the 'phenomenal character') is a compromise between the 'real' character of the object and the character given by peripheral stimulation, whether this character is shape, relative size or relative brightness. In all these cases the phenomenal character shows a tendency away from the stimulus character towards the 'real' character of the object. As a general name for this tendency, in whatever kind of perceptual character it is found, we may use the term phenomenal regression to the 'real' object, or, more shortly, phenomenal regression."

Now, as the degree of phenomenal regression varies from one individual to another, it is obvious that a drawing which appears correct to one person may appear quite wrong to another. A pupil with a high index of phenomenal regression will draw a foreshortened circle (for example, a plate) much nearer the circular form than a pupil whose index is lower; and, it is important to notice, both indices may differ from that of the teacher.

(b) The laws of perspective, it may be noted, are not laws of the ways we 'see.' Clearly, then, the usual devices adopted in teaching children to draw foreshortened figures not only do not teach them to draw what they see, but actually teach them to draw what, in all probability, they do not see. By employing such methods the child's drawing is "reconditioned to the stimulus object (perspective shape)⁽¹⁾ instead of the phenomenal object," which is the object he actually sees. From the point of view of art education the significance of the discovery of phenomenal regression cannot be over-estimated. Dr. Thouless himself appears to take an altogether too moderate view of the importance of his researches for art teaching.⁽²⁾ "On the whole," he states, there is probably sufficient ground for justifying the teaching of strict laws of perspective to those learning to draw. A simple set of rules is better than a complicated one. Moreover, the uncorrected tendency is to draw the phenomenal figure which is at the opposite extreme of error (if the object is realistic representation), and the combined effect of the uncorrected tendency and the learning of strict perspective rules may well result in a

(1) The brackets are mine.

(2) Thouless, R. H., "Phenomenal Regression to the Real Object, II," British Journal of Psychology, Vol. XXII, p.28.

practically satisfactory compromise."⁽¹⁾ But, in point of fact, the teaching of perspective rules, at all events to school children, is probably not undertaken even by the most ardent advocates of representational drawing. The commonest method adopted is that of teaching the children to make measurements by holding the pencil or ruler out at arm's length and other similar devices, but the pupils are exhorted to draw what they see.⁽²⁾ Actually, however, the method is only of very limited practical value, because precise measurements are difficult to make by these means (the younger the child the greater the difficulty), with the result that in the long run the child trusts to his perceptions. Moreover, if we assume that the child does make accurate measurements and applies them to his drawing, the result may not look right to him, and if his index of phenomenal regression is very high, it will look all wrong. The psychological importance of this cannot be over-emphasised, because the first thing the teacher must do is to lead the child to have confidence in himself and to believe in the rightness of his own efforts. Confusion will baffle him and engender diffidence and probably lead to strained

(1) Ibid., p.29.

(2) Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers, pp.298-300. Sections 35 and 36.

relations with the misunderstanding teacher.

IX. Summary and Conclusion.

(1) The aim of art education is twofold: to develop the means of expression by executive training and to stimulate the growth of such sympathy and sensitiveness as may lead to the appreciation of art.

(2) In the past the executive, as distinct from the receptive aspect of art education, has predominated. This may be attributed partly to the original utilitarian purpose of 'art' education and partly to the failure of educationists to observe the distinction between the productive and the receptive aspects of the artistic activity.

(3) Despite the growth of knowledge concerning the nature of the art activity, representational drawing (the act of reproducing as accurately as possible on paper or canvas the supposed appearance of things as observed from a particular point of view) occupies the principal place in the present practice of art education.

(4) Three main assumptions underlie present practice: (a) That all children are educable as graphic executants, and that this is desirable; (b) that representational drawing supplies the technical skill necessary for complete artistic expression; (c) that technical knowledge and

practical experience are necessary for complete appreciation of art.

(5) These assumptions do not appear to be justified. The principal objections are: first, with regard to (a), only a comparatively small number of pupils attain the standard of accuracy aimed at, and few are by natural endowment equipped with special graphic ability; second, with regard to (b), representational drawing develops a type of skill that is altogether different from that required in art; and third, with regard to (c), apart from the ambiguity of the term appreciation, there is no evidence to support the assumption.

(6) From the point of view of art education there appears to be no justification for the teaching of representational drawing. Based upon skill of hand and scientific observation, it is fundamentally not an artistic but a scientific activity. Literal accuracy can only be secured by scientifically analysing the visible appearance of things. As such a process is incompatible with artistic expression, representational drawing cannot be regarded as an exercise of the artistic mental power. The exercise of this power is considered fundamental to art education.

(7) The present insistence upon graphic execution tends to obscure the true aesthetic and educational significance

of craftwork and the importance and value of promoting the development of appreciation by means other than practical training.

(8) These considerations point to the need for a new theory of art education and a new orientation of teaching method, that will pay greater regard to (a) the artistic and educational values of craftwork, and (b) the purely appreciative aspect of the artistic mental power.

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