5-31-1967

Man, the World, and Art

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MANUSCRIPT THESES

MAN, THE WORLD, AND ART

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THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Philosophy
in the Graduate School of
The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico
June, 1967

This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Committee of the University of New Mexico in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER
OF
ARTS

Brian E. O'Neil
Dean

Date May 31, 1967

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Accusations of failure to face social responsibility may be leveled against two groups of intellectuals. One group is the philosophers; the other the artists. Both are creators. To both is entrusted to a large extent the formation of society and the construction of media through which all men are enabled to express their hopes and desires.[1]

The accusations, however, must not be made without proper distinctions. There have always been those self-sacrificing individuals who transcend the barriers placed around them by their contemporaries in the same field. It is to these men that we owe the best in the evolution of man's social consciousness. We must also recognize that at times a school of thought prevails whose basic philosophical principles render the majority within the group intensely aware of their social obligations. History, however, witnesses but few instances of this phenomenon.

The log books of philosophers and artists recount the failure of these leaders of society to interest themselves deeply in the concrete situations of the common man, the man on the street. Yet their respective instances of deliberate withdrawal from society do not run parallel with one another. Being so divergent, they seldom merge. Whether they seek this withdrawal consciously or not is beside the question. The point is that society suffers from the lack of their leadership.

In the instance of the philosopher: we find the ascendancy of rationalism divorces man from a proper appreciation of the material world. The manifold revelations of the concrete material element of nature of time lose their concrete character in the abstractions of the rationalist. Confronted by the mystery of change he takes refuge in the apparent stability of ideas. The dichotomy he makes is artificial. Justification for the validity of reason above the senses is made on the grounds of the fallibility of the senses. But if the margin of error is so great, then his reason should be of little use, since his concepts are essentially dependent on his sense experiences. In refusing to recognize the essential part his senses play in his personal development, he offers to society an illusion in the place of reality. His is a gift of abstractions. Stillborn as a lifeless babe, his ideas lack the power of life. Common men gather around him and find but the semblance of life. In their desire for leadership, many times they fail to recognize the inert form of his creation. They take it up, extol its seeming perfection. All too soon its lifelessness becomes all too apparent.[2]

There are, on the other hand, philosophers who have devoted themselves to the senses to the exclusion of their rational nature. They have deceived society into accepting the beast as a brother in preference to their fellow man. They have set in motion a process of de-evolution which would draw man back into the womb of primordial chaos and despair.

In neither case, that of the exaggerated rationalist or the extreme sensist, has the philosopher faced his social responsibility by recognizing the basic fact that man by his act of existence is a sentient, rational animal and that he cannot function solely on one level to the exclusion of the other.

Perhaps the more general evolution of society is responsible for these philosophical attitudes. When society is divided into caste-like levels whereby the leaders divide themselves from the followers, it is little wonder that the philosopher should lose contact with reality. Whether secular or religious, the effects of this arbitrary division are detrimental to the thinker, placing him in an unreal position of separation.

To discuss speculatively the ultimate end of man avails the common man but little help in his practical every day life, so far removed from his ultimate destiny. Faith, hope, and charity will do much more in this respect than philosophical reasoning. It is the philosopher's task to help all men bring their sentient and rational nature into a workable relationship. He must reveal to man his place in relation to the whole of being, animate and inanimate. He must show man how to authenticate himself by making proper and full use of the situations into which he has been thrown.

Insight into wholeness of man and into the dynamic evolving of man's social nature is the keystone to the message of today's

philosophies. The philosopher is apparently trying desperately to assume his rightful position as a leader of society, by emphasis on his membership in that society. No longer is he preaching to the exclusion of the senses, or of reason. The relationship of an artificial cleavage is ignored. Man is taken as he is, thrown by a will not his own into a situation wherein by judicious exercise of his will, he can authentically develop his potential. The philosopher has included himself in the scene and by seeking to question himself first and foremost as to his own authenticity has taken his rightful position as a leader of his fellow men.[3]

But the lines are neither parallel, nor do they merge. Throughout the centuries it has been the artist, rather than the philosopher, who has refused to exalt himself above the crowds and has actively worked to satisfy the aesthetic needs of man. Perhaps this was because he did not separate himself from those who accepted him as a leader. Or on the contrary it might have been that society did not give him reason to think he was a leader. So many of the classical works of art have been done by slaves. The Middle Ages respected the artist as it did any craftsman. Despite the position of the artist in these earlier ages, unlike his contemporary in philosophy, he was of the people and remained in contact with them.[4]

The emergence of the philosopher into contemporary events witnesses the withdrawal of the artist from his contact with society. In the name of authenticity he has retreated into

a world of self. Subjectivity has so clouded his outlook that his social relations admit of "others" only insofar as they exemplify "self." Upon examination, this type of authenticity is seen to be quite common: common, that is, to packs and herds. Instead of trying to establish contact with society, they abuse its integrity by holding society responsible for their alienation. The works they produce are hardly intelligible to the common man. Their symbols are void of meanings which would perfect the essential relations of man to man. Having turned their backs on society, society will no longer tolerate them as leaders.

Perhaps in the end the lines will merge. It is now for the philosopher to awaken the artist to his sense of responsibility. As man cannot live without expressing his emotional as well as intellectual life, so society cannot progress without a meaningful objectification of these emotions through a meaningful art.

The plea that goes up from society, from nature itself, is that man be ever-mindful of what he is: a being essentially of time as well as of eternity, of the material world, as well as of the spiritual world, of body as well as of spirit. He is an event, inseparable from other events, evolving toward perfection with the evolution of all other events.[5] Justification of each antithesis lies in its essential unity with the whole man. Social evolution has reached that point where the philosopher and the artist must accept the truths of the

self-evident, shelve their speculative digressions and plunge into the concrete situation into which mankind has been thrown through the existential act. Social problems will not admit a delay. Their solutions will only be found in a dynamic involvement. Authenticity develops through this involvement. Alienation leads to unauthenticity, fear, and death.

Footnotes

[1]Cf. Irwin Edman, Arts and the Man: A Short Introduction to Aesthetics, 2nd ed. (New York, 1939), pp. 119-154.

[2]Cf. Ernst Breisach, Introduction to Modern Existentialism (New York, 1962), pp. 13-15.

[3]Cf. Robert S. Erlich, 20th Century Philosophers (New York, 1965), pp. 5-7.

[4]"In the powerfully social structure of mediaeval civilization, the artist had only the rank of artisan, and every kind of anarchical development was forbidden his individualism, because a natural social discipline imposed on him from the outside certain limiting conditions. He did not work for the rich and fashionable and for the merchants, but for the faithful; it was his mission to instruct their intelligences, to delight their souls and their eyes." Jacques Maritain, Art and Scholasticism and the Frontiers of Poetry, trans. Joseph W. Evans (New York, 1962), pp. 21-22; cf. W. G. Constable, The Painter's Workshop (Boston, 1963), pp. 2-27; and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art, 2nd ed. (New York, 1956), pp. 112-112--hereafter cited as C. and O. Phil.

[5]Pierre Teilhard De Chardin, The Phenomenon of Man, trans. Bernard Wall (New York, 1961), pp. 254-308. This same point is made very forcibly by John Dewey throughout the entire book but especially in chapter seven, Experience and Nature (New York, 1958), pp. 248-297.

MILIEU

It would seem that man is encompassed by complexities. He is aware of the external world through a host of simultaneous sensations. A particular experience is never in the final analysis really an isolated event since it is premised by the totality of past experiences and colored by anxiety of the impending future.

Even in the matter of so called clear and distinct ideas, the intellectual finesse needed to formulate such ideas catches man up in the invariable web of complexities.

But then, there is nothing here to either marvel at or to be dismayed by. It is exactly as it must be. Nature is the matrix of complexity, and of all of nature's progeny, man is the most complex.[1]

The thing to be marveled at is the unity through which nature's complexities are enabled to express themselves. Any specific object or thought is a veritable composite of thesis and antithesis which is synthesized through its unity into an operable event. And no event stands by itself. There are among all events transcendental relations which bring about an event and sustain it in time. The exigencies of nature can admit to meither abstraction from unity nor simplification of complexities. Nature must be taken as it is: a myriad of

transcendental relationships arising from the inter-operations of essences which in themselves are interpenetrating complexities unified through their particular acts of existence.

Among the various relationships found in nature is the triadic relationship of man, world, and art. We must not confuse the world with what we call the earth. The world is much more than the primordial habitat of man. It is man circumscribed by the totality of his environmental situations, whether they be natural in the sense of earth and its elements; or self-made, with respect to his cultural, religious, or political relationships. In other words, man in constituting a socio-rational species begets the world. Insofar as he operates as an individual within the species, he produces the arts.

It must be admitted, given the order of things as they are, that we are not able to conceive of the earth, or even the whole universe as existing without man. Whoever would attempt to do so could not prescind from himself, and hence remains "in" the universe. How much more senseless, then, to envision the world without art, since art is a natural expression of man himself.

Before man came on the scene there was earth with its vegetation and animal life. But there was no culture or civilization. Once man evolved there appeared simultaneously the rudiments of social relationships and art. One might call it simply "living and doing." Even though it took place

in the caves of the Cro-Magnon there is found evidence today of some sort of communal living. The very fact which points to a skeleton as being that of a man is the art and artifact found in the vicinity of the discovery.[2]

Again we have the complexities: man, world, art. Yet they have an essential unity in their transcendental relationship which cannot be sacrificed if we are to get an insight into any of the three. If then the world and art are respectively products of man's social and individual relations, in order to understand either better, we must look more closely at the nature of man himself.

Whether it takes place in the mind of the philosopher as he sits in his proverbial armchair, or whether it takes place on the consulting couch of the psychoanalyst: the analysis of man is of utmost interest and importance. The subject and the end in both instances are the same: man and his accomodation to life. To some degree these two lines of analysis run parallel and would seem in the end to complement each other in enabling an individual to develop more fully his rapport with life. For it is evident that the psychoanalyst must be intensely aware of the constitutent principles which underly the notion of humanity. But it is just as imperative that the philosopher realize that these principles are in themselves, apart from the individual, non-existent, non-operable. It is here that the lines diverge. Habitually the psychoanalyst must consider the individual in the concrete.

There can be no departmentalization into the rational, the sentient, the social, the political, or the religious. He must of necessity take the individual as a whole in terms of self-relation and transcendental relations.

The philosopher, on the other hand, is very tempted to remain in the realm of the abstract. If he does seek to achieve practical appreciation of his speculations, it is usually in a piece-meal manner. The rationalist emphasizes mind; the empiricist, the senses. If the rationalist tends towards humanism, stress is placed on the social and economic aspect of man's makeup. For the positivist there are the sciences. For the pessimist there is the pathos of despair and death. In all of these speculative analyses the subject is not regarded as an integrated existent and the end--the individual's accomodation to life--is forfeited to the pleasures of mental gymnastics. Judging from this, it is little wonder that he who would seek a regulatory philosophy of life based upon such abstract philosophical speculations, seeks in vain. Such answers more readily are discovered on the couch of the psychoanalyst.[3]

True, man is matter and form, spirit and body, rational and sensient. He is a social, political, religious being. He is a great paradox: higher than the beasts, lower than the angels--and yet in one sense a "god." Of all this, however, the one thing to be aware of, the only thing that when all is considered has any meaning and relevancy is that man

"is." He simply "is." By the act of existence he is whatever abstraction finds him to be at the moment and so much more. For by his singular act of existence he is not only constituted in a genus and a species, but he is individualized. Whatever is inherited from the race and culture to which he belongs is altered by his singularity, transformed into something essentially new to be offered again in the course of his life to his fellow man through the interplay of vital relations.[4]

It is often said that what makes man superior to other sentient creatures is his ability of reflection, his self-consciousness. He is not only aware of the world around him, but he is also conscious of his own acts of consciousness. He not only knows; he also knows that he knows and reflectively the act whereby he knows. If then man is aware of himself as the subject of his experiences, he is aware of his ability to regulate these experiences at least to some extent. Experiences of pleasure can be retained at will; experiences of pain, repressed. The environmental conditioning of experiences can be altered. He can accept the world to some degree on his own terms, or equally seek to reject it. By such deliberate choices, the individual creates his "personality." He actualizes the potential, "the possible," of his existence, but according to a pattern that he wills and freely develops. Let us call this man's "self-creative" ability. And let us agree that self-consciousness as the foundation of the self-creative ability is that something which makes man superior to the rest of nature.[5]

We must not allow ourselves to rest in the illusion that self-consciousness and self-creative ability are identical. The latter results from the former, but its ground of action is of a wider scope. Self-consciousness necessarily builds itself on experiences derived from contact with the non-ego world. Its end, however, is an imminent action operating in the internal world of thought.[6] It is a perfection of the rational nature, but not of the whole man. In a sense it takes man from the external world and concentrates him in himself. It fails to reaffirm his relationship to all of nature. The means by which man as a reasoning being effectively and consciously participates in the fullness of his humanity is the self-creative ability. Creative ability is a transcendent ability. It executes objects external to the agent, and establishes new relationships between the agent and the non-ego world.

Self-creativity is the power than man has over nature--and himself! Whether it be in the controlling of his experiences, the adjusting of and to his environment, or the creation of art and artifacts: nature responds to the creative word of the human person.

As if it were a beguiling enchantress, nature with a smile awaits the command of the master, well aware that without her the term master would be emptied of meaning. For nature is not nature without man. More forcibly: man cannot accurately be said "to need" nature for the exercise of his

creative ability. He is one with nature; immersed in nature in himself; a microcosmos in a macrocosmos. We cannot be said to stand in need of that of which we are part.

We cannot, then, separate man from his milieu. His nature and the nature around him are but varying degrees of the same unity. His act of existence is an intrinsic part of the greater existential act by which all things are. One existent cannot be separated from another without depreciating the meaning of reality.

Man climaxes nature. In this enviable position he holds a great power over the whole of nature. His is the one power that can be called effective. He can consciously create. He can take nature and transform it into a new actuality, into a symbol of his particular intentions. He can create a world peopled by his "other-selves." His intentions are substantiated in concrete forms. His living is facilitated by a multitude of inventions. His pleasures are refined by artifacts made for the service of his delights. But with all of the advantages of this great power, let us not be misled into thinking that man does this entirely by his own free will. Nature is a knowing mistress, and to her man is not free from debt. Man is what he is not only because of what his individual nature is, but because of what nature in general is. Bound by nature's laws, he cannot develop his individual nature in contradiction to these laws. He may prescind from them in the realm of reason. He may attempt to construct his life according to a

pure rational formula. But he will never succeed in the business of living. Extrication from the material hold of the senses will not be tolerated by nature. Nor will nature admit of man's development of his senses to the exclusion of his reason. Man, like the rest of nature must be nurtured according to the dictates of the natural unity he possesses by the very act of existence. It is by the existential act that man incurs the debt he owes to nature. In this act there exists the union of all the abstractions man makes about his own nature: spirit and matter; sense knowledge and abstract reasoning; mind and world.

Man is not an island unto himself, isolated from the rest of nature. The act of existence for man cannot be separated from a further unity: namely, his intrinsic immergence into the whole of nature itself. To this receptive capacity on the part of nature, he owes the very possibility of being able to be "his-self." His individuality will develop only to the extent that he attempts to differentiate himself from the rest of being through his contact with nature. It is only through such a relationship that man will come to be what he can be. The perfection of these relationships will be the perfection of man as an individual and of total nature.

The "material" side of man's nature demands that he participate fully in, and establish a vital relationship with the whole of sensible creation. The epitome of material creation, he has a further obligation which cannot be avoided.

By the power of his intellectual capacity, man is able to entrench himself even more firmly in his total relation with being. By becoming one with the thing known, he himself is able to bring about a more intense unity with the rest of reality. The individual through the act of knowing, has the power to take the sensible world into himself and by identifying himself with it, by becoming one with the thing known, invests that known with his own personality. In this order of intention there is a veritable hypostatization of the nature of the knower with the nature of that known.[7]

This relating of man to his external environment by the process of knowing shows even more forcibly man's essential immergence in the whole of reality. Because it is this immergence which makes man what he is, he must not attempt to free himself from it. The great power he has to invest nature with his personality by means of the process of knowing is noneffective as long as it remains in the order of intention. The world of concepts is but a womb nurturing the hypostatization of the individual's personality with the world. Identification to be perfected must be concretized by means of transient action. Man must do, act, create. His action must give of his whole self--it must be enriched by the employment of his senses as well as his reason. Rationalism withers the life in nature and that life in our nature. Pure rationalism is the graveyard of dead abstractions. Contrariwise, empiricism, positivism, sensism--call it what you will--driven to its own

extreme unnaturally rejects the transcendent power of thought and man's transcendent creative spirit.

What man takes from the external world and assimilates to himself by means of his self-creative ability, must, therefore, be replaced, so to speak, by a subsequent act of creativity. The inner potential must be actualized into a new being in which all of nature can share. This is what man owes nature, and his happiness as an integrated person depends on his faithfulness in repaying the debt.

Every man is a creator: of himself as a "self," of others, and of things. It was seen how he uses his self-creative ability in adjusting to his environment. It was also pointed out how he must release this creative ability in order to establish a working relationship with the external world. In so diffusing his personality into the world about him it is obvious that he influences others by allowing his personality to become part of the ground from which their experiences rise. It is, in fact, a more vital power than that of mere power which one man holds over another. It is a determinative influence from which the "other" cannot escape. To accept reality is to accept the formulative hold of the "other" over us. All creative power is determinative power regardless of the nature by which it is wielded.

To say that every man is a creator of things is to say that every man is an artist. The artistic milieu is one of acting, making, doing. It is a world of beings reaching their

fulfillment by output. But any human output, whether it be expression of thought or the making of utensils; whether it be the reification of his desires in objects which are commonly referred to as works of art, or his emotional objectification in terms of mutual sympathy and human understanding: each of these outputs is an act of man's creative ability. It is an extension of his self-creative activity, the expression of which is common to all men.[8]

Those more attuned to the spiritual element of the sensible will express themselves in symbols of greater aesthetic value than those whose lives are oriented to the senses. The latter may be more concerned with the making of things which are useful and practical. Others while not creating the things themselves actively participate in their creation by perfecting them, and by fulfilling the end for which they were created by the using of them. A proper appreciation of artistic milieu will reveal that members of all groups are creators and that each group is inseparable from the other. The various tools needed for the execution of the fine arts, for example, are utensils. The makers of utensils supply the material needs of the maker of the fine arts. The fine arts, on the other hand, create an atmosphere that fulfills the intellectual and emotional needs of the maker of utensils.

We may talk about art in terms of the fine arts alone. We may write volumes of debatable pages attempting to enthrone the creator of these works in some diefied position above his

fellow man. We can put the genius of so-called artistic temperament on a pedestal and bow down in adoration before his greatness. But if we do so, if we seek this complete separation of artist from craftsman, of art from artifact, we run the risk of making his greatness a shallow term, of making his art an empty symbol. We must not forget that the pedestal we have placed him on came metaphorically from hands of the craftsman. "A man may be a genius and contribute to the advance of science by his personal initiative, but he can only play an important part when he has adopted the communal situation, and he succeeds because he develops the communal situation according to the inner logic that is already there."[9]

In other words the act of living, of interrelation of man with his environment, with his fellow man is, in the final analysis, the greatest of all the arts. The art of living encompasses the whole range of human activity. All men are involved in it, essentially so. No one man or group of men can be isolated from it.

To say that the art of living encompasses the whole range of human activity is not to abstract it from this activity. The art of living is the "know-how" from which all other activities proceed and through which they are perfected. It is a <u>virtus</u> ("power") of the practical intellect and the keystone to the proper objectification of the art object.[10]

The influence of creative knowledge is the influence of art. It is an influence that enters into every sphere of life

and makes complete the circle of the art of living. There are: the art of cooking, of gardening; the pedagogical art, and the industrial arts. There are as many arts as there are creative actions attributed to man.

Then there are the fine arts, these being divided into the major and the lesser: such as painting, dancing, sculpture, music, and architecture, as opposed to glass making, weaving, and the like. All of these arts, like the practical arts, stem from the knowledge man has of himself, and are developed as he actualizes his potentials according to the dictates of his ultimate end.

The knowledge man has of himself is complex. Its unifying force is the self. The kinds of arts are many, but their unifying principle lies in the exercise of a specific nature unified to the whole of reality by its act of existence.

Hegel notes that art develops by using the actions, passions, and characters of man. Art is much more than this. Art does not develop by using these media. The using of them develops art. As man's actions, passions, and character are developed parallel to his personal involvement with the world around him, to such an extent does all of nature play a part in the development of art.[11]

The milieu of the artist is the milieu of all men. If through his genius he is placed above his fellow man he owes it to himself and his art to define his life in terms of others. He must bring forth his knowledge in concrete terms.

He will be false to his calling should he attempt to objectify mere abstractions.

The artist must give to nature that which has been taken from it to form him. He must give of his whole humanity--soul and body. As his rational and sentient nature are united in his person, so must he objectify his knowledge, that he and the natures external to him become one in the object of his creation.

As an efficient cause, the artist must give of what he is. This is the only manner appropriate to his acting as a human person. His creation must show clearly the sensible and rational side of his nature. To do less would be to create grotesqueness.

In giving of what he is, the artist imparts to the art object the benefit of his universal and particular nature. He creates an experience for others which will appeal to mankind because of the generality of its human appeal. He creates an experience for others which grows in value to the extent that he has incarnated his individualness in the art object. As by the act of existence the artist is constituted in his species and yet distinguished from all other members of his species by his unique individuality: so must the object he creates, as an expression of his total self, participate in his universal and particular nature.[12]

Released from its creator, the art object now stands in its own relation and revelation to the world. The potentials

in the materials used by the artist have been refined in the execution. They have been impregnated by the personality of the artist. But this very refinement and impregnation have served to release other potentials contained in the materials, as well as in the artist himself, and these potentials are actualized in their release and create new relations between being and being.

Precious materials in the raw may be passed by unnoticed. When molded into the form of a human face, or the veined-lineation of a hand, what depth is added to their existence? How much more meaningful they become. Nor can we deny the artist his moment of truth when he views his finished work and witnesses a creation embodying powers he never knew himself to possess.

Yes, there is a power in the art object. It is a power which almost seems to make the object defy its origin in its thrust for independence. If it is a successful execution, it bears the transcendent spirit of belonging to every age. It draws others to it to acclaim its perfections. It flatters its surroundings by the presence of its beauty.

It is a power that strikes out at its own creator and as an art object <u>in itself</u> holds him spell-bound by its enchantment. This is the reason why a true artist and his work are separated but with difficulty. Like divine creation, the created and its creator are not totally separate and distinct. The object is created in the image and likeness

of the self. The object is another "self." It will not allow a total alienation of the artist from itself. But the artist should not allow himself to be victimized by this power. If as man he should express his life as a social being, then he should share his creative abilities with his fellow man in a personal yet impersonal way.

By impersonal we mean that he must detach himself from his work. He must let it speak for itself to the world. It is a symbol of universality from which all who look upon it can find a complement to their personal needs and desires. It is a universal symbol made from the materials and experiences common to mankind. Its independence must be assured by its being shared by all. Both the artist and his work must remain an integral part of the milieu which is essential to their existence.

Footnotes

[1]Cf. Henri Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics: The Creative Mind, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (Totowa, N. J., 1965), pp. 130-158--hereafter cited as Creative Mind.

[2]"The usual anthropological way of expressing the results of the great difference between Man and animals is to say that Man is the only culture-bearing animal.

"By culture the anthropologist means that complex of historically conditioned, learned patterns of behavior which is characteristic of a specific group of human beings. This is a specific culture. When we speak of Man in general, we speak of Culture in general. Animals, too, have patterns of behavior, but they are not 'learned' as are the human ones that make up culture. The basic difference, for the anthropologist, is the fact of symbolism, and this is shown best in language.

"In dealing with the culture of a group of living human beings, we have plenty of material. Language, dress, dances, art, politics, preference in food, religious beliefs--everything is characteristic of this culture, and marks it off from all others. However, most of these things cannot be fossilized and preserved for the future student, the way bones can be preserved. Some tools can be preserved and were preserved. It is these tools which help us so much in the study of early Man.

"From the point of view of the anthropologist, it is not exactly the fact that Man used tools that counts. Indeed, certain animals use tools, or implements at least; objects useful for the achievement of a purpose, which purpose cannot be achieved with the bare hands, so to speak. What counts is the fact that whole collections of a certain kind of tools are found, in a given place and stratum. This indicates that the tools were made according to a pattern, a tradition. We simply do not have a tradition, without culture. A tradition implies language, and with language we have the peculiarly human fact of a set of learned ways of group behavior."
J. Franklin Ewing, S. J., "Human Evolution - 1956," in Anthropological Quarterly [formerly Primitive Man], Vol. 29 (New Series Vol. 4) #4, Oct., 1956 (Washington, 1956), 97-98.

[3]Cf. Carl Gustav Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, trans. W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York, 1933), pp. 173-195.

[4]Cf. Carl Gustav Jung, "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious," in Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 2nd ed. (New York, 1965), pp. 136-181.

[5]The insight into the place of consciousness in the human person's makeup was obtained from Hegel. Cf. J. Loewenberg, ed., Hegel Selections, "Outline of Hegel's Phenomenology," trans. William F. Harris (New York, 1957), pp. 68-78--hereafter cited as Selections; and W. T. Stace, The Philosophy of Hegel: A Systematic Exposition (New York, 1955), pp. 350-360--hereafter cited as P. H.

[6]Cf. Henri Renard, S. J. and William J. Stackhouse, S. J., The Philosophy of Man (St. Louis, 1946), pp. 50-90; and Michael Maher, S. J., Psychology: Empirical and Rational, 6th ed. (New York, 1905), pp. 294-313; and P. Coffey, Epistemology or the Theory of Knowledge: An Introduction to General Metaphysics, 2 vols. (Gloucester, 1958), Vol. 1, pp. 262-279; Vol. 2, pp. 19-31.

[7]James V. McGlynn, trans., St. Thomas Aquinas: The Teacher, The Mind (Chicago, 1962), pp. 92-100.

[8]Cf. C. and O. Phil., pp. 23-33; 61-88.

[9]G. M. A. Jansen, O. P., An Existential Approach to Theology (Milwaukee, 1966), pp. 26-27.

[10]"According to Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, Art is a virtue--that is, an innerly developed, undeviating strength--Art is a virtue of the Practical Intellect, that particular virtue of the Practical Intellect which deals with the creation of objects made." Jacques Maritain, The Responsibility of the Artist (New York, 1960), p. 23; "Art is an intellectual, not a physical virtue; beauty has to do with knowledge and goodness, of which it is precisely the attractive aspect; and since it is by beauty that we are attracted to a work, its beauty is evidently a means to an end, and not itself the end of art; the purpose of art is always one of effective communication. The man of action, then, will not be content to substitute the knowledge of what he likes for an understanding judgment; he will not merely enjoy what he should use (those who merely enjoy we call 'aesthetes' rightly); it is not the aesthetic surfaces of works of art but the right reason or logic of the composition that will concern him." C. and O. Phil., pp. 16-17; and, cf. also Maritain, Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry (Cleveland, 1961), pp. 31-50.

[11]While not agreeing with Dewey's complete position I concur in his overall emphasis on the kinds of unity I speak of here. Cf. Chapter Nine, 354-393 in Experience and Nature.

The gist of these pages is contained in the following quote:

"We can find a portent of this, moreover, in the realm of artistic creation, for the true artist does not create for himself alone but for everyone; he is satisfied only if that condition is fulfilled and I may add that there is no artistic creation without a permanent dislocation of the agent." Gabriel Marcel, Creative Fidelity, trans. Robert Rosthal (New York, 1964), p. 47; cf. also pp. 38-57.

[12]Aquinas in explaining efficient causality emphasizes the fact that in the world of beings every manifestation of causal activity produces between the cause and that caused a relationship of transitive causality. By this we mean an efficient cause communicates something of its own being to the effect. The possibility for such communication lies in the communicability of the form, specifically the same in both cause and effect, numerically becoming different owing to the relation of transitive causality. (For a more specific analysis of the relation of transitive causality, I would refer the reader to the explanation given by Etienne Gilson, in The Elements of Christian Philosophy (New York, 1963), pp. 207-209.)

ALIENATION

Decline in art, as well as in philosophy, begins when one aspect of man's nature is expressed excessively to the negation of other aspects. The result is perversion.

When subjectivity is expressed to the exclusion of the objective and real, the resulting perversion follows the lines of rigid rationalism, or unbridled emotionalism. To be faithful to objective reality to an extent that excludes any play of the subject in the art object, tends to produce works which are sterile and stereotyped. Either of these positions is unfortunately possible because man can act contrary to the fulfillment of his nature as an integrated being. Blind to the full demands of reality he can pursue some aspects of it to the destructive neglect of others. More often than not, this is what he has attempted to do. It remains for society to judge the quality of such works, rejecting those works and authors it deems to have perpetuated a fraud on the common man.

Creativity springs from the self-consciousness of man. This does not preclude the intellect in favor of the will, the will in favor of emotions, the rational in favor of the senses. Self-consciousness is self-awareness of the individual as a whole man: sentient, emotional, rational. This awareness of self is triggered by an awareness of the distinction between the ego and the non-ego world. To know oneself reflectively is to admit of the existence of another world and of

other selves. It is to be aware of the functioning relation of oneself as an integral part of these other entities. It is to be aware that self develops in its natural milieu and not apart from it.

Many, however, attempt to separate themselves from their milieu. The dictates of environment may appeal to the individual or repulse him. A pertinent cause for this separation, therefore, can be seen to be in the milieu itself, in the way it affects the individual and his creative activity. Worringer appeals to this argument in his analysis of the influence of culture upon art. It is an insight that cannot be disregarded.[1]

An age distinguished for its emphasis on the sensual, the voluptuous, the lustful, will drive the intellectual in disgust from involvement in its sordid pursuits. Seeking an illusionary purity, tranquillity, eternality in the world of ideas, he will pattern his attitudes and works according to a rational idealism that fails to embody the aspects of the sensism he so abhors.

The pendulum swings. A society lean and thin, abstaining from the wholesome delights of the flesh and the material world, attuned only to things of the spirit, will produce an impetus that drives the intellectual from its rank and will cause him to throw himself in despair before the idol of empiricism. Disgust for spirit leads to adoration of the senses.

Difficult as it may be, the intellectual must involve himself in his age, accept his milieu, attempt to determine

its course, not by flight into the extreme, but through calling his contemporaries back to an equillibrium by means of the wisdom exemplified in his creations. A leader of his society, this obligation rests heavily on the shoulders of the artist. For the sake of his own authenticity and for the common good of mankind he must align his works with the reality of life as it presents itself: an involution of the intellectual, emotional and sentient.

Withdrawal from this commitment reduces the creations of the artist to static entities. They become so many idols placed on altars of pure emotion and pure reason. Where the abstractionist emphasizes pure form, the maker of action painting and tachisme gives free vent to his emotions at the expense of any order or discipline. Both, in prescinding from their essential involvement in the real, create not living things, but dead things. They withdraw themselves into a world of unique silence, as static as their creations, forfeiting their right to vital conversation with their peers.[2]

When the artist alienates himself from society and narcissisticly serves his reason or emotions, the one to the exclusion of the other, the symbolic aspect of his work is meaningless, except, perhaps, to the artist. Because it is not conceived in terms of the artist's essential relation to nature, its content is of less value to the whole of society. The artist, in effect, deifies his own conceit and creates an intellectually dishonest work, and thrusts it on the public

with a bravado akin to a pervert running naked in the market place.

Likewise, materials merely thrown together in an accidental unity under the impulse of sheer emotional impetus are but so much naked materials lacking the meaning necessary to give them life. Works based on abstract form, while presuming to contain the essential note of reality of the object or idea they represent, in the final analysis are rendered unintelligible to the degree that the forms have been forcibly wrested from the material they inform.

As in material nature no form exists apart from the material it informs, so with the art object. Reification of ideas, of pure form, is an impossibility. The object to be made must be molded in material. The idea by which it is to be made must include this essential unity of form and matter in its formulation. The concept must never be taken to be the thing itself. Nor must the form be taken as the whole of reality. Neither the concept nor the form contains this wholeness of reality. The real thing overflows the concept and its form in its union with matter and through its relation with other beings.

The artist must not deliriously make use of his emotions by removing the discipline of reason from the sphere of artistic creation. Neither must he sterilize his concepts by intellectual gymnastics, stripping them of their elements of human emotion and sensualism. Rather he must cause an act of existence which gives to his creation an essential unity,

dynamic in its interaction of matter and form. He must give of himself as a rational, emotional, sentient, social being. Through the power of his creative activity he must pass on to his work of art his own personal experiences which rest upon the common interchanging of experiences of the human race, which for him is exemplified in that group of humans in which he finds himself immersed in time.

To deny the artist a certain degree of abstraction would be wrong. Some abstraction can be afforded him to bring out the basic truth of the subject he portrays.[3] Yet, if he resorts to mere synthetic geometric designs, he may produce a work that is, perhaps, a symbol of mathematics, but not a symbol of life involved with the sensuous. Art based solely and exclusively on geometric principles is appreciated by only a few, is capable of being understood at all times by only a few. It robs the common man of an aesthetic experience in which he, too, in the brotherhood of man, is entitled to share. In prescinding from the encompassing reality of the material world from which the artist forms the experiences that force his destiny, such an exclusive view of art would alienate him from those around him through the production of works which portray one aspect of life as its totality.

It would seem that the value of such art objects is to be found in the interpretation of the artist himself. This presumption, in favor of the artist, places him and his works in a gnostic cult to which only those who have acquired a

certain degree of kindred knowledge, "the initiates," may be admitted. It is an alienation of choice, entrenched in conceit. The artist will expect the public to gawk and glare and marvel at the complex symbols which serve to index some mystery he has fathomed. But these symbols are more like the mysteries of an occult society. They are symbols of symbols to which the creator of the symbols alone holds the key of understanding. Nor does he wish "the masses" ever to approach the significance of his work. Does he fear that if they did, they would value the work itself and accept it for itself independent of the creator? The personality of such an artist, it would seem, fears this disclosure. His works are not meant to stand by themselves and be accepted or rejected for themselves. They are released to the public only that the public might be drawn by means of the work to the person of the artist himself. It is vital to such an artist that he stand always between the viewer and the object he created. It is not allowed to reveal itself. Only the "High Priest" can unveil the hidden mysteries of beauty which he alone could create.[4]

Such an artist exploits persons and things without having any particular interest in them. He deliberately deprives his moment of creation of its actuality by attempting to objectify pure concepts, ignoring the dependence of these concepts on the concrete. An artist of this calibre is in love with his own self and his ability to create a <u>tour de force</u>. He is not in love with man and the creative power of man <u>in</u> and <u>for</u> man.

The result is that as he fails in his rapport with his public, so also do his works fail to take their place among the great artistic creations. For a time they may be valued. But the value is too extrinsic to them. Their value, furthermore, is not found primarily in relation to their author. Rather it is the embarrassment of the public that gives them temporary worth; because the common man, too, has pride. He does not easily admit to having been deceived. For a time he will allow himself to be duped intellectually into accepting such frauds and will pretend that he appreciates them. He may even think he sees in them some relation to the reality of his every day life. In the end, however, he will lose interest because the art object itself has no sustaining appeal. When he does that, when the common man turns to works which objectify his relations to other men, the creations of the alienated artist lose their arbitrary value and become but mute examples in the history of failures.[5]

The tendency to dehumanize the arts stems from the fact that the artist as a man has failed to accept his condition in life, his essential unity in the ground of all being. He has failed to seek his authenticity by sincere response to himself and his environment.

Alienation is seen in another form of subjectivism. This is a subjectivism whereby the artist allows full whimsical reign to his emotions, freeing them entirely from the restraint and discipline of intelligence and deliberate choice. In so

doing it would seem that the artist attempts to bring about a closer identification with his fellow man rather than alienation. What he really identifies himself with, however, is not the pervading spirit of human emotions. Seeking the unlicensed play of his own personal, sentient, and emotional nature, his work betrays this uncontrolled sensuousness. In rejecting the controlling discipline of intellect, he at least implicitly rejects the formative power of his spiritual self. His is a double alienation, from society and from himself. Identifying with only the sensuous aspect of nature, he lives more on a subhuman than a genuinely human level.[6]

Seeking escape from authenticity, the sensualist plunges into sentient nature, elevating his emotional responses to the height of an intellectual priority. The abstractionist artist, on the other hand, plunges into his intellectual nature and lowers it to the depths of an emotional priority. Neither accepts the realization that the authentic situation demands a balance between the sentient and the rational. In his identification with the material aspect of reality, the sensualist loses his authenticity in the mechanical drive of instinct and unreasoned passion. The abstractionist's love of his intellectual prowess causes his authenticity to dry and wither.

Artistic authenticity, then, demands recognition of man as a rational, social animal. It demands that the artist actively participate in his milieu. But active participation

means more than mere acceptance of reality. The artist must advance towards the perfection of reality by recasting it in new forms impregnated by his genius and experiences. Together with his fellow man, the true artist builds reality as he authentically plunges himself into the unifying encompassment of being.[7]

Footnotes

[1]Wilhelm Worringer, Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style (New York, 1953)--rather than give any specific page numbers I would prefer to refer the reader to the theme of the entire book; "Hatred of art is unlikely to develop as an isolated phenomenon; it goes hand in hand with hatred of science, hatred of State, hatred, in sum, of civilization as a whole." Ortega y Gassett, The Dehumanization of Art and Other Writings on Art and Culture (Garden City, 1956), p. 42--hereafter cited as Dehumanization; and "Art, for better or worse, is necessarily a reflection of its environment. The art of Egypt was a mirror for tyranny, that of Greece a reflection of grace and proportion. The baroque painting of the Counter-Reformation, writhing with hell-fire and portents of damnation proved an invaluable visual aid in the pattern of Jesuit propaganda. The art of the French Court in the eighteenth century was understandably frivolous and irresponsible, gay and voluptuous." Mervyn Levy, Painting for All: A Complete Guide for the Amateur and Student Artist (New York, 1958), pp. 192-193.

[2]"It is essential that the artist should regain his self-respect--his sense of social and moral responsibility. He must learn to take his place, once again as a useful member of society. This is a state which cannot be achieved by the exertions of the artist alone. If it is to survive, Western civilization must extricate itself from the slime of cheap sensationalism which is the root cause of its moral decay." Levy, p. 197.

[3]"The aim of art is insight, understanding of the essential life of feeling. But all understanding requires abstraction. The abstractions which literal discourse makes are useless for this particular subject-matter, they obscure and falsify rather than communicate our ideas of vitality and sentience. Yet there is no understanding without symbolization and no symbolization without abstraction. Anything about reality, that is to be expressed and conveyed, must be abstracted from reality. There is no sense in trying to convey reality pure and simple. Even experience itself cannot do that. What we understand, we conceive, and conception always involves formulation, presentation, and therefore abstraction." Susanne K. Langer, Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures (New York, 1957), pp. 92-93--hereafter cited as Problems.

[4]"There is at present a certain group of subjects which, for one reason or another, have imposed themselves on the minds

of most artists. That is as it should be; no one can altogether escape the spirit of his age. But the danger of modern art is the old danger of mistaking correctness in choice of subject for artistic merit. There is no merit whatever in painting a group of people with cylindrical arms and legs, or in writing a novel in which everybody suffers from devastating complexes. The merit lies in getting your cylindrical arms and legs to form a harmonious and expressive arrangement, or getting your complexes to fall into an orderly and coherent pattern. That is what the good artists of today are doing. They are not content with being romantically interested in cylinders and complexes, they are trying to subordinate these materials to the formal demands of the classical ideal. The bad artists, now as always, are merely romantic, and think that the intrinsic splendidness of cylinders and complexes will atone for any lack of technical training and artistic talent. And, as the public on the whole agrees with them, and as the critics follow suit, it is difficult to blame them.

"The upshot is that two things are necessary to a work of art: conviction and technique. Conviction, a sense of having something to say, is the romantic requirement, without which a work of art becomes a school exercise or a pot boiler. Technique, the mastery of the craft, is the classical requirement, without which a work of art becomes an incoherent jumble of random gestures. Where you find a defect of conviction on the one hand or of technique on the other hand, you have found a defect for which nothing can compensate. Excellence of matter is no excuse for clumsiness of form; elegance of form no excuse for poverty in matter. But in practice the problem which is popularly supposed to arise when conviction outruns technique or technique conviction--the problem of estimating the true aesthetic value of works in which one of the factors seriously outweighs the other--seldom really arises. A defect on the one side is, as a rule, accompanied by a parallel defect on the other. Thus occurs what I have called the nod of the uncongenial subject. It is when an artist has nothing to say. He may have feelings working within him, but they are only obscure emotional perturbations, and do not take the shape of a 'message,' a conviction to be imparted to others or brought clearly before himself. Conviction and technique, the message and the language, content and form, are not two ingredients capable of existing separately and then being brought together into a work of art. They exist together, or not at all." Robert G. Collingwood, Essays in the Philosophy of Art (Bloomington, 1964), pp. 230-231.

[5]"When a man dislikes a work of art, but understands it, he feels superior to it; and there is no reason for indignation. But when his dislike is due to his failure to understand, he feels vaguely humiliated and this rankling sense of inferiority must be counterbalanced by indignant self-assertion. . . .

Accustomed to ruling supreme, the masses feel that the new art, which is the art of the privileged aristocracy of finer senses, endangers their rights as men." Dehumanization, p. 6.

[6]"Any phenomenon that aspires to being mental and not mechanical must bear this luminous character of intelligibility, of motivation. But the pleasure aroused by romantic art has hardly any connection with its content. . . . Instead of delighting in the artistic object people delight in their own emotions, the work being only the cause and the alcohol of their pleasure. And such a quid pro quo is bound to happen whenever art is made to consist essentially in an exposition of 'lived' realitied. "Lived' realities are too overpowering not to evoke a sympathy which prevents us from perceiving them in their objective purity." Dehumanization, p. 26.

[7]For insightful and extended treatments of this subject cf. William F. Lynch, Christ and Apollo: The Dimensions of the Literary Imagination, Ch. 2 (New York, 1963), pp. 45-72; Wylie Sypher, Loss of the Self in Modern Literature and Art, Chs. 6-8 (New York, 1964), pp. 110-115; and, Wyndham Lewis, Time and Western Man, Book I (Boston, 1957), pp. 3-129.

REPRESENTATION

It is often said that an art object is a representation of nature.[1] The connotative value of this statement remains obscure to those who glibly say it. Emphasis is placed on a faithful, detailed copying of nature. Any attempt of the artist to infuse himself into his work is rejected as a distortion of realistic portrayal. Thus the output of the artist in creating a work of art is reduced to a mere sensual symbol of the material aspect of reality.

Art is the creative ability by which man is able to represent nature by works of his own mind and hands. It can truly represent nature, however, only when it informs material with spirit. As we have elsewhere stated, nature is a dynamic interplay of the spiritual with the material. It is an essential union of soul and body, rational and sentient. Man and all being furthermore are unified into a whole. The complexities of nature are so interwoven into an operable whole that one aspect cannot be sacrificed in favor of another aspect. We cannot separate man from nature. Much less can we separate the artist from his creation and expect him to furnish us with a true representation of nature.

Nature and spirit cannot be compartmentalized. They are a vital oneness. Likewise, the work of an artist falls short of actuality if it seeks to represent one to the exclusion of

the other. To say that a work of art is spirit embodied in sensuous form implies that the spirit is related to the sensuous form in some mechanical, cartesian sense. Spirit is something more than embodied in its sensuous form in a work of art. It is integrally united to the sensuous, is at oneness with it. This union is a substantial unity whereby the spirit would be non-existent except for the sensuous, and the sensuous non-existent except for the spirit. To violate this relationship in the act of creating, is to make meaningless work, but not to produce art.

An art that stands as a guidepost to indicate this or that facet of the material side of nature should more properly be seen to symbolize the inert, the dead. It shows no interplay of relation between itself and its creation. It presents particulars of the complexities of being in static, isolated instances. Not having been informed by the spirit of its creator, it is stillborn. Nothing can give it life.

We have already reviewed the fault of the artist who, formulating his creation in respect to the concept alone, attempts to concretize this concept in terms of a work of art. Here, too, is a form of empty symbolism. Here, too, is a maker of things, but not of art. His works are just as inert, as stillborn, simply because in the milieu from which, and in which, he has his being there is no spirit apart from the sensual. What he produces cannot be said to represent reality.

Every work of art is at once a symbol and an actuality. But as it is actual only insofar as it participates in the wholeness of reality, substantially uniting the spiritual and the material, so it is only symbolic to the extent that these divisions are harmonized within the spirit of the artist himself and to the degree that the artist has achieved a union of his inner self and the outer world. When the artist is able to project himself into his work, he perfects its actuality and produces a meaningful symbol. Only then will his work and his symbol represent reality.[2]

Those who hold symbolism in itself to be the lowest level of art do not distinguish between symbolism based on the inoperative dichotomy of spirit and matter, and meaningful symbolism rising from the effective union of the two.[3] The artist in creating, in representing nature as it really is--an interworking relation between himself and the whole of being--produces a new truth. He infuses his personality into the materials used, transforms them into a living message of his own intuitions. As he is unique among all men, so his work stands unique among other works. However, no man can truly be said to fully understand himself, or his fellow man. It is really quite impossible to know oneself. We know the phenomena of self by observing our actions and their effects on self and the outer world. But the ultimate whys and wherefores of our actions are seldom disclosed to us. So with the truths which we utter under the spell of intuition. We

ourselves but partially understand them. Because of this the work of art, an embodiment of these intuitions, of this unfathomed personality, presents a new truth to the world in symbolic form.[4] From the moment of its actualization to the time of its complete destruction, it stands before the world to be studied to greater depth by each succeeding generation. Always something more is seen in its meaning. There is a perpetual newness radiating from it. By contemplating it, we are made more fully aware of the presence of its author. We are influenced by the power of his person.

All men, though unique, are fundamentally one. It is a paradox, but an inevitable truth. Contemplation of a work of art, by bringing us to an awareness of the personality of the artist, makes us conscious of similar qualities in our own personality. We are awakened to a realization that we possess potentialities to be actualized which we did not know ourselves to have. The artist actualizes these human possibilities in his unique manner. We actualize them in a manner unique to us. But it is in his work that the artist captures the actualization of these potentials, and it is through his work that they are perpetuated to remind us of what we are and can become.

His, then, is a universal symbol. It represents not the abstract concept of life, but of life's actuality.

The art object, like the artist, must not be alienated from its milieu. As the artist cannot be separated from the

rest of nature, so the art object must not be so conceived that it will have an existence completely separated from its maker. It will then be a distortion of reality. Rather, the art object must so share in the personality of the artist that something new and mysterious will always be found by the observer. Only by means of this union will it acquire a spiritual content that, united to the material, overflows its bond, leavens the heart of every man and stands as an eternal pledge of man's ability to rise above the mere pathos and conformity of daily life.

The fruits of intellectual reflection, the emotional drives, the ardent hopes and desires, the secret anxieties: the fullness of life as lived by the artist--this is the spirit informing his creation. The artist as man shares in the nature of man. As an individual he expresses this nature in a unique way. His experiences are neither of the mind nor the body alone. Any experience touching primarily on the one or on the other is effective only because of the substantial interaction of the two. What man experiences, he experiences because he is essentially of body and of spirit. Because of this intrinsic unity of its author, the work of art, to be truly representative of nature, of reality, must reflect this union of its spiritual content with the sensual. That a spiritual content is united to an external form in a work of art, we admit. But it is a spiritual content, which taken in relation to its external form, cannot exist apart from

the sensual. In beings which participate in the materiality of nature, there can be no disembodied spirit. Whatever there is of the spirit must be integrally united with the sensual by reason of its act of existence.

Neither should it be said that art represents the Absolute in a sensuous form. All of nature participates in the Absolute as in its font of being. All of nature can be said to be a symbol of the Absolute, a manifestation of the power of the Absolute. But the actuality of nature is sensuous and finite; the actuality of the Absolute infinite, and its infinity cannot be encompassed in the finite.

What genuine art does represent is the mind of man functioning in harmony with his sentient nature, conscious of his relation to natures other than himself. It represents the unity of a finite reality reflecting its participation in the Absolute, but not the Absolute itself. Precisely because it is a finite symbol art is understandable to the finite mind. It is this that makes a work of art a valid representation of nature.

Since the art object represents not only the material aspect of nature but also the ideal as conceived by the artist, the medium used by the artist must be such that it will serve as a proper means of representing the ideal. Each art requires its own material, its own techniques. The artist must not attempt to place the content of one art into the form of another art. By so doing, he will encounter resistance from

the material used, and will realize obstacles in the manipulation of the materials that render expression ultimately ineffective, or reduce the production to a poor work of art.

To attempt to create symphonies in stone, tone poems, and the like, is an example of this. It is an attempt to infuse a form with a content for which it has little or no aptitude. As a result, content and form remain juxtaposed, but not integrated.[5]

Representation necessitates familiarity with the nature of that which is to be represented. The artist must pay full attention to the modes of execution and to the technical details. At times this attention is intentionally by-passed through a lack of patience on the part of the artist, or through a dislike of tradition. The complete subjectivist, in his alienation from society, may do so simply to prove himself "apart" or "superior" to his fellow man. The result, however, is a fantasy of self-love.

Whatever be the cause, the work, to be an object of art, must be meaningful. But there can be no meaning embodied in a work of art unless there is an honest intellectual search and development on the part of the artist. Techniques may improve in the course of time. They may even change. The development of technique must come from the field of technique. The potential of any given object or manner of acting lies within the nature of the object or the field of action. If an artist is not acquainted as fully as possible with the

principles of execution in his respective field, he has little or no right to force a technical realization on his object that is compromised by his lack of knowledge and the inherent potential of his technique. The development of skill is an honest respect for and response to the act of creating an art object.

"Little or no right" is to be understood in this respect: perhaps because of some intuitional acuity an individual will sense a technical potential which, when actualized through the creative activity, will be capable of presenting the artistic conception in more meaningful terms.

This, however, is an exceptional instance in the process of creating. Art is not only productive, it is cognitive. Hence the normal would be a process of learning resting upon experience under the guidance of formal learning, whether by oneself or another.

That the artist has "no right" is based on the assumption that most lack this intuitive power to the extent that it would be forceful enough to make itself a sure guide in the execution of the product. An artist lacking in a knowledge of the field of technique runs a risk of producing an object that is less meaningful than that produced by an artist knowledgeable in this field.

It is not enough for the artist to operate on what some call "sensitive intuition." Such an expression can be but a euphony for a display of unbridled emotionalism. An artist

must not create by emotions alone, but must govern the emotional content of his work by discipline and control. True representation is achieved only through such unity.

Nature, excluding man, is expected to be used by man in his accommodating to life and in the actualizing of his potentials. This beneficial dependency of man on nature is not an entirely one-sided affair. Nature, in being used by man, undergoes changes which add to its perfections as well. Neither does nature allow itself to be senselessly exploited without retaliation. The implication is that nature is, in the final analysis, a gigantic tool to be used at man's discretion.

Beside the practical use that nature has for man, there is a deeper challenge it holds out to him in his search for authenticity. It is a power of a sort, a power of attraction that compels man to arrest his active life and to look upon it in contemplation. It is a power that forces man to seek a more profound understanding of the mystery of the phenomena that surround him. It is a power that would grasp him in its hold and remind him of his essential relation to the whole of being. However, because of the constant change that nature undergoes, because of the daily activity that man must necessarily exercise in the world of daily anxieties and cares; for the majority of people such moments of contemplation are but rare occurrences. The all too subjective attitude with which most of us go through life, makes us impervious not only

to the natural beauties but to our fellow man as well.

Yet, there is a way to crystallize any aspect of it so that man, when the time allows, will be able to pause, and, in making use of the time afforded him, will be able to achieve this moment of contemplation. It is by means of the work of art that this is accomplished.[6]

When the art object truly represents nature it does more than present us with static facsimile, a lifeless copy. The artist, in vital attunement with his environment, at oneness with it, has the power of transcending the phenomenon of time to embrace the eternal. The work of art in the hands of a perceiving artist, presents us with a representation of nature from which the veils of time and change have been removed. We are then enabled to contemplate the changeless, yet dynamic mysteries that nature holds by reason of its participation in the Absolute.

In representing nature, therefore, the art object must be completely disconnected from utensility. The "using" of nature itself is necessary and right. But it is the purpose of art to remove nature from the world of utensility and to establish it in the realm of contemplation. This the artist does by representing nature in a work of fine art. Any of the fine arts, therefore, that are conceived purely on a plane of utensility will fail to achieve the end of contemplation, and at best must be relegated to the classification of practical arts. As such they are no longer representations,

or symbols, but mere decorative tools to be used in the daily activities of living.

The artist, as has been said, must define his life in terms of others. He must seek to represent the common longings, desires, hopes, fears of all men as intuitively discerned and analyzed in the experiences of his own particular individuality. The artist must also define his life in terms of things other than himself. He must be objective enough to be able to embrace the whole of nature as it is in itself, allowing it value of its own intrinsic worth apart from him. He must be capable of harmonizing his own subjectivity with the objectivity of the world around him. If he can do all this, then the result of his creative activity will be a representation of nature that is neither a mirror of self, a dead symbol of inert material, or a meaningless portrayal of time and change. It will be, as it should be to be great art: a vital, dynamic representation of a vital, dynamic reality; not in abstraction, but in the concrete.[7]

Footnotes

[1]Vernon J. Bourke, ed., The Pocket Aquinas (New York, 1960), pp. 281-282.

[2]"The art symbol, on the other hand, is the expressive form. It is not a symbol in the full familiar sense, for it does not convey something beyond itself. Therefore it cannot strictly be said to have a meaning; what it does have is import. It is a symbol in a special and derivative sense, because it does not fulfil all the functions of a true symbol; it formulates and objectifies experience for direct intellectual perception, or intuition, but it does not abstract a concept for discursive thought. Its import is seen in it; not, like the meaning of a genuine symbol, by means of it but separable from the sign. The symbol in art is a metaphor, an image with overt or covert literal signification; the art symbol is the absolute image--the image of what otherwise would be irrational, as it is literally ineffable: direct awareness, emotion, vitality, personal identity--life lived and felt, the matrix of mentality." Problems, p. 139.

[3]Cf. Selections, pp. 320-332.

[4]"Poetic knowledge [the knowledge of any of the fine arts] is non-conceptual and non-rational knowledge; it is born in the preconscious life of the intellect, and it is essentially an obscure revelation both of the subjectivity of the poet and of some flash of reality coming together out of sleep in one single awakening." Jacques Maritain, The Range of Reason (New York, 1952), pp. 25-26; and, "The import of a work of art--its essential or artistic import--can never be stated in discursive language. A work of art is an expressive form, and therefore a symbol, but not a symbol which points beyond itself so that one's thought passes on to the concept symbolized. The idea remains bound up in the form that makes it conceivable." Langer, Problems, p. 67.

[5]"Half-baked theories such as I consider the traditional theories of the unity of Art to be, are apt to have sorry consequences when practice is based on them. Among such sorry consequences are the works that result from serious efforts to paint the counterparts of symphonies or parallel poems or pictures by musical compositions. Color symphonies are painted in the belief that the deployment of colors on a canvas corresponds to the deployment of tones in music, so that an analogy of structures should produce analogous works. This is, of course, a corollary of the proposition that the

various arts are distinguished in their respective materials, to which their techniques have to be adapted, but were it not for these material differences their procedures would be the same. Oddly enough, the results of such translation, when it is really technically guided, have no vestige of the artistic values of their originals. Even where the parallels of structure are recognizable, as in a painted design following the verbal design of the sonnet, the visual forms may be interesting, even pleasant, but they are not creative, beyond their mere creation of virtual space (which they do create); as expressive forms they do not resemble the sonnet at all.

"There is another class of translations that purports to express in one medium the emotional values of some work in a different medium; and this sort of suggestion (it is really nothing more) tends to produce works that are very weak in form. Simonides said that architecture is frozen music; but music is not melted architecture. When this musical ice cream is returned to its liquid state, it runs away in an amorphous flow of sound. The same weakness appears in painting that purports to render musical composition. I am thinking of the musical colors in Fantasia, and the music-paintings of students in the Boston Museum School of Art. A painting expressive of a very lyrical composition, such as Chopin's G major Nocturne, has no lyrical character at all, but only indistinct washes of color. The reason for such failure is that the painter is not guided by discernment of musical values, but is concentrating his attention on his own feelings under the influence of sounds, and producing symptoms of these feelings. What he registers is a sequence of essentially uncomposed, actual experiences; symptoms are not works." Langer, Problems, pp. 86-87.

[6]"But now and then, by a lucky accident, men arise whose senses or whose consciousness are less adherent to life. Nature has forgotten to attach their faculty of perceiving to their faculty of acting. When they look at a thing, they see it for itself and not for themselves. They do not perceive simply with a view to action; they perceive in order to perceive--for nothing, for the pleasure of doing so. In regard to a certain aspect of their nature, whether it be their consciousness or one of their senses, they are born detached; and according to whether this detachment is that of a certain particular sense, or of consciousness, they are painters or sculptors, musicians or poets. It is therefore a much more direct vision of reality that we find in the different arts; and it is because the artist is less intent on utilizing his perception that he perceives a greater number of things." Bergson, Creative Mind, p. 138.

[7]"There is reason to believe that there is a difference only in power and not in nature between the ability to feel

and the ability to create; both presuppose the existence not only of a self, but also of a world where the self can recognize itself, act, expand; a world intermediate between the closed and the open, between having and being, of which my body necessarily seems the symbol or materialized nucleus." Marcel, Creative Fidelity, p. 92; and, "Poetic experience is busy with the created world and the enigmatic and innumerable relations of existents with one another, not with the Principle of Being." Maritain, The Range of Reason, p. 25.

SPIRIT

For purposes of analysis we like to view human nature under different aspects. By reason of his actions, we speak of man's sentient, emotional, imaginative, appetitive, volitional, and intellectual nature. While such divisions can be an aid to understanding man, often as not they fall short of the truth. Dealing in such abstract reflections we fail to respect the fact that man does not function solely on any one of these levels to the exclusion of the others. Every experience that man undergoes is the result of an essential, dynamic interplay of these levels. It is not an interplay in the sense of a chain reaction. Rather it is a simultaneous involvement; immediate and direct.

Because of this we can be said to apperceive beauty by neither the senses, emotions, imagination, appetites, nor intellect alone. As man functions only insofar as he is a unified whole, so he perceives beauty simultaneously by the totality of his self as a human person.

Beauty may be an expression of spirit, but it can only be manifest when embodied in some individual and concrete form. Man is concerned with, and moved by the beautiful thing, the art object. Beauty, in itself, is an abstraction. Because man intensely enjoys experiences gathered primarily through the senses, it is necessary that the object of beauty

be present to him either immediately through his senses, or through the sensual image in his imagination.[1]

Also the rational nature of man demands that the object, to have aesthetic worth, be something more than a mere sensual experience devoid of all meaning. It demands that the object be meaningful. It must express, show forth its "intention," its transcendent "spiritual" content.

All of nature, in general terms, can be said to be meaningful insofar as it reflects participation in the Absolute. What we are concerned with, however, are man-made works of art. These, we have seen, have meaning to the extent that they are expressions of the personality of the artist as an active participant in his milieu. We have seen that the meaningful in nature often remains undisclosed to the most of us because of circumstances of time and education, or of natural imperceptibility. But the artist, the creative genius, by the force of his intuitive ability, is able to discern more thoroughly these mysteries. He is able to unfold them to us in the form of his creation.[2]

As natural beauty, the beauty of the work of art becomes apparent only when we perceive the unity among its parts. This unity causes the parts to function as an organic whole, dynamic and meaningful. It is this element of unity that appeals to our rational nature and makes the work significant.

In a work of art unity is something more than a sensual alignment of the parts to the whole. The immediacy of the presence of the personality of the artist in his work gives his work its spiritual content. This spiritual content is the unifying cause. It pervades the material, expresses itself through it, and gives meaning to it.[3]

The precise nature of this spirit is evident when we consider what the artist is. Quite simply, the artist is a man: a composite of the sentient, the emotional, the imaginative, the rational. He is body and spirit; matter and mind. But he <u>is</u> a unified whole. He is apart from other beings by reason of his individuality, unique among other men by reason of his personality. He is a unified whole in himself by reason of his spirit, and is united to other men by reason of his human nature. His spiritual nature claims for him relation with the immaterial world. His material and sentient nature establishes his unity with the world of all other material being. Although his spiritual nature and relationship take precedence over his sentient and material nature, he cannot be divorced from the material world in which he lives, for it is intrinsic to his very being. His sentient nature roots him in the non-ego world of materiality. He can be no more divided from this world and live, than he can be divided in spirit and body and still function as a man. As said before, all of these aspects of man form an integral unity.

You cannot, in analyzing man, emphasize one to the exclusion of the other.

Whether it be by words or through actions, man expresses his rational spirit through this world of matter. Yet this rational expression, the very thought he thinks, is built on experiences brought about by union with this non-ego world. An individual may be unique, but the paradox is that his uniqueness is a result of the interrelation, and the inter-cooperation he experiences with the whole of reality.

As his spirit and his sentient nature unite to form his oneness, and as man functions only insofar as his nature is related to, and coordinated with, the non-ego world--so must the personality of the artist unite with the art object he produces. The material of the art object must assume the nature of the artist, thus receiving his life as its own. This infusion of spirit, of the artist's personality, gives the art object life, as the spirit of man vivifies his material nature. It is only in this way that in art the spirit can be said to be united to matter.

In a very true way, the creation of the artist is a child of the artist. Like every child it has its own individuality once it has received its act of existence. But like every child it shares in the nature of its author, derives its life from him, and to a great extent it presents a living continuum of his personality.

Like every child, the work of art is not a mere copy of its begettor. It has a unique life of its own which is developed by its specific relation to its environment. It assumes an added depth of meaning apart from its creator when viewed in the light of this environment. Its spirit continues to express itself long after the artist has disappeared from the scene of life.

In man there is a midpoint between his sentient and intellectual nature. It is the imagination. Imagination is a storehouse of sensual images which are ever present to the intellect in order that they might be reflected upon. Through this reflection their notions are expanded, juxtaposed, compared, and interrelated. They are employed in the making of new images, of new symbols of reality.

In nature, too, there is a midpoint between the sensual, the material and man. It is the art object. For the art object, as truly representative of reality, offers the observer a storehouse of arrested instances, moments of nature. It stands before man in order that it might be contemplated ever anew. In it the observer can read a new depth of reality, can find a new ground of experience that enables him to formulate new ideas. Yet, the spirit of the artist as expressed in his work is a contagious spirit, impelling the observer to recreate his experiences in terms of the artist's insights and intuitions.

There is constant play between the senses, imagination, and intellectual activity of the artist. The intellect cannot function without the sensual images derived from the senses. Neither are the sense impulses experientially meaningful unless interpreted by the mind. There is a constant interplay of relations between the artist and his work, otherwise the work would be without spirit.

Likewise, for the art object to be meaningful to the observer, there must be a vital relation between the art object and the observer. A unity must be established between the spirit of the art object and the spirit of the observer. It is a unity of harmony by which the observer comes to the art object and contemplates it and interprets it with the whole of his emotions, experiences, and his relation to his milieu. All of these relations--of the internal harmony of the observer, of his rapport with his milieu, of his relationship with the art object--all of these relations must function simultaneously and cannot be separated from each other if the art object is to be meaningful to the observer.[4]

Since the spirit of the art object issues from the personality of the artist, it cannot express itself in art that slavishly imitates nature. The unity of the art object, in arising from the spirit of the artist infused in his work, demands the creativity of the artist as artist.

Materials used in creating the art object are taken from nature. In this condition they have a unity. But extricated

from nature this unity dissolves, and we are left with only parts of a whole. Through the act of existence conferred on the art object by the creative ability of the artist, there is a new unity given to the materials. This unity given to them by the spirit of the artist, makes the art object a new reality. Without this spirit, without this vital element of subjectivity, we have only inert juxtaposed pieces of material.

Essential to the spirit of art are the emotions--the shared-in emotions of our common humanity. This common bond of the expression of human nature unites the artist to his fellow man, and when expressed through the art object, creates in the observer the ground for a sympathetic understanding of the work.[5] The art object does not reflect these human emotions as universal. The art object is concrete; universals are abstract. It reflects them as specifically refined by its own form, and as individualized by the experiences of the artist. These human emotions are made meaningful in the life of the artist through his insights and intuitions. Through experiences peculiar to the artist they are refined. Through the exercise of the artist's creative genius we are made aware of the varied facets of their universal nature as expressed through the individual and his creation.

This awareness not only increases our knowledge of the personality of the artist himself. By awakening in us a feeling of kindred spirit, by arousing in us similar emotions, it shows us the general nature of such emotions. Individual

though our feelings are, unique and singular though they be in our personal expression of them, we come to learn that fundamentally all men share like hopes, fears, anxieties, love, etc. Because, personally, certain emotions are stronger in our personal response to life, other emotions are suppressed, or seldom expressed by us as individuals. The spirit of man, expressed through his art, causes us to see that all emotions can be meaningful, that all men are subjected to their influences in life. It causes us to see these emotions in a greater relation to others and to the whole of being. By expressing them in his creation, the artist effects a stronger bond between himself and his milieu.[6]

The value of the art object is not only in its being an expression of genius. Nor does it have a claim to value because of any idealism for which it may stand. These qualities are not the permanent qualities necessary to establish a permanent worth. Genius may express itself in a way that no one can grasp. It can blunder by not embodying its spirit in a work that is truly representative of reality. The idealism of one generation may be rejected by another. What does give permanency and value to a work of art is its adequate embodiment of the universal human emotions, impregnated by the individual experiences and insights of the artist. Human emotions can be shared to some extent by men of all ages.[7]

We have seen that the artist, as well as his work, must be vitally related to the surrounding milieu. There must be

a meaningful identification of the artist, his work, and his world. This identification, so necessary to give meaning and spirit to the art object does not arise from the mind. True, the mind, the intellectual process, makes the artist like all men, aware of the difference between him and the non-ego world. But it does not connect him to it as a responsive element. Mind does not identify him with it, as much as it causes him to realize that he is apart from the non-ego world. The spirit of the artist, however, demands of man a transcendence of the ego that results in an empathetic identification with the non-ego. This can only be achieved by the emotions which do not even admit of the awareness of the difference between what is inside the individual and what is outside of him. It is through the emotions that this necessary identification takes place. It is through the emotions that the vital relation between artist, the world, and the art object is effected.[8]

The spirit that manifests itself through art, then, is the core of human life, the universal and rational interests of man as expressed through the emotions. It is the soul of man in harmony with himself and his milieu. These are things which a finite being understands and finds meaningful. We find that meaningful which we can know experientially. Man, his thought, his passions, his universal nature as expressed through the immediacy of the concrete--these we are capable of understanding, of associating ourselves with, of identifying our own lives with. The spirit of the Absolute, wholly

infinite and other cannot be taken as the spirit of the artist.

In the realm of art, it is man who creates. Finite in capacity, the artist can only act according to the capacity of his nature. He cannot embody the Absolute in his work. The spirit or personality of the artist is not one with the personality of the Absolute.

All of nature participates in the Absolute insofar as it receives its act of existence from the Absolute. The sustaining hand of the Absolute is needed to keep nature from returning to a state of nothingness. But this dependency on the Absolute does not identify each being with the Absolute in a univocal sense. Being is related to the Absolute analogously. Such is the relation of any created object to its maker. If the spirit of the Absolute were to be the vitalizing spirit of the art object, or any being, then all of nature would be univocally one with the Absolute, and the result would be a form of pantheism.

The artist can embody in his creation only what he is, what he knows. He is not infinite; therefore, the spirit he projects into his art object is a finite spirit. The Absolute he cannot comprehend. What he does know are his own finite concepts and emotions. So he embodies these in his work, for it is these that make him what he is.

Because we are capable of understanding the finite, we are capable of understanding the art object. Therefore, the

art object is meaningful in itself, draws us to it, appeals to us, moves us. It has human appeal and is not some gnostic symbol reflecting the unfathomable spirit of the Absolute.

Footnotes

[1]"It is essential to the idea of beauty that its object should be sensuous--an actual thing present to the senses, as a statue, a building, or the beautiful sound of music, or at least that it should be the mental image of a sensuous object, as in poetry. It must be individual and concrete. It cannot be abstraction. The beautiful object thus addresses itself to the senses. But it also addresses itself to the mind or spirit. For a mere sensuous existence, as such, is not beautiful. Only when the mind perceives the Idea shining through it is beautiful." Stace, P. H., p. 443.

[2]"Furthermore, St. Thomas insisted that art imitates nature in her operation--not in respect to natural appearances, but in respect to the ways in which nature herself operates. To create his work of lines and colors the painter imitates nature as he would imitate another painter. He does not copy nature as an object, he steals from nature, he extracts from his observation of, and connivance with her, the operative ways through which nature manages her own raw materials of form, color, and light to impress on our eye and mind an emotion of beauty. This is quite a peculiar type of imitation indeed, which consists in the act of making oneself instructed by a reluctant and jealous master: pilfering rather than imitation. Here we have such secrets as that of the flamelike form detected by Michelangelo, or that of inherent irregularity detected by Renoir, or that of the cylinder, sphere, and cone structure detected by Cezanne. One day, after a walk in the wintertime, Rouault told me he had just discovered, by looking at snow-clad fields in the sunshine, how to paint the white trees of spring. Such a genuine concept of 'imitation' affords a ground and a justification for the boldest kinds of transposition, transfiguration, deformation, or recasting natural appearances, in so far as they are a means to make the work manifest intuitively the transapparent reality which has been grasped by the artist.

"Yet the fact remains that this genuine concept of imitation, correctly understood, expresses a necessity to which human art is bound: first, with regard to the transapparent reality to be 'imitated' or intuitively manifested; second, with regard to natural appearances themselves as to be used instrumentally (or as a means mastered by art, and thus as transposed and recast with a view to the end): for without the instrumentality of natural appearances made present or 'represented' in such a way, the intended manifestation cannot be intuitive, that is, the work falls short of the essence of art. As I have previously noted, it is through the instrumentality of natural appearances

that things reveal some of their secret meanings to the artist's intuition: it is also through the instrumentality of natural appearances--necessarily recast, and perhaps drastically so--that the same secret meaning can be intuitively revealed in and by the work." Maritain, Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry, pp. 164-165.

[3]Hegel states: "The content of art is spiritual, and its form is sensuous; both sides art has to reconcile into a united whole." Loewenberg, Selections, p. 316.

[4]"The audience as understanding, attempting an exact reconstruction in its own mind of the artist's imaginative experience, is engaged on an endless quest. It can carry out this reconstruction only in part. This looks as if the artist were a kind of transcendent genius whose meaning is always too profound for his audience of humbler mortals to grasp in a more than fragmentary way. And an artist inclined to give himself airs will no doubt interpret the situation like that. But another interpretation is possible. The artist may take his audience's limitations into account when composing his work; in which case they will appear to him not as limitations on the extent to which his work will prove comprehensible, but as conditions determining the subject-matter or meaning of the work itself. Insofar as the artist feels himself as one with his audience, this will involve no condescension on his part; it will mean that he takes it as his business to express not his own private emotions, irrespectively of whether any one else feels them or not, but the emotions he shares with his audience. Instead of conceiving himself as a mystagogue, leading his audience as far as it can follow through the dark and difficult paths of his own mind, he will conceive himself as his audience's spokesman, saying for it the things it wants to say but cannot say unaided. Instead of setting up for the great man who (as Hegel said) imposes upon the world the task of understanding him, he will be a humbler person, imposing upon himself the task of understanding the world, and thus enabling it to understand him.

"In this case his relation to his audience will no longer be a mere by-product of his aesthetic experience, as it still was in the situation described in the preceding section; it will be an integral part of the experience itself. If what he is trying to do is to express emotions that are not his own merely, but his audience's as well, his success in doing this will be tested by his audience's reception of what he has to say. What he sayd will be something that his audience says through his mouth; and his satisfaction in having expressed what he feels will be at the same time, insofar as he communicated this expression to them, their satisfaction in having expressed what they feel. There will thus be something more than mere communication from artist to audience, there will

be collaboration between audience and artist." R. G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art (New York, 1958), pp. 311-312.

[5]"Art, as we have said, is both readily thinkable and readily feelable--an image of nature so modified as to fit comfortably both the categories of human understanding and the norms of human emotion." Joseph Wood Krutch, Experience and Art: Some Aspects of the Esthetics of Literature (New York, 1962), p. 38.

[6]John Dewey states: "Men's conscious life of opinion and judgment often proceeds on a superficial and trivial plane. But their lives reach a deeper level. The function of art has always been to break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness. Common things, a flower, a gleam of moonlight, the song of a bird, not things rare and remote, are means with which the deeper levels of life are touched so that they spring up as desires and thought. This process is art. Poetry, the drama, the novel, are proofs that the problem of presentation is not insoluble. Artists have always been the real purveyors of news, for it is not the outward happening in itself which is new, but the kindling by it of emotion, perception and appreciation." Joseph Ratner, ed., Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy (New York, 1939), p. 399.

[7]"The emotional patterns we want to appreciate are primarily our own--not personally, but culturally. When our culture reaches out suddenly beyond its old bounds and makes contacts with other cultures we become interested in new possibilities of feeling." Langer, Problems, p. 37.

[8]Commenting on Hegel, Stace says: "Consequently where it is human life that is depicted, it will be the essential, universal, rational, interests of humanity what will form its substance--the core of human life, the moving forces of the spirit. . . . These, however, will not appear in art in the form of abstract universale. For art has no dealings with abstractions, but moves always in the sphere of the concrete and individual. They will appear, therefore, in the form of immediacy, as the essentially rational emotions, such as love of parents, loyalty, devotion to honor, etc. Only the universal emotions of our common humanity can be the permanent subject of art." Stace, P. H., pp. 449-450.

EXPRESSION

An art object may be said to be beautiful to the degree that there is an adequate balance between form and content. As before mentioned, the content must not be forced into a material or form which is not suited for it. Content as an element of the art object not only embraces the subject matter to be portrayed in the object, or by the intention of the artist. It is the means by which spirit is infused into the material and transforms it into a unified art object.

Beauty in the art object, then, is a matter of adequate balance between form and content and is apperceived by us only to the extent that these two elements have been brought into oneness or unity through spirit. Although unity lies on the part of the spirit, we must not overlook the fact that in the art object spirit must always be taken in relation to the sensual. Only in considering both of these aspects, the spirit and the sensual, are we able to formulate an opinion as to why all works of art are not beautiful in the same sense.[1]

This difference of degree in the scale of beauty as expressed by an art object may come about through a lack of spirit, or through a deficiency of materials needed to express the sensual side of the art object. The greatest factor limiting sensual expression of the art object is the often mentioned fact of trying to unite the content of one art to the form of another art.

Lack of spirit results from the artist's inability to project his personality adequately. There is a certain degree of knowledge and technique that every artist must acquire before he is able to accomplish this projection.[2] It matters little if this knowledge is gained formally or is possessed by intuitive genius. But it must be in the artist's grasp before he can function adequately as an artist.[3]

Even if the art object has the proper proportionality of spirit and the sensual, another factor enters into the evaluation of its beauty. While this factor cannot diminish the beauty of the object in itself, it does much to render the art object acceptable at a given time, or to effect its rejection. It is a factor that has its origin not in the artist, or the art object, but in the observer for whom the object is intended.

A lack of insight, on the part of the observer, into the meaning of the spirit as reflected in the sensual tends to obscure the inherent beauty of the art object. This failure to see beauty in a certain work may be attributed to various causes. These causes may rise from the lack of education, or from a low mental capacity that is incapable of appreciating the more sophisticated expressions of beauty. A narrow and myopic view of life, too, dulls an individual's response to the finer things about him.

Perhaps one of the strongest restraints put on the observer, forcing him to deliberately close his eyes to the

beauty of an art object, is the restraint that is placed on him by his times and milieu. Whatever the reasons which cause an individual to be unperceptive of beauty, these same reasons can be attributed to a given society. Any society dominated by certain theories which govern its likes and dislikes will seek to determine the likes and dislikes of its individual members according to these same theories. Psychologically imprisoned by the deadening hold of conformity, the observer will be intimidated into voicing the dictates of his milieu. Above all, he will be reluctant to give approval to any new interpretation of reality that the artist presents to the world by means of his work.

It has been said that the beautiful is that which pleases.[4] But because of reasons just mentioned, the pleasure can be limited. If the art object comes off successfully, it should please. But if the subjective experience of unity and beauty is hindered for reasons given above, little pleasure can be derived from it.

On the other hand, objectively viewing the situation: the object may be chaotic and devoid of any general aesthetic quality. If this is the case, then in reality we do not have an object of art, but merely a material presentation without the spirit of an artist. Should anyone say that he gets pleasure in beholding such an object, that it pleases him, we must conclude that it is not an aesthetic pleasure. Ultimately no one can predict what kind of stimulus will evoke

a sensual feeling of pleasure.

Although conformable to itself and perfect in relation to itself, the non-human material being, lacking the perfections and freedom of man can but little, if at all, actualize its potentials and achieve greater perfections. Man, on the other hand, not only is able to perfect himself, but through his creative ability he is able to perfect nature. He is able to actualize the potentials of non-rational and non-sentient being, and by breathing into them his spirit can raise them to higher levels. When the artist creates, therefore, he may use any subject, for all of nature is responsive to his creative touch. To render nature responsive to his power of creation, he must remove anything which will not serve the expression of his own spirit. In doing this the artist will not betray the reality of his subject matter. Often as not sordid and/or inessential details of a subject reflect not positive attributes of reality as much as deficiencies on the part of the artist.

The artist transforms nature.[5] But he also has it within his power to add to nature. Because of this, he is able to depict that which is considered ugly. He does this by supplying what is lacking in nature, by interpreting the ugly beneficially, thus putting it in a favorable light; and, finally, by giving an otherwise ugly subject a more positive value by his insight into its relations with other beings.[6] Thereby, insight is given the subject matter through spirit

which supplies it with perfections which it is apparently deficient in its "natural state."

However, to depict the ugly for its own sake is not to produce a work of art. This is because the subject matter, instead of being transformed by the spirit of the artist, rather than serving as vehicle for the expression of spirit, is merely re-presented to us as grossly physical and sensual. Now a work of art is all that is physical and sensual. But it is this plus man's spirit. So the reality of the art object would be deficient in itself and would not be truly representative if spirit were not expressed through it. When the artist depicts the ugly as unredeemably ugly, he deliberately withholds his spirit from the object. Again, he may produce an object, but not an object of art.

The spirit of the artist not only expresses itself in beauty, but also in the more intense quality of the sublime. Sublimity has always been more difficult to define than beauty. It is a quality that is kindred to beauty, even deriving from it.[7] Yet it is a quality that surpasses beauty in its intensity. It is an expression of spirit that does not create peace and balance in the beholding of it, as much as awe, confusion, and unrest.[8]

In the presence of an object that is called beautiful, we sense the tranquillity of <u>harmony</u> between the sensual and the spirit. In the presence of the sublime we are aware of a <u>struggle</u> between the sensual and the spirit. It is the

spirit that struggles, that seems to be restlessly calling out for liberation from a form otherwise suited to it.[9]

This struggle between form and content is not the same as the resistance met when the two are inept and non-conformable. When such is the case, we do not have an art object. In considering the sublime the spirit seems to struggle less for a rejection of its form, than for an overflowing of it into all that is sensual. Like the emotions which unite the individual more closely to the non-ego world by identifying him with it, sublimity is the expression of a spirit reaching out to embrace the whole of reality. Its intense impulse to pervade all is held in check by the form it infuses. The result is struggle and confusion.

Rather than pleasure, the sublime seems to have an element of pain. Whether in lower nature, or in man as he faces his daily life, or in the spirit as it expresses itself through the art object: the protagonist is subjected to the pain of struggle. What makes the struggle sublime is that the struggle never overwhelms. The protagonist always retains essential freedom.

Natural things, the majesty of the snow-capped mountains, the tumult of the tempest, the glory of a brilliant sunset: these seem more appropriately called sublime than works of art. Perhaps this is due to the greater impression of unity given by nature in contrast to its over-all greater complexities. It is an awesome thing to behold such diversified

elements being brought together into a unified whole. Perhaps it is that in the very matrix of materiality the spirit of the Absolute is seen in sharper contrast than when reflected in the more kindred spirit of man.

While it may seem more appropriate to call the things of natural creation sublime, there are instances of works of art that witness to the sublime. However, one who attempts to transform the sublime in nature into the realm of spirit runs the risk of reducing it to mere sentimentality. For the sublime is at once terrible, yet tranquil; simple, yet complex; disunified, yet unified. It seems to be a contradiction in terms, a composite of antitheses, confusion and awe. To behold the sublime is to give hurt to the senses. Reason cannot contain it. It takes from us pleasure and gives pain in return. Yet it does not repel us, but draws us forcibly to itself without destroying our freedom. It is the struggle of a magnanimous spirit wrestling with the sensual, not to be freed from it, but attempting to pervade the whole of it.[10]

To illustrate this difference between the beautiful and the sublime we have but to consider the expression of spirit in the concrete. It will become apparent that the beautiful induces harmony and tranquil pleasure. But here spirit will be seen to have less freedom of operation in the sensual than it does in an object which is called sublime. Another factor that reveals itself to us, is that pleasure arising from contemplation of the sublime is often alloyed with pain. Not

only is a sense of struggle reflected in the sublime, but the object itself often displays the quality of ugliness, and is constructed with emphasis on deliberate and evident distortion.

Perusal of the classical periods of art, regardless of the media considered, is sufficient to reveal to us that beauty is best achieved through balance or symmetrical proportion. The beauty of the work results from the unity acquired by perfect, or near perfect conformity of spirit and the sensual. Some distortion is used. In architecture there is the employment of entasis in order to correct the optical illusion of concavity in the sides when several columns are used together. This use of distortion, however, is never for the sake of distortion in itself. Nor is it used to bring into relief another aspect of the work that is made more emphatic by the use of such distortion. Rather, the limited classical use of distortion attempts to bring the work into a closer conformity to the whole of nature, the rational as well as irrational. It is the expression of a rationally planned realism. The ideas of proportion, measurement, composition and rhythm not only seek to harmonize the form and content of the art object, but also serve to achieve greater unity between the mind of man and the sensual in nature.[11]

As such, the art object is truly representative of reality, for both spirit and matter are duly emphasized and united. It is a reality, though, which lacks the emotional quality of spirit and after the initial pleasure is had, tends to create an atmosphere of monotony.[12]

This lack of emotional expression of man's spirit in his works withholds to a great extent the artist's identification with his world. He works more for the ideal than for others.[13] As a result, no matter how beautiful the work, there is always the shadow of craftsmanship obscuring the light of genuis. One cannot deny the classical works their enduring validity. Yet, validity based on the rational to the almost exclusion of the emotional aspect of the spirit cannot be as forceful as the validity of a work alive to emotional response. It is emotion that all men at all times are capable of understanding. It is through the emotions that we invariably must interpret ourselves to the world, and the world to ourselves.

As predominant as the rational is in the classical works,[14] as much as it tends to interpret reality in terms of the abstract, harmony is enforced precisely because the spirit is held in check by the sensual. This is perhaps most evident in classical architecture. The rectangular form of the lintel, the gentle slanting of the roofs, the rounding of the Roman dome: all of these seem to stop the vertical shoot of the shafts, and to force them back solidly into the ground from which they rise. Spirit is not released in order that it might pervade the universe. At most a pale contest between spirit and form might be seen as reflected by the ornamental devices on the capitols and cornices.

Approach to liberation of spirit is seen in the baroque. Here the media expresses the personality of the artist to a

greater extent than in the classical. A Michelangelo, a Bernini, a Reubens lives in his work. The message of each is undeniably expressed as authentic. The sensual becomes alive with the spirit of the artist. Yet, because of the basic relationship of the baroque to the classical, there is no final liberation of spirit. At most, we witness only so many undulations of the sensual, writhing under the impulses of a spirit alive with emotions.

Liberation of the spirit in art is perhaps more closely approached in the gothic. On the whole, its architecture displays more verticals and fewer horizontals than the classical. More use is made of pointed,cutting, jagged effects than of subtle rounding or gently sloping lines of the Greeks and Romans. Detail is in profusion. Columns are placed closely to one another. The varying, constant shift of line and ornament confuses the senses, hurts them. The compactness of this profusion defies reason to know its message at a glance. Yet, it draws the mind to consider every detail at length. Every time the mind comes to rest upon even an apparently insignificant detail, spirit is seen to abound in its fullness, overflowing its confinement to the sensual. It breaks upon us from the most unexpected places, whether from the dark corners of the naves, or from the points of the pinnacles as they pierce the sunlit skies.

The massiveness; the lavish display of the sensuous; the use of granite and marble; the furnishings of strong woods,

brass, silver, gold; the brilliance of its colored glass windows; all of these, root the gothic structure in the sensual. On the other hand, the gracefulness of its intricate carvings, the delicate tracings of the lead in its windows, the rising and pointing of its towers, spires and pinnacles: these seem to carry the massiveness of the sensual into the realm of the immateriality of the spirit.

This constant interaction between the sensuous and the spiritual, between form and content, between details, so pleasing yet so distracting and confusing give the gothic the right to be called sublime rather than beautiful. It is the gothic, more than any other art, that more closely represents nature. The struggle of the sensual in nature is reflected in the gothic. The struggle between spirit and sheer materiality as evidenced in nature is seen in the gothic. The contest between reason and senses shows forth in the gothic. Above all, man's position in time as pitted against the eternal is summarized in the gothic art.

We have said that nature might be called sublime because of its overall complexity and hence greater impression of unity. Clearly this, too, is exemplified by the gothic and gives us ample reason for classifying it as being sublime rather than beautiful. Not only is the gothic a unity of many diverse forms, but also it is a unity of an unknown number of diverse minds each expressing his spirit individually, uniquely, but at the same time consciously bringing it into accordance with the whole.

It is the gothic that makes use of the ugly. Its use of gargoyles and the grotesque serve to emphasize the struggle of spirit embodied in the sensual. Distortion is used for the sake of distortion to more fully express this reality of life. It is by deliberate employment of these means that the spirit is shown in contrast to be the free and overriding force. The unity and the perfection of the whole far outweighs any discordance arising from portrayal of the ugly.[15]

In discussing the creative act of the artist, we have noted that one of his duties is to remove the inessential from his subject in its portrayal as well as to make up for any deficiencies and imperfections it has in its material state. To validly argue for the depiction of the ugly, then, would seem to contradict this. Although metaphysically evil, ugliness and the like, and negative elements of reality--that is, they result from lack of perfections--we must note that rather than being inessential to our milieu, they are positive influences that surround us in daily life. Truly realistic depiction of the struggle of the spirit at times necessitates the representation of these characteristics to a limited extent. They serve to define the area of the struggle and to throw into greater relief the victory of the spirit.

Seemingly, architecture is the art form that lends itself with more ease to relationship with the sublime.[16] While it appears that in painting the sublime is hardly ever achieved, we do have instances that offer themselves as expressions of

the sublime. It is obvious that the painting must forcibly express the spirit's struggle. The works of El Greco and Van Gogh quite evidently show this struggle. The oblong, flame-like distortions of El Greco witness to the spirit of the artist desiring to break with the traditional portrayal of the form. Something more than the curvings and sensuous undulations of the baroque artists, these figures shoot up from the canvas like the towering spires of the gothic cathedral . Unlike the gothic, however, they are not arrested by the massiveness of sensual material and rooted to earth. Instead they appear on the canvas as liberated spirits. Yet they do not reject their bodily form. The spirit of one form intermingles with the other form.

With Van Gogh we have a different emphasis on spirit. Here it is not the question of the artist's spirit attempting to break the bonds of technical convention, as much as it is a matter of the artist struggling to free his spirit from personal pain. His spirit, anxious and troubled, seems to transcend him in the fullness of its vigor and emotional life. It is vibrantly alive in the splash of biting colors, in the short curves of vicious brush strokes. Liberation from the ego of the artist does not speak here of liberation from the sensual. It employs the sensual consciously and deliberately in the thickness of the medium. For the most part form blends into the running play of contrasting colors. It is made dynamic and illusive by the swirlings and turnings of the

strokes. Placed side by side, one picture blazes its way into another picture. The continuity of motion indicates the pervasion of spirit into the whole of Van Gogh's works. Excitement, dynamic movement, pain, anxiety: these are qualities of Van Gogh's works that put them nearer to the sublime than to the beautiful.

There are those who say that the age in which an artist lives is responsible for what he makes. He can, in fact, make only what his age is ready to receive, and produce only what his age has already implanted in him.

Let it be agreed that the artist is what his age has implanted in him--but only to some extent. He is something more. Because he is an individual, his genius is unique and will at times express itself not only contrary to what his age expects but in advance of it. El Greco, Monet and Cezanne are examples of this break with conformity. Schools of art, such as Impressionism and Fauvism attest to the genius of a spirit that would not be conformed to the dictates of the traditional milieu.

The spirit of an artist must not be restricted by his milieu. True, it must make use of the milieu. But it must not serve the milieu as a tool. It must not be limited by allowing itself to become a means of teaching moral lessons, or by allowing itself to become an instrument of political propaganda.[17]

Art, like all of nature, must be open to all. It expresses a free spirit, amoral and innocent. It cannot enjoy this freedom if it is wedded to the ideology of any one institution. Institutions and ideologies are at all times particular. The spirit of art is universal. Institutions and ideologies separate and divide mankind. The spirit of art unites. Institutions and ideologies reflect the unemotional face of rationality. The spirit of art bespeaks the very heart of man.[18]

Footnotes

[1]"Art's peculiar feature, however, consists in its ability to represent in sensuous form even the highest ideas, bringing them thus nearer to the character of natural phenomena, to the senses, and to feeling." Loewenberg, Selections, p. 314.

[2]"All technique is developed in the interest of treatment; and as treatment is simply the mode of imitation, and a truly absorbed and active artist may be quite unconscious of the mode he is evolving, all naive technicians have taken for granted that their devices were merely modes of imitation. So the great life-line of technique has been imitation, as its origin has been formalization. Technique is the power of producing a version of the model, as concrete as real existence--a vision of existence, a realization of the things in the world. Its aim is always a definite sensuous or emotional effect, which is to be brought to perception.

"In the achievement of effects lies the abstractive function of art. The effect is sought because it conveys the insight into human feeling that is, I think, the aim of all art. Therefore, technique is the skill of getting effects; and in every art we develop traditional means of 'imitation' to enhance certain effects the artists see in the model and convey to those who can perceive through art. Such traditional means are what we call 'conventions.' They are not 'laws,' for there is no reason in the world to follow them except that the artist can use them for his own purposes. When their usefulness is exhausted, they are dropped. That is why conventions change." Langer, Problems, pp. 97-98.

[3]"Probably by far the greater part of the world's art has been made upon some fortuitous occasion, that is, not with the conscious intention of creating a work of art, but with the intention of making or performing or articulating something otherwise important. People gifted with artistic intuition take any such occasion to create expressive form. Look at the intricate, strong, handsome compositions of Alaskan totem poles; their makers probably had no art theory at all, but to make the post look impressive, holy, and alive they used every principle of composition and animation that could serve the cause of sculpture. Women making pots undoubtedly made them for the sake of domestic uses, but they shaped them in fine, columinous curves for art's sake. They may often have decorated pots, fabrics, and furniture with magic symbols to keep spooks away, but in the hands of an artist such symbolic representations offer, above all, an occasion for design; and

two pots bearing the same symbols, and made of the same clay, may be worlds apart in artistic value." Langer, Problems, pp. 120-121.

[4]Cf. Henri Renard, S. J., The Philosophy of Being, 2nd ed. (Milwaukee, 1957), pp. 187-192; and, P. Coffey, Ontology or the Theory of Being: An Introduction to General Metaphysics (New York, 1938), pp. 201-206.

[5]"Art frees the true meaning of appearances from the show and deception of this bad and transient world, and invests it with a higher reality and a more genuine being than the things of ordinary life." While not agreeing with the denigration of "this world" here implied, I do agree with Hegel's realization of the ameloriating effect of art. Loewenberg, Selections, pp. 315-316.

[6]Cf. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, eds., Philosophies of Art and Beauty, Immanuel Kant's Critique of Judgment, trans. J. H. Bernard, #48 (New York, 1964) pp. 315-317.

[7]Bossanquet, in commenting on Kant, writes: ". . . Sublimity may depend on form or on 'unform.' . . . The object of the sublime feeling . . . is always one that resists our power of judgment and so far from being harmonious, is rather incongruous with it. For this reason the sublime is one degree more subjective than the beautiful, and in every way more difficult, making higher demands upon the mind. Its essence is . . . to give an austere or negative pleasure akin to awe and admiration to communicate a serious and stirring . . . movement to the imagination, and . . . to stimulate only the ideas of the reason and not those of the understanding." Bernard Bossanquet, A History of Aesthetic, 2nd ed. (New York, 1957), p. 276.

[8]In his essay concerning the beautiful and the sublime, Kant observes that: "Temperaments which have a sense for the sublime will be drawn toward elevated sentiments regarding friendship, contempt for the world, and toward eternity. . . . The sublime moves; the expression of a person experiencing the full sense of the sublime is serious, at times rigid and amazed. . . . The sublime . . . is at times accompanied by some terror or melancholia, in some cases merely by quiet admiration and in still others by the beauty which is spread over the sublime place. The first I want to call the terrible sublime, the second the noble, and the third the magnificent. Deep loneliness is sublime, but in a terrifying way.

"The sublime must always be large; . . . the sublime must be simple. . . .

"A long duration is sublime. If it concerns past time it is noble; if anticipated as an indeterminable future, it has

something terrifying." Carl J. Friedrich, ed., The Philosophy of Kant: Immanuel Kant's Moral and Political Writings (New York, 1949), p. 4.

[9]Kant notes: "The strictly sublime can be contained in no sensuous form, but attaches to ideas of reason, which although no adequate representation is possible for them, are yet stirred up and evoked in the mind by this very inadequacy which can be represented in sensuous form." [K. d. U.] Cited by Bossanquet, A History of Aesthetic, p. 105.

[10]In commenting on Hegel, Stace observes: "The sublime is the attempt to express the infinite, without being able to find any sensuous medium which is adequate to express it--so that it remains at least the unspeakable, the unutterable. The true sublime breaks and shatters every form in which we seek to enclose it." Stace, P. H., p. 457.

[11]Cf. Germain Bazin, A History of Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present, trans. Francis Scarge (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp. 62-103.

[12]What is said in the following about Greek architecture may still be said about Greek art in general. "The drawback of Greek architecture is its monotony. The monumental perfection attained in the fifth century left little scope for invention in the following centuries. Like all those forms of architecture that lack the arch or vault, Greek architecture could only exploit a limited number of possibilities both at the structural level and by way of harmonic effects. By the use of the arch the Romans were able to give the architect a far wider field of action." Bazin, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

[13]"The intuitive naturalism which prevailed in primitive times became, in Greek art, a rationally planned realism; but found its own limits in the idealism which led the Hellenes to see an expression of universal order in everything." Bazin. op. cit., p. 68.

[14]"The name Classicism has been given to this realism, which tended toward abstraction and was governed by a philosophy that reduced all things to the measure of man." Bazin, op. cit., p. 69.

[15]In his analysis of the late Gothic period in Germany, Bazin remarks: "All these workshops [Strasbourg, Trier, Ulm, Tyrol, Lubeck, Nuremberg] whether in the North or South, showed the same trend toward expressionism (twisting of bodies, convulsive movement of draperies with numerous broken folds), toward a naturalism which led artists to go in search of popular folk types (Hans Multscher) and even physical deformities

(Altarpiece of the Virgin by Veit Stoss, Cracow, . . .). Bazin, op. cit., p. 230.

[16]Hegel observes: "For it is architecture that paves the way, as it were, for the adequate realization of the God, toiling and wresting in his service with eternal nature, and seeking to extricate it from the chaos of finitude, and the abortiveness of change." Loewenberg, Selections, p. 329.

[17]Cf. Collingwood, The Principles of Art, Bk. I, pp. 15-153.

[18]"As St. Thomas expresses it, 'Art does not require of the artist that his act be a good act, but that his work be good. . . . Art does not presuppose rectitude of appetite,'--but only to serve the appetite, whether for good or evil. It is for the man to decide what, if any, propaganda are desirable; for man as artist only to make the propagation effective. The artist may nevertheless come short, and in this case he is said to 'sin as an artist': if, for example, he undertakes and proposes to manufacture an efficient poison gas, and actually produces something quite innocuous, or intends to fashion a Modonna, and only produces a fashion plate. The artist as such is an amoral type: at the same time there can be no good use, that is effective use, without art." Coomaraswamy, C. and O. Phil., pp. 82-83. For a fuller treatment of this issue, cf. Jacques Maritain, The Responsibility of the Artist (New York, 1960); and, Jacques Maritain, Art and Scholasticism, Ch. IX "Art and Morality," pp. 70-81.

CONCLUSIONS

Man, his art, the world are essentially related; indissolubly joined. Man makes his world. His world forms man. Midway between man and the world is his art, reflecting both him and the world around him. Each is representative of the other to the extent that it adequately integrates the other into the whole of itself.

Obviously the unifying force of the whole is the spirit of the artist. By creative power he determines the actualization of his potentials, shaping his own life and the world around him. Through his creative act he brings to the sensual the freedom of spirit. In this creation he is joined to all men for all time.

Dwelling among the gods, the artist is not himself a god. His is a freedom not without restrictions, obligations, and responsibilities. He must work within the framework of the meaningful. Therefore he must speak as a <u>man</u>. To attempt to use the language of the gods would render his work spiritless and empty. Pretense of divinity alienates the artist from his fellow man. If the gods find the company of men delightful, certainly the artist should not presume to withdraw from conversation with them. He who alienates himself from man, alienates himself from the gods who made man. This is the ultimate alienation which dries up the source of creative power.

It is simple enough to enumerate the responsibility of the artist. The secret of successful use of his creative power lies in the internal harmony of his own personality. Achievement of this necessitates that the artist strives for equillibrium between his spirit and his senses. Mind and body should be brought into adequate conformity.

To hope that such a conformity will ever be fully achieved is perhaps the best one can do. To continue to hope is the important thing. For where there is hope, there is struggle. Where there is struggle there is a spirit alive, dynamic, seeking to overflow its bonds and to pervade the other.

Pervasion of the other brings us to the third responsibility of the artist. He must unite himself with, identify himself with, his non-ego world. He must take from it of what he does not have in order to perfect his own essence. In return, the artist, as creator, must make a free and generous gift of himself to the world.

Essentially the genius of the artist is conceived in love. The internal harmony of the artist is conceived in the love he has for himself. The continuum that unites the whole of man's reality is love in one form or another. Without this love there is no reason for creating. More than that, there is no impelling force to call the creative power into play. The greatest responsibility that the artist has, then, is that of loving, warmly, emotionally, without reserve.

The artist has the right to safeguard his talents and the free exercise of them by seeing that they do not become instruments of social or religious dogmatism or of any type of propaganda. Harlotry in the arts is as disgusting as harlotry in the streets.

Rather than becoming a tool in the hands of a select few, the true artist freely gives of himself and his art to all. The disposition of love enables him to sense the glorious vision of daily reality and to appreciate it to its fullness. He does not attempt to place himself within the aura of psuedo-divinity. Rather he glories in the taste, the sight, the touch, the smell of the sensual. His spirit is at its best when it has a plenitude of the sensual to enoble. When faced with a scarcity of the sensual, his ability to express himself falters. The will to create is weakened. A bodiless spirit with nothing to inform is meaningless to him who is part of the reality of this material world. The artist who wishes to live fully, richly and meaningfully does not attempt the ascent into the heavens until he has plumbed the depths of the sensual.[1]

Again we have the complexities: man, world, art. All three unite to form the milieu from which each takes its being. Apart from this common milieu, excluded from this relation, there is not, there cannot be reality for any of the three.

Footnote

[1]"There are no shortcuts to beauty or to insight. We must go through the finite, the limited, the definite, omitting none of it lest we omit some of the potencies of being-in-the-flesh. . . . We waste our time if we try to go around or above or under the definite; we must literally go through it. And in taking this narrow path directly, we shall be using our remembered experience of things seen and earned in a cumulative way, to create hope in the things that are not yet seen." Lynch, Christ and Apollo, p. 23.

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