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University of Colorado at Boulder



U18304 0355746

CHILD ART AND PRIMITIVE ART:
ANALOGIES IN AESTHETIC DEVELOPMENT

by

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B.F.A., University of Colorado, 1947

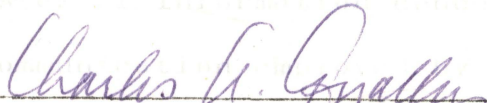
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Master of Arts

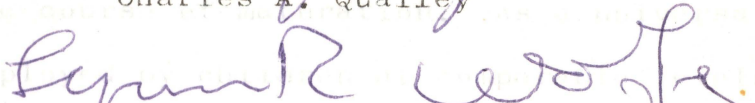
Department of Fine Arts

1968

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Child Art and Primitive Art: Analogies in Aesthetic
Development

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Charles A.
Qualley

Contemporary research in the field of Art Education and Psychology has given widespread but relatively limited cognizance to the phenomenon of a compatible symbolism appearing in the art products of children and that of ancient peoples and primitives. European and American educators and scientists have compiled masses of information concerning the modes of visual communication employed by children at varying stages in the course of maturation. As a universal symbology employed by children at comparable levels of development became clear, an associated occurrence of like symbols in the art work of primitives was noted.

The recognition of extrinsic analogies in the visual image formation of individuals so widely disparate, geographically and temporally, has engendered the speculations of this study.

The prime hypothesis is: the basic psychic energy and the process of mentation are identical in the human being whether he existed 10,000 years ago or exists today, on any part of the earth. A further,

supporting, proposition is that manifestations of this universality are observable in analogies of art forms created by ancient peoples, primitives, and children.

The major theories of specialists in Art Education are compared to those of Gestalt psychologists in relation to the probable quality of mental processes involved in image formation. This comparison is intended to provoke a curiosity that will encourage a search for self-knowledge, and further a belief in the homogeneity of all peoples of the earth.

This abstract of about 235 words is approved as to form and content.

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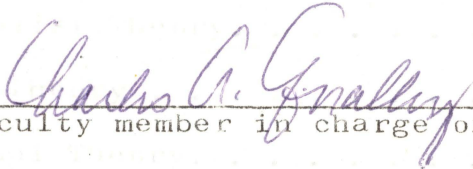

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the Twentieth Century a great deal of speculative research has been pursued in the field of Child Art. Psychologists, Artists and educators have been systematically studying children's art work. Masses of information have been compiled and many theories proposed concerning the pattern of development of the child's artistic expression. From these studies has come overwhelming evidence of the similarity of the visual images created by children who are widely separated geographically. Concurrently, investigators were discovering remarkable analogies in art forms employed by prehistoric man and by primitives to the work of the contemporary children which they were studying.

As educators became aware of the stylistic and formal similarities in art products of individuals so widely disparate, many explicative hypotheses were developed. Some major theories in the study of Child Art are those of Naive Realism, Perception Delineation, the Intellectualist theory, the Perceptual theory and the Haptic-Visual theory; these will be elaborated on in

a later section. The theories of selected psychologists and philosophers concerning symbol and image formation will be placed in apposition to Art Education theories.

The purpose of this paper is to present a speculation, a proposition of universality; made in the belief that the basic psychic energy and the process of mentation are identical in the human being whether he existed 10,000 years ago or exists today, on any part of the earth. The further, supporting, proposition is that manifestations of universality are observable in similarities of developmental stages of art forms created by ancient peoples, primitives and children. It is a truism to say that, today, the societies of the world exist in a novel proximity because of modern communications and transportation systems. For this reason it is urgent that these neighbors resolve differences and give cognizance to the individual; it is in the recognition of differences and similarities that this study may have its greatest purpose.

Even as we are concerned, today, with individual rights and freedoms in our social structure, we must be concerned with the emotional and intellectual likeness of mankind and encourage this concept of similarity. Within the framework of education, and specifically Art Education, there is the possibility of freeing the

individual of the mass reactions of rigidity and automatic response. This aim should be pursued through a merger of self-knowledge and knowledge of human nature, not through a blind insistence on "individuality."

One step toward this goal is the recognition of the universality of visual perception. Through such recognition it may be possible to understand more clearly the integrity of children's art work and the integrity of all human artistic effort. Through visual art, feelings and facts are transmitted regardless of cultures, language barriers and time.¹ Awareness of similarities in the motifs employed by children and adults may lead to valid speculation about the universality of "feelings" and mental processes which have defined, limited, and determined the character of the creative products. If universality exists and is visually manifest in the work of the young and the naive, then perhaps it should be a function of Art Education to promote awareness of this universality with its ramifications for self-knowledge and the understanding of human nature.

¹Manfred L. Keiler, The Art in Teaching Art (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 5.

CHAPTER II

ANALOGIES: VISUAL FORM

Piaget, Lowenfeld, McFee and Arnheim have considered the similarities between the work of children and that of primitives.¹ This similarity poses a difficult problem because of the obvious need to reconcile the differences in physical maturation of child and primitive adult. The rationale for doing this is presented more fully in Chapter IV, but, the pivotal assumption is that there is a basically similar psychological condition operative in all people who make art products.

In order to arrive at a possible explanation of the analogous phenomena in visual imagery it is necessary to present a description of some of the stages of concept formation. These stages are accepted de facto by most art educators, although a specific chronology has not been agreed upon. References to historical examples of adult art work will be made where extrinsic features seem to indicate an analogue.

¹"Primitive" is considered to be "rudimentary, naive, resisting or lacking civilizing influences." American College Dictionary, (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 962.

The Search For a Symbol

The term symbol is used frequently when discussing graphic images. It is used here to indicate an artificial or natural "sign" which represents or stands for another object, specific event or condition.²

In the search for a symbol each very young child expresses himself first with "scribbling." He picks up a stick, pushes and pulls it, lines go in all directions, in the dirt or on a wall; it is a disorderly scribbling. As muscular coordination develops the markings become more systematic and he experiences consciously what he has previously done kinesthetically.³ The lines may go in many directions, but soon become predominantly circular. Next a particular conformation of lines is created by choice and elaborated upon. It is in this process that the "will-to-art"⁴ comes into existence. As Read suggests:

In Prehistoric times, the cave men of the Phrenees may have arrived at their symbolic representation by a similar route, for there

² Morris Philipson, Outline of a Jungian Aesthetic (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1963), p. 52.

³ Viktor Lowenfeld, Creative and Mental Growth (New York: McMillan Company, 1956), p. 3.

⁴ Daniel Mendelowitz, Children Are Artists (Palo Alto: Stanford Press, 1956), p. 5.

are, in the caves of Europe, striated markings, seemingly made by fingers trailing through a clayey surface, marks which might have first been made involuntarily as the man crawled along. Deliberate drawings of animals by the same method, fingers on a damp clay surface, are to be seen in the caves at Gargas and at Altamira.⁵

Children in the process of symbol development progress from scribbling to representation, or at least conscious creation of form. The art work of children in this early stage of Geometricism⁶ and the early Schematic⁷ stage has the quality of contextual indivisibility. An oval may be a body within the whole representation of a man, but when separated from the whole the oval loses its meaning as "body."⁸ Triangular, circular, rectangular forms in combination are symbols for the child's reality. Simple shapes prevail with strong horizontal-vertical orientation (the structurally most simple form: right-angular relationship).⁹

⁵Herbert Read, Art and Society (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1937), pp. 12-13.

⁶Lowenfeld, op. cit., p. 27.

⁷Ibid., p. 37.

⁸Ibid., p. 27.

⁹Rudolph Arnheim, Art and Visual Perception (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), p. 178.

In Lowenfeld's theory, size differences seem to denote a difference in social value or immediate personal "weighting." The child who talks about his painting frequently calls attention to the importance of self, or parent, or animal in his thoughts at the time of making the picture, and the important figure will be noticeably of greater size in his total picture. Egyptians, in 2500-1500 B.C., composed wall paintings and friezes extrinsically analogous to children's art in this respect. This quality, apparent in both art products, may stem from comparable stages in conceptual development. Arnheim has suggested that "perception may be influenced by wishes and fears."¹⁰

In other ancient civilizations we see symbol formation stunningly similar to that of the child. The "Venus of Willendorf," ca. 25,000 B.C., is probably the best known example of a group of prehistoric figurines sculptured from stone. These bulbous unclothed female figures are alike in their conjunction of convex forms, their frontality, their spherical simplicity. Arnheim has described these Paleolithic stone figures:

These figures with their round heads, bellies, breasts and thighs look indeed as though they had been conceived as spheres modified to fit the

¹⁰ Arnheim, op. cit., p. 15.

human shape. We may wonder whether their obesity is to be explained only by the subject matter-- symbols of motherhood and fertility---or also as manifestations of early form conception at the spherical stage.¹¹

Arnheim is relating this "primordial ball" to the circular or ovoid forms exhibited in representations typical of children's geometric or early schematic stage drawings. It merely reflects the most elementary kind of form concept. These figures may, then, be related in concept and execution to the first mud balls and snow men of the youngest sculptor today.

Cycladean sculptures of 2500 B.C.¹² exhibit the compact simplification, the frontality and two-dimensional rigidity found in the clay figures created by children. Good examples of analogous ancient sculpture can be found among the terra cotta figures done on Cyprus and at Mycenae during the second millennium B.C. The bodies of men and animals are made of sticklike units of roughly the same diameter. Stick elements are also found in the small bronzes of the Geometric period

¹¹ Ibid., p. 203.

¹² Christian Zervos, L'Art Des Cyclades (Paris: Editions Cahiers D'Art, 1957) illustrations.

in Greece, around the eighth century B.C. Children make sausagelike sticks for their clay figures. Probability this stage exists universally at the beginning of modelling.¹³

Concepts of Space

The concept of spatial relationships and spatial organization is the next step in the child's artistic development. Lowenfeld states:

The first mass consciousness of discovering that the child is a part of environment is expressed by a symbol which we shall call 'base line.' From now on this consciousness is expressed by putting everything, objects and figures, on this important space schema, the baseline...It is important to keep in mind that we speak of a space schema when space is represented by some signs or others which, through repetition, assume a constant meaning in the drawings of children. [The child] is frequently forced to introduce lines which are merely individual symbols. These lines are supposed to substitute for the third dimension. Consequently, the space schema is almost entirely abstract and has only an indirect connection with reality.¹⁴

This baseline concept has been attributed by McFee to companion learning: as children are taught in school to write along a line, they arrange their pictorial images along a line. Arnheim considers this concept as a manifestation of the vertical-horizontal relationship in its

¹³Arnheim, op. cit., p. 204.

¹⁴Lowenfeld, op. cit., p. 29.

simplest form. The intricacies of a spatial system are subjected to a given law of form. The construction of the figures clings to two main directions to achieve visual unity, in which each detail holds its clearly defined place.¹⁵

Lowenfeld assumes the child attempts to rationalize the multiplicity of his environment when he employs multiple baselines, a resolution which seems to appear as the "registers" of Egyptian wall painting. In both cases a series of objects or figures is related to its horizontal baseline. In addition, other sets of objects and figures, which may be assumed to occupy another place in contiguous space, are placed on the horizontal to which they relate, above or below the first grouping.

In much Egyptian art space was divided into parallelograms to indicate the importance of boundaries. In the drawings of 1500 B.C. figures were no longer distributed over the surface more or less at random, as had been the case around 3500-3000 B.C. They were subjected to the strict discipline of a framework and arranged in a vertical fashion from a horizontal line, the recti-linear base of the "ground." The place occupied by the figure was subjected to the picture plane. Each part of the

¹⁵Arnheim, op. cit., p. 179.

body was represented flatly where it could be shown as completely as possible. Human form was fitted into a rigid pattern.¹⁶

The Egyptian register system seemed to stem, according to Janson,¹⁷ from the Neolithic period when farming took precedence over hunting and the nomadic existence.

The "empty" spaces of Egyptian painting were filled with hieroglyphics in a response which has been dubbed Horror Vacui. The child exhibits a like propensity for cramming and filling the picture plane. Elements of the space-filling technique, two dimensional frontality and baseline vertical-horizontal discipline are also observable in the vessel decoration by the inhabitants of the Cyclades in 2500 B.C. and in Attic vase painting of ancient Greece.¹⁸

Other modes of child form and spatial organization can be compared to historical examples. Some of these representational modes have been termed, by Lowenfeld, X-Ray Drawing, Comic-Strip Effect and Fold-over Technique. The first mode has been presumed to depict the inside

¹⁶H. W. Janson, History of Art (New York: Prentice Hall, 1964), p. 13.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Rhys Carpenter, Greek Art (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), pp. 46-48.

and the outside at the same time. Arnheim disagrees with Lowenfeld concerning the particulars of the method. He proposes that when one sees figures and objects within the structural contour of another object it does not signify an x-ray effect attempted by the artist, but that the enclosing of a space by a contour line creates a solid. Therefore, objects may be portrayed within other objects which are neither open, nor transparent. The child who draws people in his house or a child in its mother's womb is making a two-dimensional representation of three-dimensional space.

This concept of space is observable in early adult art from the representation of a Mesopotamian ox with embryonic calf clearly defined, to the work of Australian primitives in the twentieth century wherein a kangaroo's skeletal and internal structure is carefully represented within the contour of the outer configuration.

Another mode of depicting the conditions of space has been termed Fold-Over drawing. The child most frequently uses this method in picturing his street with rows of houses in alignment. Also a common subject to receive this treatment, is a group of people seated around a table. In order to show, in the most concise way, the vertical relationship of the house to the horizontal street, the child lays out his houses to left and

right, perpendicular to the roadway. In the same manner, chairs and people are placed at the simplest right angularity to the rectangular table contour.

A very similar technique seems apparent in the work of the Egyptians of Thebes of 1400 B.C.¹⁹ The Persians of the seventeenth century repeated this ancient pictorial concept in their carpet designs.²⁰ In each instance trees and pool or roadways and near objects are executed with each separate element relating in polarity to its logical base. Many more examples in the work of the early Aegean artists, in East Asian-Oriental Art, as well as the folk art of central Europe from 1000 A.D. to the present, are available to those curious enough to search for the comparative examples.²¹

Depiction of Time

The Comic-strip effect involves different episodes taking place within the framework of one picture or, in another form, "temporally distinct actions are represented

¹⁹H. W. Janson, Key Monuments of the History of Art (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1959), p. 70.

²⁰Henry Schaefer-Simmern, The Unfolding of Artistic Activity (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948), pp. 16-17.

²¹Checking the "Bayeaux Tapestry," ca. 1073-83 is recommended. See Janson, Key Monuments, p. 442.

within one space."²² This effect, common in the work of young children may show a figure whose right hand accomplishes one task while the left is still involved in a precedent task. Another example is two representations of the same person or animal, within the same drawing, performing actions different in time. In pictorial description, this is the simplest most concise explanatory device with which the child handles a manifold situation or condition.

Medieval manuscripts depict people with four arms apparently for the same purpose. It is possible the multiple armed Gods of the Far East were conceived with a like purpose. As far back in history as the time of the cave painting at Altimira this effect can be observed. In hunting expeditions depicted by the primitive Eskimos of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries one sees this mode employed in much the same manner as it was used 2700 years before by the Egyptians and Assyrians.

Summary

Major factors in symbol and image formation, such as possible method of invention, form and space and temporal concepts, have been considered. Certainly there exist myriad historical objects or works of art which

²²Lowenfeld, op. cit., p. 56.

may be compared to the art work of children with an amazing degree of correspondence.

CHAPTER III

ART EDUCATION THEORIES: IMAGE FORMATION

Recent investigation in the field of the psychology of perception has been directed toward describing the artistic process more accurately. A consideration of some of the major theories regarding child art is necessary to understand some current attitudes concerning chronology and typology and the several disagreements between those theorists studying children's artistic efforts.

Naive Realism Theory

According to the theory of Naive Realism the child is assumed to see the object "exactly as it is" and will have the same information to use that an adult has.¹ The theory assumes that children do not draw as adults simply because their motor skills are insufficiently

developed. According to McFee:

Naive Realism limits art activity to reproductions and does not include emotional and ideational expression, designing, improvisation and invention.²

¹ June McFee, Preparation for Art (New York: Wadsworth Publishing Co. 1961), p. 152.

² Ibid., p. 153.

Arnheim also has commented specifically on this theory's fallacy:

...at an early age the former imprecision of the stroke gives way to an exactness that is more than sufficient to show what the child is trying to do. There can be no doubt that none of these drawings is an unskillful attempt at projective realism. They all clearly try to do something else. The reader is invited to put a pencil in his mouth or between his toes and copy a realistic picture of a human ear. The lines may turn out to be crooked... but...it will still be basically different from the usual way in which a child draws the ear as two concentric circles. Thus lack of motor skill cannot explain the phenomenon.³

This theory does not consider the relativity of "Realism" as it has been considered by sociologists, psychologists and philosophers in the twentieth century. It is restricted to a recent aspect of Western civilization's concepts of perspective and limiting photographic realism. This is more correctly termed "naturalism" or "illusionism" as it is concerned with outward physical characteristics. It seems one of the least acceptable of the proposed theories of child art.

Intellectualist Theory

This theory has had widespread acceptance of its proposal that the child "draws what he knows."⁴ Since children are not drawing what it is assumed they can see,

³Arnheim, op. cit., p. 156.

⁴McFee, op. cit., p. 55.

some mental process other than perception must be responsible. Because children represent an over-all quality such as straightness of legs or roundness of head it is presumed that generalized knowledge accounts for the character of their drawings. The child "knows" he has ten fingers, four coat buttons or six shirt buttons, and this cognition rather than visual perception accounts for his representational style.

Since the emphasis in this theory is on the cognitive content of a drawing, Florence Goodenough, for purposes of research, devised the "Draw-a-Man Test."⁵ This test designed as a completion of parts or complexity conception index, was correlated with mental age data. The correlation tended to show that the higher the I.Q., the more detail and correctness of relationships a child is able to incorporate in a drawing. However, Goodenough herself recognizes this test applies to only one factor in children's work.⁶

Arnheim feels that the formula "the child draws what he knows rather than what he sees" would be invalid even if the word knowledge had a different meaning, if it referred to visual rather than intellectual knowledge. He says:

⁵E. W. Eisner and D. W. Ecker, Readings in Art Education (Waltham: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1966), p. 143.

⁶As cited by McFee, op. cit., p. 154.

Even then the theory would be misleading, because it would still assume between perceiving and knowing a dichotomy that is alien to the perceptual and the artistic processes.⁷

Perceptual Theory

The Perceptual Theory developed by Rudolph Arnheim proposes that the child draws what he perceives and that the perceiving starts with undifferentiated wholes and progresses to particulars; that the individual moves, by preference, from the simple to the complex. The Perceptual theory is an outgrowth of Gestalt psychology. Gestalt theorists have posited the existence in the brain of a field of electro chemical forces and have come to the conclusion that every psychological field tends toward the simplest, most balanced, most regular organization available.⁸ Arnheim proposes that early artistic representations based on naive observation will be concerned with generalities, with simple over-all structural features. "Unquestionably, children and primitives draw generalities and undistorted shape precisely because they draw what they see."⁹

⁷Arnheim, op. cit., p. 159.

⁸Ibid., p. 25.

⁹Ibid., p. 160.

But also, children see more than they draw. This seems to mean that although the retinal reception of the child or primitive is the equivalent of the contemporary adult, the process of perception of visual cognition, is not the same. This process is one of progressive structural growth as it proceeds from the simple to the complex. The child "sees" the dog across a distance, the generality is "dogish-ness"; as he recognizes breed or type characteristics his perception is more complex. Ultimately, the animal is perceived as Sam's dog, a black Labrador female. This process is a parable of perception. The child records in visual form the growth of his perceptions--from the general to the specific.

Another theorist, Henry Schaefer-Simmern, holds beliefs concerning visual conception and personal recognition which are closely related to Arnheim's Perceptual theory. In his work The Unfolding of Artistic Activity,¹⁰ Schaefer-Simmern develops the theory that pictorial form grows organically, according to definite rules of its own, from the simples to more and more complex patterns. In the conclusion of that volume Schaefer-Simmern states:

[Scientific examination of art work of] persons of widely varied abilities, ages and educational

¹⁰Schaefer-Simmern, op. cit.

backgrounds--may throw light upon autonomous mental processes which, until now, have been too little recognized. It is through these processes that man is able to comprehend sensuously the appearance of the world, and to express his comprehension symbolically by means of the artistic form...the ability to create the artistic form by means of visual conceiving is a natural attribute of the mental existence of man.¹¹

This "artistic form" can be found in simple beginnings as well as highly evolved art works. It can be recognized in prehistoric and folk art, in primitives work and in that of children. Children's drawings, not yet distorted by imitation or by external methods of teaching, reveal a definite structural order, which in its "constancy of form" is similar to that of more developed works of art.

Haptic-Visual Theory

Viktor Lowenfeld devised a theory concerning the individual's orientation to his environment that characterizes types by their visual orientation or their kinesthetic (bodily) orientation to their surroundings. He assumes this is a biogenic factor, not modified by experience. Lowenfeld states:

We can now clearly distinguish two types, both by the end products of their artistic activities and by their attitude toward their own experiences. When we investigate the artistic products of these

¹¹ Ibid, , pp. 197-198.

two types we find that the visual type starts from his environment, that he feels always as spectator, and that his intermediaries for experience are mainly the eyes. The other, the haptic type is primarily concerned with his own body sensation and the subjective experiences in which he feels emotionally involved.¹²

The extremes of the type may be seen, for example, in the representation of a tree in foliage. The visual child will define the skeletal form and attempt to describe the conformation of the leaves. The haptic child's picture will be, by comparison, a slash of trunk and a blaze of greenness or goldness to depict the foliage.

Perception-Delineation Theory

The theorists whose work is outlined here have agreed upon the fact of similar stages of development in child art as evinced by the similarity of graphic devices employed, the symbols utilized, and the nature of that utilization.

June McFee feels that a strictly chronological development theory in its intransigency, is unacceptable. She has developed a more comprehensive theory. McFee comments on developmental stages:

...only a very general concept of art growth as a series of developmental stages can be used. Probably children scribble before they invent symbols; the symbols become more definitive as

¹²Lowenfeld, op. cit., p. 131.

they [children] have more experience; the symbols approach cultural "realism" when the motor, perceptual and cognitive skills, as well as conditions in the environment allow them to do so. The nature of symbols children invent is related to their total bio-psychological-cultural experience.¹³

The last sentence in this statement carries the major premise of the Perception-Delineation theory. The theory is presented as a framework in which the individual variables that affect art production are identified. The child's art work is an extremely complicated combination of processes. It requires the coordination of the child's intellect, emotions and perceptual and motor skills. His readiness to use these traits is affected by many factors in his environment. The different degrees to which the child uses these traits accounts for the external quality of his art products.

Summary

Of the major theories presented here, that of Arnheim has held the most pertinent and substantiating factors to contribute to the idea of the universality of man's perceiving. He has commented that the child discovers, spontaneously, that a visual object on paper can stand for something vastly different in nature. Throughout his major work in this area Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye, he repeatedly reveals possibilities for comparing the work

¹³McFee, op. cit., p. 159.

of the child, the maturing individual, with that of specific cultures and with primitive and folk art. He indicates that in human perceiving and thinking, similarity is not based upon piece-meal identity, but on the correspondence of essential structural features. This leads to the assumption that the unspoiled mind will spontaneously understand any given object according to the laws of its context. He says:

It takes a great deal of "spoiling" before we come to think that representation is not only an imitation of the object but also of its medium, so so that we expect a painting not to look like a painting but like physical space, and a statue not like a piece of stone but like living flesh and blood. This unquestionably less intelligent concept of representation, far from being natural to man, is a late product of the particular civilization in which we happen to have lived for a while."¹⁴

The material presented in this paper gains some corroboration from the beliefs of Schaefer-Simmern as evinced in his statement:

In the organic development and realization of visual conception, definite corresponding stages of artistic configuration in works of art of various epochs and races are reexperienced.¹⁵

His conviction concerning visual conception and personal cognition present an important reinforcement of Arnheim's views on art and visual perception.

¹⁴ Arnheim, op. cit., p. 163.

¹⁵ Schaefer-Simmern, op. cit., p. 199.

An important facet in the consideration of the art theories presented here is to establish the similarity of symbols invented by children; the next step, the similarity of the "inventing processes" within each individual.

CHAPTER IV

APPOSITION: PSYCHOLOGICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES

With the awareness of the many similarities in style and mode of representation in art forms found in varying locales and times, the question has arisen as to underlying reasons for these similarities and whether they represent visual accidents or some related phenomenon. One solution is that the products' analogies indicate a similarity of psychological needs and of the mentation which arises to meet these needs.

To postulate the nature of man, the nature of his psyche as universal, means that we should place here, in apposition to the theories of experts in the field of Child Art and Education, some theories of psychologists and philosophers about creativity and image formation and the nature of the psyche. Rather than entering a professional war, drawing adherents to one position or the other and demanding classroom procedures based on that exclusive adoption, one might well delve further into examination of the nature of man, society and self in order to gain greater possibilities for comparison and conjecture.

Art educators have drawn on the work of sociologists and psychologists to clarify and support hypotheses concerning children's artistic activities. The exact nature of this activity or "creation" has been, and is, the subject of conjecture, the focus of manifold definitive attempts. In the limits of this paper it is important only to recognize that, in the efforts of those who have tried to define this creative activity, one concept seems to be consistently noted--organization or "ordering." Gyorgy Kepes has aptly stated that facet which is of most importance in this context:

In each age of human history man was compelled to search for a temporary equilibrium in his conflicts with nature and in his relations with other men, and thus created, through an organization of visual imagery, a symbolic order of his psychological and intellectual experience.¹

The research of the psychologists Jung, Kubie, Brown and Koffka form the core of the following conjectural thoughts concerning the growth of the mind, its creative potential and processes and some energy from which is believed to have risen the myths, fables and universal imagery of all human kind.

An area common to all these theories is the process of creation or ordering of symbols as a mental process. Instinct may be considered in different terms

¹Gyorgy Kepes, Language of Vision (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1944), p. 164.

by different men; the unconscious and conscious levels of mental operation may be given varying names. However, in all the studies there seems to be concurrence in the belief that there is a quality in the mentation of all human beings which impels the individual to order and control his environment, and presses him toward further and more complex states of differentiation.

In the concern with explanations for the likeness of creative products, Jung's theory of the archetypes and the primordial images of the collective unconscious contains important ideas for consideration. As an initial part of the examination of Jung's theories it is necessary to understand that the Jungian connotation of "symbol" is specific in his studies, and relates to the unconscious level of symbolic function. Morris Philipson interprets Jung's symbol:

The transformation of...psychical energy through the symbol is a process that has been taking place since the beginning of time and its effectiveness continues. Symbols are never thought out consciously; they are always produced from the unconscious in the way so-called revelation or intuition.²

The symbol according to Jung, is part of an attempt to link a given known with an unknown. The symbol connects

²Morris Philipson, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

sensory perception of present experience with something that is not immediately available, the multiplex contents of the unconscious.³

Concerning the uniformity of the human psyche Jung writes:

In order to discover the uniformity of the human psyche I must descend into the very foundations of the consciousness. Only there do I find wherein all are alike...I have embraced [this uniformity] in the concept of the collective unconscious as a universal and homogenous substratum whose homogeneity extends into a worldwide identity or similarity of myths or fairy tales; so that a negro of the southern states of America dreams in the motives of Grecian mythology, and a Swiss grocer's apprentice repeats in his psychosis the vision of an Egyptian Gnostic.⁴

Joseph Campbell in The Hero With a Thousand Faces has pursued the development and characteristics of the myth of the "hero" over thousands of miles and across thousands of years turning up myriad prototypes, or similar mythic concepts. Forms or images of a collective nature occur practically all over the earth as constituents of myths and at the same time as autochthonous, individual products of unconscious origin.⁵

³Violet S. Laszlo, The Basic Writings of C.G. Jung (New York: Random House [Modern Library], 1959), p. 70.

⁴C. G. Jung, Psychological Types (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953), As cited by: DeLaszlo, op. cit., p. 71.

⁵Joseph Campbell, Hero With a Thousand Faces (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949), pp. 18-19.

In the pursuit of information to support the proposed universality of man's basic psychic energy in particular relationship to symbol and image formation, the Jungian theory of the archetypes has assumed a primary position. The existence of the archetypes and their projected character provides linkage between the symbology of myth, dream and artistic expression.

The archetype is a symbolic formula which always begins to function whenever there are no conscious ideas present, or when such as are present are impossible on intrinsic or extrinsic grounds. The contents of the collective unconscious are represented in the consciousness in the form of pronounced tendencies or definite ways of looking at things.⁶

This concept may be pursued in the estoric profundities of the Purist Ozenfant's "Preforms," and much more directly in Arnheim's Gestalt based theory of perception and Kubie's theory concerning symbolic function on the preconscious level.

Another investigator, Adolph Portmann, also speaks of the primordial images as performed by heredity, in the experience of man and animal. Portmann says:

⁶DeLaszlo, op. cit., p. 72.

Biological research on the central nervous system of animals reveals structures which are ordered in the manner of "Gestalten" and can provoke actions typical of the species. They represent definite configurations of being and action and reaction, bearing a structural imprint in their original pattern, but not in their individual manifestations.⁷

Accepting an inherent possibility of patterning in the human psyche, we can perhaps more readily understand the consistencies in method and form employed by ancient, primitive and child artist.

Lawrence Kubie's work in the last decade has been concerned with the influence of the preconscious process of mentation on the symbolic function, and on unique thinking in art and science.

The preconscious system of operation lies between two rather rigid realms, the conscious and the unconscious. At the conscious level of symbolic function words play a dominant role. There is a one-to-one relationship of symbol and referent. The symbol is essentially like a literal photograph. On the unconscious level the symbol represents an unconscious quantity. In dream and fantasy visual hieroglyphics represent "complex mental events and processes while at the same time striving to disguise them."⁸ The contents of the unconscious are never

⁷Joland Jacobi, Complex/Archetype/Symbol (New York: Bollinger Foundation, Inc., 1959), p. 40.

⁸Lawrence S. Kubie, M.D., Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 1958), p. 27.

directly open to the conscious. They may be intuited by the preconscious and given form and substance by the conscious.

The preconscious contains components which first have been, in some measure at least, conscious; as, in learning by repetition the intermediate steps to a goal are learned, then become "automatic," presumably forgotten. Actually, they are stored in the computer of the preconscious as components of a manifold symbol, and operate below the level of consciousness with fantastic rapidity. It is in this way that our thinking processes acquire the ability to leap over many intervening steps in complex mathematical computations. This is the root of intuitive thinking.

Kubie's work offers another possibility for understanding the role of the mind's "reservoir" in intuiting, imagining and creating. His interpretation of the preconscious as a computer-arbitrator refers to its function as a storehouse of information which has "seeped" through from the unconscious, and that which accrued from perceptions and cognitions at the conscious level. The conscious mind, through a screening process, perceives only that amount of information it can handle. Far greater amounts of information are actually perceived, pre-consciously sorted, and shuffled into new perceptual and conceptual patterns. This is why the preconscious

process is considered the "Seven-League-Boat of intuitive creative functions."⁹ Kubie feels that when the pre-conscious is functioning in proper accord with the conscious and unconscious the greatest potential for creative operation exists.

Kubie and Jung are aligned on the essential point of the basic psychic source of image formation and this further substantiates the premise of universality. Kubie feels that in dreams and those moments of entering into, and emerging from, sleep the human consciousness relaxes its watchguard hold on the total contents of the psyche. At these times and during the trance-like involvement in an act of creative production, the pre-conscious performs most freely its function as go-between. It is at these times of accord that mental processes are freed of the rigidity imposed by both the conscious and the unconscious.

Brown in his theory of the psychological characteristics of nations, and Spengler, in his philosophy of history, occupy a position which is empathic to that of Jung and Kubie. Brown, a recent interpreter of Freud, has searched Freud's writings for references to ontogeny and phylogeny. He has recorded data leading to the assumption that in the history of the species something

⁹Ibid., p. 35.

happened similar to the events in the life of the individual. He feels that mankind is a prisoner of the past in his archaic heritage. Brown quotes Freud:

Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny (each individual recapitulates the history of the race): in the few years of childhood "we" have to cover the enormous distance of development from primitive man of the Stone Age to civilized man of today.¹⁰

Thus, Brown interpreting Freud has opened the way to a corollary assumption; that aesthetic development of the race of man may be understood within the pattern of the aesthetic development of the contemporary individual. The inverse should be equally valid.

Spengler's philosophy of history embodies an idea similar, according to Kurt Koffka,¹¹ to the one termed the Theory of Correspondence by students of developmental history. On individual and racial developmental Koffka quotes Spengler:

According to [this] theory dispositional traits are so constituted that the individual indicates the history of his development from the most primitive beginnings by typical forms of reaction to his environment which appear at every stage of his career; and these reactions correspond in a general way to the stages of racial development. There are, therefore, primitive, more highly developed, and very highly developed forms of reaction, each of a uniform type, whether they be found in ontogenesis or phylogensis.¹²

¹⁰ Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death (New York: Vintage Books--Random House, 1959), p. 13.

¹¹ Kurt Koffka, Growth of the Mind (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, Inc., 1925), p. 46.

¹² Ibid., p. 16.

This is a highly important concept in relation to the studies of Schaefer-Simmern and Arnheim. Also, the connection with the beliefs of Jung (who first worked with Freud) about the archetypes and the collective unconscious is impressive. There seems to be a vast concurrence, within the literature of three related fields, concerning the appearance of human behavior patterns attributable to the slowly evolving, if not immutable, nature of Man.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Examples of the art work of children from all over the world have shown, on objective examination, multiple similarities in form, style and symbol development. Comparative investigation of the aesthetic produce of ancient and primitive man has disclosed numerous analogies to Child Art.

Theories of contemporary specialists in Art Education have been examined with particular reference to the work of pre-adolescent children. Certain seeming paradoxes have, hopefully, been resolved in the projection of a theory of the universality of the basic psychic energy and mental processes of the human being. Rather than elaborating on all the biogenic and cultural factors which most art educators have agreed upon as conditions encouraging the formal analogies in child art, most attention has been given to the physiological-psychological implications as they appear in the work of Arnheim, Jung and their followers. In their work are found numerous references to genetic characteristics and cultural impositions. Within the limitations of this paper, the focus of attention on the physio-psychological factors seemed most relevant.

The hypothesis of the delimited universality has developed along with the attendant hypothesis that each individual, in his childhood, experiences the drives and the needs that the race of Man has experienced. The evidence of this experience is manifest in the visual art products of his creative efforts. This observable, comparable art product bears witness to that universal mentation.

If art is fundamentally an instinctive force, employing the intuitive faculty, it would seem reasonable to expect universal human artistic produce to indicate a conformation to the psycho-physiological development and to the needs of the artist. The child, as does the primitive, draws or paints, expresses himself visually, as a means to understanding, clarifying and controlling his environment; employing visual means to communicate first with himself, then with his society.

The mature sophisticated artist of today is a product of all of Man's history, a reservoir of human experience shaped by his total historical environment and by a continuous social accretion. In contrast, Early Man, as each child does, faced great numbers of unknown quantities and qualities--the mysteries and the "magic elements of his world. The motivation or need to create symbols is similar in both sorts of "child." The primacy of their response, their easier access to what Kubie

calls the unconscious level of mentation--as compared to the sophisticated adult--explains in large part the similar graphic forms employed by both. One might also, in this context, recall the studies of psychologists and sociologists in the realm of dreams and mythological parallels. Jung's concept of the Archetypes and themes of the Primordial Images proposes answers to the questions that have been posed concerning universal mythology and dream symbolism, as well as well as those concerning the reasons for the existence of the analogies in art form.

Primitive man's symbols and those of the child show a comparable manifold character. These symbols, in their complexity and overlapping meanings, can describe far greater numbers of perceptions and apprehensions than can a "naturalistic" or critically limited form of photographic "realism."

Jung, in his theory of primordial images does not intend our conclusion that certain symbols for sun, man, animal, tree, et cetera, were lurking preformed and immutable in every psyche, ready to spring out in conscious representation in identical form. Rather, Jung's Archetypes and primordial images can bring forth certain "patterns"; they are not inherited images, but inherent possibilities of images.

It has been the purpose of this paper to support hypotheses and to raise questions through the analogies presented; to engender a curiosity in the reader which will lead to greater knowledge of self and mankind.

To defer to Kubie:

Self knowledge is not all there is to wisdom and maturity; but it is an essential ingredient which makes maturity at least possible. Yet it is the one ingredient which is almost totally neglected [in education]. This lack is both an index and a cause of the immaturity of our culture.¹

The awareness of the analogies presented in this study can serve as a stimulus to those involved in Art and in Education; promoting a concomitant awareness of the universality of the basic psychic energy and mentation of all mankind.

¹ Kubie, op. cit., p. 134.

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree M.A. in Art Education

Jeanne Rathfon Gray

NAME

has submitted this written thesis
as a supplement to the creative thesis

Two (2) Pots

11"

Size

Raku-Branch Pot

Title

7"

Size

Stoneware-Jar

Title

Which is in the permanent possession of the University
of Colorado and recorded with the Department of Fine Arts.

Approved by

Lynn R Wolfe
Co-Chairman of Committee

Roberta Day
Co-Chairman of Committee

Roberta Day
Chairman, Fine Arts

Date

July 26, 1968





