

A PHILOSOPHY OF ART

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## Chapter 1

Believing a conception of what this thesis 'A Philosophy of Art' involves, can best be secured if, at the outset, the breadth and scope of philosophy itself, is dealt with - for art is but one of the many fields that philosophy investigates and tries to explain - I shall attempt first to answer the question, 'what is philosophy?' Etymologically speaking the word 'philosophy' is derived from the Greek word, philosophia, philos meaning love and sophia, wisdom, hence, love of wisdom and he who is concerned with the study, a lover of wisdom. It is interesting, just here, to note that early philosophers at first, however, called themselves sophoi or wisemen but Pythagoras, thinking it a pedantic and boastful term, changed it to philosophoi, i.e. lovers of wisdom. What is the extent of this wisdom that they profess to love? Is it a wisdom like the wisdom of the scientist, be he botanist, physicist, mathematician or psychologist - a wisdom attained in a particular realm of scientific experimentation and endeavour; a wisdom of particular conclusions which give rise to particular laws, principles, facts and theories, in brief, particular knowledge, such as helio-, geo-, or hydrotropism, osmosis, gravity, buoyancy, atomism, ionization, hibernation, estivation, evolution, embryology and space and time? Philosophy is broader than the particular sciences in that it treats of problems that embrace all the sciences such as one would expect to find involved in reply to such questions as 'What is the ultimate end of man? What is its nature? What is the ultimate end of reality outside

of man? What is its nature? What is meant by mind? matter? creation? evolution?' Philosophy is all-inclusive in its scope. It is concerned with reality in toto and hence its wisdom is a synthesis of all knowledge or, in other words, its wisdom comprises theories, of ultimate reality, of ultimate knowledge, of ultimate values.

Systems of philosophy exist side by side, varying greatly in subject matter, method of approach, criticism, judgment and finality. One only needs to take one implication of philosophy to see this, e.g. What is the ultimate reality? Examining the philosophy advanced to answer this question throughout the ages, we find it runs a gamut of theories; from a cosmology of a creation of static forms to one of dynamic evolving forms, from idealism, wherein mind is the only reality; from naturalism, wherein matter is the only reality; from dualism, wherein mind and matter are the only two realities; from a possible third theory of a reality, unlike either mind or matter; or from a possible plurality of realities - to just unknowability or agnosticism. By examining one of these major theories we shall see how a pragmatic philosophical criticism advocates or prevents its acceptance and thereby see the more easily why a pragmatic theory, which forms the basis of this thesis, is advocated and is more acceptable as a philosophy of art.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth and the earth.....was without form and void". This

genesis states for us a dualism of Creator and creation; a creator, defined as the formal cause of creation, its source, its antecedent, its unmoved mover, before which nothing had being and upon which, what has being depends for its continuance, its change, its final end; a creation, defined as matter, "ex nihilo" given being, devoid of form at first, but to which the creator added (and continues to control) various kinds of form, which in no way altered the matter intrinsically. The union of matter and forms produced substances i.e. reality. And because the Creator added various kinds of form to matter there are various kinds of substances, each substance having the potentiality to change its form, having as its final end the realization of all potentialities of form accorded it by God. Thus spake the Schoolmen and Aristotle before them in their metaphysical explanation of reality. Plato's philosophy was similar except that he postulated a transcendental existence of Forms (Ideas) to which the things of this world are but an approximation and of which we have some recollection because we had a former existence in that transcendental world of ultimate realities.

Philosophical criticism of such a teleological and dualistic explanation of reality of which God is the author, the Idea, the Absolute of all goodness, beauty, and truth, an unchanging unity of a trinity of absolutes, raises the question, how can we possibly know this being (who is so far

removed from experience) and therefore, know the true meaning of goodness, beauty, and truth? Greek philosophy said by deductive reasoning, Neo-Platonism of Plotinus said by intuition - making philosophy the experiences of a "seer", by mystic union, by communing with Him although He remains unknowable. Scholasticism said by revelation and by faith, ascribing by analogy all perfection to Him, for He is a transcendent being with no imperfections. As pragmatists, are we satisfied with such answers? We reject all of them on the basis that they are inclined to promote a mystical, worshipful attitude which is inadequate toward the whole subject of philosophical criticism rather than an observant attitude and therefore inadequate as the basis of a philosophy of art. Some conception of the extent to which this 'mystical, worshipful attitude' may be carried we find in a recent philosophy of art, advanced by McMahon, for he would have us modify the superstructure of Platonic metaphysics to harmonize with our present needs and interests;<sup>(1)</sup> an examination of this will illustrate better our point of variance. He gives us some idea of this mysticism when, speaking of beauty, he says, "As human beings nevertheless we are so strangely organized that we are capable of seeing beauty, and our knowledge of it is obtained chiefly through art. Analogy is at bottom a mystical process, but the analogy that we establish through art between things that we make and an abiding reality is a true one. The

(1) A. P. McMahon, The Meaning of Art, p. 294

essence to which we penetrate through works of art is beauty. Through art we have the power to realize, record, and communicate beauty effectively."<sup>(1)</sup> So far so good - but let us go further and see what he means by beauty. He bases his convictions regarding transcendental beauty on the following quotation from Plotinus, "Certainly there is such a principle and it is perceived by the senses at the very first glance. The soul identifies it as if the soul knew it well, recognizes and welcomes it, and in so far as possible enters into union with it.....We say, therefore, that the soul, since it is what it is in its very nature and is close to that which actually and essentially is best, whenever it sees anything of its own kind or even suggesting such a relationship, rejoices and is startled with delight, takes its own to itself, and remembers again what it really is and what belongs to it.....But what resemblance is there between the things that are beautiful here and those that are beautiful there? And if there is likeness, they must be alike. How, indeed, are these things beautiful as well as those?.....It is, we say, because they share in an idea, an eternal form."<sup>(2)</sup>

The guardians of the particular sciences, from time to time, found that new thought made theories only hypothetical, tentative, and relative, as a result of which theories grew to be more inclusive in scope or, in many cases, became superseded by new theories. Just here we might digress from our main theme to say that it was often necessary for the scientist, once a new theory was apparent to him, that he lay down his life in order to have it accepted because, as we know, great is the repulsion

(1) A. P. McMahon, op. cit. p.297

(2) A. P. McMahon, op. cit. p.297

exhibited by the conservative and conventional to the new, as is exemplified in this quotation -- "The terrible pace at which the world now jolts and clanks along, was set in our island, where, first, invention was harnessed to organized capital. For fifty years that great change was left uncontrolled by the community which it was transforming. So new was the experience, that for a while the wisest were as much at fault as the most foolish. Burke for all his powers of prophecy, Pitt for all his study of Adam Smith, Fox for all his welcome to the new democracy, no more understood the English economic revolution, and no more dreamt of controlling it for the common good, than George III himself."<sup>(1)</sup> And further, when we read that "Most of us would be at home taking tea at Dr. Johnson's, hearing the contact of civilized man with society discussed with British common sense and good nature, with British idiosyncrasy or prejudice. Only we should be aware that we had stepped back out of a scientific, romantic and mobile era into an era literary, classical and static. Dr. Johnson and Burke had never heard of 'evolution' in our meaning of the word. They thought that the world would remain what they and their fathers had known it. With them, time moved so slowly that they thought it stayed still withal. A very different experience has taught us to perceive that the forms of our civilization are transient as the bubble on a river."<sup>(2)</sup> Scientists find that old theories may be en-

(1) G. M. Trevelyan, British History of the Nineteenth Century, Introduction, p. XLV

(2) G. M. Trevelyan, op. cit. Introduction, p. XLV



larged upon or even superseded by new knowledge. But what of the philosophers? They have not always been eager to accept the fact that the new might present a theory that would supersede the old. Many philosophical theories, as a result of this, are found to be absolutistic, having changed very little in scope since they were first formulated. They are rejected as the basis for a philosophy of art because they are not found to be hypothetical and tentative in outlook.

In order to create a system of philosophy, a philosopher must have some method of criticism of reality, knowledge, and values - a method that will lead him to accept or reject any theories in part or in their entirety that might arise. Such philosophical methods of general criticism have been developed - methods based on the authority or prestige of a former exponent, or on inductive or deductive reasoning, or on intuition. Since our philosophy is pragmatic, the system of criticism which forms the basis of this thesis will be empirical - that is, inductive, in developing theories of knowledge, of reality, of values, as opposed to the deductive type of criticism we found supporting dualism; for man is only able to acquire knowledge empirically. His intellect is an organism that gives him the meaning of experience from which he derives values but not the meaning of ultimate transcendental values, for these are unknowable. We feel convinced of the fact that; to postulate and by deductive reasoning try to prove that a monistic God exists, or by deductive reasoning, aided by faith and revelation to ascribe to God existence and, by analogy, to

give Him glorified human attributes (thereby making Him an anthropomorphic being) or by intuition to believe that one reaches mystically some recognition of Him and therefore of His attributes, does not thereby prove that a being with such attributes exists, nor is it proved that intuition gives us knowledge of Him and His attributes. Rather it leads us to believe that knowledge of such a being and His attributes is impossible. Values should be sought by man in experience alone, where, because reality is evolving, values can be only hypothetical and relative because they too are evolving. It is in view of this that I propose that any theory should be treated as purely hypothetical, tentative and relative, so that it may be tested, altered and corrected from time to time in the light of new evidence rather than resignedly accepted as all-inclusive, absolute and final. This does not mean that a philosophy, not concerned with transcendentals, will not have high and comprehensive values for its purpose.

In conclusion, then, it should not be surprising to find in a resume of philosophies of art, as will be undertaken in the next chapter, a similar approach, criticism, and judgment as is found in the systems of philosophy upon which those philosophies of art are based. For, no matter what the philosophy of art may be, it should reflect the general philosophical<sup>(1)</sup>

- (1) Just as the Hindu art of India reflects the Hindu's conception of God as the All-pervasive Cosmic Self which is known by intuition rather than by sense perception in so far as our reason can know It.  
Anand, The Hindu View of Art, p. 39

viewpoint of him who advances it, because art is the expression of thought of each and every age, for as Eric Gill says, "So far from it being true that religion and philosophy have no concern for the artist or he for them, it is only when a religion and philosophy have become the unifying principle of a nation that any great works of art, whether steel bridge or stone shrines, are possible, and the decay of human art follows immediately upon the weakening of men's grasp upon the motives of action. The great art works of twentieth-century Europe are the product of the great materialist erection of post-Reformation, post-Renaissance thought. Without that thought and its enthusiastic acceptance by widespread populations there could be none of those great monuments of engineering and science which, while we may deplore the servile labour of the millions of workmen employed in their making, we unite to admire because in themselves they are admirable. Similarly the pyramids of Egypt could not have existed but for the theocracy of the ancient Egyptians, and, while we profess to loathe their system of slave-labour, we rightly admire the pyramids because they are in themselves admirable monuments. So it is with the sculptures of India and Easter Island. So it is with the plain-chant of the Roman Church and the building achievements of the European Middle Age. So indeed it is with wireless telegraphy and the telephone; and all these things are the product of human activity directed, inspired, controlled, and only made possible by

the religion and philosophy of their makers. And the crowning example will be post-Revolution Russia. It remains to be seen in what ways the product will be different from previous human achievements, but one thing is certain: it will be the direct expression of the religious idea and of the philosophy which is the unifying principle, the soul of the Russian Revolution."<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Eric Gill, Essay on Art and Reality, The Hindu View of Art by Mulk Raj Anand, p. 22

## Chapter 11

The early Greeks, believing art was concerned only with the beautiful, either identified the beautiful with the good or postulated it as one of a trinity of absolutes, the other two being the good and the true. This idea found expression, in one form or another, in modern idealistic systems of philosophy, as we shall later see in this discussion. For Plato the essence of objective beauty was harmony, symmetry, order, with the realization of these in the art form which, due to a mimetic impulse, became an imitation of imitations of a more real world than this we now experience - a world of universals, of ideals, from which we transmigrated. Art was for Plato a pastime affording pleasure and recreation with a moral bias. The Schoolmen adopted this moral bias, as did Tolstoi and Sulzer, although the latter considered it from a sociological point of view. The Schoolmen contrasted art allegorically with morality, holding that man acts in two ways, morally and creatively, and that both ways of acting are governed by prudence. Aristotle, neglecting the psychological and sociological implications of art, agreed with Plato that art is mimetic. He further considered it as a catharsis of the emotions, calming, purifying and ennobling them. We cannot agree with Aristotle that art is a catharsis of the emotions because constant use tends rather to develop preferred emotional habits than to purge and quiet them, so that the emotions grow stronger and, as a result of this, are ever in a better condition to act in a definite way than before, even beyond what might be in the best moral interests of the

individual. Aristotle held that this purging was particularly apparent in the drama; but of this Sheldon Cheney says, in speaking of realism in the theatre: "Once in a while, to be sure, one of these natural plays stirs us deeply -- just as a bit of news will sometimes register so that we can't dismiss it for hours or days. It is generally something horrible that makes such a lasting impression -- whether in the newspaper or the journalistic play. There is a difference between the response here and that to Trojan Women or to Hamlet. There was the glow of the theatre in those days; now it is downright disturbing emotional dislocation. After the shock there is no purging element -- call it what you will, poetry, spiritual depth, beauty, Dionysian experience."<sup>(1)</sup>

Baumgarten, believing beauty was the perfect perceived through the senses, agreed that the aim of art was to copy nature, since nature reflected the perfect. Sulzer, concerned chiefly with the sociological aspects of man, naturally enough made art subservient to morality, accepting it as its handmaiden in effecting social reform.

One can best appreciate the meaning Kant ascribed to beauty by understanding his theory of perception. By pure reason he shows how scientific knowledge is validated. By his practical reason he shows how goodness is perceived by the subjective will. However, there are also aesthetic

(1) Sheldon Cheney, The Theatre, p. 449

judgments which are not based on either the practical reason or the pure reason. Beauty for Kant is subjectively that which necessarily and universally without reason or practical advantage pleases. Objectively, it is form perceived without any conception of its utility.

Beauty, for Schelling, is the perception of the Infinite in the finite; for Hegel, it is the shining forth of the Idea or the Spirit, (for truth, beauty, and goodness are reflections of one and the same being,) through matter. Art is the production of that appearance. Spencer and Schiller believed that the art activity was but the play impulse seeking expression to satisfy excess energy. Schopenhauer said that beauty is the highest objectification of the will. Fichte called it a subjective quality given to art by the recipient, so that beauty becomes a viewpoint, in a sense, a subjective quality like empathy. Emotionalists like Tolstoi, consider art to be concerned with the transference of emotions to others, which is praiseworthy when the emotions are compatible with the moral end of life as understood at the time. Tolstoi sums up his conception of art as follows: "Art is not as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious Idea of beauty, or God; it is not as the aesthetical physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy; it is not the expression of man's emotions by external signs; it is not the production of pleasing ob-

jects; and, above all, it is not pleasure; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and of humanity."<sup>(1)</sup> Other emotionalists like Winckelmann and Veron consider art merely as an expression of the emotions. For Croce art is intuition, a rational awareness or synthesis of feelings when experienced in expression (creating) or when experienced within oneself when a work of art is "seen". If there is an hedonistic accompaniment or complement to these feelings it is a beautiful experience, for the beautiful "does not belong to things, but to the activity of man, to spiritual energy."<sup>(2)</sup>

Croce, like those who advance idealistic systems, is inclined to be vague and indefinite at times in the use of the terms "intuition" and "expression". Both terms seem to have a variety of meanings, but when we realize that he treats them as identical and when we also find the term "expression" applied to the act of creating form as well as to that of conceiving form, its meaning is somewhat clarified. He at least is treating of the psychological implications of the art activity. His conception of beauty as the spiritual activity in expression gives strength to a subjectivist theory of beauty. The art activity might be explained as being expression, that is, - objectification of spiritual images, constituted as such by intuition into objective art forms. These objective forms become

(1) Tolstoi, What is Art? p. 50

(2) Croce, Estetica, p. 97, 4th ed., 1912



objective images for the intuition of the recipient, having for their purpose, as a consequence of this, the arousal in the recipient of that intuitive feeling. In other words, symbolism seems to be the aim of art - a point which will be enlarged upon later.

What conclusions can we draw from this resume of art philosophy? It is quite evident that such idealistic systems as those of Kant, Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer, in making use of the concept of beauty as a pillar to support their philosophical elaborations, and in treating it extensively as an aspect or reflection of God, the Infinite, the Idea, the Will, neglect to consider art as a creative activity or to consider the psychological and sociological implications of the artist and the recipient. In fact, they neglect the artist, the act of creating, the recipient, the act of receiving and the art object. They are more concerned with beauty as a means to help unify knowledge. They are more concerned with art as a revelation of the meaning of things in themselves than as a revelation of the values by which men live. They always present a transcendental monistic explanation of values. But, "Aesthetics must abandon this ancient craving for a monistic solution if it is to function in a world increasingly conscious of the plurality and relativity of things"<sup>(1)</sup> because "To take the place of the vague dogmas of idealistic aesthetics, there is an increasing demand for a naturalistic answer to every problem encountered in the arts."<sup>(2)</sup> There are undoubtedly

(1) T. Munro, Scientific Method in Aesthetics, p. 97

(2) T. Munro, op. cit. p. 61

other values derivable from experience (perhaps unevolved and not standardized) quite as meaningful and important to a philosophy of art as beauty, quite as meaningful to the artist - values less vague which he objectifies in the work of art and which we predicate of such creations, because they explain the various intensities of our particular emotional reactions, expressed by such words as interesting, unusual, delightful, ugly, disgusting. Such systems in treating only of beauty, goodness and truth tell but one half the story. "The terms 'good' and 'beautiful' are less and less used in the criticism of art: as '"true", their partner, in the classical trinity', is vanishing from scientific discussion.....Their breadth is that of vagueness and they are too ambiguous to function effectively as tools for explaining phenomena or directing choice. (In their place will come more distinct hypotheses)."<sup>(1)</sup> Idealistic philosophy deals with ultimate values, ultimate knowledge, ultimate reality, absolutes. To what extent can values be ultimate and absolute? They can only be ultimate and absolute in so far as they are the ultimate synthesis of all empirical knowledge. To go beyond this and postulate values of a transcendental region seems vain and fanciful speculation. In view of this my theory of art will be naturalistic and pragmatic, for then only will a theory of art be not too far removed from man, his environment and his reaction to that environment. Then only can a theory of art be helpful to a recipient who would try to understand his heritage of values as incorporated in his racial culture, i.e., in art.

(1) T. Munro, op. cit. p. 97

The chief quarrel with such systems as I have reviewed is, on the whole, that they do not treat art as experience. They do not realize that it is a dynamic movement, a manifestation of life evolving here and now. In their criticism they start at the wrong end of the ladder with a static created absolute at the top, and from the bottom they mount with the art found in experience in order to compare it with an absolute - just as the moralists do with man, saying that he was created perfect but fell from that height - a convenient arrangement for establishing a moral ladder to climb to an absolute. Nothing is more certain than the belief that man and art have evolved from a less perfect status, and that this evolution is not yet complete. As a result of this, man should be more concerned with understanding his present environment than with trying to understand a possible future environment of another existence. In the light of this, a pragmatic theory of art and a relativistic theory of beauty seems to be in keeping with such evolution. A pragmatic theory of art, like a pragmatic theory of philosophy, will not concern itself with the study of the revelation of supernatural, absolute, values in art because it considers such values (1) as beyond our reach, (2) as of no concern of the mind because the mind is an organ developed to aid man in his struggle for existence and survival - and not as an organ to know the meaning of things, as they are in themselves. Such a theory is concerned with values derived from experience, which it accepts as valuable to 'live by' if they stand the test of personal and social 'cash value', that is, if they work. To work they must be con-

ductive to harmonious, personal and social living. Although these values may not be established as true, yet they are to be accepted as such until such time as they prove otherwise. They are to be taken as 'working hypotheses', not as final or conclusive. Naturally enough, man has concerned himself with such utilitarian and practical values because, in his personal evolution, they were to his advantage. He chose them, not because he always understood them completely, but because they worked for his stability and for the stability of the group to which he belonged. His individual choice was always subservient to the good of the group - for the welfare of mankind as a whole. This is reflected in his art.

### Chapter III

Anthropology lends ample support to a pragmatic theory of art<sup>(1)</sup>. It shows that primitive men, such as the Aztecs, the Maori, and those found in many African tribes to-day, who have been influenced very little or not at all by contact with civilization, attacked their social problems much as we would do under the same circumstances. It shows that those problems which are connected with the satisfaction of the physical necessities of life -- the procuring and preparation of food, clothing and shelter, were solved by emotions, reason and will just as ours are solved by our emotions, reason and will. As a result of which the culture<sup>(2)</sup> that evolved expresses relative values which were worked out in experience, influenced then, as now, by environment and by traits inherited by the individuals. So that we should be convinced that the better solution of sociological problems in our day, upon which we pride ourselves, is due to a better empirical mental content; or in other words, to a greater heritage of tried experience upon which to base judgments in developing a culture.

A pragmatic theory of art acknowledges that only by some comprehension of the genesis, early growth, and development of values can we secure a broad and comprehensive view of the meaning of culture in general and a particular appreciation of our own contemporary culture. "Every culture has grown out of

(1) See Chapter II, p. 17

(2) By culture I mean all judgment passed on experience which is accepted as valuable to man's well-being, as found objectified in symbolic form or art.

an earlier one which itself may have been the result of adaptation to a different environment or by a people (being) in a different environment or by a people in a different state of development.... few, if any, cultures are or have been self-contained."<sup>(1)</sup>

By studying such culture as is revealed by anthropology we discover a pragmatic evolution of mind for "implements are but the outward sign or symbol of particular ideas in the mind,"<sup>(2)</sup> and an evolution of values which satisfied the cravings of that mind, which sought satisfaction for physiological and sociological wants -- values which often became incorporated, as specific religious values, playing an important part in further evolution of culture.

Man is profoundly affected by the uncontrollable, inexorable powers of nature which bring disease and death, the finality of which, together with his helplessness, create within him great fear of pain and of extermination. This fear in primitive man developed a strong desire to appease those mystifying, physical and uncontrollable powers. For him such powers were divine powers in view of the fact that they took their source (for many, in the sun, moon and stars) outside of man's environment. They were beyond his comprehension and control. To appease or honour such powers a polytheism of angry gods of war, plague and flood and of beneficent gods of abundance, wealth and happiness were created, evolving in meaning as man grew in comprehension of his experience in his en-

(1) R. U. Sayce, Primitive Arts and Crafts, p. 29

(2) R. U. Sayce, Primitive Arts and Crafts, p. 21

vironment. The conception primitive man had of these superhuman beings he objectified in bronze, stone and wood. Sometimes we find them as individual gods, sometimes as one god with many heads or arms and hands holding, within the latter, objects which symbolize its individual powers. To give objectivity to minor ideas connected with such beings a train of amulets, charms, rights, dispensations, ceremonies, taboos, propitious times, blessings, sacrifices and feasts were created and were given symbolic form.

Since there were uncontrollable powers, what was controllable had to conform to the supposed oracular dictates of the former. As comprehension grew of these uncontrollable powers and they became less uncontrollable, man's social status changed and as it changed his attitude towards his gods and his culture changed. "It can scarcely be doubted that the religions of the palaeolithic cave artist of Europe, of the wandering Semitic herdsmen of Arabia, and of the maize cultivators of Mexico were related to the occupations by means of which they obtained their food supply."<sup>(1)</sup> As one example of this we find the apportionment of labour which was often divided according to sex, age or social status upon a mystical and magical basis often prohibitive of change or transference, lest tragedy result to the group, changing later when the cause of such beliefs held little or no mystifying appeal.

Myths<sup>(2)</sup> so explanatory of any environmental attitude

(1) R. U. Sayce, Primitive Arts and Crafts, p.32

(2) Mythology was the chief source of musical inspiration of the ancient slaves who chanted hymns to the gods of the sun, as is still done by some primitive peoples. Kincella, Music on the Air, p.15

and, hence, cultural development, are found inextricably intertwined in primitive culture. They were created because they were felt to be necessary to give sanction to faith in miracles, morals, social status, magical and mystical contacts with the unknown forces of nature. Myths, then as now, arose due to the conviction of some outstanding personality in the social group - some imaginative, poetic and sensitive individual, whom the rest of the group believed communed with a supernatural power, person, or god, as an intermediary, able to bring to his fellowmen messages and cures from the unknown. He really was the creative artist, often the moral creative artist-leader -- as Moses. Upon his convictions depended innovations - new values - and change that affected tribal stability, to wit - the medicine man and witch doctor.

Primitive art, thus, expresses the significance that experience<sup>(1)</sup> had for primitive man. Art of any period should do

- (1) A generalized illustration of the meaning of experience may be had if we imagine a stone, which is rolling down hill, to have an experience. The activity is surely sufficiently "practical". The stone starts from somewhere, and moves as consistently as conditions permit, toward a place and state where it will be at rest - toward an end. Let us add, by imagination, to these internal facts, the ideas that it looks forward with desire to the final outcome; that it is interested in the things it meets on its way, conditions that accelerate and retard its movements with respect to their bearing on the end; that it acts and feels toward them according to the hindering or helping function it attributes to them; and that the final coming to rest is related to all that went before as the culmination of a continuous movement. Then the stone would have an experience, and one with aesthetic quality.

Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 39. Also see Chapter IV, p. 27.



the same. Taine gives as a law of art the following, "The work of art is determined by an aggregate which is the general state of the mind and surrounding manners."<sup>(1)</sup> In the 17th Century, in France, when man was anything but primitive, we find art expressed an experience which was concerned with making man "polished and correct in deportment" for "if a savage Muscovite, a dull German, a stolid Englishman, or any other uncivilized or half-civilized man of the North quit his brandy, pipe and furs, his feudal or hunting or rural life, it was to French salons and to French books he betook himself in order to acquire the arts of politeness, urbanity and conversation."<sup>(2)</sup>

Cheney, in his article on 'Machine Made Art', gives us some idea of the significance of aesthetic experience to-day as expressed in the art form. "Electric lamp, cocktail shaker, airplane, city; these I see as typical of a world transformed by the machine. My thesis is that with the physical transformation there has come - as already suggested - a transformation of art. For the first time in centuries, out of a pattern of living become almost universal, emerges a revolutionary and epochal, typical art-form."<sup>(3)</sup> And again, "Against this background of unparalleled revolution there are those who insist that human nature and the things of the spirit, including art, do not change. Although they use fountain pens, pocket flashlights and automobiles and although

(1) H. Taine, The Philosophy of Art, p. 180

(2) H. Taine, The Philosophy of Art, p. 167

(3) S. Cheney, Machine-made Art - Encyclopedia Britannica Supplement, Vol. 3, September, 1935, p. 19

they may even proclaim that creative art is born out of the way of living in each successive age, they cling to the inherited "fine arts", and to the regally decorated curtains and carpets, carved walnut desks, and bespangled chandeliers. To them the skyscraper and the telephone instrument and the electric clock are utilitarian contrivances outside art, necessarily ugly or just plain."<sup>(1)</sup> From what has been said we conclude that man's culture is intimately connected with his environment and the experiences he undergoes therein. These experiences were essentially meaningful to him, so much so that we find he incorporates what he thinks about those experiences in some objective form, developing thereby a culture or art.

A pragmatic theory of art, strengthened and conditioned by anthropology, incorporates a relativistic theory of values, for a study of primitive culture reveals to us a variety of values in various stages of evolution being superseded by newer ones as they evolve in greater comprehension of experiences. We find discovery, invention, mutation and variation changing the whole primitive social structure and leading, by selection, repression, inhibition, restraint and taboo, to relative standards of social values - so that there is monogamy on the one hand and polygamy on the other; in the religious structure, beliefs built around monotheism, polytheism and pantheism; in art because of a variety of experiences, various art values objectified in various media of expression. An environment unkind and unfriendly and unsuited to man made the

(1) S. Cheney, Machine-made Art - Encyclopedia Britannica Supplement, Vol. 3, September 1935, p. 20

maxim "ago ergo sum" of paramount importance to man's survival.

"The first great consideration is that life goes on in an environment, not merely in it but because of it. No creature lives merely unto his skin; its subcutaneous organs are means of connection with what lies beyond its bodily frame and to which, in order to live, it must adjust itself, by accommodation and defense and also by conquest. At every moment, the living creature is exposed to dangers from its surroundings, and at every moment it must draw upon something in its surroundings to satisfy its needs. The career and destiny of a living being are bound up with its interchanges with its environment, not externally but in the most intimate way."<sup>(1)</sup>

Man's mentality as it grew helped him to succeed in overcoming his environment and as he exercised it, co-ordinating eye, hand and brain, he grew further in physical and mental strength. When he added to his physical strength by using the forces of inanimate nature, fire, waterfall, wind, and by domesticating various animals, the social structure widened and man's ability to harness his environment continued to widen. The following quotation will help to clarify this point. "During the last hundred and fifty years, the rate of progress in man's command over nature has been ten times as fast as in the period between Caesar and Napoleon, a hundred times as fast as in the slow prehistoric ages. Tens of thousands of years divided man's first use of fire from his first application of it to iron. Even in the civilized era, when literature, science and philosophy were given us by Greece, the art of

(1) Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 13

writing preceded the printing-press by tens of centuries. In those days each great invention was granted a lease of many ages in which to foster its own characteristic civilization before it was submerged by the next. But, in our day, inventions, each implying a revolution in the habits of men, follow each other thick as the falling leaves."<sup>(1)</sup> Values, varied and relative, as they would naturally be from locale to locale, became however, as time went on, more and more comprehensive. The relativity and comprehensiveness of such values can hardly be understood except in the light of evolution for we find an evolution of values was intimately bound up with culture all along the road of its development. Is there no absolute value for culture then? None, except each value as it served the present purpose for which it was accepted as meaningful and all sufficient. For, in experience, A is a more perfect value than A-1, and A-1 a more perfect value than A-2, but it does not follow that over and above A, A-1 and A-2 there is a transcendental value perceivable and knowable by man more perfect than A, but rather that A is the most perfect yet experienced and therefore yet knowable to man. So that, in the light of a relativistic theory of values, we accept values as realizable and realized in experience; not complete or absolute at any time, but relative and hypothetical.

In conclusion, we might, then, say anthropology, by its study of the evolved culture of the past, helps us to understand the values of the past. It helps us to understand that in the

(1) C. M. Trevelyan, British History of the 19th Century, Introduction, p.18

present we are "the heirs of all the ages in the foremost files of time," of values and it lends prophetic perspective to the future of values. From the foregoing, anthropology shows us that men grew throughout the ages in comprehension of the meaning of his environment. His culture - his art - objectively expresses that growth and comprehension. So that we conclude art is but the evolution of 'value', empirically arrived at, expressed in objective form. A 'value', the more it reveals its inadequacy to cope with a more comprehensive purpose, the less meaningful it becomes, so that a more comprehensive and ideal value is worked for and accepted at a new, absolute value. Thus, epoch after epoch, each supposedly absolute value surrenders as its shortcomings are revealed so that a new, more comprehensive value is found through experience and accepted as absolute until it likewise is proven otherwise. That is how men progressed! These comprehensive values we find revealed as art if we examine any objective culture that incorporates a development of a social structure.

## Chapter 1V

Man, as we saw in the previous chapter, is born into an environment to which he cannot be adamant for he soon finds that it is forever forcing itself upon him. Terrifying winds, and waves, awe-inspiring stars, mystifying growth and miraculous birth in animal and plant life do not fail to arouse him so that he is forced to undergo some experience.<sup>(1)</sup> Man is by nature a being sensible to his environment and because of this the most natural and, at the same time, most essential thing for him in life is experience in that environment. By experience he attains a knowledge of what life means to him and to others like himself. Such experience is essentially psychological. It is a subjective reaction to the environment without and a concomitant, subjective reaction to a reality within - brought into consciousness by imagination and recollection. (Such experience man, during his wakeful hours and often during his sleeping hours, constantly undergoes). When his disconnected mental content is reasoned about and judged, that is, subjected to values worked out in past experience, it becomes the most meaningful, most valuable thing life has to offer man at every stage of his development. It is that which raises him above the beast, for it is the conscious idea - the conscious concept - with which we saw in Chapter III, man chose to build his own character and the culture of his race.

(1) See Chapter III, p. 23, footnote (1)

A primeval British Columbia forest of majestic trees was the environment for five travellers for a few days. They were lumberman, botanist, dentist, guide and painter. To the lumberman the forest was an inspiration for new commercial exploitation and ultimate great wealth, for his judgment of its value was utilitarian. To the botanist it was an inspiration because it gave to him new botanical information and new specimens. His judgment of its value was utilitarian and intellectual. To the dentist it was an inspiration because he thought it the acme of hunting ground. His judgment was also utilitarian. To the guide, since his mental content was that of the natives, it was a region where evil spirits abode, which he must appease according to inherited beliefs. To him the forest was judged morally. To the painter the forest was an inspiration because it aroused within him a pleasant, enjoyable experience not like the others but enjoyable on its own account, with no ulterior purpose.

From such an example we see that five individuals, from a similar subjective reaction, arrived at judgments, but of a different value, about the same experience. Why? The individuals had throughout their lives developed a mental content of personally preferred values (as was seen in Chapter III), as a result of which each could only pragmatically experience the forest with his own "eyes", each could only judge it according to his own mental content. To one the experience was essentially utilitarian; to another, a different value, and so on. Each found such experience meaningful from his different viewpoint because, as a value, it fulfilled the

requirements that his conception of a forest's ultimate value had for him.<sup>(1)</sup> Each would call his experience enjoyable. Such experience is aesthetic experience or subjective beauty. No one would deny that each individual felt his experience was aesthetic since it inspired him in his own peculiar interest. But what do we mean by aesthetic? Simply this, that the experience was meaningful to him. We equate the two terms - aesthetic and meaningful. There is always some individual who would not find such an experience pleasing but rather distasteful. But, since he has an experience, even though it is distasteful, it does not mean that it is not an aesthetic experience, that is, that it is an experience without meaning. Quite to the contrary. For all experiences, no matter how distasteful, have meaning. So, for this reason, if art is to concern itself with the whole of what is meaningful in experience it must concern itself with the pleasing and the distasteful for they are but two sides of the same shield - the shield of aesthetic experience.

Most theories of art (cf. Clive Bell) concern themselves with only pure aesthetic experience. As if it were possible to isolate pure aesthetic experience except as an abstraction from intellectual, moral or practical experience, for any and all experience is made up of values from each and all of these, before final judgment on the predominance of one value or another is made. In such theories the painter would, accordingly, be the only one who aesthetically experienced the forest because he alone experienced it without any ulterior motive. He experienced it simply as an experience meaningful on its own account as pure experience. Abstractly speak-

(1) See footnote at end of Chapter



ing this is true. But such an experience is seldom, if ever, "pure" because a painter will assign utilitarian, intellectual and practical values to the experience such as: (1) It is an experience which gives suitable material for teaching a lesson in forestation. (2) It is an experience which is a means to helping him create an impression by his individual technique. (3) It is an inspiration to complete a picture so that he may provide himself with a hundred dollars for food, clothing and shelter. (4) It is an experience that clarifies a confused conception of aerial perspective. For, since an artist is also a man, he at once colours his judgment of experience with values that are utilitarian, intellectual and moral. As a result of this interdependency of the pure aesthetic, utilitarian, intellectual and moral values I see no reason for limiting the term "aesthetic" to only "pure" experience, so I use the term to apply to all experience if that experience is meaningful. In thus equating aesthetic and meaningful, my theory of art must accept all experience, whether it is predominantly good, bad, moral, unmoral, useful, useless, pleasing or distasteful, as the source and proper subject matter for objectification in the art form, with the one stipulation - it must be meaningful. Any man then is an artist who gives objectivity to an idea, no matter whether that idea is partially or wholly intellectual, moral, practical or aesthetic, if his objectivities are meaningful. Was not Moses a moral artist in his own right? Was not Plato an intellectual artist in his own right? Was not James Watt a utilitarian artist in his own right? Was not Millet an aesthetic

artist in his own right? And of the distasteful experience is not an experience of the storm or the flood as meaningful as one of the sunshine and, because it is meaningful and therefore enjoyable, rightly subject matter for art, even though not pleasing?

There are some men, from genius down the scale of intelligence, who are awakened to an urge or impulse to exteriorize their interpretation of experience in objective form. Had it not been for such men the thoughts of the ages, the meaning of life to those in the past, would not have been preserved but would have been lost forever to us because it would never have had expression. Such men are the purveyors of culture in which is incorporated and made permanent their judgments in objective form of the meaning experience had for them. In their works we see perpetrated the values of the strivings, the struggles - their present judged in the light of their past becoming new values for their future. We see humanity in the light of such values pushing forward to higher values. Man judges experiences for their worth to him personally and to society. He judges them according to his moral, intellectual, practical and aesthetic values, accepting and rejecting them in proportion as they agree with his last absolute values, with the result his values and the culture he builds around them will, we saw, be pragmatic.

By anthropology we learned of such fruition of experience in objective form. For sometimes it was a new idea to better the efficiency of a weapon, sometimes a new conception of a god, sometimes a new conception of a moral law or a new ceremonial in religion.

Man, as artist, is not wholly concerned with objectifying experience as experience but with objectifying meaningful experience in a work of art. The perfection of this work of art lies in its ability to convey completely to others the experience it expresses. A work of art then, like aesthetic experience, is not the concern only of the aesthetic artist but of any man who wishes to objectify an idea with the end in view that the form he creates will express the idea, so long as the idea is meaningful. Creations, which we might have mentioned previously, of Moses, Plato, James Watt and Millet would be works of art in so far as they meaningfully, completely and therefore beautifully, expressed the idea that was in the mind of their creators. As objective creations in their own right, yes, because in order to exist as such they would embody unity, harmony, intelligibility. They are aesthetic creations but, because they have ulterior motives, they are not pure aesthetic works of art. Their ultimate end is beyond or outside themselves. They are moral, intellectual or utilitarian aesthetic works of art whose success depends upon their value as meaningful for their respective ends. They are the means by which we value something else. This something else, although it may overshadow perhaps the importance of the original pure aesthetic experience, does not destroy their claim to being works of art. Let us examine the pure aesthetic experience further. Such an experience is instantaneous experience, in nature, of a storm or of a flood; in art, of an art object. Such an experience we like or dislike immediately, finding it enjoyable or otherwise. We often

do not know why until we submit our enjoyment or dislikes to further judgment. Such experience we value for itself. All experience is like that at first. As man grows he controls its effect upon him by his intellectual, moral and practical judgment. We might say we fall in or out of love with an experience. It is then purely aesthetic. But later, by reason and judgment, we decide whether such experience should be continued to be enjoyed lest it interfere with our ultimate good. Then it becomes moral, intellectual or practical. Sometimes we do not decide at all but just go on loving it for itself, not caring whether it is true, good or moral, for such experience, when it is only pure aesthetic experience, is disliked or enjoyed for itself and, as such, forms the inspiration for the pure work of art.

To summarize: All experience is, if meaningful, aesthetic experience; when judged morally, intellectually, practically or aesthetically, it becomes conscious experience - a power which gives man the ability to raise himself above the beasts. Such experience may become objectified in works of art. Those who objectify such ideas we call artists. Only he who concerns himself with expressing the pure aesthetic experience he derived from reality is the one that we call pure aesthetic artist (usually just called artist). The activity that concerns itself with the expression of this aesthetic experience we call pure aesthetic art. Pure aesthetic art usually is designated as just

art, to the exclusion of that art which is an expression of all ideas - moral, intellectual and practical.<sup>(1)</sup> Art for us, as pragmatists, means - all creations of meaningful experience, enjoyable or otherwise. No matter whether such experience is purely aesthetic, moral, intellectual or practical, as long as it is meaningful we call it aesthetic and accept it as the subject matter for art.

- (1) There are no intrinsic psychological divisions between the intellectual and the sensory aspects; the emotional and ideational; the imaginative and the practical phases of human nature. But there are individuals and even classes of individuals who are dominantly executive or reflective; dreamers or "idealists" and doers; sensualists and the humanely minded; egoists and unselfish; those who engage in routine bodily activity and those who specialize in intellectual inquiry. In a badly ordered society such divisions as these are exaggerated. The well-rounded man and woman are the exception. But just as it is the office of art to be unifying, to break through conventional distinctions to the underlying common elements of the experienced world, while developing individuality as the manner of seeing and expressing these elements, so it is the office of art in the individual person, to compose differences, to do away with isolations and conflicts among the elements of our being, to utilize oppositions among them to build a richer personality. Hence the extraordinary ineptitude of a compartmentalized psychology to serve as an instrument for a theory of art.

Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 248

## Chapter V

Physiologically and psychologically it is impossible to transfer directly an idea, as an idea, from one mind to another. Man has no way of extracting it from his mind and of having it enter another mind in its spiritual or sensuous form. How does man convey from mind to mind his ideas which have proven of paramount value in adjusting himself to environment and environment to him, for we all know ideas are conveyed, else we would live only within the confines of a world of our own direct experience? Ideas are conveyed by objective symbols which we find on every hand standing for and representing empirical judgment. Taken collectively they, as well as those symbols found in the conventional and departmentalized arts of music, architecture, painting, sculpture and the dance, make up the total objective form of art, a factor from which we may find our key to the meaning and purpose of the art form and its relation to the subject matter of art. For art, "the only media of complete and unhindered communication between man and man that can occur in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit community of experience",<sup>(1)</sup> makes use of such symbolic form to express a subject matter that will arouse in us our funded knowledge and thereby cause within us a meaningful or, as we said before, beautiful experience. The following will show to some extent how we depend upon objective symbols in our everyday life to convey ideas.

(a) In religion we find definite ideas are symbolized by the Christian cross, the Hebrew interlaced triangles, the Moslem star and crescent, as well as sacraments and ritual and the

(1) Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 105

buildings themselves for the Christian Church as "form in itself is not sufficient .... It must be a symbol of and designate some august mystery. The edifice with its transverse naves represents the cross on which Christ died; its circular window with its brilliant petals figures the rose of eternity, the leaves of which are redeemed souls; all the dimensions of its parts correspond to sacred numbers".<sup>(1)</sup>

(b) In commerce we find definite ideas are symbolized by trade marks, slogans, radio call letters, the druggist's bottle of coloured liquid, the barber's pole, the three balls of the pawn shop.

(c) In organizations such as clubs, lodges, schools, - insignia, banners, pins, initiation ritual, songs and pledges symbolize ideas.

(d) In language, - letters are symbols of sounds, words are symbols of objects, sentences are symbols of complex ideas.

(e) In nations, - flags, flowers, animals, anthems, coins, stamps, persons (John Bull, Jack Canuck, Uncle Sam) symbolize power, authority and ambitions, as we well know the Swastika and Fasces do.

(f) In colours we find red symbolizes danger and is used as a consequence in fire alarm boxes, stop lights, hydrants; blue, sadness; black, and purple, royalty, old age, death; white, purity; green, inexperience; yellow, cowardice.

(g) In music and the dance, rhythms symbolize ideas connected with war, victory, hatred, festivity, love and animal worship.

(h) More generally speaking, other ideas such as those connected with love, marriage, life, death, and time, are respectively symbolized by bows and arrows, the wedding ring, the flaming torch,

(1) H. Taine, The Philosophy of Art, p. 148

the inverted torch, the hour glass.

(1) More closely related to our present subject - the created art form - will be that symbolism we find associated with the various objective characters that the artist uses to create that form and those principles that unify those characters - rhythm, harmony, and symmetry. Line and mass, when used in the plastic arts and metaphorically in music, the dance and literature are themselves symbols of an analogous psychological and psychophysical experience of the human organism.<sup>(1)</sup> They are used in art expression in such a way that they objectify a planned, a designed, a realized order or unity. That is their ultimate purpose. The artist carries over in his creation factors of experience that effected in him a mental unity. So, from earliest times, the artist incorporated (1) rhythm in the art form to bring about a unity of parts because he, by experience, grew physically and psychologically conditioned by the movement of the wind, the wave and the seasons in their progression and by the rhythm of his own struggles and their consummation within the environment; (2) balance or symmetry, because he was forced to attain an equilibrium to maintain physical and mental symmetry; (3) harmony or order, because he, finding discord unpleasant, confusing, distracting and ineffective in working out his life pattern, accepted it as essential if that life pattern were to be unified. As a result of this his whole organism, thus con-

(1) "In listening to music, we see how it is that we ourselves, body and soul, seem to be in the rhythm. We make it, and we wait to make it. The satisfaction of our expectation is like the satisfaction of a bodily desire or need; no, not like it, it is that. The conditions and causes of rhythm and our pleasure in it are more deeply seated than language, custom, even instinct; they are in the most fundamental functions of life."

E. D. Puffer, The Psychology of Beauty, p. 171



ditioned, would of necessity, if he be an artist, condition his work of art, because it incorporates his judgment of unity. As a result of this it is quite obvious, then, that the art object, since it is the interpretation of the meaning of life, will be made up of spacial and temporal factors that convey the meaning of actual experience of space and time relationships. How then are space and time intervals symbolized in the arts? In the plastic arts and, as we said, metaphorically in the other arts this is accomplished by the use of line, mass and tone. Let us first examine the symbolic meaning of line.

"Nature.....does not present us with lines in isolation.....That is to say, lines express the ways in which things act upon one another and upon us; the ways in which, when objects act together, they reinforce and interfere. For this reason, lines are wavering, upright, oblique, crooked, majestic; for this reason they seem in direct perception to have even moral expressiveness. They are earth-bound and aspiring; intimate and coldly aloof; enticing and repellent. They carry with them the properties of objects."<sup>(1)</sup> "Different lines and different relations of lines have become subconsciously charged with all the values that result from what they have done in our experience in our every contact with the world about us. The expressiveness of lines and space relations in painting cannot be understood upon any other basis."<sup>(2)</sup>

Because line symbolizes a continuous movement or lack of it, we find static or dynamic action symbolized in the art form when it is predominantly made up of the straight line. For, when the straight

(1) Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 101

(2) Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 102

line is used vertically it symbolizes dignity, aspiration, majesty, stateliness, calmness of awareness, because such are the meanings the human organism derives from experience when it assumes a vertical posture or when it stands in awe before the majestic oak, the skyscraper and the cathedral spire; when the straight line is used horizontally it symbolizes suppression, death, calmness of rest, for exactly the same reason, for do we not experience such meanings when we assume the horizontal posture? when used obliquely it symbolizes a dynamic action we would likewise experience if we fell to the right or to the left - such action in a design is arrested by the support of another oblique line, in experience by us by a pole or hoe upon which we would lean for support.

When the curved line is used in composition, because of its more regular, sequent rhythmic and dynamic nature, we should expect it to symbolize a more dynamic movement than the straight line. When we wish to express symbolically a lively movement by our hand, as that of an individual falling over a cliff, do we not illustrate it by describing circles in the air and not by disjointed straight lines? The curved line, if it is concave, will symbolize a lively action like the movement of waves and the commonplace roller coaster. If convex, protection like that afforded by church domes and umbrellas. If compound or 'S'-shaped, it symbolizes a gracefulness we find in plant growth. If spiral, a mystery and an infinity, suggested by the never-ending intertwining. "Lines aesthetically "drawn" fulfill many functions with corresponding increase of expressiveness. They embody the meaning of volume, of room and pos-

ition; solidity and movement; they enter into the force of all other parts of the picture, and they serve to relate all parts together so that the value of the whole is energetically expressed."<sup>(1)</sup>

Likewise, if we examine contours such as the ovoid, oval, circle, respectively, we find that because they symbolize the tactual feelings undergone when we experience them in objectivity they are preferred in design because (1) they have their "corners knocked off" and therefore symbolically present a more pleasing and dynamic rhythm and (2) more variety in contour (because no two sections of contours are identically the same) than the square, rectangle and triangle<sup>(2)</sup> which have corners. Variety in form, as in experience, is the "spice of life" so long as it is coupled with order. The pungent appeal of motifs of jazz music no doubt lose their appeal because their rhythm is too self-evident - lacking nuances and inuendoes which appear in great musical compositions, a subtlety apparent only after repeated hearings. Of the straight lined contours however, we might say the rectangle is symbolic of more variety than the square and for that reason is more acceptable. But the rectangle must be of proportions that are not too evident or too alike. Such proportions as 2:3, 3:4, 3:5, 5:7, 7:9 present this subtlety. Rectangles with sides too alike in proportion or too extreme make for monotony and repulsion and are therefore avoided as bad spacial form.

If a mass is sub-divided into smaller masses it is more

(1) Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 93

(2) The triangle or pyramidal form of paintings, particularly in evidence in those of Madonnas, seems to have been used because it suggests an absolute lack of action in place of which is expressed a feeling of contemplation and aspiration.

pleasing if these are unequal in size, but in a harmonious ratio, rather than if they are equal in size or of extreme ratio. A mass made up of smaller masses of equal size presents a monotonous arrangement of parts. No matter how pungent or interesting the part may be, if, by repetition, too many similar parts make up the whole, that whole cannot fail to produce a monotonous impression, just as the second meal from the Sunday roast, if it is not varied by the use of curry and onions, will produce a similar effect upon the palate.

"The aesthetic vulgarity of many of our edifices, especially of those that line American city streets, is due to the monotony caused by regular repetition of forms, uniformly spaced, the architect depending only upon adventitious ornamentation for variety."<sup>(1)</sup> "I have said that the organism craves variety as well as order. The statement, however, is too weak for it sets forth a secondary property rather than the primary fact. The process of organic life is variation."<sup>(2)</sup> "Demand for variety is the manifestation of the fact that being alive we seek to live, until we are cowed by fear or dulled by routine. The need of life itself pushes us out into the unknown. This is the abiding truth of romance."<sup>(3)</sup>

Colours, we said, symbolize definite environmental meanings. Hence, where colour is added to form, it is only natural that those colours should be used that best symbolize the idea that the form expresses. Such we find, for example, in Watt's painting entitled "Hope", where he uses chiefly greens and blues to symbolize the depressing situation of humanity hoping for something better

- (1) Dewey, Art as Experience, p.168
- (2) Dewey, Art as Experience, p.168
- (3) Dewey, Art as Experience, p.169

when all possible physical chance of it has passed. Just here we might sum up what has been said about the purpose of visual symbolism by saying that it is used in order that an indirect experience, similar in meaning to a direct experience, might be derived from an art object. The direct experience is symbolized in a rhythm, balance, and harmony of line, colour, mass, and contour so that the art object is then but a symbol of a mental unity. For "underneath the rhythm of every art and of every work of art there lies, as a substratum in the depths of the subconsciousness, the basic pattern of the relations of the live creature to his environment."<sup>(1)</sup> This we find to be the case in religious beliefs, rites, ceremonies, laws, literature, dance architecture, music, painting or the multifarious articles of everyday use and commerce. Objectively, then, form is, briefly, the tool by means of which that man, who wishes to transfer his experiences to another mind, may exteriorize those subjective judgments symbolically so that they may arouse a recipient to the meaning of life (the latter experiencing indirectly that which the former experienced directly.)

Art, then, is an objective language, symbolic of subjective ideas, which is dependent upon

- (1) an artist with an idea to objectify symbolically and an ability to objectify it,
- (2) an art object which is the symbolic form or symbolic expression of that idea,
- (3) a recipient who receives an impression from the art object and thereby undergoes indirectly the artist's experience when he reads

(1) Dewey, Art as Experience, p.150

the meaning behind that symbolism.

Since we all undergo experiences, we are potential artists. But some of us do not become artists because we never exteriorize our ideas in symbolic objective form. Why is this so? It is not because we are insensible to our environment, but rather because (1) we do not feel those experiences we undergo as worthwhile to be objectified or, (2) if we do feel them worthwhile, we have not the impulse to create an objective form or, (3) if we have the conviction of their value and the impulse, we find ourselves lacking in ability to create because of our inability to unify our experiences and to choose the necessary symbols to express that unity - "the words won't come". We therefore cannot create the objective form, pattern or design and, like many others, we are unable to add anything to culture. "What most of us lack in order to be artists is not the inceptive emotion nor yet merely technical skill in execution. It is capacity to work a vague idea and emotion over into terms of some definite medium."<sup>(1)</sup> Those who do add to culture, in any group, are therefore usually in the minority. They are the rare, great intelligences - the geni, who, gifted with the necessary mental ability, having acquired a meaningful mental content, create symbolic forms. We have some conception of the greatness of such artists from their objective works - nothing but geni could be responsible for the ten commandments, the pyramids, Greek, Roman and Gothic architecture, the Pilgrim's Progress, the Books of the Bible. They are great values made permanent in form, - values derived from experience. From such form, others derive those values

(1) Dewey, Art as Experience, p.75

indirectly. Direct experience is more meaningful than indirect experience for the very good reason that direct experience is the best teacher, because we are aware of a more intense effect upon the organism. However, because we have not the time or opportunity to to directly experience every empirical situation life has to offer, we must content ourselves with the indirect communications of a great deal of it in symbolic form, or in other words, we depend upon formal education, for there is no other way that we can acquire our heritage of evolved culture.<sup>(1)</sup>

The symbolic form is particularly meaningful because it expresses another's experience which is so often like our own and for which we feel a delight in experiencing it because "each is glad that another feels what he feels; glad of the communion established, not only between him and all present, but also with all now living who will yet share the same impression; and more than that, he feels the mysterious gladness of a communion which, reaching beyond the grave, unite us with all men of the past who have been moved by the same feelings, and with all the men of the future who will yet be touched by them. And this effect is produced both by the religious art which transmits feelings of love to God and one's neighbour, and by universal art, transmitting the very simplest feelings common to all men."<sup>(2)</sup> To the recipient the symbolic form will be meaningful in proportion as (1) it expresses a meaningful value(subject matter), (2) in a meaningful way (form), (3) in so far as the recipient is capable of appreciating it. With the latter the following seems to be in harmony: "There must be indirect and collateral channels of

(1) See page 54, footnote.

(2) Tolstoi, What is Art? p.165

response prepared in advance in the case of one who really sees the picture or hears the music. This motor preparation is a large part of aesthetic education in any particular line. To know what to look for and how to see it is an affair of readiness on the part of motor equipment. A skilled surgeon is the one who appreciates the artistry of another surgeon's performance; he follows it sympathetically, though not overtly, in his own body. The one who knows something about the relation of the movements of the piano-player to the production of music from the piano will hear something the mere layman does not perceive - just as the expert performer "fingers" music while engaged in reading a score. One does not have to know much about mixing paints on a palette or about the brush-strokes that transfer pigments to canvas to see the picture in the painting. But it is necessary that there be ready defined channels of motor response, due in part to native constitution and in part to education through experience. Emotion may be stirred and yet be as irrelevant to the act of perception as it is to the action of the hunter seized by buck-fever. It is not too much to say that emotion that lacks proper motor lines of operation will be so undirected as to confuse and distort perception."<sup>(1)</sup> Of (2) and (3) above we might say their fulfilment depends upon the fact that the artist should choose a subject matter which has such value as will be of use for a practical, intellectual, aesthetic or moral growth and development, and should give as perfect a symbolic form as he is capable of to this subject matter, first, for the sake of intelligibility or "legibility" for

(1) Dewey, Art as Experience, p.98



upon these rests the truthful communication of values; second, because the artist having the responsibility of creating the new and since upon the truth or falsity of the new depends the advancement or the retrogression of the individual and the group, he is in a sense morally bound to fulfil his duty as artist. The judgment of the artist, which forms the subject matter of his creation naturally since it precedes the actual culmination of the completed work, precedes its social acceptance. Works of art are not always accepted at their inception for, as we know from history, the creator of the new is usually crucified for his convictions, especially if he tries to inflict that conviction upon his contemporaries as a new value for them. Why is the present always so loathe to sacrifice the old? Is it because the old is so satisfying? The present does not like the mental disturbance of the new, that is the reason - adjustments do come hard but to progress to more absolute values the old must ever be replaced by the new. It must accept as things<sup>(1)</sup> desired all those creations in spite of the momentary unhappiness that they may bring if they help us to arrive at greater values, to ever forge ahead. The greatest artists of the world, no matter what symbolic form and medium they used or what their subject matter, realized this because, for their efforts to propagate them, they derived anything but happiness. The recipient must be prepared to accept the philosophy of life as expressed in the subject matter and form of art. He must be prepared to accept life, the real,

(1) By "things" I do not mean concrete, objective things in general but those objective creations which symbolize the rhythm of life, strivings, strugglings, conscious realizations of urges and judgment - realization of ideals by self-abasement, self-sacrifice and devotion.

rather than life, the romantic and the fanciful because the end of art is to objectify the truth as it evolves, even if it hurts, because it expresses from time to time the absolute, the most meaningful values of life which were accomplished both pleasingly and disturbingly for life was harsh and cruel. The way of the righteous is not romantically straight and narrow but really very crooked and wide, along which man must travel, travailing and judging proper alternatives, creating in fulfilment of that striving ideals and values in order to comprehend reality. To serve such a purpose the artist portrays in his art both the struggle and the outcome in proportion as they are meaningful as stepping stones to further fulfilment.

Chapter VI

What is the ultimate end of art? What is its ultimate value in the totality of things? With all philosophies of art we agree it is Beauty, but will qualify in this chapter our meaning of it. However, to say beauty is found in art as the objectification of an absolute will, idea or unity we rejected as fanciful and beyond proof. For what meaning can such an assumption as the following, like the Platonistic philosophy of McMahon, have except to be vague and fanciful? Who, by introspection, can decide that he has obtained such ecstasy? "Be they artists or lovers of art, mystics or mathematicians, those who achieve ecstasy are those who have freed themselves from the arrogance of humanity.....Whatever the world of aesthetic contemplation may be it is not the world of human business and passion; in it the chatter and tumult of material existence is unheard, or heard only as the echo of some more ultimate reality."<sup>(1)</sup> Bell, in an attempt to answer this problem of the meaning of beauty, says the following: "What quality is shared by all objects that provoke our aesthetic emotions? What quality is common to Sta. Sophia and the windows at Chartres, Mexican sculpture, a Persian bowl, Chinese carpets, Giotto's frescoes at Padua, and the masterpieces of Poussin, Piero della Francesca, and Cezanne? Only one answer seems possible - significant form. In each, lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, stir our aesthetic emotions. These relations and combinations of lines and colours, these aesthetically moving forms, I call "Significant Form"; and "Significant Form" is the one quality common

(1) Clive Bell, Art, p.70

to all works of art."<sup>(1)</sup> How can one ever hope that design or "significant form", since it is but man's judgment of an experience objectified, can express an ultimate reality - the thing in itself? For it is but an objective representation only of an empirical abstraction and not of an experience transcending the experiences of life. For sensuous experience is all that men can know. The thing in itself, for art as for philosophy, is unknowable. We accept, therefore, the fact that the objective beauty takes its source in sensuous experience but we reject the conception of that beauty as a reflection of an absolute transcendental. We prefer to think of absolute beauty, since it has its source in sensuous experience, as being the culmination of an evolutionary process. It is but the reflection of an evolved empirical judgment which makes sensuous experience meaningful and therefore beautiful. For, "The silence of the desert is without value, until some wanderer finds it lonely and terrifying; the cataract, until some human sensibility finds it sublime, or until it is harnessed to satisfy human needs. Natural substances or the by-products of manufacture are without value until a use is found for them, whereupon their value may increase to any degree of preciousness according to the eagerness with which they are coveted. There is no entity that can be named that does not, in the very naming of it, take on a certain value through the fact that it is selected by the cognitive purpose of some interested mind. As interests grow and expand, multiplying in number and extending their radius through experience and imagination, the store of cosmic value is enriched and diversified."<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Clive Bell, Art, p.8

(2) Perry, General Theory of Value, p.125

This is the common quality that works of art have, that makes them works of art. In proportion then as they are or are not clearly meaningful they will be beautiful or non-beautiful. Now meaningfulness or beauty is but the suitability of the work of art for carrying out the purpose for which it was created. In the practical realm, a humble spoon has meaningfulness or beauty if it incorporates a design which approximates as closely as possible the absolute purpose for which a spoon could be used. If the design includes an added decoration or a curvature of the handle which hinders that absolute use, it cannot fulfil its purpose perfectly and therefore will fall far short of having absolute beauty, although it will be a work of art. In the case of added decoration such was the case with Gothic architecture for Taine says, "In the interior the decoration is so exuberant and complex, the groinings so richly display their thorny and tangled vegetation, and the stalls, pulpit and railings swarm with such intricate, tortuous, fantastic arabesques that the church no longer seems to be a sacred monument, but a rare example of the jeweller's art .... a festive decoration as elaborated as that of a queen or a bride."<sup>(1)</sup> In the moral realm, a moral code likewise, if it is hindered in performing its function absolutely, lacks beauty in proportion as it falls short of that purpose. It is evident then to be fully beautiful, a work of art should incorporate as subject matter the best value so far known in order to carry out its purpose. This best value, as we have mentioned before, being not the same for every age, suggests that it is conditioned by "the general state of the mind

(1) H. Taine, The Philosophy of Art, p.152

and surrounding manners"<sup>(1)</sup> of every age. For Taine says, "In Greece we see physical perfection and a balance of faculties which no manual or cerebral excess of life deranges; in the middle ages the intemperance of over-excited imaginations and the delicacy of feminine sensibility; in the 17th Century the polish and good-breeding of society and the dignity of aristocratic salons; and in modern times the grandeur of unchained ambitions and the morbidity of unsatisfied yearnings" - which gave rise to a "representative man" which was.... "in Greece, the naked youth of a fine race and accomplished in bodily exercise; in the middle ages, the ecstatic monk and the amorous knight; in the 17th Century, the perfect courtier; and in our days, the melancholy insatiable Faust or Werther."<sup>(2)</sup> In our own day we saw in Chapter III<sup>(3)</sup> some conception of how art values have grown out of our way of living. A work of art may be beautiful, practically, morally, intellectually and aesthetically. For as this was so of the spoon, of the moral code, it would be so of a better mathematical solution to an algebraic deduction. The pure aesthetic object, since it exists solely to express the meaningfulness of pure experience, would have aesthetic beauty as its only aim. Such could be the case in works of art of poetry, painting, sculpture and music for they could concern themselves with only pure aesthetic experience, i.e., pure design. But we like to think of works of art as expressing some resemblance to nature as well as expressing only pure aesthetic experience lest pure design be the only end the art object may have and the meaning of life be missed because the art object is the

(1) H. Taine, The Philosophy of Art, p.180

(2) H. Taine, *ibid*, p.181

(3) Page 24

objectification of the whole man.

What is this beauty, this meaningfulness, essentially? The design for a creation arises in the mind as a result of a complexity of sensuous experiences which by judgment in the light of past experience<sup>(1)</sup> is conceived into a meaningful unity. This unity is objectified by an artist. As far as possible the objectification conforms to that meaningful unity. Hence, we might say meaningfulness is but the judgment the artist passed upon his own experience as he accepts what is relevant and rejects what is irrelevant for the end for which the experience was judged, for only thus can he unify and harmonize experience, i.e., only thus can he arrive at beauty. When he objectifies his judgment in the work of art it will exhibit this judgment as an objective beauty similar to the artist's subjective beauty for it is but judgment objectified into an objective unity and harmony, a purposeful whole. Now the recipient! What is this judgment objectified for him? The recipient, when he experiences this work of art, experiences the judgment of the artist. He puts himself, as it were, in unison with the artist. He communes with him and experiences that unity which meant so much to him. He judges that objective unity according to his own likes and dislikes. He may accept or reject it as beauty. For such beauty as the object incorporates is a relative beauty, a value judged by each individual according to his mental content and accepted or rejected by each on the same score, just as he would have accepted or rejected the

(1) Life is too short to analyze and decide every problem from the ground up and no sane person disregards entirely the testimony of past experience in art or other activities.

T. Munro, Scientific Methods in Aesthetics, p.92

original experience of the artist. For, "Fundamentally, one's response to a work of art as to anything else is determined by the long history of habit-formation, stretching back into infancy, whose cumulative steps can not be consciously remembered. One's most intense fascinations and repulsions may be caused by some long-forgotten shock, or the habitual repression of a strong tendency. Aesthetic response may be influenced by major peculiarities of one's physical condition, deafness, colour-blindness; or transitory as a headache, fatigue, over-satiety caused by over-stimulation."<sup>(1)</sup>

"Certain peculiar preferences, certain habits, faiths and assumptions, strong emotional associations one may accept as integral parts of one's character. Their dictates in aesthetic judgment will then be upheld even when consciously recognized. Everyone has such peculiarities; there is no such thing as a completely objective valuation as a work of art."<sup>(2)</sup> From this we see beauty is as relative as the judgments that make it. It is an absolute value in so far as it is acceptable to the greatest number of individuals as the best value yet attained, for we saw in Chapter III that aesthetic values were not absolute and universal in any other way than as the result of varying social and individual preferences. From the foregoing we deduce: (1) Beauty begins as a subjective judgment of a sensuous experience by the artist. It is made objective by him in his work of art. Acting as a stimulus later to a recipient, it becomes again a subjective judgment in his mind, and he rejudges it. In brief, beauty is judgment judging itself for unity and harmony.

(1) T. Munro, Scientific Methods in Aesthetics, p.84

(2) T. Munro, *ibid*, p.86



(2) Beauty is absolute in so far as it is acceptable, as the greatest judgment of unity and harmony so far made, to the greatest number of individuals.<sup>(1)</sup> We further deduce (3) beauty is subjective and objective, but since the objective beauty is but the subjective in symbolic form we accept the dogmatic statement that beauty is essentially subjective. Does this mean no subject, no beauty? Yes. But what of the beauty in nature? We grant there is objective beauty there but this is not the beauty of art, for nature is not man's judgment objectified. Art is only concerned with man's judgment. Hence, if there is no subject there will be no judgment. If there is no judgment there will be no art. If there is no art object there will be no meaning - no arousal of judgment in the mind of the recipient. Since beauty is unity and harmony arrived at through judgment, if there is no subject there will be no beauty.

- (1) It is the mark of great art that its appeal is universal and eternal.

Clive Bell, Art, p.36

However, like a violin, all art, if it does not produce aesthetic tone when created, will not have that quality added to it by years of age. It, as well as the violin, may increase in historical value but not in aesthetic value for which they were created.

## Chapter VII

We are now at a point when a discussion of the relationship of the matter and the form of the art object should be undertaken in order to clarify their function. It will be recalled that, by art object we mean any creation, be it predominantly intellectual, moral, utilitarian or aesthetic, for it may be an expression purely of any one of these or ~~of~~ a combination of them. However, an art object, no matter what its value, incorporates ~~one~~ (1) a subject matter and (2) a form. Of the latter Munro distinguishes certain groups of elements that make for its wholeness of which we treated in Chapter V - "These are the sensuous materials (e.g. tones, colors, lines, masses, word sounds, considered as individual units); the same materials as co-operating factors in a design (e.g. a sonnet, facade or sonata); and the natural objects represented, the ideas or emotions expressed (e.g. trees, houses and sunlight in a landscape; religious, moral or dramatic interest, a gay or tragic mood).<sup>(1)</sup> The function of the subject matter, which, as we have mentioned before, is a unity of sensuous experience, is, when made permanent in objective form, an abiding, meaningful occasion of that unity for every recipient that views it. The function of the form is not only to express (1) the idea objectively as a cumulative unity, but also (2) to express in line, mass, contour and sounds how the creator felt about that idea. This latter function of form is of supreme importance for by it the purely or dominantly intellectual, moral and practical art object is or is not made aesthetic. Dogmatic moralists and politicians realize this fact for they, knowing well that pure intellectual argument

(1) T. Munro, *ibid*, p. 32

is not, as such, purely convincing, colour it with an objective appeal to the emotions, in the form of aesthetic symbols. Thus those who have not intellectual "ears" by which to hear will at least accept ideas because of their tremendous aesthetic appeal. An aesthetic form, as well as the idea, are both incorporated thus in the art object. In the pure aesthetic work of art the form's sole function is to express a pure aesthetic experience as is found in abstract paintings and Gertrude Stein's poetry where no verisimilitude of objective reality is attempted or expressed. It is this symbolic form that those who create other values in works of art than the aesthetic use when they clothe their works by ritual, ceremony, pomp and splendour. All art may thus become aesthetic for by such symbolism is the inward meaning of art realized in outward expression.

From what precedes we conclude art is subjective at its source because it begins in the artist's mind. This subjectivity is given objective form. To be an aesthetic work of art this form must express symbolically the creator's feeling about the idea so that it will be an occasion for arousing a similar experience in any recipient who has the ability to undergo it when and where it is exhibited. This thesis, although it conveys intellectual interpretations of a philosophy of art, does not convey the emotional stress undergone in developing it. Because of this it lacks pure aesthetic appeal and as such is not wholly meaningful as a possible work of art. Similarly, a pure aesthetic work of art is non-intellectual, non-moral, non-utilitarian because it is disinterested

primarily in anything but aesthetic value. Factually, man does not create or approach a work of art as a pure intellectual, moralist or aesthete. He is part of all these, perhaps dominantly so of one and, as a result of this, his creations are that personality. They are part of all those values and may thereby arouse an interest in every value or predominantly one.

The art object may be enjoyed solely (1) for itself as design aesthetically appealing as Clive Bell suggests when he says "significant form" is the one quality common to all works of art that make them works of art. But he who, like Bell, worships this formal element to such an extent that he would have us, in order to appreciate it purely, bring "nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotion" lest such knowledge prevent us from enjoying that purity, misses a great part of the function of art. Is all we need to appreciate a work of art just a knowledge of three-dimensional space, a sense of form and colour? It is, if art is to concern itself only with the pure aesthetic experience. But art concerns itself with the whole of experience that has any value no matter whether it is aesthetic, moral or intellectual.

The art object may be enjoyed (2) solely for the experience it symbolizes. We find today many objects, particularly religious objects, enjoyed not as symbols of aesthetic judgment or religious judgment but as taboos against danger or as beneficent charms having inherent qualities physically helpful. I recall seeing statues of saints in a Christian shrine completely covered

with names and initials of individuals who no doubt hoped their desires would be ever obvious to the saint and eventually granted. A false utilitarian motive is substituted for the real motive for which the object was created. The real motive is lost sight of. Superstition and a false experience is substituted. If an objective creation does not give an experience of what it symbolizes and how the artist felt about that experience, it is not really art. This is true when in painting and sculpture, objective nature, and in music, natural sounds are duplicated. If the artist is to tell us how he felt about what he experienced, a creation which is a verisimilitude of the line, colour, tone and shape, as found in nature, will not tell us the "how" of an experience of an autumn landscape but only the "what". Here the artist is not creating how he felt because he felt nothing. He was but a camera, duplicating what he saw, and as the camera, was incapable of recording any feeling and he likewise was incapable when, as a phonograph or parrot, he reproduced sounds he heard in all their naturalness but did not interpret them. To be an artist it is necessary, besides being able to register the experience and transfer it with dexterity of hand, to be able to modulate experience and interpret it as a meaningful unity in terms of past experience so that by such interpretation the indirect experience of the recipient will be meaningfully enriched. Art should not duplicate nature. It should bend it to its liking. If the artist wishes to express his feeling of hardship, drudgery or primitiveness of a people within an environment, he may, if he wishes,

distort the natural forms to express such ideas more powerfully. Whether they represent the human figure matters little so long as they express the feeling the artist had about them. Classic art, as is shown in Aztec, Maya and Maori distorted carvings, did express this feeling. Their creations did not lose in meaningfulness by not having their formal significance in exact duplication of descriptive qualities nor by lack of technical dexterity. Civilization too, none the less, gives us variations from the natural form for in so-called "society portraits" in many cases we find exhibited neither the sitters own hands nor her true proportions, but only such as give dignity and gracefulness for the very good reason that "sitters" rather like flattery which never seems to have been rejected as false in the same way as distortions were. In both the primitive and civilized treatment of natural form there is a factor of untruthfulness. . . However, since an idea is made more forceful by the addition of a change in form, the design expressed is quite legitimate. In fact, because of that design, it is made more powerfully aesthetic. So long as the art object expresses unequivocally what and how the artist felt about his experience that is all that is required of it.

## Chapter VIII

The preceding chapters have been devoted to a pragmatic conception of art. A conception of art wide enough in scope to include all creation - all objectification of judgment no matter of what value because we feel all experience is basically aesthetic and therefore all of it is the proper subject matter for art. We have concerned ourselves with the development of art as an expression of a comprehensive value - beauty, and to explanations of this value and its relation to artist, art object, and recipient. Because this value, as we conceive it, is dependent upon man's judgment of sensuous experience for its existence and not upon his revelation of it as a value existing as an independent Platonic form, we called it relative, tentative and evolving. Our conception of such a value was also comprehensive enough to be applied to all creation no matter of what value. As a result of this all works of art are beautiful in proportion as they fulfil the purpose for which they are given objectification for, like an animal form, they are not "estimated according to standards foreign to such an organism but strictly according to the ends that the creature is intended to attain and the means whereby it survives in a world more or less hostile to it".<sup>(1)</sup> Works of art, as we have mentioned before, as pure abstract art, have, as that purpose, pure design - religious art, design plus a religious value - and so on with all creations of other values. The point to be drawn from this, it seems, is that art, since it concerns itself with judgment of all values, is all judgment. And since that judgment is objectified in the art form

(1) De Garmo and Winslow, *ibid*, p. 33

and thus can be judged further by a recipient, art is judgment judging itself.

From our discussion we also found some men at times are driven by impulse to create new art forms due to the fact that they have sought and found a spiritual or intellectual value to objectify. There is something inspiring in the urge to surpass the old by creating something new and they could not resist this urge even at the point of great sacrifice. This value must be discerned but to be discerned the recipient must penetrate beyond the form to the meaning it symbolizes. He should look beyond a statue for the idea of deity, beyond the elements of a painting of the crucifixion for the meaning of self-sacrifice and salvation, beyond the drama for the meaning of continence. On this point Puffer, in speaking of the value of the word in itself in literature says, "The word is but a sign, a negligible quantity in human intercourse - a counter in which the coins are ideas and emotions - merely legal tender, of no value save in exchange. What we really experience in the sound of a sentence, in the sight of a printed page, is a complex sequence of visual and other images, ideas, emotions, feelings, logical relations, swept along in the stream of consciousness - differing, indeed, in certain ways from daily experience, but yet primarily of the web of life itself. The words in their nuances, march, tempo, melody, add certain elements to this flood - hasten, retard, undulate, or calm it; but it is the thought, the understood experience, that is the stuff of literature."<sup>(1)</sup> To understand well

(1) E. D. Puffer, *ibid*, p.207



this underlying meaning of things is to understand reality - if they are true ideas it is an idealism for if true they are ideals by which to judge. For, "the end of literature, as of all the arts, is not the criticism of life; rather the appreciation of life - the full savour of life in its entirety ... the art of experience." (1)

Art is a universal, international, catholic language. We must learn to have ears that hear and eyes that see lest it speak in an unknown tongue, making it impossible for us to participate in or partake of its meanings. We must try to understand it from the creator's viewpoint because each art object has impressed upon it the individuality of that person - every culture the collective individuality of the people wherein it arose. For only by understanding the thought that our vitally dynamic life prompts can another of a totally different environment comprehend the meaning of our architecture and machine-made art. Only by some comprehension of the Hindu's eager desire to acquiesce in a knowledge and harmonious union with the Cosmic Self can we understand his art. For to understand art we must understand that "the beginning of man is the beginning of articulate thought and of thought put into action. Without words, whether framed in sober, rational conversation or launched in magical spells, or used to entreat superior divinities, man would not have been able to embark upon his great Odyssey of cultural adventure and achievement." (2)

(1) E. D. Puffer, *ibid*, p.225

(2) B. Malinowski, *The Fraser Lectures*, p.119

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