

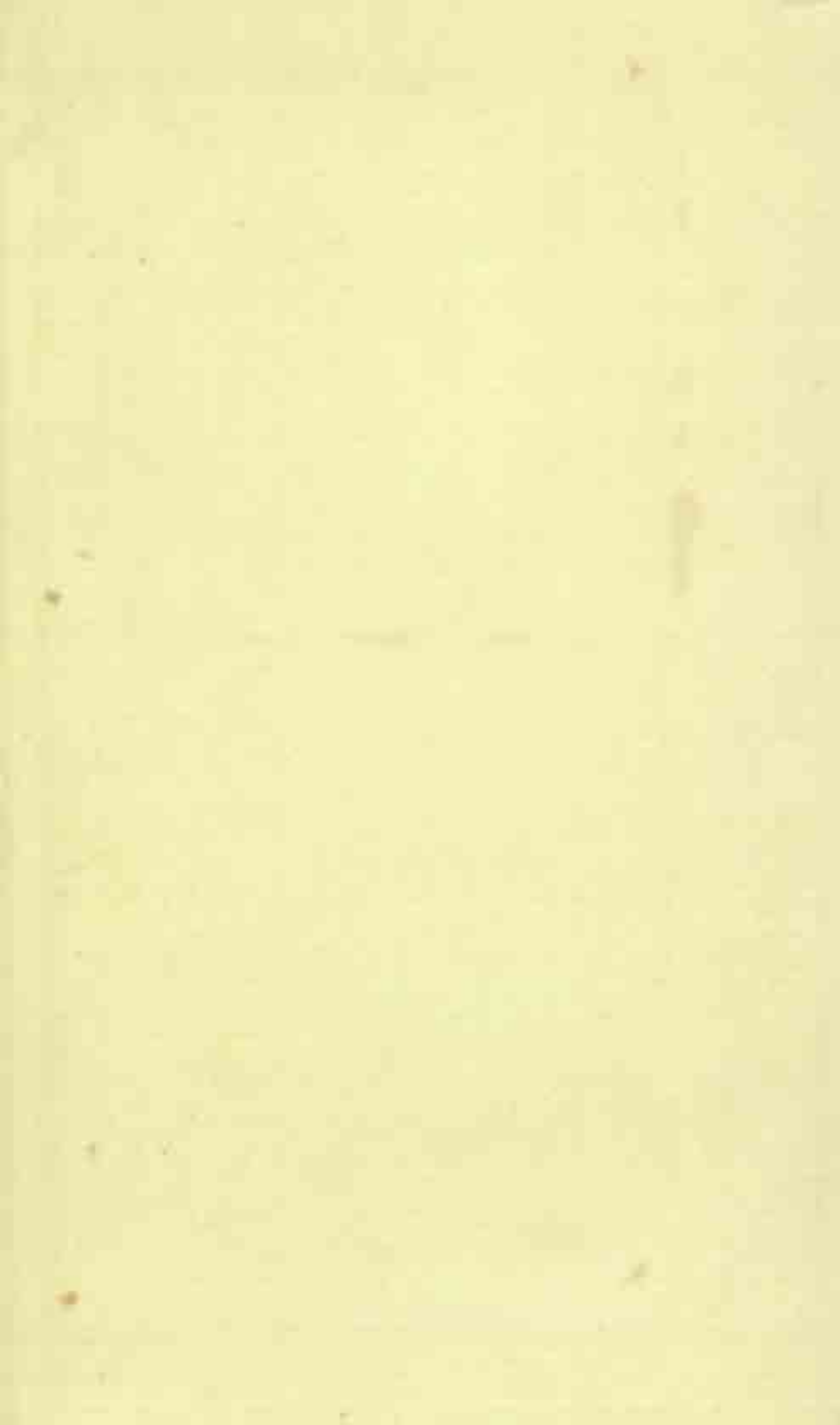
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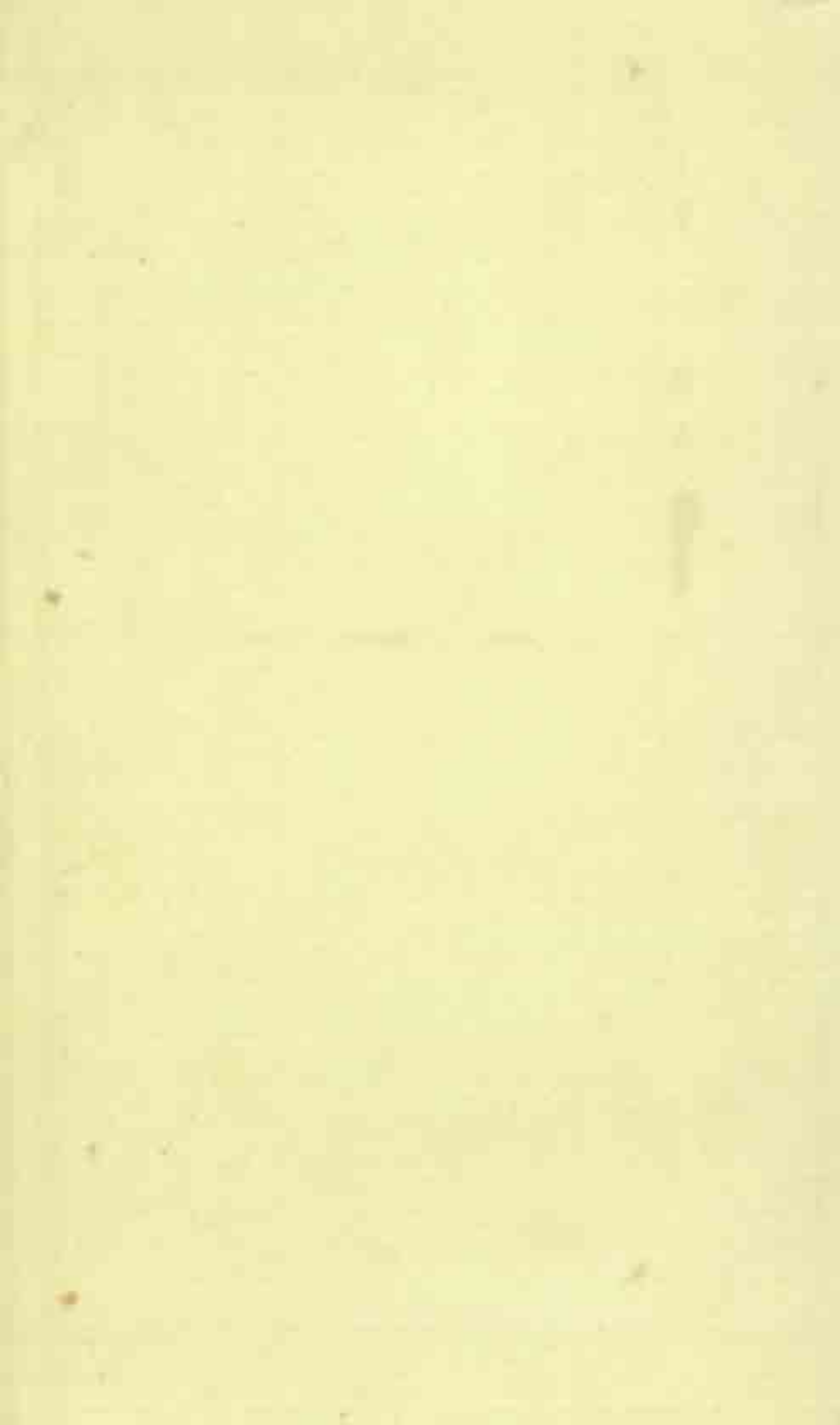
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THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF ART

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HENRI MATISSE



LA FEMME D'ALGER

By courtesy of Rex Nanterrell, Esq.

THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF ART

OR

THE MAKING OF LIFE

BY

ARTHUR R. HOWELL

Also Author of

'FOUR VITAL YEARS'

11015

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

CHARLES MARRIOTT

Former Art Critic to 'The Times'

701
How



1957

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ERRATA

Page x.—Second paragraph, ninth line:

for 'Surrealism and post-impressionist art' *read* 'Surrealism
and post-Impressionist art'

Page 93.—Second paragraph, second line:

for 'is composed for four elements only' *read* 'is composed of
four elements only'

Plate facing page 168:

for 'Jean Lurcat' *read* 'Jean Lurçat'

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FOREWORD

BY CHARLES MARRIOTT
Former Art Critic of 'The Times'

I WELCOME this opportunity to speak of the pleasure and profit I derived from reading Mr Howell's book. What seems to me to distinguish it among books of the kind that have come my way, is the combination of a philosophical habit of mind with a first-hand acquaintance with works of art, works of contemporary art in particular. Philosophical writers on art have, as a rule, only a sketchy acquaintance with the way things are done, and technical experts, too, often lack the generalising capacity. Those who remember the series of exhibitions at the St George's Gallery, under Mr Howell's direction, giving a first opportunity to several young British artists who have since become famous, and introducing foreign artists hitherto unknown in this country, will not need to be told that his knowledge of works of art is both extensive and peculiar, and his generalising capacity comes out in every line he writes.

The combination indicated above enables Mr Howell to refer particular works of art to the general sensibility, which is the test of quality, without losing any of the characteristics due to individual personality or medium or race or period, on the way. He not only does not 'empty out the baby with the bath', as aesthetic philosophers are apt to do, but he does not spill any of the contents in arriving at his conclusions about form. To put it another way, he preserves unbroken all the relations between central and local government in artistic affairs. Parts of the book I found difficult, and in one or two details I found myself in opposition, but with the general argument I am in complete agreement. I feel sure that the book will help towards a better understanding of art, both in itself and in relation to everyday life.

Portishead, Bristol.

November 19th, 1944.

FOREWORD TO THE SECOND REVISED EDITION

THIS second Revised Edition is, unhappily, brought out posthumously.

Soon after the first reprint of this book in 1945 the Author felt the necessity to make certain revisions and additions. He has given much thought to it, and put in a great deal of work. There is an alteration on almost every page, a word here and there, which he felt would make what he had to say, clearer; chapters VII and VIII have been partially re-written; and he has added twelve pages, never published before, to chapter XXIX, on Surrealism and post-impressionist art. There are additional illustrations. The book and pencil were seldom out of his hand, with the exception of periods of illness, such as in 1951, when he had his first major attack of coronary thrombosis.

The book has been on the L.C.C. approved list since its publication, and the then Principal of the College of Arts and Crafts, Southampton Row, who had read the book, offered that the Author should lecture to the various Schools; but unfortunately Mr Arthur Howell was of far too nervous and retiring a nature to accept this offer, and appear publicly. But since that suggestion was made to him it has been his dearest wish that the Revised Edition should be brought out in a cheap paperback publication, printed in thousands and at a price within the pockets of all boy and girl students. Unfortunately, although every effort has been made to grant him this wish, I could not bring it about. However, perhaps it may still happen in the future.

That he was entirely satisfied with the book in its present form, I know, for when I came into his room on the evening of April 10, 1956, at 10 o'clock, to give him his medicine—he had just recovered from pneumonia—he placed the book, pencil and india-rubber on his bedside table, and turning to me with a happy smile, said:

'Well, I have finished it; I have at last got that book exactly as I have always wanted it; free from all ambiguity, and tomorrow I will write to . . .' But there was to be no tomorrow, for at 6 o'clock the next morning, April 11, 1956, his bell rang, and within half-an-hour he had gone, with his second major attack of coronary thrombosis.

In the making of this book the Author hoped that it would also help towards a way of living; he never lost sight of this hope, which ran through the fabric of his philosophic thoughts on other matters like a golden thread.

He felt that by the fostering of the aesthetic presence by *all* men, no matter who they were, they would be more likely to find themselves in tune with their surroundings, their activities, to give and to receive happiness.

I would like to make two acknowledgements: one to his dear friend, Professor Evan J. Jones, D.LITT., M.A., F.S.A., of the Education Department, University of Wales, who read the original manuscript in 1945, and has helped him in every way he could; and to my sister, Miss Minona Harmston, but for whose kindness and help this Revised Second Edition would be at least twelve months later in seeing the light of day.

LILIAN HARMSTON.

PREFACE

THERE is much in the intellectual climate of today which would confine our efforts to '... modelling social life after the pattern of scientific truths'.¹ Such a conception, however, while *apparently* upheld by the many forms of practical life in which each one of us is seen to play so large a part, must, of necessity, if its practice be allowed to become dominant and itself an end, lead to a materialistic creed. We have seen this occur.

Art cannot thrive in a world of such intention, and was never meant to. But as the practical life is no less necessary than the artistic, and each must have freedom to serve its purpose, our aim must be of a broader kind. This we can establish by giving primacy in worthwhileness to the aesthetic presence, when the scientific modelling of social life shall then be of a pattern qualified by aesthetic discernments.²

And this, in more humanistic terms, is to make permanent the moral determination to build and maintain from aesthetic affinities, with the full help of scientific knowledge, a harmony-in-expression that shall become a self-sufficing love.

Such is the vision that those who believe in something beyond material progress, the import of which they look for in improved material conditions that offer greater opportunities for an expansion of the aesthetic life, must keep ever before them. The aesthetic presence in relation to the material object is that of an aura of the visional or spiritual insight, upon the apprehension of which depends the happiness of each individual mind.

I would ask, should the reader proceed with this book,

¹ *Human Affairs*, Lancelot Hogben, Editorial introduction.

² To possess spiritual aims is not to do away with material necessities. If we cannot protect, clothe and feed ourselves, there can be no aesthetic life.

that he shall not forget entirely having read these few opening lines. They might, perhaps, help him to become possessed of a vision more clarified and expansive than he may otherwise obtain from these pages.



Every age has sought to interpret art. Today it is said that art is no longer to be interpreted in the way in which it was in the past. Is this a true statement, or is it said merely in honest defence of misconceived endeavours? To answer this it is necessary first to make a general interpretation of art, and secondly to note the modifications or radical changes that have been witnessed in artistic expression during the present age. This implies an examination of modern forms and their significance.

Artists, finding themselves today working without a common or universal ideal, have been forced to turn to science and philosophy for knowledge of the facts which have destroyed old meanings and are bringing about new outlooks, also for knowledge concerning the expressional power of the forms through which their conceptions are revealed. Old forms have, as it were, become corroded with the symbolic meanings for which they have so long stood, meanings that no longer retain their former values. So, following the rejection or dismemberment of these forms, artists have set themselves the task of rebuilding upon a new foundation the techniques which shall present the meanings upon which their present outlooks are founded.

Interpretation, therefore, must be through an under-

standing of the artist's manner of thinking and of the terms that carry his train of thought to its completed form, the work-of-art. Only by these means can it be hoped to arrive at an appraisal of his 'presentations' in accordance with their aim, and to establish an affinity between them and our own experiences.

To comply with this demand, it is essential to define one's own terms, and if, before doing so, use is made of such words as art, artistic, aesthetic, beautiful, spirit, etc., the reader is asked to accept momentarily their generally accepted meanings, in the hope that, in due course, no ambiguity shall be left behind as to the meanings these words are intended to convey here.

In any treatise on a particular subject, certain words are, on account of their significance and continual reappearance, inherent to it, and no understanding, therefore, is possible unless their meanings are clearly conceived. The words above referred to are among those inherent to this subject. Imagination, feeling or felt, and emotion are others.

Unfortunately, all these terms suffer from looseness of meaning. Custom, or acceptance on trust, seems to have decreed that no distinction shall exist between the words aesthetic and artistic, and that considerable freedom may be allowed in the use of the words art and work-of-art. The distinctions, however, between each of these terms are very real. Yet, aesthetic and artistic are employed interchangeably: aesthetic form and artistic form being apparently, and always, one and the same kind of form! Art is invariably used where work-of-art is referred to, and as if its meaning could not be misunderstood; whereas, the elucidation of this meaning might well be the purpose of the discourse! Imagination is a word with meanings so appropriate to an explanation of all that goes to the making of works-of-art that it often is made to appear the exclusive property of the subject. The user rarely shows that he appreciates how all forms owe their origin to image-making. Emotion is proverbially the motive of a work-of-art. It may impel,

but so it does a great many other activities. It is easily distinguished as the impelling force governing our more extreme moods affecting the practical life, and is unlimited in its manifestations. Our enthusiasms should be a sufficient reminder of it as an ever-activating force. Why then this stressing of emotion where the work-of-art is concerned? Yet there must be some form of mental activity exclusive to this particular outlook on life. Is it implied, yet not clearly isolated? And again, that complex mental condition described as 'felt', which the artist—but not only the artist—is, indisputably, always experiencing: is it synonymous with emotion or is it something different? And if different and not exclusive to the artist, what is its significance to him?

To resolve the extended, yet elementary, psychological details such as are entered into in the first section of this book is the only method by which definite meanings can be given to these fundamental words. Perhaps not all the meanings will be accepted, but it is hoped that something of the verbal inconclusiveness from which the difficulties of this subject largely arise shall have given way to a much-desired precision more in keeping with the structural requirements of today.

The chapters of this book have not been written consecutively. More lately welded into their present form, they were elaborated from notes made from ideas as chance brought them to me. For the most part, the ideas dawned and came to maturity amid the seclusion of rural nature, the sublime constitution of which was their nourishment. On an occasion, they may have taken form from the onlookers' point of view; on another, from consideration of the artist and his aims; and in still different surroundings, from reaction to a work-of-art—characterised by enquiry into the theoretical significance and logic of aesthetic problems, and of the wider philosophic significance of the aesthetic life. Different arts were given thought in relation to the application of a single principle. It is inevitable, therefore, that in retaining something of this artless form,

such a method of production must lead to a certain amount of repetition. I have observed that this is so here. But, remembering my past studies and the difficulties I experienced at times in trying to give practical application to a principle being expounded by an author, even with the help of the one illustration to which he generally confined himself, I have come to the conclusion that where the possibilities of application are varied and continual, something is gained if the examples are many. For this reason it will be found that a principle is referred to and illustrated under more than one heading and in accordance with the standpoint from which it is then being approached.

INTRODUCTION

FORMS of art have ever been considered the means by which the ennobling aspirations of human nature are given utterance. Yet in precisely what respect? Is it not true that many persons to whom may be attributed a 'beautiful' character—by which the orthodox good is not necessarily implied—have attained this by a life lived in an environment where works-of-art have played little or no part at all? Is it not also true that only a few in every community have a constructional knowledge of the arts? Where then can be the artistic intercourse? These being the facts, have we or have we not in the past been in error by attributing to art an importance which in fact it does not possess? Is it merely recreative? Unquestionably, no. Its place and purpose in the spiritual life have yet to receive full recognition.

There is no contradiction between such observed facts and a belief in the high spiritual value of art forms. This value comes from the power of these forms to serve and foster a certain form of the spirit which is identified as aesthetic, and which is experienced by us not only in reaction to works-of-art themselves but to the forms of life generally. Certain of these reactions or impressions we call 'beautiful'. It is by this, their spiritual quality, that we know and remember them. They come from blissful accord with our surroundings, with those with whom we may be, or with what we are doing. They constitute moments of aesthetic elation—aesthetic reality. They are accepted by the mind as an ideal state of being or spiritual *presence* in which we would live and aim at establishing within ourselves. The 'influence' of such an impression may be life-long. Life, in fact, is filled with impressions of the kind, but for the most part they are of an ephemeral nature. An acknowledgment of their value is to be found in the endeavour to create for the

young an environment that shall give rise to them, in the hope that their total effect shall form a permanent imprint on these minds, and thereafter act as an inspiration to future striving.

Works-of-art, in furtherance of this aim, are the means through which the presences of life are given material form. Commonplace and vague apprehensions are experienced and formulated into definition as works-of-art. The definite form enlightens. In being intellectually formulated, structure is revealed, a more profound meaning is given, and the incidental is idealised. So we come to know that which before was only a vague and unformulated awareness. The heightened awareness is assimilated into our minds and permeates the general outlook. Just as an artist can transform an aesthetic awareness or 'felt' experience from one form into another, as when he transforms his reactions to nature into a work-of-art, namely, into sound (musical form) or into movement (dance form), so, in the reverse manner, may we in life bring an outlook revealed to us through works-of-art to bear upon the forms of our environment. Which is no more than to respond to, and to strive after the creation of, a certain idealistic attitude towards life. With this belief, a belief in a more enlightened and a more 'felt' presence, works-of-art are seen to be indispensable to the development of the spiritual life.

A thesis of this book is that the fundamental desire activating a man's life is for *Aesthetic Unity* between himself and his environment. The search for amenities through economic means is ultimately the search for beauty. This unity is for him who lives in accord with the principles governing aesthetic creation,¹ and who seeks to make of himself an acting unit in the great design formed by his relation to his environment, in

¹ To avoid possible misunderstanding, it is well, perhaps, for the reader to be warned that aesthetic creation should not be misconstrued into artistic creation. The work-of-art and the artistic will not seriously claim our attention till we come to Section III.

which all forms are co-units, whereby to create for himself an aesthetic presence of his own that shall activate at all times. Such an ideal presence realised would be complete unity with all. This, it seems, as a positive aim, is indistinguishable from religious endeavour. The great religious teachers are the would-be creators of this presence: a universal omnipresence. It is not possible, however, to be in agreement with those who seek to promote this universality through a uniformity of means, since presence is individual and each unit can only attain such a unity by creating from what is unifiable within him.

The 'beautiful' character implied is of this making. The simplest of its kind has experienced aesthetic vision, appraised aesthetic forms and fulfilled aesthetic aims, although the more intellectual and meaningful, conceptual and idealistic, works-of-art may be little known to it. In its love of sound it has listened to the song of the bird but has not heard a Beethoven sonata. So, it is denied that greater richness of intercourse between itself and its environment—man, his works, nature and the silence of the unknown.

SECTION ONE

THE AESTHETIC PERCEPTION

CHAPTER I

MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

TO what extent the birds of the air and the animals of the field enjoy and have their lives enriched by the blue of the sky, the green of the earth, the sounds of each other and the pressures of the winds that blow, we cannot tell. But we can be sure that as sentient beings they receive impressions through their senses, and that these were thus in like simplicity once experienced by primitive man. The change has been one of development, and what we now possess in the great world of art is the enriched heritage of these primitive impressions.

Man, emerging from his earliest experiences, submitted to a life inexorably evolved. In his unfolding world, objective surroundings gradually assumed form. His sense reactions were an adjustment to a conditioned existence. Adjustment permitted the continuance of life and was sense satisfaction; non-adjustment often resulted in bodily injury or death, and was dissatisfaction. Life reacted to conditions, and was significant according to adaptability to these natural ends.

Environment was sensed as a world of light and dark, of space in which to move, both free and restricted, from the open sky above the forest, to the close confines of the foliage and the cave, of colours and of sounds. The 'feelings' which arose in reaction to these 'forms' became associated with them.

In such manner the forms and forces of nature stimulated impressions, certain of which through the ages have become fundamental to our nature, and are now instinctively experienced by us. So is it said of impressions from forms which are constant in their power to affect and influence us—that our response is natural.

With the growth of mind impressions were valued for themselves. Thus came the appraisal of beauty.

Man and his environment are transformed. He no longer lives in a state of uncontrolled nature. His surroundings are of his own conditioning—of his vision, thought and action.

Of these is the aesthetic vision, the essence of which is that of a mind-light thrown upon and enveloping the whole of man's activities: an omnipresence pervading the spiritual life of each and all. Its expression is that which creates the artist within us.

There is no person who is not, to some degree, an artist. That he is so, is accountable to his nature, from which there is no escape. In life today we are artists in the same way that we all are philosophers, economists and moralists, without necessarily being practising artists, professors, financiers or preachers. As philosophers we are for ever generalising experience: that of our own and of others. We form judgments in an endeavour to solve problems from which we are never free. As economists, we buy and sell for our own personal needs, calculate and keep accounts, and consistently review our wants and social activities in the light of economic means. As moralists, we deliberate upon our conduct, which in our relationship with others requires continual exercise in ethical freedom and restraint. There is no artist who is not each of these, nor is there any man who does not act as these and as an artist. Judgments, intuitive or reasoned, on art, philosophy, business and morality, form an unceasing activity of the minds of all human beings, varying in power only with the individual's capacity and ability to apply himself.

These judgments are the creation of the mind. Apart from mind there is no such thing as an aesthetic object. That which we refer to as such, is so according to the quality of perception which is brought to bear upon it. An object becomes to the mind what that mind makes of it. That our environment and world of thought should increasingly be controlled by the aesthetic perception

and thus be brought into illumination and acceptance, is the endeavour of the artist among us, whose efforts are his contribution to the revealing process. By materialising his aesthetic outlook into works-of-art, the enlightenment man receives from these recorded experiences expands and intensifies the vision of the whole.

CHAPTER II

MAN'S AESTHETIC SENSIBILITY TOWARDS HIS ENVIRONMENT

LIVING day by day his life of usefulness, man, in his self-created surroundings, finds himself everywhere appraising in terms of the aesthetic. He may not think so, but it is what he practises.

May we consider the motorist a typically practical person? Yet what of him? He cannot buy a car without the exercise of his aesthetic sense, without consideration of the car's appearance, an appearance chosen for its own sake, for a satisfaction it gives in itself, and which is quite distinct from that other and obviously more important consideration of his: the car's utility. His purchase is primarily for utility: for a purpose, transport of a kind. But every such purchase is guided by the dual consideration: utilitarian and aesthetic. While utility is essential, it is quite usual for appearance to be the deciding factor, that is, a decision arrived at through an appraisement of the car's artistic qualities.

This same motorist, although his purchases are always made to conform to his practical vision, will insist that not only his car but everything he buys shall claim a like aesthetic appreciation from him. His suit must be well-cut, and of a colour and pattern to his liking. His tie must be in harmony, and his shoes of an elegance to 'fit his eye' as well as his feet: an artistic in addition to an utilitarian fit. The chocolates he buys as a gift are often decided upon by the attractiveness of the box in which they are packed. So well-known is his susceptibility to decorative appeal that chocolate makers, and tobacco merchants, too, give employment to an army of artists to make designs that shall please his eye and thereby increase their sales.

So much for the man. Then what of his wife or fiancée? Equally true is it of her. Will she not make decisions upon the decorating and furnishing of the house or flat, and any purchase, on whatever grounds of utility it may be made, be influenced by its shape or colour or something pleasing in itself apart from use?

Indeed, aesthetic judgments are brought to bear upon all our acquisitions, and it is in answer to this appeal that artistic design is worked into them. Even food is arranged in shops as attractively as possible, and when these edibles are preserved, care is taken to see that they, like the cigarettes, are wrapped in decorative labels calculated to enliven our imagination. For this another group of artists is at work. Let us glance around the room in which we happen to be. The wall-paper, the carpet, the curtains, the fire-grate and fender, the table with any china or glass on it, the book-case and books, any ornaments or pictures, the fabrics of the clothes of those sitting around—all have the imprint of the artist upon them. There is no escape from visual aesthetic appraisal, although we may become conscious of it only when approval or disapproval is strongly marked.

We have, however, other senses besides the visual through which we receive impressions and appraise aesthetically. We hear; we have the sense of sound. Sound pleases and displeases us as something in itself, quite apart from how we use it. All are sensible to it. A motor-horn's primary use is utilitarian in producing sound as a warning, but our aesthetic sense is not neglected when the purchase of one is guided by the quality of the sound. The articulations of speech are sounds, conventionalised into definite meanings which we use to communicate with one another. Their intonations, modulations and rhythms have the power to interest us apart from the meaning conveyed. By their quality is the voice graded as either refined or coarse. These same qualities are also to be distinguished in letters received from friends and business firms, and

form part of what we call their diction. It escapes us no less, although reading for 'news', than it does in speech, and is a direct appeal to our aesthetic sensibility.

Movement is an indispensable condition of life; we observe it everywhere and at all times. As practical activity it is directed towards utility. A motor moves along the road to get somewhere. It is unlikely that the driver of the car is thinking of its increase and decrease in speed or of its deviations in curves to right and left, other than as movement for an utilitarian purpose—to get to his destination. Yet, at times, to an observer, this movement in and out of passing traffic is seen to have the grace of a bird. This observance has nothing to do with utility, but with the awareness that dictates to us what is beautiful.

And what of our own movements? Do we not differentiate between ways of sitting, standing, walking and eating, and appraise from the same interest as we do the car? Deportment and gesture are fine arts when seen on the stage. Should they be thought any the less so when the actor steps into the foyer?

There are more things in this world than motor-cars, clothes, wrappers, fabrics and furniture, the human voice and manners, that are part of our permanent environment, and to which we equally respond with aesthetic and artistic judgments. Enough, however, has been said to show that the power for making these judgments, far from being the prerogative of a gifted few, belongs to humanity as a whole.

CHAPTER III

RESPONSE TO RURAL NATURE

WE are not to suppose that everyone's aesthetic responses are equal, either in quality or intensity. As no two minds are alike, no two reactions can be assumed alike. And we know from practical experience how different they are. Some persons are, relatively, not greatly affected aesthetically by what they see or hear, either from lack of inherent sensibility or from neglect to make use of the powers they have. Many give their attention almost wholly to an utilitarian outlook upon life. Others again are innately so sensitive to aesthetic impressions that enjoyment becomes an indulgence. For such persons it is arduous to attend to more practical matters, even to recording the impressions which it is the business of some people, namely artists, to do.

This contrast between men's aesthetic reactions may be somewhat determined from their appraisalment of the country, a universal and elementary form of aesthetic appreciation.

Curiously, the wide divergency which exists in this appreciation is not always fully realised. It is contended that all men enjoy the country, and that only lack of opportunity interferes with their more constant enjoyment of it. Artistic persons are not specially privileged. There are great lovers of rural nature who are no lovers of art. It is ordinary, say they, to find persons who regularly spend their week-ends not only motoring or golfing, but lunching in by-lanes, wood-glades, or on the sea-shore, who will tell you how greatly they enjoy natural forms, but that, frankly, their interest in art is little; they are not artistic.

That persons behave in this manner is true. Yet, if

aesthetic appreciation of nature and of works-of-art are fundamentally of one and the same mind-attitude, which undoubtedly they are, how comes this apparent inconsistency?

In the first place, these lovers of the countryside may be under a misapprehension when they attribute their pleasure in the country so wholly to formal appraisal of what is to be seen around them. The open air is made use of by them for purposes other than this, chief among which are the many forms of recreation.

Picnicing, as an open-air enjoyment, is very popular. But only since the motor-car brought the country—as measured in terms of effort—outside the front door. That it has become popular on this account is suggestive enough that the appeal of rural nature is not so strong as it might perhaps be thought—except to a minority—and that it is essentially used as a playground or setting for social and recreative purposes. The minority never waited for wheels to relieve it of the effort to answer the appeal.

Secondly, united to, yet separable from recreation, are bodily enjoyments experienced from physical contact with nature's conditions, such as the sun's warmth.

A camper-out, for instance, having erected his tent in a field for the purpose of spending a holiday under canvas, in abandoning himself to a life of unrestricted freedom, would inhale the fresh air, lie on the grass, turn in with the dark, rise with the light, eat heartily, be refreshed in the river, exposed to the sun's rays, feel physically alert, and withal be possessed of a feeling of glorious well-being of rest and exercise. This is the sort of life he would lead and enjoy.

To what extent are these enjoyments aesthetic? What of inhaling fresh air, or bodily exercise, or lying down, or the sun's ray's falling on the body, eating well or being in health? Are not these mere physical experiences? Do not the animals in the fields enjoy them, too?

We feed and nourish the body internally to feel a sense of well-being, so do we nourish it externally to

experience a similar feeling. The water we allow to flow externally over our bodies when bathing produces a feeling none other in kind than that from the water we let flow internally down our throats when thirsty. These feelings are predominantly sensations, and are direct physical sense pleasures—our physical reaction to nature.¹

It cannot therefore be arbitrarily assumed that delight in natural surroundings is a necessary indication of a strongly developed aesthetic awareness of these forms. Those who have the awareness and wish to enjoy it receive little satisfaction from being rushed through the country in a vehicle. So, too, when games demand most of the attention.

Many people tramp the roads and fields mainly for exercise, physical exhilaration and conversing. But there are those who go into the country for the purpose of reacting to nature as they would attend a concert to react to the sounds of the orchestra. Their whole being responds to the visual scene with a completeness and forgetfulness of all else, as when absorbed in the music, and from which they receive equal elation. They delight in observation and in mentally constructed arrangements of the natural forms: their shapes, colours, lights, shadows, in movement or at rest, soundful or silent, which are fused into an harmonic actuality of deep intuitive meaning² for the understanding. Such minds can become distracted through a conversation which dwells on imagery and ideas³ unconnected with the reaction from the visible surroundings: the defined form.

The difference in response between these persons who expressly seek out the forms of nature with this all-absorbing aesthetic interest and those who are not so impelled is very considerable.

¹ This question is more fully entered into in Chapter VIII.

² For Intuitive meaning, see Chapters VII and VIII.

³ The word imagery is used throughout indiscriminately for the objectively seen and the subjectively visualised. The context should, on every occasion, inform which is being referred to.

This is not to imply that a mood caused through such means is necessarily of a more exhilarating kind than a mood occasioned through other means. There is no evidence that a man playing his round of golf or riding over the heather is one whit less aesthetically enraptured than may be the poet or painter sitting on the brow of a hill. In fact, when the occasion comes for speaking of the pleasurable nature of action itself as a form of activity indulged in for its own sake, we shall discover certain affinities between its enjoyment and that of the visual perception which differ only in quality.

CHAPTER IV

NATURAL FORM AND ART FORM

PRACTICAL understanding of the aesthetic outlook, of that perceptive attitude by which we judge form as either beautiful or ugly and from which the mind is scarcely ever free, is confused at the outset by a prevailing assumption which restricts the outlook too narrowly to works-of-art.

This confusion is in no way lessened by the knowledge that nature is capable of arousing feelings of the same kind and of equal exaltation to those aroused by works-of-art.

To deny interest in the arts is not to deny the use in life of the aesthetic consciousness or apprehension, an activity with which every mind is empowered, and which arises in response to the forms of life generally. Aesthetic apprehension of environmental forms is a mental activity which precedes the work-of-art.

Any object, of nature or of man's creation, may at any given moment be viewed aesthetically and become aesthetic form for the person who desires to perceive it so. The work-of-art holds no prerogative. Any object of which we might say 'This is beautiful' or 'This is ugly' is aesthetic form to us. The most ordinary experience of every-day may call up this awareness and its emotion—a glimpse of a face, the sound of a voice, the atmosphere of an inn, a single flower or the colour of the sky. These common contacts may capture the consciousness more surely than works-of-art. Thus aesthetic form is established by the fact that it is form being perceived in a certain manner.

Works-of-art are the recorded experiences of the aesthetic perception. They are recordings which have been born of 'artifice'¹ for the purpose of meaningful

¹ Making by art: *ars*—skill, and *facio*—I make: to make by skill.

expression. This artifice, as constructed form—hence, art form—is the fundamental distinction between works-of-art and natural form.

Art form is form practically constructed in accordance with the techniques of art. Art is formulation. The forms of certain works-of-art (music) are today, through development, so complicated and far removed from the simple natural forms of their origin, that these latter are no longer visible. A transmutation has occurred.

Nature is not a work-of-art. The forms of nature are natural forms. The natural form of the song of the bird or of his movements in flight are not art forms. They are not of artifice and do not pertain to forms humanly created. They are aesthetic forms—at least, for most persons—which fact is as important.

To differentiate aesthetic form from art form is to clarify all those academic arguments as to whether certain sounds and colour-formations in nature are art or not art. None is.

To maintain that they are is to add nothing to their significance, and is an attitude to be adopted only on grounds similar to those by which we continually refer to natural forms as artistic and picturesque. This is to stress their beauty by implication that they are so by being perceived in the manner of works-of-art: forms of material relations.

What then is the aesthetic perception? What is that attitude and significance of mind by which the attention becomes fixed on a sunset, the long shadows of a summer evening, a garden in bloom, a railway train winding its course through the valley, the humming of an engine, smoke rising from a chimney, the sound of a fog-horn at sea, a voice, a word, a phrase, laughter, a thought, an action, a work-of-art, and which, in revealing something beyond the recognition of facts by which we know the thing for what it is, seems to exclude conscious intellectual activity from a reality whose essence would, to all appearance, be 'to dwell'?

CHAPTER V

THE AESTHETIC PERCEPTION

So, to the oft-repeated enquiry of what is this attitude of mind or manner of apprehending life which we call aesthetic perceiving, we commonly receive reply, 'When I look at a thing and it gives me pleasure, it is then beautiful to me, and is, therefore, I suppose, aesthetic'.

Although this is far too all-embracing and is not, in fact, explanatory, the general conception underlying the assertion may come from a practice nearer the truth perhaps than the statement itself would imply.

Yet we know there are many things we look at, and listen to, which give us pleasure and are referred to as beautiful, but which we have little doubt are not being aesthetically perceived. We might receive a letter, which, upon opening, we find to contain a cheque, a gift from the writer, and which we examine with considerable pleasure. We are hungry, and view the dish of eatables before us with extreme relish. A prospective purchaser of a house takes home the plans in order to spend the evening looking over them, which he does with the greatest interest. Anything which supplies a material want of any kind is looked at with unquestioned satisfaction.

In spite of which, no one is likely to assert that these objects: a cheque, food, an architectural plan and, say, a nut to repair one's lawn-mower, are themselves aesthetic forms *because* the pleasure we get from the sight of them is due to a knowledge of what they respectively stand for, namely, purchasing power, satisfaction of hunger, desired accommodation, and the renewed running of a machine. Were it so, the 'beauty' of these objects could be made to vanish with the depletion of

the giver's bank balance, the loss of hunger, the withdrawal of the house from sale, and the breaking of the bolt on which the nut was to have been screwed. Our interest in these objects having arisen by reason of the purposes they serve, for their utility, their instrumental value, and not for what they mean to us as visual forms in themselves, this interest ceases directly the instrumental value is destroyed. This is not aesthetic perceiving. Little reflection, therefore, is necessary to inform us that not all pleasure from the sight of things is aesthetic.

I well remember, when scarcely more than a boy, being spoken to by a man much older than myself, who began to expatiate somewhat vehemently upon the teachings of Ruskin. I fancy his manner of delivery interested me as much as the substance of what he had to say. Yet I remember both. 'Ruskin!' he said, with emphasis, raising his voice. 'Ruskin! A b . . . fool!' I looked at him. 'Do you know what he says?' he went on. 'No', I returned mildly. Throwing out his arm and waving his wrist at a table, 'He says that if there were a lump of gold on that table, no matter what you can do with it, you must leave it there that we can look at it'.¹ And then almost with violence: 'Leave it there! Ruskin! Ruskin! A bur . . . luddy fool!'

The manner in which he enunciated the three syllables of the adjective was really splendid, and I most surely experienced an aesthetic emotion on hearing them. Having expended his energy, which I judged gave him considerable satisfaction, I was told to scuttle off.

Obviously, here was a business man expounding the business man's point of view, which has, nevertheless, an importance no less than the aesthetic. He was evidently unaware that he had expressed such a view, and that by so doing, he had most strikingly emphasised the distinction between the utilitarian and aesthetic

¹ An admirable recommendation, but not Ruskin's.

outlooks, namely, that of seeing an object as a thing of practical purpose and of perceiving it in its own visual right.

What was his attitude of mind as he looked at the gold? What did he see? What is the nature of his perception?

Seeing the gold on the table—which we will assume to have been there—he certainly visualised nothing to make him wish it to remain there. Its *presence* apparently meant nothing to him: it had no *presential* value, a value residing in the visibly present and its meanings.

His perception passed beyond this to the gold's economic value, to its purchasing power, to the uses to which it might be put.

If there were any imagery in his mind at all, it is evident from his argument that it took the form of objects coveted by him, and which could be acquired through the gold's economic value—larger business premises, perhaps.

After the initial act of recognition, imagery of the gold was pushed into the background, to be replaced by thoughts of its use and by images of things which it might be the means of bringing to him. The gold, as an object of visual interest in itself, had passed out of his mind. My friend's assessment was entirely utilitarian, towards which the sight of the gold was acting as an instrument only.

Now if he had done as he was told, which was to look at the gold, and not at images which were aroused in his mind by it, would he have perceived anything different, or have perceived what he did see with another significance?

Did he not perceive everything about it? In recognising that it was gold he must have observed its visible appearance: its colour, its bulk, its protuberances and hollows, its broken surface areas, the play of light and shade; which led to his intuiting non-visible attributes: solidity, hardness, weight, homogeneity of substance; and to values outside itself but of relation to other things: to

its being an object of some rarity and of economic worth, which finally aroused imagery of material things on which his mind came to rest. Could one perceive more?

If not more objectively, then something different arising through a difference in activity of mind. What he could have done and did not do, was to have concentrated his vision on the gold and its attributes—the object, its structure and qualities—for their presential value. He might have given his attention to one or more or to all of these attributes, either singly or in combination, forming through his imagination, an idealisation or relationships individual to himself, all of which as a fused visual whole would form *with their meanings* the presence he was asked to appraise. In effect, he could have viewed the gold in a manner similar to that in which the country is viewed by those who are attracted by it.

Yet to fix the eyes on a line or colour might also arouse in the mind an image as far removed from the presence as were those connected with its use. A particular protuberance of the gold's surface might, for example, have caused him, through certain features of similarity, to visualise a rock which he had once climbed, and that while visualising this associated scene he could not at the same time be concentrating on the gold.

That images will arise is undoubted, and our attitude towards these shall be defined shortly. For all which, the object is there before us to apprehend, and we know that it can be looked at without the intrusion of any extraneous images, and that whatever is attentively perceived is merged into one single *impression*. The many individual impressions of objects and sounds which arise from perceptions through the eye and ear every second of our waking consciousness inform us that this is so.

Also, when sensible to form in this way we cannot divest ourselves of the knowledge we have about it, knowledge say of its physical properties and physical behaviour, knowledge of the purposes for which it can

be used, and knowledge of association, to all of which it owes much of its meaning, and which in being thus embodied in the object, must contribute to the impression.

It does so, but the important factor in presential perceiving is that such knowledge is not unveiled to the mind in the form of images or ideas, it issues in the form of an *affective* activity which is termed 'felt', and is the intellectually indefinite or undefined.

Let us for a moment, having removed the gold, observe the table. A table is an object designed for placing things on, a form that is conditioned precisely by that very purpose. It also is conditioned by the material of which it is made, and which must be a substance of certain physical characteristics to have been so shaped. We have, when perceiving, undoubted awarenesses of these facts about the table, and they contribute to the whole impression of it in our minds. If we have not them we fail even to recognise the object for what it is. So the knowledge is there, in the impression.

But if, while looking at the table, we allow any of this apprehended knowledge to be raised to the status of imagery, we then concentrate upon this to the detriment of the visible image. If, in effect, we replace imagery of the table by a visualisation of what it came from, namely, a tree, or of what are the purposes for which it might be used—on which to serve a meal—then we see other than what is before us and cease to perceive presentially. For the time being, while appraising for structure or use, we view the table instrumentally as we do a cheque or a machine nut. We see other images with other interests.

If presential perceiving of an object meant a conscious formulation into or a bringing before us of imagery and ideas of say the object's utility, the presential perception would become impossible of being sustained. The image of the object would become 'jammed' from so many images and ideas clamouring for attention. How could we presentially apprehend an old-world cottage, for example, if when about to do so we found ourselves

forced into a formulated apprehending of the utility of the garden wall surrounding it, the garden gate, the pathway, the windows or the chimney-pots of the cottage itself, and all else about it?

That we cannot perceive presentially if we dwell on an object's use does not mean that therefore the object cannot be so perceived *in* use. This does not imply that the usefulness must be appraised. A table in use supporting a piece of gold is perceived in no less a presential manner than one with nothing on it. Water lies about on grass and may be viewed presentially. It also moves as a flowing river and tumbles as a waterfall, both of which states can likewise be viewed presentially. Each too can be appraised from an utilitarian standpoint. Is the still water fit to drink? the flowing water navigable? and the falling water serviceable on account of its power? But to think of these utilities is to destroy the presential impression—that of water being perceived which is not so appraised.¹ And further, if we place under the falling water a wheel, a waterwheel, which thereby is caused to revolve and turn a mill, such a wheel of utility under a waterfall now included into our imagery need in no way interfere with presential perceiving. The water as something now in use is merely the equivalent to the table in use.

But it *can* interfere, and this is precisely what we so often permit to occur when interesting ourselves in objects of use. The water has through our meddlesomeness become such an object: one instrumental to revolving a wheel, and if we wish we can now view it and appraise its value according to how well or badly it functions towards this purpose.

This is an ordinary attitude adopted towards articles of utility—cups and saucers, plates, a teapot or anything—of which we ourselves may be making practical use. The presential and utilitarian outlooks interchange, and

¹ The word impression, when not signifying sense-impression, is used in its popular sense: to signify the effects or product of a perception.

continually, and it is just this interwoven association between the two that lends support to the views of those who wish to believe that there is a special and necessary connection between utility and beauty. There is no other than that which is referred to here. To have chosen to speak of utility value is to have done so simply because it is a value that can be given to most forms, but one might just as effectively have spoken of moral, economic, or other values. With any of these apprehensions forced into cognisance as the predominant or only facts of interest about an object—and one or another often is—is to establish this interest, displace presential perceiving, and make the object only an *instrument* of perception. If it be the presence of an object that is to be appraised, by which we are to become sensible to and absorb the affection aroused in reaction to it, and which may include these values and much more, then they must be apprehended in the 'felt' form. For this, objects must be perceived as conditioned form, as self-contained entities in themselves, and not as form conditioned by or conditioning, which they none the less are. They are not perceived as representative of causes or of effects, they *present* both and are themselves.

Thus, by looking at an object, the perception is brought into being. It is a sense-impression with a meaningfulness beyond the seen, a 'felt' awareness which, *with the seen*, is what we call the object's *presence*. It comes from a manifold of causes operating here and now and since the beginning of time. If we do not allow ourselves to criticise this presence, to discriminate or compare, to consider its usefulness or be led away from it to the causes or effects it represents, or to what it reminds us of, but simply and solely to experience it, then we experience aesthetically.

All this 'felt' knowledge is experienced as a discerning affection, and precedes formation of any images or ideas characterising its nature.

The aesthetic perception then is reaction to form in

its own right. It can be defined formally in this way. Aesthetic perception is present when the self is absorbed in reacting to form, of any kind or complexity, whose qualities involving its nature, and which enter into the perception, are not being viewed instrumentally but by visionary right of their own, the reaction to which is an excitation of intuitive or 'felt' presence as an end in itself. In a word, this is presential perceiving.

When the mind perceives an object which holds the vision in this undisputed possession, that object is viewed aesthetically, and the impression created by any imagery or idea so viewed is an aesthetic impression.

It follows that any object or form when apprehended as presence in its own right, that is, without criticism or ulterior motive, is aesthetic form.

This avowal has a two-fold application. The term presence may be used objectively or subjectively. We may speak not only of a room, a wine-glass, the sound of a voice or a landscape as a presence, but of the impression itself, i.e., that which occupies the mind or is present within it.

I swear I begin to see little or nothing in
audible words.

All merges towards the presentation of
the unspoken meanings of earth,¹

¹ Walt Whitman.

CHAPTER VI

AESTHETIC AND INSTRUMENTAL APPRAISEMENTS OF NATURE

TO say that the aesthetic perception is apprehension of presence is to mean apprehending literally, and not mere recognition. My friend recognised the existence of the gold, but he permitted himself to follow his own train of thought away from the presence.

The kind of apprehension with which we appraise a form—whether, for instance, it shall be aesthetic or economic—is determined by the particular interest with which we approach it and by the *affectability* of the object or circumstance upon our minds.

These differing attitudes by which we appraise the forms of life, form one unceasing stream of interchanging activity.

Darkness is covering the moors. As I walk along the road my attention is arrested by the clear notes of a bird, singing alone in a distant tree. I listen. The sound, as presence, is creating a pure aesthetic impression. The objectively and subjectively perceived 'felt' experiences that are awakened by hearing that sound-form in its surroundings are undisturbed by any other imagery. The mind is completely absorbed in apprehension of the song, which is in no way instrumentally related. The apprehension is an end in itself.

I pass on. Suddenly I am startled by an unexpected noise coming from a bush close by, and I quicken my steps nervously. This is no aesthetic awareness.

Yet, if the bird-sound were aesthetic, why not this also, which as sound would differ only in quality? Not because the reaction happens to be unpleasant, for aesthetic reaction can be either pleasant or unpleasant, but because the bush-sound is no sooner perceived by

the mind than it is apprehended instrumentally, arousing a vision of danger. Imagery of the possible forms that this danger might take flutters before my mind, and prevents a reaction to the sound in its own right. The mind construes the sound as serving a purpose, that of a warning, like a motor-horn. Had this imagery not forced itself upon me, and I had been permitted and had wished to dwell upon the sound—as one might dwell on the tone of the motor-horn after danger has passed—then, no matter of what quality the reaction, pleasant or unpleasant, it would have been an aesthetic appraisalment.

Presently I come to a branching of the road and see a finger-post in front of me of a character I like, and becoming completely absorbed in it, I am once more delighted, on this occasion with a visual impression. I can see only vaguely now in the dark what is in front of me, to which I react aesthetically in like manner to the bird's sound-form.

Approaching nearer to the finger-post I observe that I have seen it before, that friends and I once ate our lunch beside it. The present sight of it momentarily disappears as I recall imagery of them and myself on that day in the sunlight, seeing, in a condition of absent-mindedness, myself and my friends, and the circumstances and the surroundings in which we were then.

The manner in which this recalled imagery is viewed by the mind is beside the present argument. The point to be noted, however, is that the finger-post has aroused *associated* imagery which is other than the post itself, and any pleasure derived from that imagery is not from the post, which is acting instrumentally.

Now I observe from the signs on the post that I am three times the distance I believed myself to be from the village. Imagery is once again changed and I am filled with disappointment. That of the past and of the sign-post disappear, and as I continue on in the dark my mind is occupied with images which picture results of my late arrival at the inn, the distance of the ground to be

covered, and of my fatigue. The signs on the finger-post were not themselves seen aesthetically, because once more the feeling experienced is due to the facts which they were instrumental in conveying. These facts are outside the presence and it is them I apprehend. Had the finger-post indicated to me that I was nearer to the inn by half the distance I had thought, and at which I was pleased, that feeling too would not arise from the sign-post, but as formerly, from imagery which the post was instrumental in arousing.

As I descend the long hill, at the bottom of which are the village lights, I see an increasing glare which by and by flares up into a blaze. My eyes are fixed on the fire with aesthetic interest, watching the moving flames, their many-hued colours, the play of flickering light on the trees and buildings around and on the swirling volumes of smoke. I come nearer, when, with some suddenness, my aesthetic apprehending comes to a stop. I have noticed the position of the fire, and am led to believe that the inn at which I am staying might be burning. My aesthetic attitude towards the spectacle has changed, overcome by a possessive attitude which has arisen on account of the connection between the fire and what belongs to or is personal to me about it: my luggage is in the inn, and I, staying there, wish nothing to interfere with my remaining.

I do not proceed far, however, before my attitude again changes. I have remembered that my belongings in the inn are old and worn and well-covered by insurance and that their destruction would be a gain to me, the knowledge of which enables me to view the fire with a calmer interest. Should any pleasure arise from this cause, it would be due, as was the former anxiety, to the possessive interest, whereby the fire is perceived as instrumental, namely, to gain, as a few moments before it was to lose. Neither of these attitudes is aesthetic apprehending.

Not until I see that the fire is caused by a burning hayrick in the field behind, in which I have no personal

interest, am I again able to view it aesthetically, and to enjoy a true presential discernment.

It might be possible to continue in this manner perhaps indefinitely, and to show how the mind, as one unceasing change of imagery and idea, is perpetually fluctuating in its attitudes of apprehending—the possessive, the personal, the critical, the utilitarian, the economic, the ethical—with which the aesthetic is inextricably interwoven. All the non-aesthetic attitudes, while initiated in conjunction with the presential, lead away from it to non-presential apprehending, whereby the apprehended becomes instrumental and the operating of the aesthetic displaced.

* * *

We have been viewing the presential image as if it could be isolated and concentrated upon without the intervention of other images. As, for instance, when we became absorbed in the song of a bird, a finger-post, or a lump of gold.

It would, nevertheless, be untrue to suppose that we concentrate for any appreciable length of time upon a single image to the exclusion of all other images, objectively seen or subjectively visualised. We do not keep the eyes still, nor does the imagination become static.

I listen to the sound of a bird, but I also see the dark form of a tree silhouetted against the atmosphere, the formation of the ground between it and me, and the vague horizon line.

I see a finger-post, and almost simultaneously I see an image of it as it was to me some years before.

The gold arouses imagery of a rock.

A moment's reflection tells us that no object is perceived isolated for long from its objective setting or from imagery imaginatively formulated. Rather is it the focal or central image of a plexure (a weaving or combining) of images and their qualities and requiring an effort of will to keep the attention fixed on any one.

A change of focus from one image to another does not necessarily mean a change in quality of apprehension—the aesthetic may still persist. We find ourselves, for example, seated in a room observing it as a single whole and the next moment concentrating separately on the individual objects in it. There is a continual change of imagery during a performance of an opera—one image being fused into and superseded by another. Of the country, too, as we pass on step by step. The intention of the mind is to perceive aesthetically all that might be brought before it. Changed imagery may mean a changed impression, but so long as we assume an attitude of aesthetic perceiving, all things and their qualities will continue to be apprehended in this way.

So, too, of images initiated within the mind, associatively aroused, and which may be perceived and aesthetically dwelt on in like manner to objects in the environment. We cannot avoid generating from impressions. Moreover, there are moments when we desire to do so. The deliberate calling up, through memory, of associated imagery, and the formulating of subjectively created imagery, supporting a single or central image to which the aesthetic mood may be due, is an essential power of the truly creative mind. Particularly is this process revealed in the work of the poet, where his associated and imagined images—metaphors and similes—are, as an artistic unification, the very form of his expression.

CHAPTER VII

INTUITIVE DISCERNMENT

A. Presence and Feeling

A CONDITION, then, to perceiving and apprehending form aesthetically is to experience its presence. Presence is 'felt'. Aesthetic appraisalment is of what we 'feel', and artistic expression the consciously directed embodiment of 'feeling' into material form. What is the 'felt'? What quality of perception or kind of vision does it stand for? Nothing is more important to an understanding of our subject than that we should have a knowledge of what this might be, for then only shall we know what is happening when aesthetically happy or unhappy. For all which, there is no intention to enter into details which are more especially the claim of psychology proper than of aesthetics, and which have no direct bearing on the conscious acts of aesthetic appraisalment and artistic expression as dealt with here.¹

The intuitive character of the 'felt' has already been revealed. The outward superficial aspect of a man—his face, clothes and gestures—is his 'appearance'. This appearance *with* so much of his inner self, behaviour and circumstances, that may be intuited is his presence. His appearance is seen, his presence 'felt': a reaction incited by and in interaction with the appearance.

The word 'felt', although thus commonly made use of for communicating an intuitive judgment, as when we say 'I "felt" he was honest', carries an implication that the experiencing of presence might be predominantly one of sheer feeling or emotion, whereas it is firstly and

¹ For those more especially interested in the argument, several appendices have been added to this and the following chapter. The general reader need scarcely refer to them; these two chapters, as they stand, are more abstruse than I wish.

basically intellective¹ or cognitive discernment: of visional form. No psychic experience could be more so, and the quality of emotion accompanying it is directly accountable to what is intellectually discerned.² This should be remembered, for we speak more freely of the aesthetic emotion than we do of the aesthetic awareness, apprehension or discernment. We do so because the emotion is not only the end to the awareness, but announces judgment in the matter of like or dislike. Thus we look upon it as the experience valued, which therefore becomes fixed in the mind as the aesthetic experience itself. This is not correct. There is no emotion without a cause. Structure must first be seen and its meaning discerned (if transiently) before it can stir us into emotion. So it is that the aesthetic emotion is dependent upon this meaning, i.e., the knowledgeable ingredients of the awareness, which is the intellectually discerned.³ 'Feeling' therefore, is both intellection and emotion.

It is this 'felt' activity released in reaction to an image or idea that is the very significance of presence. There is no appearance, no object, or form of any kind that can be perceived without giving rise to a subjective animation of the form and to an unformulated psychic awareness correlative with it: an intellective efflorescence or aura, as it were, with which we animate the image or idea and which is 'felt'.

This 'felt' perception fixes to a form that particular

¹ The term intellection is made use of throughout to embrace all activities of the understanding, but it is particularly applied to distinguishing the subconscious, affective, automatic, reflex and intuitive states of mind as opposed to the consciously formulative and logical, for which the word intellectual is substituted. Cognition is an all-in term for any form of knowledge.

Also, as far as possible, I have tried to confine the use of the terms reality and the real to denoting mind experience. External, material, objective forms, events or occurrences are referred to as of the actual or actuality.

² See Appendix.

³ See Appendix.

quality and meaning which that form will have for each of us individually. Meaning does not, of course, reside in the object. Were it thus, an object would affect each of us alike, which we know is not so. It is a reactive effect within ourselves, the meaning of which we associate with and embody into the object because the reaction occurs through its instrumentality.

The impression received of an individual person is such a reaction to form, or, as we may say, to a variant of a particular type of form—that of human beings—of whose behaviour we have had previous experience, and we now 'feel' a certain behaviour to be a potentiality of this individual form. We discern in the form a potentiality for behaving in a certain manner. That which is discerned or 'felt' is an intuition, or, when in this affective, undefined state, an intuitive affection.¹

B. Intuition: The Undefined State

Intuitive affection or insight is not confined to complicated discernments of the kind instanced. It arises from the perception of a single attribute of an object—a line or a colour.

The upright or vertical line or position, for example, has a totally different affectability from the horizontal, wherever seen. This is well known to artists, and, as knowledge, is part of their technical equipment for use in expression.

The vertical is used to express elevation, strength and energy, and other allied ideas or concepts, such as uplift, exaltation and aspiration; the horizontal for repose, rest and inertia.

Think of the upward rays of the sun to the horizontal clouds lying low over the horizon. The Aiguilles of the Alps to the long line of the Sussex Downs. Of a person standing to one lying down. Of a growing tree to one fallen. Of an erect to a recumbent column. Of the difference in 'feeling' aroused by any object when altered from the one position to the other.

¹ See Appendix.

Our experience of these lines throughout life is indicative to us of energy in these opposed states. And in reacting to the lines themselves, we do so as if they were embodied with this meaning, which, by an apparent power of 'peering into', we experience as an intuitive discernment.

We tend, however, to think that the manner in which we are affected by a thing is fully explained when understood as simply the 'natural' affection of that thing upon us, wherein intuitive discernments play no part. This is not so. The object is an instrument upon which we play our melodies. We generously attribute the song to it, but it is sung within our own beings. Nothing might appear truer than to affirm unthinkingly, when visualising the blue of the sky, that we image no more than a sensation of blue—the 'natural' affectability of the sky, with nothing more to it. If confined to this physical reaction of the colour alone then it would be true. But the mind discerns a great deal more, and of a kind dependent upon itself.

To visualise blue sky is to intuit an immensity of vista far beyond colour, a vista embodying space, height, distance, perhaps worlds beyond, infinity, brightness and more. Thus, there would arise from the original image perceived an intuitive 'radiation' comparable with the overtones of a musical note. An intuition of height or upwardness may, for example, have for its content as 'intuitive overtones' the characterisation which belongs to the concept of verticality, something of the significance of which has been indicated.

Suppose also that we look, as multitudes of persons have looked, with an idea of heaven in our minds: are not the intuitions still further added to by what this idea may mean to us? Many are they who have conceived a beyond peopled with those who await their coming.

Would the religiously-minded be affected by perception of the sky in the same manner as the astronomically-minded?

If an astronomer were to make us believe, contrary to what we have believed, that at a comparatively short distance beyond our lighted earth begins an interminable desert of darkness, completely enveloping us in isolation from the rest of the cosmos, might we not suddenly realise, from the mental jerk received, that our previous awareness now undergone so rude a change was indeed no 'natural' affection, but was individual and intuitively created?

Neither must we think that the knowledge implicit in intuitions, i.e., the full meaning or content experienced as them, is by any means made known or brought to our understanding by verbal identification of the intuition with a concept—height or brightness (of the sky).¹

What might it signify to speak of a 'bright' countenance? Of what trivial significance are the facts by which we identify that which is 'bright' to the deep and vast experience of the intuition itself as a reality, embodying elements reaching to the very depths of the unconscious activities? For some persons, so penetrating and of such soul significance is their discernment of the personality possessing it, that it creates an affinity of love. Of such richness are intuitions and the presence which they enrich.

Whence comes this intuitive insight, this feeling; and how evolves this so-called embodiment?

C. Intuition: The Defined State

When perceiving a person, an event, the heavens or a single object such as a tree, we do not perceive alike. Our differing mental qualities affect the perception in different ways. What we perceive (the sense-impression) is brought under the influence of, or is animated by, an awakened set of reactions or impulses, namely, unconscious processes, inherited and cultivated tendencies, interests, associated effects and knowledge latent within us. These reactions, ignited by contact with the sense-

¹ See Appendix.

impression, ensue as form-qualifying feelings. Their bearing upon the forms perceived is to qualify them: by interaction. If this qualifying should be of an object which attracts the attention, the eye plays over the visible surface in process of discriminating and re-uniting. Perceptions are transient and infinite in number: of things and qualities, combining into new relations. This is the image-making process.¹ It is cognitive in structure, unceasing and effortless.² Its interactions include, too, forms and qualities recalled from memory which are interwoven with what the eye is seeing. From this interplay is created an ideality in terms of relationship: a new perception. Every perception is an ideality of relations.

Let us illustrate in detail. The material components of an outspreading group of trees upon which we look may be objectively described as dark upwardly twining colours (trunk and branches) surrounded and partly concealed by other lighter colours of innumerable tiny shapes and tints (leaves). It is from these many colours and as many shapes that the perceiver may create as many and more relations of these, of their lines, their spaces, in detail or together in masses.

These relations are of a quality peculiar to him who looks. Under the direction of different tendencies, some persons will perceive relations of colour in preference to those of lines or other details. Or it may be of certain colours only. Or those of certain contrasts. Some will give attention to the outlines formed by the colours when (as leaves) they are seen forming a mass. Or to the flowing lines of the branches. For those who tend to

¹ The form-making activity as known by analysis brings into play the whole of the cognitive process—discriminating, abstracting, recognising, associating, comparing, identifying, combining, eliminating, conceiving, judging, classifying, valuing, etc., a medley of terms with overlapping meanings, but all of which contribute something to our understanding of the defined and undefined perceptive consciousness.

² Basically, the abstractive and prehensile (discriminating and combining) principle.

dwell on the remote or distant, in mind or actuality, then vistas or horizons, even the relative positions of the trees in recession, will attract them. The more sensible are they to construction or order, the more likely do the relations in which they are interested tend to take the shape of definite patterns or designs. This is an important activity for the artist whose uppermost wish, or indeed necessity, is to design his perceptions. The celebrated *gestalt* theory of pattern-forming can operate only upon a quality in which the perceiver is interested. To some degree all interested observers develop a personal outlook which becomes an *order* of relating the material, and which, by reiteration, they can clearly and habitually visualise and weld into the perception. To this we refer later. Marked variations in the material relations occur from the accentuating effects of acuteness in observation, of knowledge, of unconscious shaping tendencies, of associated embodiments and from different qualities in taste. To think (if when in a state of contemplation) or utter to ourselves such terms as dignified, stately or noble, in appraisement of the scene before us is more than to give a name. It is to create concepts by relating what is now being perceived with what has formerly been experienced, and by this means to characterise and classify both our feelings and the qualities of the trees, thereby adding a further accentuation and wider meaning to the perception. All these and other qualifying activities fashion the sense-impression into the actual thing we see. We build on the material given, which, even so, is of our own building.

The sensory material is ever being assembled into new relations so long as there is inter-activity between the material and what is cognitively or emotionally impelling in the feeling of the perceiver. The activity is kept going by the perception of new aspects and new relations. There is continual re-relating from re-newed experience and revival in memory. Selection is an evolvment of the interactions. The transforming results

of this image-making is to create a subjectively qualified image (sense-impression), together with its own correlated feeling: a visionally cognitive and organically excitational (i.e., emotional) enlivenment. Thus appared, the object is an illumination of our own lighting, a personal revelation brought about through an animating of it by a relating of the material components. As an ideality of relations, it is, through and through, symbolic of the personality: an ideality known to no other. It exists as an intuition.

This transforming of an image or sense-impression, or of any kind of medium whatever, is aptly termed *imagic interplay*.¹ Aesthetic perceiving of or dwelling upon form is to give autonomy to this self-activating imagic interplay. In its own right it is the poetic or aesthetic activity. Its conscious control by contemplation and knowledge of technique is the practice of art.

Imagic interplay, by effecting a quality of animation upon the material relations, effects an order of animation, an order of movement, which is an order of rhythm. To control imagic interplay is to direct this order of rhythm. And this being the practice of the artist, it is correct to say that art is rhythm, although such a brief definition without further explanation might be considered almost meaningless. It defines, however, the meaning of those theorists who maintain that aesthetics is a matter of formal arrangements only. This is true at a certain moment in the making of art, but all art is the product of time without measure, and meaning must be accounted for.

Controlled or planned imagic interplay is not necessarily an order of rhythm that is symmetrical. '... of

¹ If, in pronunciation of imagic, the accent be placed on the second and not the first syllable, there will be evoked feelings which arise not only from the word image, but from the terms magic and the implied mystical: so appropriate to the construction and effects of imagic interplay. To speak of *imaginative* interplay would not be apt here where the intention is to emphasise the subject-matter or defined state of the perception rather than the subjective process.

the painters of the English School, it might be pointed out how the rich shadows of Reynolds, the broken touch of Gainsborough, the drifting mists of Turner and the flickering lights of Constable, all in their respective ways and degrees, enable the artists who employ them to disguise the plan of their pictures, and thereby to give them that sense of mystery and infinity to which a great part of their attractiveness is due. The extraordinary minuteness of certain Pre-Raphaelite pictures, and the vibrant atmosphere of the best Impressionist work have a similar effect . . .¹ As animation, it is the presence which, when experienced by the artist as feeling or what is now so appropriately referred to by psycho-analysts as the unconscious or inarticulate form, it is his business to formulate, whether it be through verse, prose, painting or other media, by all the artistry at his command.

Thus this intuitive feeling or insight is brought to expression or articulation by the formulation of an intuitive image in correlation with the intuitive feeling. It may also bring about formulation of an intuitive idea or an intuitive action (performance or behaviour).

For example. Many of our day-to-day contacts with new acquaintances are casual meetings which cannot be said to arouse impressions of a very positive nature. Often these are no more than a 'feeling' in favour or disfavour of the person met: the effect of imagic interplay. Such an awareness is not a characterisation, and for the reason that we cannot carry the impression further because of our inability to ideate, i.e., to formulate meaning. It remains a 'felt' discernment or mere affection.

To be able to advance and to form an idea from an affection, that, for instance, a man is honest or dishonest, is to formulate and to express an intuitive idea.

When a young child moves towards, or shrinks from, a new face, he is but expressing an intuitive affection as

¹ *Picture-making*, by C. J. Holmes (Chatto and Windus).

keenly 'felt' as that by an adult, and expressing it by the only means possible to him: action. His is an intuitive action.

Painters, and artists generally, aim at translating their intuitive affections into intuitive images.

This power of consciously directed imagining (image-making), ideating (idea-forming), and activating (action-forming), inspired by an impression is the essential creative power to which reference has been made, and is a necessary endowment for mastery of achievement in any creative work—art or other.

One is reminded of the intuitive affection experienced by the poet Keats when seated one evening in a suburban garden: of the presence which was formulated by him into a unification as disclosed to us in his poem to the nightingale. A simple garden, in ordinary if pleasant surroundings.

We read the poem to discover the many commonplace forms contributing to the affection, and which, perceived in a condition of imagic interplay, were 'felt' as an intuitive whole. In the first stanza: a bird, plots of ground, a beech tree, shadows, summer, a bird's song, its spontaneity. In the fourth and fifth stanzas: the night, the moon, the stars, darkness, verdure, flowers, their scent, boughs, the time of year, the grass, and so on.

Keats that evening saw and heard nothing more than we, or to recall our camper-out, what he might see and hear as he rests in the field before his last turn-in, but it is to be observed how the poet's sensory images incited activity beyond the feeling state, an activity impelled by the imagic interplay to formulate consciously directed imagery—synthesised into an artistic unification.

The subject-matter perceived by Keats in the form of sense-impressions is vast: the sky with the moon and stars; a garden; the country beyond; and the singing of a bird. To this externally perceived matter is conjoined internally perceived matter. There are other as vitally experienced sense-impressions: his actual physical feelings (as: ' . . . a drowsy numbness pains . . .') and recalled

imagery (as: 'With beaded bubbles winking at the brim'). Also visualised action (as: 'That I . . . might leave the world unseen') and defined thought (as: 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot').

These inner psychic perceptions are as defined as are the externally seen forms. All are equally affected by the transforming qualities of the imagic interplay born of the autonomous 'felt' influences of the poet's mind: those unconscious¹ impulses and innate tendencies, interests, associative effects and knowledge. No subject-matter, abstract or concrete, can ever escape the effects of the involuntary image-making or relating activity.

Impelled to express his perceptions symbolically, and in a medium at which he is technically proficient, the poet takes conscious control of this activity. He constructively transforms into his medium so much of his involuntarily and poetically animated subject-matter as will serve his aim, and interweaves or formulates it into an artistic (*controlled* or directed imagic interplay) conception or theme. The feelings which formerly, by involuntary interaction, have animated the initial perceptions, now also animate those perceptions directing the poet's choice of words, metaphors and similes and the thematic form into which he unites his subject-matter. The feeling—or intuitive—form is in the materialising state.

The aesthetically disposed mind has of necessity a sensibility for registering presence—for being intuitively affected. The artistically disposed mind goes further in having the power to bring the affection to imagery or idea—to define it.

The aesthetically disposed mind may have little power of thought for originating imagery or ideas to express its affections; the power it may have for visualising being

¹ The psycho-analyst is very active today at research establishing both abstract and concrete form in works-of-art as symbols with meanings of archetypal value. The roots of present-day consciousness lie in the primordial pre-conscious period: the millenia when we possessed life but no consciousness.

limited to the recalling and dwelling upon imagery familiar to it. Excessive indulgence in this is popularly known as day-dreaming.

Nevertheless, it is not incapacitated from appraising—*affectively*—the imagined or ideated forms of artists (works-of-art) because it is itself without this constructive power of expression. Its intuitive power enables it to react to the expression of another which, as a discernment, it may have experienced or can imagine, but has never formulated. The intuitive insight¹ of an artist has by no means always the full and rich quality of those who appraise his work, although they themselves may be without a craft for expressing their own affections. There is no qualitative ratio between judgments of taste and power of craftsmanship.²

¹ Image-making activity.

² See Chapter XIII.

CHAPTER VIII

INTUITIVE UNITY

A. *The Full Awareness*

WE now approach more nearly to a meaning of the beautiful. Again we must enquire: what is meant by this term? What kind of affinity is this which has been established between us and the object? 'Feeling' the experience, what is it of the object that we discern and which makes it either beautiful or ugly to us? We all 'feel', but what we 'feel' does not necessarily come from reaction to the same quality or form in the one object, neither does a quality have the same meaning for all. The kind of form that impresses or arouses certain effects within each of us must be known if we are to understand what is of personal value, and what forms must be sought for constructing our own individual presences and works-of-art as aimed at expressions of the beautiful.

In the definition given of the aesthetic apprehension¹ it was said that it comes about through reaction to form presented, namely, to that which is before or occupies consciousness—and *ipso facto*, is recognised. We see or hear something: the sense-impression. As such it is constructed form. If visual-form or sound-form, it is then a construction of the visual or aural sensations: of the sensuous—colour or sound.² An image is a mosaic of sensations held together intellectually. So, analytically, we have in visual form the sensuous, its construction, and the final image.

¹ Page 26.

² We need not concern ourselves with apprehensions arrived at through the senses of touch, taste and smell. Aesthetically, they play a less prominent part than those which originate through the ear and eye.

Reaction to the colours of an individual work-of-art, for example, may be quite separable and distinct from reaction to their arrangement into a pattern or design, or to the object which the design may reveal. We may react to the colour (sensuous) of a pot with or without any strong reaction to its design (construction), or to the pot as a pot (the object), which may be a type of object with or without special meaning for us in its appeal to our fancy. We also react to the form's texture.

In the same way we react to the forms of nature. But we do not subject every perception to this analytical scrutiny. Nevertheless, every aesthetic perception is of this character and includes perception of the sensuous, the construction of it and the object or identity which is formed.

In a bird's song sound is the sensation, the succession of sounds or group of sense units is the construction we call song, and their particular arrangement forms the identity, i.e., a song or form which differs from other constructed forms. In that of a finger-post, visual units take the place of aural and are recognised as of a particular construction forming a finger-post amid its miniature landscape-setting.

Our foundation then is the sensuous, namely, sound and colour, which are sensations in being of direct sense-perception, and which, by the constructive process of the mind, are organised into form and recognised as differentiated entities. These ordered groups of sensations form the image in the consciousness, i.e., the sense-impression in animation from imagic interplay, and in having their apparent material counterparts in actuality, may therefore be viewed as that part of the consciousness which represents objectivity. The full consciousness involves, in addition, the ensuing intuitive or felt awarenesses and emotion which they—the objectively seen—may invoke severally or collectively.

So, the aesthetic consciousness is a fusion or synthesis of sense units, construction, objective identity, intuition and emotion, and it is of the combined intuitive affection

created in reaction to so much of each or all of the perceived which is receiving attention by reason of imagic interplay, that the aesthetic value is derived. This is so because the intuitive or 'felt' reaction involves all that is presentially significant to the form.¹ Form of which imaginative reaction is not the interest is factual and not poetic form. To what we react poetically in the form is the personal problem.

B. *The Beautiful*

The aesthetic consciousness will be a single harmonious presence according to the *apprehended* unity of the intuitive content. This then is our aim: to seek for, and maybe to create, form of which the animation or meaningfulness of the poetically related components, of our ideality of relations, when put together shall harmonise into a reaction of *intuitive unity*.

Intuitive unity is aesthetic unity.

Pleasure or unpleasure, respectively of rest or unrest experienced from such a discernment, is the measure of unity or disunity evoked—for the person who perceives.

This affirmation may appear at first sight open to question. For it might be asked concerning the presence of a pot—how can its unity be described as intuitive when its very essence lies in its formal proportions? By reason of the fact that its construction, however formal, was intuitive in judgment throughout. To ask the artist to explain his construction, is to elicit the reply, 'I "felt" it so', which is to imply that it came from such a judgment, from controlled imagic interplay. Where symmetry of proportion is the expression aimed at, the proportions, when being put together, are judged intuitively, and are to be apprehended in like manner—through the mathematical intuitions.²

Have we intuitive judgments more active, more

¹ The intuitive and emotional parts of the consciousness are, of course, what we have already seen to be the 'felt'.*

* See Appendix.

² Here we may think of architecture.

sensed, more put to practical everyday test, than those of mathematical relations? Do we not continually intuit size—volume and area? And length, breadth, height, distance, weight, fulness, poise, time, number, etc., are hourly intuited for practical purposes. So universally experienced are these intuitions that a presence formed without them would be rare, and no work-of-art devoid of mathematical order is considered worthy of the name. Its absence is 'felt' at once, inducing a state of restlessness in the beholder. And in art, because there are no mensurable facts to which the aesthetic judgment can appeal, the discernment always remains intuitive. In the work-of-art mathematical unity is experienced as intuitive unity.

The mind does not rest when there is want of unity in its perceptions. The desire to bring harmony to the mind and body by unification with its environment is constant and universal.

The desire is, in fact, a manifestation of nature, for our very psycho-physical structure is to be considered as none other than form which exists only by virtue of an adapted unity between itself and other forms of nature—physical, biological and mental.

Every perception carries with it this—if latent—desire to unify in consciousness what is presented to it, producing a condition of equilibrium and contentedness to the mind: a content in affinity.

Every presentation—visual and aural—is of the nature of a problem or proposition for unification with the mind's outlook. The mind demands, for its own peace, that there be unity of comprehension from among the diversity of material presented to it, without and within, in order to perceive thus, and by so doing, to form its own unities. The image-making activity impels a unifying of the intuitive content of the impression into a synthesis of intuitive oneness.

In intuitive unity is found the fulfilment of the overriding creative power, and the only power, which can unify the affectabilities of the sensuous, the pattern or

design and the thing into a single mind whole. There is then an absolute oneness between the self and the object or form. Affinity is established. The inward vision is outwardly expressed by the objective form, and conversely, the outward form expresses what is being inwardly discerned. The two are one.

Intuitive unity, as unified presence, is the beautiful. Intuitive disunity is the ugly. The attainment of intuitive unity is the object of the work-of-art.¹ It is the beatific end to aesthetic aim.

C. Beatific Vision

John Cowper Powys has written penetrating words on the nature of intuitive harmony as an experience of the soul. The vastness in meaningfulness which this harmony may assume even when born of a single visual unit is luminously suggested. In the picture which he draws, the sleeper has awakened and his eyes rest on a patch of morning sunlight brightening the wall of the room. 'That yellow sunlight, the magnetic radiation from the mysterious sun-god, dappled with shadows from the window-blind as a faint blowing wind stirs it a little, is enough to occupy the whole field of the soul's consciousness. The only portion of such consciousness that is not occupied by the beauty of the yellow light is the will itself; and the will itself is all the while making a conscious effort to ward off any other thought—thoughts

¹ As just stated, intuitive unity is an order or harmony formed in reaction to so much of the visible that is valued. It may, therefore, be brought about by perceiving or by giving value to only a fraction of what is present. A single attribute of the form will then suffice. This limitation of outlook may be by intention or from insensibility. Complete unity may be 'felt' from the decorative aspect alone, as also from the constructive or from the object represented. No two person's valuations can possibly be alike. It is for this reason that certain so-called ugly pictures—ugly in what is represented—can yet be considered beautiful paintings to one who is receptive only to their decorative or constructive qualities. As a rule this is the artist's point of view, i.e., that value lies in construction: in the design or pattern.

that like mosquitos troubling a sleeper, keep trying to interrupt that vigil. Except for the activity of the will, thus guarding like a sentinel the particular psychic event that is occurring, the loneliness of the ego is uninvaded.

'And the ego herself does not intrude upon her own contemplations. The mystical act wherein the pure mind and this patch of yellow sunlight from the great burning sun are brought into reciprocal harmony is not accompanied by any mental activity. In the depths of the ego the will holds the field clear, and is prepared to cry "Cave!" at the approach of an enemy.'¹

The 'psychic event' which Mr Powys is here describing and which he knows so 'feelingly', is none other than intuitive unity consequent on completeness of imagic interplay, and the error into which he falls is in calling it sensation. In the immediately preceding paragraphs he writes '. . . ; for the dominant happiness of the lonely ego, that happiness that is the deepest clue to his life, consists not only in expressing himself or in realising himself, but in losing himself in sensation.

'The Beatific Vision of the lonely man is a pure sensation—a sensation composed of the self that feels and of the object, whatever it may be, that is felt by the self. Such a sensation—like that of the yellow light upon the wall, which my ichthyosaurus-ego drowsily contemplates from his bed—becomes a thing in itself.'

Beatific vision is a far ascent from the sensational.² Yellow colour acting mechanically as a physical stimulus upon the human organism and arousing no mental elaboration is sensation. The recognition that yellow colour is 'sunlight . . . dappled with shadows from the window-blind' is mental construction and therefore something higher, while the intuitive and imaginative outreaching of consciousness realised in imagic interplay to which this knowledge gives rise is something still further beyond. It is this fulness of consciousness

¹ *In Defence of Sensuality.*

² See Appendix.

that constitutes Mr Powys' 'psychic event', and in the quality of its harmonic richness lies the value of the whole experience. Thus, too, the mind is not in quietude; it could not be busier.

Here may be referred to again the question as to whether certain experiences of our camper-out arising from direct sensory contact with the outer world are not mere sensational experiences? None can ever be wholly so. For they will also be, and at the same moment, but to a degree commensurate with his knowledge and sensibility, intellectually affected, animated by imagic interplay: the poetic activity.

The sensuous is the basic material on which the mind expands, and the extent to which this expansion is yet apprehended as sensation, or is sublimated through animal joyousness into aesthetic affection and imagery, depends upon the intuitive and image-making powers of the individual and the use he puts these to. By these is life superadded to the sensorily perceived, and sensations seen and heard become more than a physical sensuous experience. The moon and the stars are something more to us than sensations of light; darkness of the night is no longer a purely ocular condition of absence of light; and the breeze playing on the cheek is more than a mere pressure of changing temperature on the skin.

These physical sensations become endowed, by intellectual meaning, with what is to the senses an invisible reality, a something above them, that is of mind perception. It is this reality, objectively invisible, unseen by the senses, of supersensory form, and which is no actual part of physical objects, but a mind illumination we give to them, which becomes their meaning and is our own true reality.

There are as many realities in apprehension as there are lives, and each is its individual own. But all are of similar reactive material in contact, creating and drawing from one another.

What we create depends upon our mental heritage, our experience and ourselves as we are at the moment of

experiencing. From the forms of our environment we are animated, and in turn, animate just so much as our individual capacities will permit. This is to see within limits. Personal visions differ, and so no two outlooks are alike. The work-of-art bears witness to this.¹

Works-of-art are means of communicating to others the conceptions of a personality that has reacted to the world, a world in which we move together, but as distinct and separate beings. By interchange of outlooks our awarenesses multiply and are exalted, and the commonplace things about us become endowed with a fulness of meaning with which no single mind could invest them.

The whole of life, all that we each know of it as form in imagery, idea and action (performance), can be brought within the aesthetic vision. Such harmony is naturalisation of the spirit, of a kind accordant with the consciousness of the feathered songster in the sunlight.

But this reaction to form, to a thing seen or heard, is, to be aesthetic, always experienced as the reality itself, a self-subsisting attitude—an intuitive or visional presence. It is in no way instrumental, or appraised on account of discerned function or purpose, with which it must not be confused.

A presence or awareness that is being 'felt' for a purpose outside the acknowledgment of itself is being viewed instrumentally. It is being considered critically in relation to that practical purpose, and is then, for the mind, a thing of use and not of beauty.

Forget not, brother singer! that though Prose
Can never be too truthful or too wise,
Song is not truth, not wisdom, but the rose
Upon Truth's lip, the light in Wisdom's eyes.²

¹ Because art is individual expression, we must not think of the individual outlook as necessarily capricious and in opposition to the collective outlook. Individualism derives from collectivism, and in the aggregate is collectivism.

² William Watson.

SECTION TWO

THE ARTIST'S OUTLOOK

CHAPTER IX

THE ARTIST AND THE IMPRESSION

COMING now to the artist and the work-of-art, it is desirable, before dealing in detail with the construction of the works themselves, to refer in a general way to the artist's attitude and manner of approach towards impressions and their expression.

What is the value of the impression¹ to the practising artist? How is he stimulated towards work, and how does his impulse differ from that of other men? To what extent, as a specialist in a particular form of work, does he develop an outlook peculiar to himself?

The subject may be approached by elaborating a distinction which has already been made. Suppose a painter in his studio to proceed with his wife, his son, a florist and a gardener—four practical persons—into the garden to see his roses. They go out and all are charmed by the beauty of the blooms, which is to say they are moved by the impression aroused by these flower-forms. The forms constitute the image in their minds.

This image as seen individually by these four persons may, as they contemplate, be quickly superseded and followed by another image directed by the practical interests of each. The artist's wife visualises the roses decorating her room and asks if she may cut some of

¹ From now on, whenever reference is made to an aesthetic impression, it must be understood to be the reaction to a sense-impression which has been subjected to imagic interplay, the quality and intensity of which is in correlation with the poetic feelings that give rise to it. Interest in the impression has much to do with the perceiver's desire to become an artist, i.e., to give continuous attention to more than the effects of imagic interplay and by its control learn to construct form technically from its incitation. It is for us to form the habit in daily life of becoming conscious of the fact that we animate all things.

them. His son sees one in his button-hole and makes the request that he also may cut one. The florist pictures them in his shop, bringing good business, and asks if he may buy them, while the gardener sees their like growing in his own garden and enquires if he may be allowed to take cuttings.

With each of these persons the vision of the flowers themselves is not sufficiently all-absorbing to prevent a more dominant vision from intruding, and in accordance with the different outlooks. The presential vision is suppressed for one of practical or functional value.

Not so with the artist. There in the immediate impression of the image, and in it alone, lies his interest. His dwelling on its presence is sufficing. His is an attitude of acceptance or avowal of the immediacy of the presential life. Therein lies his difference from the other four.

A difference only of degree, true, for they also experience the beauty of the flowers. But not with the same presential intensity or quality of imagic interplay, and therefore their thoughts will soon be concerned with other imagery.

The difference, however, is very real. The artist's greater impressionability has forced him into giving a value to impressions in their own right which the others do not possess, a value which, with its expression, is more to him than all else he may indulge.

From this desire to express arises his practical interest in life, which is the recording of his impressions through the construction of form, and in such manner that the idealisation with which he invests his images may be materialised. It is this idealisation that makes his forms different from any other and which gives them their value. To idealise form is to invest it with a transcendence created by a man's whole being.¹

¹ There are idealisations of nature that almost take the form of transmutations. These were, perhaps, at one time, most nearly associated with the term vision than any other form of imagery. An easily understood illustration might be had from a visualisation of nature filled with sounds which, to the transforming mind,



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LANDSCAPE WITH CYPRESS TREES—VAN GOGH

Thus comes he to observe the details of an object as if they were of a world themselves and related only to the presence which is their meaningfulness to him. From this meaningfulness is evolved the forms which shall reveal his outlook when materialising form into works-of-art.

Meaningfulness of form to the practical man is form that is useful in a practical way. To be arrested by the beauty of the flowers, to gaze on them and dwell in contemplation, is of the artist. To recognise their loveliness, but to suppress the reverie and, under pressure of another vision, to gather the flowers for market, is of something other than an artist. To be either is within the capacity of all men.

The all-practical man, however, has often little use for what is to him a waste of time in pandering to dreamy inclinations. But he does not understand that meaningful form, when being formulated and put into order as a work-of-art, is material in a world as constructive as the world of organisation in which he claims to live.

The artist relies upon a delicate sensitivity and fertile imagination, but he is not alone in possessing these. His particular distinction as a practising artist lies in the power to formulate and materialise presential images into a meaningful unity. It is this which constitutes his actual work.

become transmuted into the truly orchestral. Visual form, too, is idealised in this manner—a creative fusion of colour, for example, as found in Turner's phantasies. The reproduction given here of Van Gogh's *Cypress Trees* shows an idealisation equally pronounced, but of very different form. It is a most individual ideality of relations.

CHAPTER X

THE AESTHETIC CONCEPTION

AN artist, aesthetically impressed by a natural form, and wishing to make it the subject-matter of a work-of-art, has then to work upon it and to transform it into an art form. He must construct.

The creator of form, therefore, in addition to appraising impressions, must construct expressions. He must have *conceptions* and be able to express them in his chosen medium—colour, line, sound, etc.

It will ever be impossible to know the ingredients of an impression. A product of mind in reaction to environment, we know little or nothing of the multitude of impressions which have entered and helped to mould the mind into what it is, a mind with a disposition for registering and digesting certain forms and affections while passing over others.

A boy listens to his father telling him tales of the sea, or of the engine he drives, or of the business he entered as a boy and now manages.

The boy's imagination is kindled into imagery of life on the sea and foreign lands, or of the power and speed of engines, or of statesmanship applied to great organisations. Impressions are engendered within his mind, and from these there will ultimately arise conceptions as to his future, and of the work he will himself undertake.

Sometimes, and with some boys, the impression made is so strong, the imagination has been so fired, that the boy doesn't stop to ponder. The conception he has formed, vague though it may be, must be acted upon at once, and he runs away to sea perhaps. He is impressionable: he has been affected deeply by the effects of imagic interplay.

There is another boy who is not so carried away, who weighs up the conditions with thoughtfulness, and is in no great hurry to make up his mind until he has learnt something about the kind of work entailed. He is practical: he *controls* the imagic interplay, or, subjectively, his correlated feelings.

This thinking by him is a criticism of the means, i.e., of the forms through which the conception is to be realised and will 'take form', and which are reviewed by the mind in terms of themselves and in the light of his reaction towards them. For a boy who is imaginatively affected by imagery of ships, life in the ports, the sea and foreign lands, will feel and think in terms of these forms, and will, if he takes to the life, formulate and finally realise himself through them.

So it is of the artist's impression. A particular impression interests him, and the forms which produce it are dwelt on. Should the desire to express arise, he also will think in terms of the forms through which he wishes to express himself, and the conception will be of their form.

A painter might perhaps have been listening to the word-imagery of the boy's father, when he too would visualise, but of forms resplendent with colour. In terms of these forms would he ultimately realise himself.

A musician would transform and conceive in terms of sound.

Directly the mind believes of itself that by taking action it can realise a desire, it has visualised or conceived an ordering of form which is a conception and the form to be aimed at materially. Action decided upon, the call to work transfers interest from the impression—which is none the less retained as a conscious affection—to the conceived form and its materialisation.

In the actualisation of form lies the true working interest of the artist.

Great however as interest in this practice may become, it is always instrumental to the conception which is to be realised through construction. Construction is the means.

By way of emphasis it may be noted that the instrumental relationship of construction to final aim in art is exactly analogous to what exists in the world of practical affairs: as for example, in the activities of a commercial man whose aim may be to make money, but whose practice is the construction of form, namely, that of his business, as instrumental to this end. The commercial man never forgets his ultimate purpose, but his whole time, thought and ability, are given over to organisation and its execution. He attains through his technique.

It is so with the artist. Organisation of form is the means by which he conveys what he wishes to express, namely, an intuitive perception of a unity revealed to him. Design is his preoccupation.

* * *

In confirmation of the belief that the fundamental desire activating a man's life is for aesthetic affinity between himself and his environment, I should here like to take advantage of the illustration made use of by drawing attention to the nature of the motive which leads the boy to take to a life on the sea.

Quite obviously the motive is aesthetic. Were this doubted, we might as easily suppose the boy to have received his impression from a work-of-art, from tales told in the form of the novel or of the drama, as from his father's story. Inspiration for a life's work has frequently been had through these means.

A fancy, or phantasy if we wish it, becomes woven around these forms associated with the sea, and the boy

sets out to realise it: a materialisation of imagic interplay. An aesthetic dream, never forgotten, to which a life may consecrate its whole activity.

It is precisely this fancy which every man embarking on life wishes to have for the work which is to be of a lifetime. And in so far as can be discerned, there is no higher aim revealed to us than dedication of the practical life to such means. Attainment excludes none of life's forms. The most lowly among us is not without the power of its fulfilment in some chosen form.

Men know that they must make their livelihoods, and if, when forced to enter a commercial or industrial life they are able to express a preference, be it for contact with ships, coal, engineering, livestock, finance or any other, it is due to this fancy, which is an intuitive discernment of a life as near to creating a unity with their environment as they can imagine, and which it is hoped the pursuit of the object will bring to them. That the day following the launching of an aesthetic pursuit by entering a business may bring with it disillusion and loss of the aesthetic ideal, is no argument that it did not exist, nor yet still exists—to activate again. Rather does it imply that the conditions found in the office or factory, viewed as the forms through which the ideal was to have been realised, were themselves so aesthetically distasteful as temporarily to destroy the ideal.

Most young people are unable from economic necessity to pursue individually an aesthetic ideal, and must rely upon the prevailing working conditions governed by the expression of the collective ideals of the community—predominantly economic—to supply the means for aesthetic enjoyment.¹ But if discouraged by such conditions, the ideal might in time be lost, to be supplemented by an aimless search for distractions.

The more aesthetic in aim become the collective ideals of a community, the more aesthetically in unity with life will men find themselves individually.

¹ For aesthetic apprehension of work see Chapter XXVII.

CHAPTER XI

THE ARTIST AS OBSERVER OF NATURE

IN practice, design is the artist's preoccupation. He is impressed and he conceives—constructs, first mentally and then materially.

Practice quickly informs him of the dependence of expression upon order.

From his earliest efforts to paint, a painter, as a close observer of nature, soon discovers that he is attracted not only to objects, *qua* objects, however much they may interest him, but to the arrangement of what he sees. Objects that are grouped together, let us say, to form a particular landscape, are found to be limited and similar in kind to those found in any other landscape—chiefly fields, trees, hedges and hills: but if seen as an arrangement of qualities—colours and lines—there is no such limitation.

Therefrom the artist learns that what is beautiful to him is personal to him and that only by mere chance may the haphazard arrangements of nature fully satisfy his desire for a unity as ideally perceived by him: an ideality of relations. He is therefore at liberty to construct his arrangements according to his own dictates, a liberty which opens an illimitable vista before him, and through which he is free to develop his organising powers as means for the expression of his impressions, i.e., presential meanings. This organising—relating of formal qualities—constitutes art construction. It is abstract constructing, and is the means for converting incidental into conceptual form, which is the distinguishing feature of the art form.

It is the perceiving in form of qualities consciously related to one another that creates the essential difference between the artist and others in their methods of

observing things. Most persons tend to see what is before them as objects, whereas the artist, who values the object no less, sees everything in qualities (colours and lines) or abstractions and essentially as collective wholes with the qualities of one object in relation to the qualities of another. This is the normal artistic vision.

An artist on entering a field situated a mile distant, say, from the Sussex Downs might be confronted by a tree, the form of which, as qualities of colours and lines, he sees simultaneously with and in relation to the colours and lines of the hills in the background. The colour of the field, too, on which he stands, with that of the tree-shadow and its edge as a line, and all such qualities intervening between him and the extremity of his vision are observed and related in the same manner.

Those who are artistically untrained would, for the most part, see the distant Downs as a panoramic whole, but the nearer an object is to them the more is it seen in isolation and apart from all other objects. They are quite unlikely to see—and especially at the same moment—the green of the tree in relation to the green of the hills, or the vertical lines of its trunk in relation to the horizontal line of the distant horizon. These are relations which an artist cannot avoid seeing. They enter his imagic interplay.

It is so always and at whatever he may be looking. Seldom would he look down a street and catch sight of a pillar-box without seeing its red colour in relation to the colours of the sky behind it or of the buildings around it. He would not stand on the pavement surrounding the Victoria Memorial and see the horizon line formed by the trees and architecture over St James's Park without at the same time seeing the line of the kerb near him and of that across the road with those of the parapet surrounding the park and of any others that might intervene between them and that forming the sky line. Neither could he see the colours and lines of a chandelier suspended from a ceiling without relating them to those of the furniture and wallpaper behind it. Such relating

is habitual to his perceiving and conforms to the expression on his canvas where these colours and lines are found beside one another.

In picture-making this form of construction is elementary, being the first stage in intellectual or artistic arrangement beyond mere reproduction. Although elementary, it is seldom free of complexities and is what artists find most difficult in their work to fulfil consistently throughout and with eloquence.

An artist may be sitting on the lawn of a garden. At a short distance in front of him is a wall, mostly concealed by flowers and shrubs. From among them grows a single tree, well above the height of the wall. On the other side of the wall, a few yards away from it, there stands another and taller tree, which, from the artist's position, is seen to the left of the one inside the garden.

These are the principal objects which he sees. They please him and from the effects of imagic interplay he feels aesthetically moved to make a drawing, but upon reflection decides that he cannot make much of it artistically, and he is not sufficiently interested in thought to construct these objects into a design.

Presently something comes to sight which was not there before. Some workmen at work outside the garden have just erected in position a telegraph pole beyond the further tree which comes into view somewhere between the two trees and overtops them. Immediately a new significance is given to the view—a constructional significance, which is ideally inherent to the artist's perception. As, in imagery, one line will always affect another, so this tall upright pole-line by position and contrast affects the horizontal lines of the wall and the contours of the trees. Its black tone in juxtaposition with the grey of the wall and the blue of the sky accentuates the colours, and an interesting rhythm of planes receding from the first tree to the second and from the second tree to the telegraph pole is brought into play.

The painter now sees the possibility of meaningful

MAURICE UTRILLO



MONTMARTRE

By courtesy of Mrs. Nashvill, Esq.

expression by order into unity, which, before the advent of the vertical line and the relationships it formed, was but weakly 'felt'. The material for imagic interplay has been added to, and the perception is now more greatly animated.¹

¹ 'Ordering' of form, when based on a model, must not be looked upon as if it were a mere tightening up or pulling together of the existing units of that model. It always implies what we understand as designing and constructing, concepts which are not, however, at all times the most appropriate to use with a particular context. 'Order' is, perhaps the best general, all-covering term.

It will be observed from the scene visualised here that by the introduction of 'order' there is brought about an entirely new set of harmonies, thereby creating something which has not previously existed. This is unavoidably so whenever a pattern of 'order' is changed. There is always harmonic change, which is creation—a new presence, objective and spiritual.

CHAPTER XII

VISUAL UNITY

IF there is to be unity in design of the various constituents which go to form a work-of-art, it is evident that the first constructive demand must be upon the seen: the sensuous, in being that which takes priority in the consciousness as direct sense perception, and which is the material structure holding the intellectual content. There must be visual or sensuous unity. No matter what may be put into a work-of-art as expression, entering its unification either as subjective content or objective representation, there must, for the satisfactory expression of these, be unity in what is perceived by the senses.

Art-directed form is first and foremost construction of the sensuous—of the seen: appearance only.

The recognition and practice of this first principle of design—the direct appeal to the eye¹—in the making of a work-of-art is a cardinal acknowledgment common to all periods of art. It forms part of the general approach of an artist towards his subject and is the governing consideration in what shall or shall not be painted. Art is construction, construction of the materially poetic.

The significance of visual unity in painting implies that the sensuous elements in the picture—colours and lines—which make up the forms of it, shall, by their ordered interplay, move us by something seen, as by the interplay of musical sounds we are moved by

¹ 'Appeal to the eye' and 'appeal to the ear' are not very exact phrases for use, although possibly their few words express more adequately what is intended than many a long discourse! They point to formal arrangement of 'appearance' only, which may be said to embody relations in proportion, balance, direction and rhythm: basically the intuitively mathematical. Such an 'appearance' may also be spoken of as a *constructed* harmony in decoration.

something heard. In all art, this interplay of the medium through which the artist is expressing himself, whether it be of sound by the musician, of colour by the painter, of line by the draughtsman, of movement by the dancer, of volume by the sculptor or of words by the poet, is that which the artist endeavours always to make artistically expressive, the parts being put together by him with this purpose. To fail in this is for him to fail in his task. To succeed is to justify the subject chosen, no matter what it may be. It is merely *directed* imagic interplay.

But there is more to it than this. Visual unity as an ideal aim enforces presential perceiving of the object, which is by no means always perceived in the state of presential purity that might be supposed. An object may be interesting and dwelt upon on account of what conditions it, or is associated with it. It may be appraised and painted predominantly as representative rather than presentative. A portrait, for example, because of whom it represents, and not for any intrinsic qualities of the painting itself. Other examples are illustrations generally for books and magazines; also depictions of ceremonies and topical events, of which the aim is to represent the circumstantial significance of the incident portrayed. An artist who does not look upon an object as a thing itself of visual interest must alternatively view it as conditioned by or incidental to something—a circumstance or an idea—and he will design his picture in illustration of whatever this may be. Which means that his picture is so much the poorer in that it is limited to what conditions the object, while the object as sheer presentative form, together with the sensuous and its construction as such, are overlooked. In effect, the value of the object rests on the value of what it circumstantially represents, which is what gives value to a cheque. The significance of presential unity is to give a threefold presential value, namely, to the sensuous, to the design and to the object, but if the intent be to record only on account of the incident represented by them, then these

values are subordinated to, if not eliminated by, the value given to that which conditions them—the incident. Incident becomes the motive of the work-of-art and the artist's form will be incidental and not conceptual. Visual unity checks this.

This was the outlook adopted generally by the Victorians. The old academic manner as practised in those days maintained that the form should be conditioned by a story, supported by a title expressive of an idea. A good title was, in fact, a chief asset in those days. Painters searched for them, and success in capturing the attention of the public largely depended upon choosing one which emphasised a dramatic or moral idea. The method was to force a painter's primary interest into the idea of the story, *irrespective* of whether the form or imagery symbolic of it was conceived or was even capable of being conceived artistically. A dramatic idea alone is never a sufficient motive for making a picture. To be led away in this manner and to be intent upon depiction because of dramatic or eventful qualities is, to say the least, artistic laxity. Prevalent fifty years ago, it was a practice set by Royal Academicians themselves, and, one regrets to say, in these days to some extent still is.¹

There is, however, a considerable difference between making a story the supreme expressional aim and sweeping out of the picture all literary, dramatic and psychological interest. This is what certain schools of the opposite extreme have since endeavoured to do. Taken literally, and carried to its logical end, this would mean the destruction of form. It is a consideration which shall be entered into later.

The farthest it is possible to go towards making any general statement is, that painting being a visual art,

¹ If, of course, our purpose is to formulate meaning, any work-of-art may be said to be saturated with ideas. This however, does not over-ride the fact that their presentation is in the form of imagery, which, if presentially conceived, conditions them and not they it. More finality is given to this subject in Chapter XXX.

its primary appeal must be to the eye, and therefore, whatever meaning may be conveyed by it is subject first to the judgment of the eye. This is true, and one cannot be too definite about it.

This can be illustrated by examples of the varied visual experiences we might come across in ordinary life. Suppose that I enter a house, and in the hall on a table is a bowl of flowers. It stands illuminated by the sun before a curtained window through which the rays penetrate. My eye is immediately attracted, and I think how beautiful it is. Here is a pure visual impression, a subject wholly a painter's, and one to be portrayed more adequately by colour than by any other medium. Should I, however, paint because the flowers happen to be unique to me, it would be to paint for the incidental value, which would result in a very different work-of-art from that impelled by the desire for visual or sensuous unity. Adherence to representational accuracy would be the only means of recording imagery viewed wholly as unique, and would interfere with individual relating of the formal elements into imagined arrangements expressive of meaning personal to me.

Or perhaps I go into the dining-room and in it I see a man seated in an arm-chair, reading. Here again I am visually impressed. The attitude of the figure, the position of the chair in relation to the French window behind, and the bright geraniums in the greenhouse contrasted with the deep green shadows of the carpet, please me at once, as a pure visual unity. My impression is in no way incidental to who is seated in the chair.

I leave this room and walk into the library, where upon opening the door I see two figures standing, one on each side of a writing desk, an elderly and a younger man. I am here quite conscious of not being interested in what is before me; the room appears gloomy and unattractive. Sensing that my presence is not required, I withdraw, but upon closing the door I hear a remark coming from within which holds me where I am. Presumably, the voice is that of the elder man, who says:

'I can put up with this no longer; you must leave the house for good'. The room and those within it have now by circumstance become charged with dramatic interest, and as I stand and visualise I am deeply affected. But although so moved, what is it that moves me? Nothing visual, for I saw all that was to be seen and came away uninterested. It is, then, in what I have *heard* that now leads me to visualise the scene with interest. In other words, I become interested in what I have *seen* because I happen not to be deaf, which has nothing to do with sight. Is this then a subject for me to paint? How can it be, when my interest *as a painter* was not aroused? Not until the dramatic situation had become known to me verbally was I interested. This is a conditioning circumstance which alone conditions any interest I may have in the form.

Sometimes the distinction between the visual and the circumstance or idea is not always so clearly defined. Frequently the two appeals occur simultaneously. How often have young people been seen seated together in circumstances which we at once endow with romance? A truly Victorian inspiration! Yet what is the appeal here? Is it purely visual form, or is it of an interest aroused by recognition—but not necessarily arrived at by hearing spoken words—of a sentimental circumstance we know to be taking place and around which we weave romance? If this last, then again we are interested in the incident, romantic on this occasion instead of tragic, and likewise of extraneous interest to the painter, as painter. Withdraw the circumstance and the visual interest disappears with it.

Let us return to the house. It is evening, the lights are turned on, and music comes from the lounge. I enter. Around the piano are grouped a number of persons lost in rapture, listening to strains arising in response to the touch of the pianist. Once more I am interested, but in what particularly of this multifold appeal? Is it the music that affects me, or the observance of its effect upon other listeners, or upon the pianist himself, or is it

my interest in one particular listener who is gazing at the pianist more intently than any other, or in memories recalled from my youth, or in ideas that arise as to the power of beauty and culture, or is it due to the colour or flowing lines of what I see? Which is it of these that moves me? Is it one or more of these, or is it all together? This I may not know, although clearly all these material forms and awarenesses must contribute to the impression, and if I am stimulated by interest to make it the subject of a painting, adjudication must take place through the eye, and consideration be focused as before upon the unifying possibilities of the visual form. If nothing can be made of it, the subject is abandoned.

To be interested visually in the form of those persons arranged around the piano, is to be interested in form which has resulted from their action in so grouping themselves together. While thus giving attention to the form for its expressional possibilities, I must for the time being be indifferent to the action which produced it, and to the idea (the intent to have music) which produced the action. I am interested—*qua* painter—not because this grouping is representative of an incident, but because an incident has happened to result in a grouping which I see, or may try to see, as an artistic unity.

How does this outlook apply when viewing rural nature? I walk along an open road and come to a group of trees being swept into curves by the wind. Here is form, and action producing that form, the action of the wind. Does not the same question present itself? Am I interested in the trees because of the form they have now assumed, or am I interested in the occurrence of trees incidental to wind? If the latter, then again it is the incident, viewed somewhat as a novelty, and my painting of them would be of the character of a souvenir. But if the forms please visually or suggest artistically unifiable forms to my mind, I might wish to express myself.

Do we not bring this same attitude to bear upon

persons when painting their portraits, and is this not the reason why so many artists will not and cannot paint portraits? A sitter requires a portrait to be either beautiful or to portray character. By the portrayal of character we mean the seeking out of those traits and attributes of the mind which, through constant activity, have affected and moulded the physiognomy into a certain form. To the artist, when interested in form as a thing of visual unity, this mind activity as action that produces form is of no greater relevance than the action which produced the group sitting around the piano, or that which bent the trees on the road. As one interested in human character, yes, but as a painter, the possibilities for treating the form as an artistic visual unity must lead the way.

There are occasions when our interest in an object is due wholly to a memory recalled. Many of the objects we like to keep about us are there for a love of this kind. When an object acts instrumentally in this manner by arousing other imagery—as when a finger-post recalls a circumstance of long ago—whereby the mental focus is transferred from the object (the post) to the aroused imagery (the picnic) this latter is, as previously remarked, an associated interest. We like and dislike objects on account of their associations.

Knowingly to paint form or imagery for the sake of an associated interest which is present to the mind in the form of a conscious idea or other conscious imagery is to paint for that idea or that other imagery and not for the form which awakened it. Thus, associated interest takes precedence over the visual interest. Whereas to paint an object seen as visual form will not preclude the associations attached to it being apprehended intuitively, i.e., in the 'felt' form. The visual form is then the one and only image to receive attention, and as such, the greater the number of associations aroused by it, the more richly is it animated and the fuller its meaning.

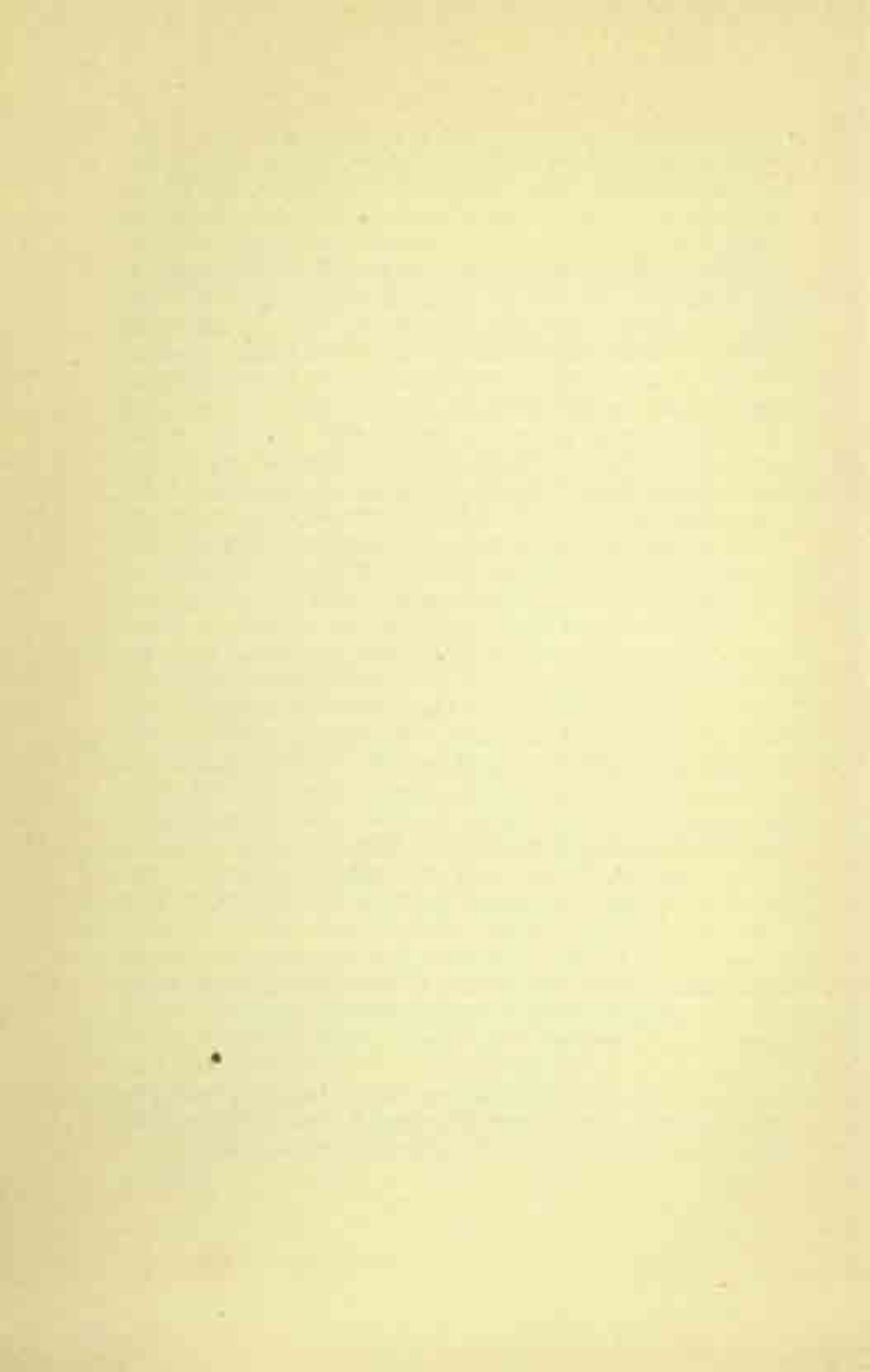
There is no naïveté in the doctrine that the aesthetic outlook is to look upon the world with the simple

wonderment of a child enriched by our fuller intuitions. We, today, do not perhaps speak in the worshipful terms of the past, but we have their equivalents. We lie on a beach and play with the pebbles saying, 'A funny thing, a stone', expressing an apprehension of the how and why of the unknowable as complete as if seeing for the first time. Such apprehending is to see the huge wave breaking upon the shingle as sheer presence of form. No scientist is needed to stand by our side to tell of the power, the energy that is going to waste; no philosopher to construe the rhythmic movements into terms of the eternal; or pagan to speak of anger when the wave soars into foam. In the language of these the painter is inarticulate, but through his vision something of all their ideas is intuitively 'felt' and revealed in his work. The fact that these awarenesses are not brought to verbal consciousness is no proof of their absence. There is a visual consciousness that likewise speaks.

Whatever may interest an artist in the life around him, that part of it which he chooses to express must be subservient to his conceiving a form which shall be visually satisfying. This does not limit his interest, but only what he chooses to paint. This form becomes the artist's all-pervading search, and if he pursues his art with this outlook it never occurs to him to paint until what moves him is seen in the light of this idealisation. Such a visualisation is the conception.

The moment of discovery is the moment of fusion, and is the so-called moment of inspiration. Inspiration is a word one does not much care to use; its significance can be over-glorified. Work is a more potent producer of inspiration than inspiration is of work. Besides, it is enjoyed by all persons and appears in all forms of mental construction, and not only as an urge to artistic activity.

Any object may be painted provided the artist is interested in it as form artistically visualised, and not only as form subordinated to the idea or action which produced it or is represented by it.



SECTION THREE

THE WORK-OF-ART

CHAPTER XIII

THE APPROACH TO WORKS-OF-ART

DISTINCTION has been made between natural form and art form.

Forms of nature: flowers and trees, lakes and streams, mountains and valleys, with their varied disposition in landscape, are readily appraised as familiar forms. But forms of art, be they of movements, words, sounds or colours, are individual and when unfamiliar do not evoke discerning response. To do so they must approximate either to what can already be assimilated or await familiarisation. This is why, in painting, it is those pictures which are more or less exact depictions of nature that are most generally and spontaneously appraised. As expressions of reactions to commonplace objects they appear simple and familiar. The aesthetic discernment responds to them as easily and naïvely as to nature, and the response is of the same quality.

It may be observed that to a townsman who might be wholly unacquainted with the uses or instrumental values of what he sees in the country, rural nature cannot be looked at by him in any other way than aesthetically. He sees what is to be seen by visual right only—as sheer presence. There is no other form of appraisal open to him.

Equally true is it that this appraisal, through repeated observation of and discrimination between the forms being continually re-related by imagic interplay, is capable of critical development, and may eventually become of a highly constructional character. He who sees, forms artistic harmonies. These would be the forms to be transformed into a work-of-art were he so able and so willed to make them. As seen in nature they form a sort of draft design. This constructive observation is to

enter the realm of the artist, or, as correctly, aesthetic perception is re-inforced by artistic perception.

* * *

Hesitancy to familiarise oneself with art forms is a chief reason for retarding their appreciation. Yet the necessary familiarisation is to be acquired with a minimum of effort, for, works-of-art in being intuitively apprehended rather than intellectually understood, appraisalment is not dependent upon technical knowledge. Were it so, no artist would have an audience. The needful knowledge on which judgment relies is involuntarily acquired. Life as a whole is, for the most part, valued without technical knowledge. That which each of us possesses of an instructed technique is confined mostly to one or two chosen activities: a job and a hobby, outside which our specialised knowledge is very small. We need contact with works-of-art, little more. Power of appraisalment grows unconsciously, as it has for those things of which we have an acquired taste. This, for most men, is in what art training consists.

Many listeners attend the concert halls every season to hear Beethoven, Bach and Wagner, yet it can be said of those present that only a few know anything about the structure of music. If appreciation of the art depended upon a course at a college of music, the public performance of it would cease for want of demand. It is, however, usual for most persons, on hearing work by an artist to whose music they are listening for the first time, to come away with a very indefinite and none-too-appreciative impression. Yet we know that a second

or third hearing—further opportunities for relating through imagic interplay—without any further means of instruction will bring about an assimilation by which the sounds take form, i.e., identity, in the musical consciousness.

We experience a similar vagueness with verse when the style is new and unfamiliar, the effect of which is an inclination sometimes to put down the book. We, however, read on, and, grasping the phraseology, find a meaning to emerge which at first was unsuspected.

Painting also is to be appreciated without constructive knowledge.

Thus, in the course of time, do we get to know something of the salient features of a work-of-art, and of the type of work which attracts us. This knowledge is a help to appreciation by the accrued and larger interest we gain. Appraisal becomes more discriminating from the wider experience.

To go beyond appreciation, namely, to enquire into a thing, of its form, of its relation to other forms and how it is achieved, which is in effect to understand art, is more than desirable, and would become a general desire had we the time and opportunity. The effort to understand is but the natural outcome of appreciation. But critical contemplation of work is an activity very different from the relative passivity in absorption of meaning. Criticism demands that, for the time being, we forget the impression and give attention to the picture's construction. This is intellectual analysis. Sensibility for the one does not imply power for the other. Many are the aesthetically sensible who remain incapable of verbal criticism. And the informed are often without the sensibility.

A work-of-art is not, as nature is not, by any means always perceived aesthetically. Many persons' approach is deliberately and persistently factual conforming to their practical observations and interests.

To react to works-of-art for purely presential reactions is as far as most men wish to go with art. For the average

man to concern himself with the why and the wherefore of this and that in construction is beyond his knowledge and time. Unless he has the interest of the specialist, it cannot be expected of him. But this ignorance of technique does not inhibit the desire for contact with works-of-art, neither does it repress a sensibility for beauty.

Artists themselves know nothing more about the arts which lie outside their particular own—which sometimes extends to more than one—than does the untechnical appraiser, and indeed they are often far less discriminating than he about work even in their own medium, but which is outside their personal visions.

Witness the gulf between the opinions of artists who practise precise draftsmanship and those given to Impressionist forms, and between either of these or both and of those expressing themselves through post-Impressionism—the advanced forms of today. Artists *collectively*, and of every denomination, no less in the past than in the present, can lay no claim to being more sensible towards a new outlook than any other members of the community who have acquaintance with the forms.

Do we forget what the musicians and the accredited musical critics of the time of Wagner had to say of him? Yet it was they who possessed all the technical knowledge! But—not the intuitive sensibility towards forms outside their own schools. It has always been so.

We can, of course, when attempting to appraise forms with which we are unfamiliar, be helped towards interpretation of their meaning by a clue as to what is attempted in the work. This is the only move when our own sensibilities cease to direct us. It is a very necessary help today when there is so great a divergency in the manner of using forms, and especially for appraising 'reactions' and 'consciousnesses', and when there is concealment of both subject and subject-matter.

For those who are unfamiliar with modern paintings perhaps a helpful reminder of an elementary character

calculated to break down prejudice when confronted with these works is that the disposition of forms in nature—which is the 'natural' disposition of colours, lines, etc.—is not the only, nor necessarily the most effective, arrangement for the expression of a conception that may or may not even be initiated from them. In any event, such forms in their divergence from nature must be viewed unprejudicially as outer signs of inner meanings. To some extent, this divergence may be likened to that between our own natural movements of the body and their transformation into dance-form movements.

To reconcile one's appraisal of modern works-of-art to this departure from naturalism, which must be understood to be to the dictate of a reaction or consciousness experienced and expressed ideally, and the forms of which are not necessarily for comparison with those of nature, is the only approach to these 'distorted' works. Following familiarisation, our sensibilities must do the rest. If, after a fair trial, we 'feel' nothing of consequence, then they are dismissed as without meaning—to us.



Standards of taste—as expressed in qualities of 'feeling' for what is appropriate to presential harmony—differ. It is for each person to discover for himself what his may be, and he will do this through the enlargement of his experience.

The level or quality of one's taste has no bearing upon intensity of enjoyment. Those who find that music of the cabaret is more to their liking than music of the concert hall are no less appreciative than those assim-

lating the higher forms. There is unity of reaction for the one as for as for the other. To recognise this truth, each one of us need only think of the work-of-art that used to interest him before his taste was what it is. It is not stable now.

Aesthetic appraisalment is wholly individual. Men do not live in equality of apprehension. To admit the individualistic character of aesthetic judgments is to assert nothing as to their quality, neither is it to imply the negation of technical principles and consequent standards arising from the application of these principles.

* * *

There are persons who, when they do not appreciate the great expressions of acknowledged masterpieces, accept the fact unconcernedly and turn from them to nature in the belief that in natural form they can appreciate the highest that is given.

They are mistaken; there is no giving, but an offering, as from the work-of-art. It is we who take, and in accordance with our capacity. We learn from both, but it is in works-of-art that aesthetic expression reaches its highest, and it is from them that the great enrichment of our own perceptions is to be learnt. Those who, by a mode of living, seek for themselves the creation of an aesthetic presence and experience its kind in reaction to a work-of-art, have found a form enlightening their way of attainment.

The work-of-art, however, or any form to which we react aesthetically, is limited in power to impression. Therein lies the enlightenment. It merely presents and

is itself a presentation. The impression is 'felt'. That, as we have learnt, is the experience. There is no instruction in aesthetic reaction. Not in the reaction itself. No dwelling upon the presence of a work-of-art which awakens aspirational 'feelings' can inform how these 'feelings' may be personally expressed or sustained in life by personal effort. No prolonged gaze upon the flowers of the garden or upon the refinements of a room can tell of the effort, knowledge and means required to create the presence evoked by these. As an experience beauty is final. It is an end in itself in relation to the form that arouses it. Yet, there is no experiential finality so long as the spirit lives, and the end is but a beginning. Beauty impels. So, having experienced aesthetic elation and being moved to aspire—what then? We cannot forever dwell in a state of passivity. Construction awaits us, and we must turn to thought: to science, for knowledge of the techniques of effective doing, whether it be of the ordering of form for the making of a work-of-art or for the beautifying of a mode of living. Every form of achievement has its technique. From aesthetic vision is born the ideal; science in the form of practical construction is the means for achieving it.¹

As practices, the individual arts are similar to the sciences in that they are specialised in by only a few of us. That all should specialise in even a single science is neither practicable, nor necessary, but it is essential that all keep themselves accessible to scientific discovery.

¹ I here use the word science in its widest meaning—logically co-ordinated observation, thought and action. Although the arts are intuitive in construction (intuitively co-ordinated thought and action), there is no escape from logical observation, research and study of all that is objective as means: of characteristics, behaviour and handling. Architecture and gardening are very obvious illustrations. The layout and colour arrangement of a garden must always be intuitive if pursued as an art, but how far could a would-be artist-gardener proceed successfully without scientific knowledge of what he handles? To this duality must be applied the term scientific aestheticism, or, if preferred, it can be described as aesthetically inspired science. The relationship is, of course, a sequential one.

So of art. Not all can be writers, musicians, actors, dancers, painters and poets, but it is a necessity that all be subject to the influence of their forms and of those higher-quality manifestations of art forms through which are expressed the commonplace everyday activities of life.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WORK-OF-ART, ART AND ARTISTIC

WE will briefly recapitulate our findings regarding the aesthetic reaction, and in doing so with some repetition, shall be certain of emphasising what is characteristic to it as a form-making activity or process.

So, accepting the definition that poetic (aesthetic) form is form animated by imagic interplay into an ideality of *material* relations in its own right, then the work-of-art is poetic form worked into an ideality of *unified* material relations. In different words, we find that by perceiving form in its own right we give attention to its presence and therefore perceive presentially, which is to provide the condition for its involuntary animation by means of imagic interplay. This is the poetic conception, an ideality of form, which, if qualified by order or unity, is a work-of-art. By bearing in mind, then, the essential quality of aesthetic form, namely, that it is a quality of animation which arises from perceiving form in its own right, and that art form is the same quality perception unified, we may proceed to make the following observations.

A work-of-art exists for one reason only: to be aesthetically apprehended.¹

¹ This is a strictly accurate statement, although at first sight it may not appear to cover such works which, from a teacup to a cathedral, are to be apprehended from an utilitarian as well as an artistic standpoint.

A work-of-art is what it is by conception: an artistic conception embodied into form by the maker. And when an object is made by the conjoining in form of two conceptions—artistic and utilitarian—the artistic embodiment is there unaffected, fulfilling its one purpose, i.e., to force an artistic reaction for apprehending the object aesthetically, in addition to and irrespective of use. When perceived thus, the object is a work-of-art and nothing else, without purpose or power other than to arouse aesthetic reaction.

It is a manifestation of the aesthetic spirit; an *ordered* aesthetic discernment in *material form*.

It is aesthetic or presentially perceived form organised into art form. Any form presentially *conceived* expresses art. Art form, therefore, is presentially arranged pattern: presential creation. In painting, the art form is, by conception, a reformed or developed aesthetic form or image. It is the aesthetic form's higher state. All art forms are aesthetic forms, but not all aesthetic forms are art forms.¹

The *process* involved in the creation of art forms is not exclusive to them, and, by way of emphasis, an analogy may be drawn between the aesthetic apprehension and its materialisation into a work-of-art and that of the economic apprehension and its materialisation into business or industry. Economic apprehension is the perception of frugality in the use of means:

¹ Art cannot be defined in terms in which it so often is defined: as expression of the imaginative life. This is a simple and apparently easily grasped definition, and on this account, perhaps, owes its attraction. Also, it happens to be true. But it is true of much else and its very wideness robs it of all significance. Art is certainly imaginative expression, but, we are entitled to ask, what is not? Every humanly created form has originated from image-making. Mechanical invention, of purely utilitarian purpose, and of which there is no single piece that is not born of imagination, may express this power in its very highest form. Every successful business man—not successful in the sense of maintaining and carrying on an existing business, but in creating one—is fully aware that nothing can be achieved without imagination, and that the more he dwells on his business forms at the expense of other forms the more successful is he likely to be. His dwelling is a state of critically considered imagic interplay of relations impelled by his *practical* interest. The imaginative life may take any form. The philosopher, the theist and the mathematician may be oblivious to all but their own imagined worlds. The imaginatively expressed is not necessarily art. The essence of art is not that it is imaginative, but that it is a particular quality of the imaginative, and is so by reason of the fact that what is subjected to the image-making or imaginative process is of the aesthetic or presential life and not of the practical. Facts regarded practically must become presentially perceived facts in order to qualify for this process. And there is no practical fact or utilitarian form that is debarred from this qualification.

frugality in the expenditure of energy in any form, or of what may represent energy. It is materialised by organisation into business form, as, in like manner, the aesthetic apprehension is materialised by organisation into art form. The business, as actual form, corresponds with the work-of-art as actual form, both forms being the actualisation of apprehensions.

Business is the means of giving expression to apprehended frugality or judicious expenditure. Art is the means of giving expression to apprehended presence.

Aesthetic apprehension and contemplation are not confined to actual works-of-art, any more than the apprehension and contemplation of economy are confined to actual businesses. The economically-minded will continually be appraising all that comes within his purview: criticising the economic conditions of his environment. So will the aesthetically-minded of what he sees around and about him.

A successful work-of-art expresses aesthetic unity as a successful business expresses economic unity.

It may, however, fall short of this fulfilment, but is none the less a work-of-art, and for the reason that it is an achievement produced under pressure of the aesthetic apprehension, as certain performances achieved under pressure of economy are economic acts or works, yet may be far from economical—or effectively so.

A work-of-art is an objective entity added to the already existing objects in this world, and is an individual's expression of his own aesthetic reactions, reactions of a kind that are experienced by everyone, but not necessarily actualised into works-of-art. To react to the work of another, is to view through the reactions of that other.

Art, when conceived as an abstract idea or concept, as the *power* for expressing aesthetic apprehension, must be clearly distinguished from the work-of-art as objectivity, and most frequently referred to as art. When so applied, the term is but an abbreviation for work-of-art. But when used as an abstraction, as something common

to the production of all works-of-art, it refers to the creative power of bringing the aesthetic apprehension to expressional form.

Art is the term used to denote power which gives expression to aesthetic apprehension. It is the power of formulation in the attainment of intuitive unity.

When aesthetically judging, we point to an object and say 'That is art' with precisely the same intent as when economically judging we observe an action and say 'That is business'. We imply that each respectively displays aesthetic and economic form. Thus are those who frequently see and act in these ways called artistic and business-like.

Natural objects are not referred to as works-of-art, although they may arouse aesthetic reactions as strongly, and because they have not been formulated and materialised by the human mind expressly in the service of these reactions.

Nevertheless, we refer to them as artistic, in being forms which we mentally unify into art forms by means of an artistically intentioned perception. The 'artistic' is implied to have in its form an affinity with form found in works-of-art.

Theoretically, the distinction between aesthetically perceived natural forms and art forms is one only of degree, for there must be few aesthetically perceived forms of which structural relations do not count. No person can be conscious of harmonies other than what his constructional power permits. This is art construction.¹

¹ It is not unusual to find purely utilitarian activities referred to as arts. War is such a one. In fact, the point has, on occasions, been carried as far as it can go, i.e., by the general conducting operations being singled out and acclaimed an artist! This manner of thinking is somewhat belated and would appear to be a carry-over from the days when the trapping and tracking of animals, implement making, agriculture, and almost every human activity based on skill was loosely spoken of as an art. Nevertheless, there still persists a prevalence for upholding such misleading assumptions.

When different colours are made use of on railways for signalling

purposes, the purpose is utilitarian, with no thought of artistic arrangement in the planning. But if, now being installed, the colours be looked at presentially, as something present which is accepted and dwelt on as an end in itself, they are being perceived aesthetically.

As applied to war, we have then simply to ask ourselves—is an army constructed, and its movements planned and directed presentially? They are not, and therefore artistic form and direction are entirely absent. No general can embark upon a battle thinking artistically—and win it! When, however, artistic form is his purpose, harmony of presence, in movement or at rest, is his aim, and pageantry results—a work-of-art, the creation of an artist.

CHAPTER XV

THE MEANING OF DESIGN

WE have advanced so far in having learnt that the artist receives an impression or impressions, from which, and through the creative activity of the imagination, there is formed, in terms of his medium, a conception, which he desires to express. The conception, in the form of imagery personal to him, must be organised into what shall be a visually and meaningfully satisfying form. He must build it up, construct it, put it into order, thereby doing what he or any other individual would do with any other kind of work he was about to undertake. His subject-matter has now to be designed.

Creative achievement in work of any sort requires imaginative power, constructive power and executive power, which respectively constitute the image or idea, the design, and the execution or craftsmanship. Anything to be accomplished must be born of an idea or image, to be organised or put into shape as a conception, and practically carried out. 'That sounds a good idea, but can you construct it, and if so, have you the means for carrying it out?' is a question put every day and in every walk of life.

To construct is to design, which is to put into order. It is to organise, to give form, shape or pattern, to something, no matter what. Each of these terms is synonymous for one and the same activity, the creation and co-ordination of parts that shall combine into a unity. This, as we have seen, is a fundamental activity of the human spirit. It is the movement from chaos to order which we endeavour to bring into all things: art, science, business and conduct. There is no human continuity of aim that is not directed towards order.

This directing is the exercise of our constructive ability, which shapes and forms the world into what it is as we know it. We make it. We conceive and then construct.

We use many different terms as indicative of this shaping. We speak of painting as 'designed', music as 'composed', architecture as designed or 'planned', a building 'constructed', a room 'tidied', a business 'organised', the 'cut' of clothes, an educational 'system', the 'rules' of a game, the 'discipline' of a school, good 'form' in conduct, the 'laws' of the land, and many more. Each of these terms relates to the order found in these things, which is put there by us. Everything we undertake has to be organised. And painting is no exception.

Order serves us in two ways. When putting things into order we do so for one of two purposes. If, upon retiring at night, I empty my pockets and lay out the contents 'methodically' by my bedside, and do so in case I might wish to make use of one of the articles during the night and will know exactly where to place my hand without putting on the light, I am arranging purely for utilitarian purposes and no other. On the other hand, I may be well aware that I never do use any of the articles during the night, but nevertheless, emptying my pockets, instead of throwing the contents down in an accidental manner, I arrange them 'tidily', because it pleases me, and my doing so has no further or ulterior purpose than that. This is an aesthetic purpose.

We take interest then in ordering things for utilitarian purposes: an ordering which would not be indulged in but for this utilitarian purpose; and we order things for the sake of the immediate result which follows: to obtain something which is desired for itself as a presence. All business is of the former, all art is of the latter. Order, either artistic or utilitarian in purpose, is so directed by us alternately from one day's end to the other.

As already pointed out, we have distinctive names for

differing forms of order, and the generic term for aesthetic order is harmony. Harmony means nothing more than being brought or bound together into a *relationship* of imagic interplay that forms a unity. The directing force of abstract harmony as expressed through the interplay of tonality, spacial proportions, linear and recessional rhythm, is the desire for a condition of equilibrium which, when experienced, satisfies within the limits of our perception.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF VISUAL FORM— COLOURS, LINES, SPACES AND PLANES

WHAT is it in painting that has to be ordered? Painting is a visual art, therefore its constructional elements are to be found in what is seen. These will be the elements of visual form.

Everything we behold in actuality, imaginatively or in our dreams, is composed for four elements only. The most beautiful landscape spread out before us with its assemblage of different objects in all their variety is, to ocular vision, composed of an infinitude of varied combinations of these four visual elements. We may discover for ourselves what these are by concentrating upon a single object.

Observe the least complex, a basic geometric form for example, an orange, which is a sphere. What is it we see? Its **COLOUR**; the surface or **SPACE** (area) occupied by the colour; the circumferential edge encircling the space, from which we construct **LINE**; and the volume. The orange exists as a volume by virtue of depth as an addition to its surface. This gives it solidity, so that different parts of the orange occupy different positions in the hand, some near, some further away. These different positions are spoken of as being in different **PLANES**, one behind the other, the back part of the orange, namely, that which is farthest from our eye, being in a plane behind that of the front part. This also applies to the relative positions occupied by individual objects which may come within our field of vision. The painter's fourth fundamental then is what is referred to as planes, giving volume, depth or recessional position—that which recedes. The interplay of planes or planal positions is as important as the interplay or rhythm of lines.

Colours, spaces, lines and planes, are the painter's four elements of visual shape or form, by means of which all objects are portrayed. He can depict and must say everything he has to say only by the use of these four means or 'media', combined into a design.¹ Solidity, weight, texture, balance, movement; in fact all that is seen and 'felt' by the painter, must be conveyed through his rendering of these media. Other terms in use descriptive of media are either synonymous with these or signify two or more of them combined. Light and shade, for instance, are colour; tone is colour; and mass is a number of details seen collectively as a single and larger unit.²

¹ He may emphasise one more than another, but none is ever absent.

² See Appendix.

CHAPTER XVII

THE AESTHETIC IMPORTANCE OF THE VISUAL ELEMENTS COMPARED

IT is desirable here to comment upon what is a general practice among those interested in the problems of art, namely, the attempt to give comparative expressional values to the elements of form. 'Which', it is asked, 'is the most important—form, line or colour?' The question is stated repeatedly in these very words. Yet note how line and colour are referred to as if something distinct from form. Where is the line or colour not of form?¹ However, waive aside this question as outside our immediate interest, and name both colour and line attributes of form, or, media, of expression, which is the all-important point. All such attempts at establishing fixed valuations are without reason, because a valuation is personal and depends not at all upon the actuality of what is valued.

The pre-disposition of artists towards either colour, line, space or volume is, of course, a commonplace. Upon it depends whether they work as painters, draughtsmen, architects or sculptors. If line is observed most readily and clearly and appeals most strongly to an artist, if it be the element which impresses him and out of which arise his fullest and most valued awarenesses, then line to him is the most aesthetically important element of an object, and of greatest reality. The relations of his ideality will be of lines.

And the same is true of colour. The truth of this may be verified by time spent with artists and others interested in colour, to find that not one quarter hour of the

¹ Also it is somewhat meaningless to contrast form with colour, inasmuch as the different recessional values of different colours give structural and, therefore, formal value to them.

day passes without a reference to some 'beautiful tone' caught sight of; that memories are filled with imagery of colour; that events are often recalled only on account of their association with colour; that, in short, its meaning is to them their lives. Yet invariably colour is placed last on the list. Line, I believe, is most often placed first. But is line then being thought of as line only, and not line enclosing a space? Are two elements being conceived as one? For what kind of line—vertical, horizontal, curved—is there, that can be drawn on paper and of which it is true to say has greater expressive power than a colour placed beside it?

From these attempts at classification do we get the statement that colour in itself or colour alone is of no significance. The reasoning which would support this assertion is difficult to follow. It seems to come from the supposition that the colour of an object is superfluous to the object's function or purpose and that we learn all we need to know of an object from its other elements, which combined give it shape and practical value, and towards which colour is irrelevant.

Is this true, and were it, would this make colour aesthetically superfluous? There are occasions when the only guide to knowing whether an expanse of sky is a misty cloudiness or cloudless, is to be learnt only by its colour. There is no way of telling whether fields in the distance are grass or arable other than by colour, or whether a distant roof is slated or tiled. Neither can anyone tell the ripeness of fruit by looking at it apart from colour.

Our time system and methods of recording now inform us of the departure of a season and the approach of another, but this seasonal change is never more convincingly impressed upon us than by change of colour in vegetation. Even the hour is indicated by colour, as Monet has shown in his hourly compositions of haystacks, poplars and other subjects. Colour is a constant and fairly sure method of detecting states of health, and is often the means for recognising the medicine we

should take, as it also is the means of recognising a hundred and one articles of use. In fact, as an attribute towards cognition, the instrumental power of colour in communicating knowledge of the external world is boundless, for, in actuality, it alone is the visible world.

We do not measure aesthetic values by standards of utility. That which is of the most aesthetic significance to an object, or to a group of objects, depends solely upon the person who looks at it; he gives it the significance.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE VISUAL ELEMENTS AS SEEN IN NATURE

LET us return to our four elements to see how they are found in nature and what artistic ordering of them means in practice, and with what result. We will begin by taking the simplest of objects: those with the elements most clearly defined. These objects would, as before, be the basic geometric forms—the cube, the sphere, the cylinder, the cone, etc.

Imagine ourselves seated with a canvas before a table. Place on the table a cube of one colour, again orange. Observing the cube, what now do we see? Of elements, no more and no less than what we saw when looking at the fruit. But there is a difference of shape, of form. The sphere is now a cube, and it has been brought about by a change of form in three of its four elements. The colour is there, and is similar; the lines are there, but straight instead of curved; the surfaces or spaces are there, but square not circular; the volume is there, but of vertical, horizontal or inclined planes and not of convex surfaces. To observe these elements and to paint this cube would be no very difficult task.

Now we replace the one cube with twelve, all of the same colour and thrown down in a haphazard manner one on top of the other. Still nothing has been added fundamentally. Only twelve times one. But, on account of the disorderly arrangement of the cubes, the many lines are in a like disarranged condition. The same applies to the additional surfaces and to the increased number of planes; vertical, horizontal and inclined. These twelve times as many lines, spaces and planes are to be given order on our canvas so that their interplay shall bring about a visual unity. There was no disorder

LEON UNDERWOOD



MEXICAN HARVEST SONG

Tate Gallery

A painting wherein is displayed
the ability to construct with
equal power in any or all of
the media.

with only one cube on the table and we had little to do but to copy it, but now organising power in selection and emphasis is required to help in the effort to transform this disorder into a harmony. This is not so easy a matter.

After this experiment, let us change the cubes and have each of a different colour. The problem at once becomes infinitely more complex, for the number of colour-tones increased by shadow and reflection to be harmonised into tonality are innumerable. The difficulties are greatly increased. Now, having done this, and in order to bring our observation a little nearer to everyday life, suppose we take another canvas and replace the cubic volumes with books which, in being rectangular volumes, are not substantially different, but as books are called 'Still-Life'. Are the difficulties further increased, and is the character of what we are to do altered? Hardly at all; the problem is almost identical, but by a change of subject-matter from cubes to conventional 'Still-Life' it becomes more commonplace, and is more readily understood.

So it is with all objects. No matter how a painter may look at them, whether he singles out their lines or colours for special observation, or observes them as objects as a whole—as compounds of four elements, he is, when painting, occupied with a process of combining these four elements, into an intelligible and expressive unity.¹

¹ As of the artist, so also is it of any person who may be affected by one formal element more than another: he will ordinarily turn to those forms which embody it. In nature, colour is, perhaps, the most apprehended of all elements; green fields, golden corn, blue skies and seas, sunsets, spring and autumn verdure. If, however, lines be the most appealing, then those objects which in some way give rise to this arrangement, such as hedgerows, rows of trees, vistas of winding roads, telegraph poles and wires, walls, fences and horizon lines will be the forms dwelt on. If planes, then buildings, hills and grouped trees in recessionary form, or trees as found in isolation in parks, by which their volumed shapes stand out in planal relation to surrounding objects. And if spaces, then the patchwork

These exercises, as we shall see later, are closely in accord with the practice of Cubism, whereby colours, lines, spaces and planes are perceived formally and organised into 'lyrical' abstractions.

of fields as seen on the sides of hills, or from on high. The same individual preferences are similarly affected when the elements apprehended are in architectural form: that type of form of which our cities are almost exclusively made up.

It is not uncommon to find that the appealing form may be none of these elements, but the object itself—an appeal arising entirely from an utilitarianly or socially based association. Where this is so, trees, streams, buildings, the sea coast of sands and promenades, and ships are preferred to the 'empty' open meadows, moors and spacial views generally, no matter how colourful these latter may be. A pronounced tendency of this kind leads to a marked preference for towns, with their surfeit of objects, over any liking for the country.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ABSTRACT TWO-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN: DECORATIVE ART

THE simplest unity into which visual elements can be combined is accomplished by abstracting one of them, namely, line, and arranging it formally on a flat surface, i.e., on a single plane. This is to make a simple two-dimensional design. To design in line suitable for embroidery would be an example.

Although to work thus is to concentrate chiefly upon a single element, i.e., line, all other elements are present. To draw a linear design is to form spaces between or within the lines. Planes are represented by the use of but a single one: the flat surface; and colour by that of the surface upon which the lines are drawn and of the lines themselves. Colour and planes would be eliminated from the attention after their first acceptance. We should call this a linear design, but of course, it would be just as much one of spacing.

Such a design is a construction of lines (and spaces), of which the sole aim is arrangement into a visual unity. It is unrepresentational of any object and, as a purely formal abstract two-dimensional design, no meaning is intended to be expressed beyond that which is inherent to a unified or symmetrical interplay of the visible, and of all visible designs none can have less meaning. Formal appearance only is the aimed-at presence.

A design constructed on these principles, which are those applied generally to the designing of tablecloths, carpets, wall-papers, etc., is what we call decorative.¹

¹ Although these designs are correctly called decorative designs, it should not be overlooked that the decorative is not necessarily formally constructed design. Colour splashed about in a casual manner, or as seen in nature and in certain naturalistic paintings,

may be exceedingly decorative. Fragments of writing executed as notes at odd moments on waste paper may finally cover the sheet most decoratively. The decorative is what it has been said to be—a harmony of the sensuous.

CHAPTER XX

THE ABSTRACT THREE-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN

THE next step in pure abstract conception is the introduction of the third dimension—of depth, as effected by planes.

To this there is one important qualification: there is no such thing as a purely abstract three-dimensional painting, i.e., a painting which does not depict something representational. So long as we design in two dimensions, on the flat, as in a carpet, we *may* have nothing but colours, lines and spaces without a vestige of anything being represented, but directly we introduce the third dimension we have depth and represent space (aerial), which *is* something. And very definitely so, for there is no 'object' which kindles the imagination more than space, even unto the infinite.

Also, in any picture depicting space there automatically appear other objects, because once having given objective actuality in the form of space to the body of the picture, any other forms in it act as boundaries to the space and must themselves have actuality.

In our abstractly conceived cube picture, the lower boundary would have objective meaning for us in indicating things voluminous, possibly solid, hard, or possessing any other attribute with which our intuition may endow them. And if this heaped broken-looking mass were unrecognisable as cubes or anything else, we know it must be something, and our imagination, while not permitting us to think otherwise, is active in trying to give these units objectivity.

Further, if we cannot unravel the puzzle and are content to leave them as abstractions only, then we fail to unify, which is to fail in the expression, for we cannot

have a picture composed of actuality (space) and abstractions as distinct units in the same composition. It is meaningless.

Because, therefore, in a three-dimensional picture (one with depth) the representation of space cannot be avoided, there are no purely unrepresentational abstract paintings other than flat designs.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ABSTRACT THREE-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN: THE MONUMENTAL

NEVERTHELESS, there is this possibility. Abstract arrangement may be given so strong an emphasis that the representational meaning of the forms may be largely eliminated from attention.

If this be assumed, what is added to three-dimensional form which the two-dimensional has not? Space (aerial) and volume, from which are apprehended infinity and the gravitational; the latter as manifested in solidity and weight. These are the qualities in objective form, which make up what we call the 'monumental'.

Abstract three-dimensional paintings in the purest form to be attained are monumental designs. This is their value. They are designs conceived and constructed in principle in no way different from monuments, which are abstract designs of volume in actual space.

If we are successful in subordinating the representational to all but a purely formal relationship, nothing more is put into the design by way of expression than what a monument can give us.

In two-dimensional abstract designs we have the decorative; in three-dimensional abstract designs we have the decorative and monumental. This is considerable but limited.

Do not these two forms of expression represent aesthetic outlooks which have been predominantly exploited by modern painters today, and through which objects are looked upon as so much material for design: decorative and monumental?

To consider two of the most influential painters of the modern school, Matisse and Picasso, is not a primary outlook of the one representative of decoratised subject-

matter, and of the other monumentalised subject-matter?¹

¹ The monumental may be viewed as an extended or three-dimensional form of the decorative.

It is quite possible that the purely decorative may, on account of the inherent difference in recessional values of the different colours employed (which have different wave lengths) and of the varying thicknesses of the lines in relation to one another and to the background, evoke a reaction of depth.

PICASSO



LA SOURCE

CHAPTER XXII

THE DECORATIVE AND MONUMENTAL: INNER MEANING

ALTHOUGH it has been assumed hitherto that abstract decorative and monumental designs possess no subjective content other than what is derived from a formalistic relationship, sufficient has been said in the foregoing remarks to know that this is not true, no matter how purely formal the artist's aim may have been.

No design is without subjective content, for no single element of which it is composed is itself without an embodied psychological meaning. It comes from inner impulsion.

Having referred to this inherent power, particularly in reference to colours and lines, it is almost a banality to refer to the affectability of or to the difference in affectability between the simplest of designs—of the disc to the square, for example—made up as they each are by these very elements.

There is no element, as there is no object—and an element is, psychologically, an object—which does not affect us psychically beyond the formalistic in some manner and to some degree.

Abstract designs have sometimes great psychological content. I remember once entering the church of a village in Somerset, and, when just inside the doorway, I stopped, my attention arrested by the rood screen: an abstract formal design in wood. There was something definitely frightening about the way in which the dark form rose almost menacingly between the nave and the chancel, and I left with an unforgettable impression. That I was not alone in experiencing this 'feeling' was confirmed a few days later, by my coming across a guide

book, in which the design of this screen is mentioned as 'rather fearsome'.

Nevertheless, formal unity, when aimed at as the single purpose, results in a thing which must be judged in conformity with this aim, and is therefore something which must rely for its affective power upon the interplay of its parts as a visual unity. In spite of the affectability of lines, colours and spaces, of which we may be aware when working at abstract relationships, and which may unconsciously be guiding the form, the ultimate affectability of such a design will reside in its formal order in conformity with the aim. Notwithstanding the design being impregnated with psychological ingredients which cannot be eliminated, in its formal unity will lie its value.

CHAPTER XXIII

ABSTRACT USE OF SUBJECT-MATTER

So, to advance further—beyond the formally abstract. The unifying treatment of lines, colours, spaces and planes, resulting in as formal an abstract design as might be conceived, and which for the purpose of argument we have assumed to convey nothing beyond what is presented to the eye, can be amplified towards a fuller expression in two ways, by which it becomes something different.

We can aim to give to the design a definite subjective content, or we can make it representational. The design can, in its making, be directed to embody intentionally the 'fearsome', for example, or it can be directed to represent objects.

This means, in the first instance, that the design will symbolise an inner, subjective state of the artist, and in the second, it will represent an outer, objective, image of the artist's visible environment. The former will arise from what, in present-day jargon, is labelled a 'consciousness', the latter from what is seen externally—the objective.

This is the point where the schism begins between traditional art and modern art.

Traditional art depicts objects, and the elements—colours, lines, planes and spaces—of which they are formed are treated as abstractions subservient to the objective shapes.

Modern art, in theory at least and in much of its practice, dispenses with the object and embodies into the abstract an idea, an emotion, or what is the more all-in term—a consciousness.

Our course will be to follow first the methods of traditional art. Afterwards, a return shall be made to

this same point to follow the new way, to examine and appraise its aims and possibilities as a means for expression.

Having explained then that the end of abstract ordering is harmony, and that when aimed at with this singleness of purpose results in decorative and monumental design, it must now be considered in connection with subject-matter. To maintain continuity, the approach shall be made by considering first those forms of which the introduction of the object into the design is the least disturbing to the abstract.

Shop-window displays are a form of decoration built up by the application of artistic ordering which, in principle, is exactly the same as that applied to our cube painting. It is a common-place observation how attractive these displays have become in recent years. Arrangements upon 'modern' lines is a feature. Simplification, harmonious colour and orderliness in the placing of the goods, bound together by the flow of their lines into a unified whole is the aim of the window-artist, for artist he is. Shop-window displays of today are veritable pictures, not paintings representative of objects in pigment on canvas, but pictures composed of the objects themselves as subject-matter handled in space. Similar thought and care is bestowed upon the one as upon the other, the ensemble being a carefully thought-out decoration. In them we find our same four elements. We see the blending of the colours; the spaces taken up by each object, with the space intervals between them; the lines or contours of the materials flowing one into another; and the planes formed by the articles themselves in recession from the foreground to the background. All these play their part in the resulting fusion.

The window-artist has subject-matter, but he views it and works upon it as an abstractionist, and constructs his picture with an intention similar to that by which we constructed our cube picture. Therefore, it is a matter of indifference to him what the subject-matter is, whether it be cubes, boxes, dresses, hats, ties or any

other type of article. He merely uses them to express the decorative sense which is his personal expression.

In case of misapprehension, it is to be noted that although the purpose of window display is to sell, the window-artist when carrying out his work need not and often does not as an artist have any such purpose in his mind. The selection of the goods he is handling is no doubt made for that reason, but by another person responsible for sales. The window-artist receives what he is given and is concerned only in making good his own job, which is decorative display. Certain designs for window-displays are drawn by artists who themselves have nothing to do with the actual 'dressing' of the window.

From this to the decorating of a room is but a step. To select wall-papers, rugs, curtains, furniture, ornaments and flowers and to harmonise all these objects, mostly of convenience, into a single decorative whole is again to apply artistic order, and to do so in principle precisely as the window-artist does to his subject-matter. In principle, the arrangement of furniture into positions on a floor is exactly what it is to arrange objects decoratively in paint on a canvas. All such ordering is achieved by an interplay of the four formal elements which results in decoration, and is a practice indulged in to some degree probably by everyone every day who has a room to look after. To do so is to act as an artist.

So, not only have we abstract designs of colours and lines but of objects also, which are analytically split into abstractions (colours, lines and volumes of the furniture). Ordering takes place by viewing the objects as sense material, when they are handled as so much abstraction.

Attention was drawn to this attitude a moment ago when speaking of decoratised and monumentalised subject-matter. Further point may be given to this remark by again referring to those paintings by Matisse of which the aesthetic motive impelling the arrangement of objects is similar in kind to that by which the window-artist is impelled, namely, decorative.

The comparison, made for the purpose of emphasising the affinity between decoratively arranged objects and decorative paintings, is not discounted by acknowledgment of Matisse's pioneering outlook, supreme colour sense and power of rendering. Neither would it be so even were it 'felt' that the works referred to reveal more than the decorative—a fuller discernment: a presence disclosed unavoidably rather than intentionally.

CHAPTER XXIV

SUBJECT-MATTER AND SUBJECTIVE MEANING

THE next move in this handling of objective subject-matter will lead us to where we consciously introduce a definite mental conception into the decorative arrangement to produce a definite impression (the 'fearsome' again).

We might, for example, decorate our room with the intention of embodying into the form the spirit of springtime, where everything chosen and arranged would be done with a view to expressing this conception. The floral decorations of many bedroom wall-papers suggest that a conception of this kind, arising from the love of rural nature and gardens, is very common.

To express the spirit of springtime in the form of a decorated room is to arrange the furnishing of it under the influence of another form (nature) which exists in the mind as imagery. The endeavour will be to embody certain features of this imagery into the decoration, that it shall arouse an impression allied to that experienced in actuality. It may be that the principal element lending itself to this is colour.

As the imagined colours in the mind are not exact reflections of the colours as found in nature, but an idealised indefinite image of them, how then in their transformation from the vehicle vegetation to that of furniture are we to know that we have got what we want? By what can we measure success, there being nothing exact with which our work can objectively be compared?

Our problem arises from the simple desire or feeling to create form by decoration of a room, and in a certain style. It is something different from, although funda-

mentally the same as, the desire or feeling to re-present nature by a new set of relations on a canvas. Our 'feeling' for a certain aspect of nature will shape the qualities of form. The aspect is imaginatively represented or symbolised to us by the abstracted colours which we perceive as a recalled and idealised sense-impression.

These colours when imaginatively fused into the forms of our new subject-matter are perceived as an ideality of new relations. This is our *conception*. And as we proceed with our design, rightness or wrongness towards fulfilment of the conception is gauged by the 'felt', that 'feeling' engendered by it and which is now being embodied into, yet sitting in judgment over, the maturing form. This 'feeling' is the intuitively discerned and its emotion, and it is the emotion that finally informs when the discerned has been expressed or defined. The whole process is the formulation of imagic interplay, conception, and as this materialises, the sense elements (colours, volumes, etc.) of the constructed (designed) entities (objects of furniture) are apprehended and ordered into 'felt' symbols, from the desire that future observance of the design shall arouse this 'feeling'. There is to be a re-experienced presence of nature, but in a new form. The process is a formulation effected by controlled imagic interplay.

This ordering is an expression of the full aesthetic activity. It shall presently be applied to painting.

CHAPTER XXV

CREATION THROUGH THE FORM-IDEAL

WE have seen that when an artist has formed a conception which involves the translating of something imagined and felt into conceived form, he is ready for work. Then it is that his 'interest becomes transferred to material form. . . . In the actualisation of form lies the true working interest of the artist. Design is his preoccupation.'

Let us now halt a moment and briefly consider the nature of the form-sense: the sense of design, which means so much to us. What is its true significance, what does development mean, and what characteristics of the artist's mind does increasing power reflect in his forms? If the power of design and of its control is capable of progressive development and a maintained interest on the part of the worker, how does progress occur and what is the nature of the progress aimed at? Is there, for the artist, anything ultimate in maturity of design?

Visual designs are composed by an artist in conformity with an ideal of form in his mind. Such an ideal is not affirmed or formulated at the outset. Contingent upon the image-making process, it is 'felt' to arise from continuous perception in a state of comparative imagic interplay, and the forms through which it grows are progressively imagined and materialised. That more satisfying form should be believed in, or even that existing form should be 'felt' as dissatisfying, implies the existence of an ideal, the attaining of which would be the active striving for form that shall express it.

When at practice, the artist draws lines, lays on colours, arranges window-displays or decorates rooms according to his conception of what is harmonious ordering—an ordering of images expressive of the 'felt'.

Choice of what does and does not harmonise is arbitrary and peculiar to him. Each expression 'tried out' is an attempted advance towards his ideal of form.

The intricacies of all form are learned by the same means: through observation, instruction and practice, towards which we react according to our individualities. From these reactions are built up our separate individual form-ideals as to what we think is 'right' in the form. 'Right' forms are abstract conceptions, and are translated into conceptual form.

The artist studies the many forms of design which have preceded him: those of tradition, from which have been abstracted the conventional forms and rules of composition acknowledged during his age. Upon these he brings to bear a mental and temperamental attitude which governs his tendencies and preferences towards certain forms, through which, by use in expression, his own form-ideal matures. This, from the practical aspect, is the evolving of a 'technique' expressive of what he has to say. Its becoming expresses ever more fully his poetic or aesthetic outlook.

Maturity does not come to an artist at once. He is at first too exclusively under the influence of the subject-matter giving rise to the impression—the incidental form.

When young, first and early experiences are the most impressionable. Therefore, our lack of knowledge—youthfulness in form-experience—compels us to give to the incidental form an impression-value, which, with greater experience in other manifestations of it, we come to learn is none other than incidental and emotionally novel. Consequently, until an artist's form-sense develops and begins to assume control he will accept the incidental form as the form of value, and he is satisfied when expressing himself to accept this form as it is. His conception does not rise above it. Imagic interplay is un-directed. In other words, his form-sense being at first weak, he invariably accepts, or must accept, the form as presented to him in objectivity, the literal recording

or depiction of which is his conception. His is an objective vision. Not only youthful painters, but young writers, begin with mere descriptions of what they objectively see.

The artist has to learn what forms are specifically vital to his own impressions and expressions and to develop a discrimination of what is valuable in form to him generally. He will progress by subjecting the forms that give rise to his impressions to a process of analysis and synthesis, of seeking out in them what is inherent and relevant to his discernment—certain of the lines or colours—mentally re-arranging, eliminating and selecting.

The degree to which this relating activity of conscious analysis and synthesis is carried will at all times correspond with the stage in development of the form-ideal. The artist's conception may never rise much beyond an acceptance of the objective form as found in nature or as seen in and derived from the accomplishments of others, when little effort will be required to organise. Or, on the other hand, he may be 'original' and view objectivity wholly from its possibilities for imaginative treatment and will accept suggestions from it only. Conceptions may range anywhere between the purely naturalistic and the abstract.

As his sense of form matures and becomes more and more formulated into his form-ideal, the objective or incidental form will become only so much material in the service of the ideal. It will now be conceptually and not incidentally rendered. The general will have taken the place of the particular. As when a dancer sensitive to movement (movement-form) is entranced by the sweep of a gull and may be inspired therefrom. This incidental movement of the bird will not be imitated, but, entering the perception as material for imagic interplay, will be made use of by being transformed and incorporated into a form-ideal—a dance-form. Thus there will be continual observance and 'trying-out' of impression-forms in expressional form, by which there

is a growing together of the accepted into a new personal rendering that is ever more stable and less incidentally affected. The ideality of relations tends to crystallise into a stable type or norm, which is ultimately revealed as the artist's form-ideal.

At this point in the development an impression-form is always controlled by the form-ideal. In a sense the impressionable stage has passed. This does not mean that naturalistic impressions cease to be experienced, but that they cease to control the expression. The strengthening of the form-ideal is the interest, and only those objects that symbolise it, or do so to some degree, are constructively dwelt on. It is they, material patterns which are seen to symbolise or embody the ideal, that now impress. Expression, too, is now always through conceptual form. The maturing form-ideal has become, as the result of progressive experience, the artist's standard of artistic behaviour, responding only to conceptual or abstract change.

Initially, abstraction is a process of discrimination and withdrawal from actuality, from experience in acts of perception. Therefore, however conventional forms may become, even when abstract, they originate from perception and represent impressions and are expressive forms. Forms are born of poetically expressive needs. The 'laws' of composition governing artistic design are abstractions arising from a prolonged process of artistic expression. The apparent restrictions of traditional form are not arbitrary restrictions imposed. They are expressive necessities.

On the other hand, conceptions which are to be expressed undergo change; not only those of the individual, but those of the age in which he lives, and therefore, the form of the expression demands change. This prevents blind acceptance of the past.

In principle, the *process* of attainment of an ideal art form in no way differs from the attaining of all other form-ideals in life. Interest directs what shall be idealised. In every advanced form of practical life we subjugate the incidental to a form-ideal. As of the visual so of the moral, and of the social form-ideal expressed by conventions and which is understood as 'good form'. Each is striven for as visually, morally and conventionally satisfying form in response to 'felt' needs. To this striving imagic interplay is basic: the cognitive image-making activity animating all forms—visualised or actual. Their qualities come under the shaping influence 'of awakened impulses, needs, interests, associative effects and knowledge' conditioning the final quality of the expression.

A schoolmaster trying to knock a boy into 'decent' shape, does constructively precisely what is being done by an artist who tries to knock an incidental visual form into artistic shape. Both apply their form ideals to actual circumstance. The one acts upon his knowledge of conventional form and the moral code, which exist in his mind as an ideal of form, while the other acts upon his knowledge of artistic form and the principles of composition, which likewise exist in his mind as an ideal of form.

'Good form' in manners is largely artistic, being conduct in its manner or 'form' of rendering which is sanctioned and upheld as that which is most expressive and desirable for social intercourse. It is design applied to general behaviour, and is to it what design is to a work-of-art.

It can be viewed in the abstract as something in itself, but when objectified in action, i.e., in conduct, as form, it is as symbolic as the form of a work-of-art and as expressive in meaning. When adopted for outward show and not prompted by 'feeling' or meaning from within, it is not integral to the action but a pose.

To be expressive and in unity with the man, manners should conform to and be of the form desired and

necessary for the expression of his spirit. He will accept from traditional and conventional forms that which is 'felt' needful for his expressive end. Which end is revealed through his presence in the form of 'aesthetic tone': a reflection of the 'aesthetic plane' on which he lives.¹

* * *

A more detailed example of a practical aim being directed by a form-ideal is perhaps needed to understand the parallelism existing between the process of its con-

¹ The practice of one art does not necessarily imply a readiness towards the acknowledgment of another, and we find among artists of all kinds those who are so absorbed by the forms of their own imagery that they are often quite unable to apprehend the ordered forms of 'living' which constitute the imagery of others. Just as he is very much aware of the lack of comprehension by these others of work which is of a particular kind of order, and upon which he has spent his life in giving to his medium, so, conversely, he in turn fails to show comprehension towards the meaning of the aesthetically impelled social activities and manner of conduct which these others have made respectively their medium and rendering, and of which a complete cultural synthesis would be significant of nothing less than a flowering of all the arts. It is from this aspect that the saying 'There is no civilisation without art', acquires meaning.

The lay Anglo-Saxon's outlook is essentially of this practical nature, and he presents himself as something of an enigma to the artist. The greater part of his aesthetic self is undoubtedly expended in 'play'* in the form of games, sport, gardening, behaviour—and work, the handling of which he would like to conduct and rightly dwell on as a craft. By 'rightly' I mean that his love of doing should not be overridden by economic pressure. His prejudice against professionalism in sport is confirmation of his wish to keep the aesthetic nature of play as pure as possible. Dishonesty in business

struction and that of works-of-art. Also, the comparison will, by a more easily arrived at judgment of what is essential to success in practical form, assist in passing a like judgment on works-of-art generally.

Eating, in its lowest natural state, is a purely sensuous activity. Human development, however, has transformed: woven into and elaborated upon it—especially when in the form of an entertainment—a superstructure embodying a unified group of complicated art forms.

A dinner-party, for instance, may impress one of the guests solely on account of the quality of the food and wine (predominantly sensuous); another, who may be used to planning such events himself, for its organisation (construction); yet a third for the efficiency with which it is carried out (execution); and so on, to less essential or incidental circumstances—for a particular conversation or for the presence of a particular person (units within the design). In spite of which, we know that

is referred to as 'not cricket', and injustice is 'not fair play'. It would appear that in the formation of his moral concepts something has been taken from the techniques which have grown as the result of his expression in play form. Also, if he be the humorist he is said to be, and humour be the irrational aesthetically perceived, then this quality, too, should advance his claim to being more aesthetically affected than his reputation allows. Nevertheless, as an 'artist', he would not have the standing he has, were it not for the Celt—or is it less contentious to say Celtic imagination, certain features of which are perhaps more easily isolated and agreed upon?—in his midst.

In recalling the criticism which has recently been passed on the subject of the form and significance of our public schools, it is strange that the high quality of their aesthetic atmosphere or presence should have remained unstressed as the one outstanding quality justifying pre-eminence among their kind. The English public school has been an expression of the most beautiful atmosphere in which young people can be reared, and the strength of the moral qualities attributed to those who have had the benefit of their presence is, in large measure, due to its constructive influence. For men will serve and uphold those forms which they assimilate in love.

* This paragraph should be re-read after the reading of Chapter XXVIII, where the meaning of 'play' is fully explained.

ultimate value; the full meaning of the form, must come not from selection of parts or from what is perceived by a single individual, but from all that *can* be perceived of it as a materialised *indivisible* whole. This is so of works-of-art.

Practical forms differ from one another as works-of-art differ according to the quality of the form-ideals which, as crystallisations of impulsions into interests, impel their production. With some hostesses, unless their form-ideals of such as entertainment can be carried out as they conceive and in accordance with what they are used—from the inviting of the guests, the dresses worn, the lay-out of the table, the wines, the courses, the cooking, the service and the conversation, to the after entertainment, all of which are ingredients of her form-ideal—there is no dinner, however strong the impulse. The form-ideal controls.

The inception of a dinner may arise from a hostess meeting and being moved to entertain a certain person. He is the incidental form and her reaction to his presence is the inciting event or circumstance. An impression is created, the image of the person being imaginatively fused into her form-ideal from which issues a conception (in imagery) of the design (dinner form) in which the character (guest) is visualised as the principal unit. The conceived form will later be expressed materially by means of the materials which pertain to a formalistic dinner-party, and through which she aims at creating the presence evoked by her conception.

In the rendering and elaboration of the work the impression is not destroyed. It has been carried forward, as it were, and embodied into the conception, which represents it and is now the direct aim. The impression shares with the form-ideal in the structure of the conception which would not have been formed without either.

An entertainment of this kind is, as we know, made up of different expressional forms: service, conventional behaviour, conversation, etc., incorporating those which

relate to the incidental—any courtesy necessary to show honour to her guest—all of which are materialised into a synthesised unity. The very nature of a dinner-party is that these varied expressions enter into it, upon the successful expression of which in their proper relation to one another depends the success of the final unity as a consummation of a form-ideal.

To continue a little further. If we assume that a dinner such as conjectured is from every aspect successful as a unity: a perfect harmony in the interplay of its parts, thus welding the incidental circumstance to the form-ideal, we can none the less conjecture other forms of it as unities, namely, those formed by a greater emphasis upon either the incidental or upon the form-ideal. The former attitude would be brought about by the hostess concentrating upon her chief guest, where attention to him expresses literally the incidental purpose of her dinner, regardless of all formalities. While in the latter, the very strictest attention would be concentrated upon the formalities; to the carrying out of her form-ideal to the point of enforced ceremony, in which all her guests are regarded impersonally and become just so much material for her design. In terms of art we should call the former naturalistic form and the latter abstract form.

In such manner do we act throughout life, by accepting and rejecting this and that as compatible or not with our ideals, thus forming particular 'ways' of rendering: behaviour conforming to our conceptions of how things should be done. Principles applied to art are the counterpart of principles applied to life. Each idealist has his distant ends. Formal objectification or materialisation, whether formalised into the compositional 'laws' of art, 'rules' of discipline, 'codes' of morality, 'rituals' of the church, or any other, exist—and by their only right—as expressive needs, to which necessities they must conform to justify their practice.

It is this right to be, in the light of modern demands, which is being questioned today with regard to all forms. The extremes of modern art offer no exception.

Thus we see that an artist who works to a form-ideal is no exception to rule. When incited objectively he not only designs to the model, but to his inner visualisations. There is a welding of two perceived series of interacting forms. '*Feeling*' giving rise to involuntary *imagic interplay* upon perceived *matter* (objective or subjective) results in *new relations*, which, by being brought under control, lead to *design*, to develop into a *form-ideal*. This is the order of advancement.

Form or design of any kind, inclusive of the abstract and of only decorative intent, is always expressive of spiritual content. The visual form-ideal as held individually, should if genuine, be the expression of what is an artist's own and is persistent to his aesthetic outlook, by which ultimately is evolved a mind in true affinity with its chosen universe. Maturity of artistic design is the embodiment of the fully realised aesthetic self. The form actualises the presence for which the artist has so long striven.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FULL EXPRESSION

WE come now, after having somewhat anticipated what is to be said, to the pictorial painter.¹ He, like the decorator who furnishes rooms by consciously embodying a definite impression into form, also wishes to express a 'felt' discernment in imagined form, but to do so in a manner whereby he believes it can be recorded more fully, clearly and forcibly than is possible by abstract means.

What then is to be done to materialise this belief? The artist's discernment will have to be embodied into an objective form, which, by its appropriateness, will 'take' it. By the aid of this form, namely, its meaning, the expression will be brought to light, to be seen and 'felt' in all its fulness.

Standing on the coast before the open sea, I look out on all that is around me: the breaking waves, the sand, rocks and boulders, the distant horizon and the sky above. These forms impress me and give rise to a 'felt' discernment—perhaps of desolation, perhaps of joy—a presence which I desire to express, and which, therefore, becomes my *subject*.

I look around for *subject-matter* to 'take' it. I see not only the scene as a whole, but every individual thing singly or in combination. All contribute to the impression. Why then choose one form more than another? Because there is a control to which the forms giving rise to the impression must submit. This is my form-sense. I choose that object with a form which conforms or can be made to conform to my form-ideal and which yet appeals to me as appropriate to 'take' my immediate discernment.

¹ The word pictorial is applied here to those works which depict objects.

It may be the view as a whole, or perhaps a rock, or a group of boulders. The more geometrical forms of the boulders may be more appropriate than the irregularly formed rock, and they are approved by my form-sense in that I say to myself: 'I can do something with these.' They will be chosen in accordance with that sense which, as remarked upon, is for ever causing an artist to notice the relations of tones and lines, and to create harmonies expressive of his intentions. They will be chosen as the form into which the 'felt' discernment itself can best be embodied and expressed. The fusion of them will be my conception. The discovery, or belief, that the fusion is possible is the *inspiring* event.

The form of the object—let us say: boulders—chosen as the subject-matter to take or have embodied into it the 'felt' discernment—desolation—of my mind, will become the incidental form. I endeavour so to paint that it shall be united to my form-ideal, with emotion (a constituent of the 'felt') as final arbiter.

The design will be representational (boulders), and will be more representational than ideal or more ideal than representational, according to which form shall predominate in the completed design—the incidental or ideal. A predominance of the former leads to naturalism, of the latter to abstraction. There is a uniting of expressive power to expressive power—of the incidental to the ideal, of imagery to imagery, and of emotion.

Would not the facts in the life of Saint Francis, as learned by Giotto, be significant to him on account of what he intuited or 'felt' from them, and be his reason for wishing to portray them? And would they not, visualised as actuality and grouped as such into episodes, be then the incidental forms to be welded to *his own form-ideal* in formulation of conceptions expressing what is meaningful to him in them? Is not this true in the expression of all pictorial discernments, from whatever source they may be derived, whether from the sub-conscious, the imagination, from nature, works-of-art or history?



AUTUMN

JOHN NASH

*By courtesy of
The Soho and Goupil
Galleries*

CHAPTER XXVII

FORM AND CONTENT ARE ONE

THUS do we find the 'feeling' *content* of our consciousness being expressed as imaginative form, the form or design taking shape from the content, and expressing it.

When, in a work-of-art, design or form is referred to as something separated from its content or expression the statement is meaningless.

To express is to form. To form is to express. To request 'Express yourself' is to say 'Give form to what you have to say'.

To assert that a certain expression should have been expressed in a different form is to imply that the form used is ineffective as expression and has failed in attaining conviction.

When a painter decides to make us of a particular conventional form—the pyramidal, for example, Δ —he does so because he considers it is expressive of what he has to say. He believes that the content of the objective pyramidal form—an ingredient of which, let us say, is stability—corresponds to the content of his as yet unuttered expression, which will be effectively objectified by the use of the form.

To alter the form is to alter the expression, to alter the expression is to alter the form. Form and content are conjoined, they are one—a single whole, and separable only by intellectual abstraction.

All form is seen relatively as a condition of order, and is, therefore, design, which leads to the impression and the impression to the conception, which, as expression, is again design. A particular form is perceived as a particular ordering of elements which makes that form be what it is to each of us, giving it identity, which

identity impresses us. That our form-ideals should allow us to view it within possibilities of what is to us a more significantly ordered form, is not to say that it was ever without order. What is orderly to one person can be disorderly to another, each seeing, as we know, according to his outlook and capacity. To speak of design and not design is to imply relative states of ordering, and not of something and nothing. There is a re-forming. And the re-formed is a single whole, analyse it as we may. Success in expression, of all expression, ultimately depends upon power in organisation, to draw in, to weld the incidental to the ideal, the objectively seen to the subjectively conceived, by which alone we express full reality.

Finally, we see how in this relationship, the incidental or circumstance is subjugated to the form-ideal, to which it is adjusted and incorporated or rejected.

And of these two forms—the incidental as the impressing and inciting form and the form-ideal as the conceptual and controlling form, are they not, in standing as they do for the free and for the restricted, to be identified with those accepted respectively as the Romantic and the Classical? In which sense it must be that all great art, taking the form of a fusion of the two forms, is an infusion of the Romantic into a framework of the Classical. Indeed, is this not true of all form, when we recall the romantic nature of the beginnings of form as the inspirational romancings of the individual form-inexperienced mind?

The incidental, therefore, in art and life, in relation to the form-ideal, is the opportunity: the inciting cause.

If this be so, if the incidental form be an inciting cause only, and is, with the 'feeling' aroused by it, correlated in the work-of-art with a form-ideal and its 'feeling' content, what have we in the work-of-art? That which is dominated by the form-ideal certainly! But what should we say it ought to be? How identify it?

Of those persons who, in life, endeavour to pursue their activities by attention to what is fundamental and

persistent to these activities, are they not those who emerge successful and lead the way for those who follow?

May we not say, by analogy, that a similar attitude on the part of the artist brings about a similar result with his work? That with him, as the recorder of the intuitive life, the power to apprehend what is fundamental and persistent in feeling of the concepts¹ of life is that which is essential to produce great and enduring art? Should not these apprehensions form the content of his discerned presence?

Can we say that a work of this kind is an expression of intuitions pertaining to the fundamental concepts of actuality and ideals, that might be current at the time of its creation?

Is it not from this aspect that we attempt to ideate the spiritual content to be apprehended from the most noble Egyptian, Chinese, Indian and Grecian art, in order that we may know the true spiritual attitudes of these people towards life?

¹ This is not to imply conscious ideation to the artist.

CHAPTER XXVIII

EXECUTION

WITH regard to execution, which may be described as the final of the three processes in picture-making, and which is the manipulation or handling of materials for the purpose of 'putting down' what is in the mind, it is wished to draw attention here only to one particular quality revealed through it. That is, sensitivity as expressed manually, which is something beyond craftsmanship in actual manipulation of the oil-paint, water-colour, lead pencil or crayon, and is the effect of muscular pressure in response to nervous force.

Through this physical handling of the material, by which the nervous sensibility of the artist expresses itself, we are made to feel in contact with him as a living organism. Through it we sense decision, spontaneity, firmness, lightness, etc., and their opposites, which are revealed in line, for example, by just how the line begins and how it ends, is pointed or blunt, whether thick or thin, heavy or light, and by gentleness or hardness in its gradations. In other words, it is 'touch'. Every sensitive person who has ridden beside the driver of a motor-car feels unfailingly the modulations in increase and decrease of speed, in the swerves to right or left; the response of the physical mechanism to the play of the driver's hand. Every driver knows that he is a better driver the more he can exercise this play sensitively. So every artist knows he is no great executive artist unless he also can command and play in like manner upon his material.

This play is intuitively impelled. It is intuitive action. In motoring it is known as road sense, which is none other than to intuit speed in relation to time and distance when confronted by oncoming cars or other

possible obstructions. It is what impels us to adjust muscular effort to the lifting of objects. We intuit their weights. Who, on occasions, has not made such an adjustment to lift a receptacle, which on being lifted has seemed almost to spring into the air with a spilling of the contents, because we have misappraised the weight to be lifted? So it is of those muscular actions by which, instead of lifting or pulling, we strike or push. The boxer, if he wishes to get the maximum of effect from his punches, can do so only by intuiting time, speed and distance in precisely the same manner as the motorist, but under different conditions. And so of the pianist. He, too, in order to produce his effects of varying strengths of tone, must intuit the muscular effort required to hit the separate keys.

The intuitive and accompanying emotional effect of 'touch' as 'felt' through craftsmanship is very great. That it is a quality highly appreciated for its own sake is demonstrated particularly in piano playing, where it is found in isolation as the one valued quality of the pianist, *qua* pianist, mere executive skill—manual dexterity in handling a keyboard—being appreciated for what it is: skill. The recognition of what we call a 'good touch' with a pianist—as with any form of instrument—is almost general in calling forth instantaneous approbation. It is a matter of opinion which might be declared the more pleasing, a classic played by a brilliant executant lacking in touch, or a composition of commonplace phrasing played by one with great sensitivity.

The elocutionist and the singer also rely for quality of expression upon this power, namely, the power of modulation in muscular pressure upon the vocal chords.

In painting, the executant being his own composer, it is but one of three qualities, that of conception, of design, and execution. It is a quality, too, as effected through a relationship of imparted strengths to tones, that is able, as we see by analogy to music, to stand on its own and be appraised and given value however

commonplace may be the conception of the form depicted. Many Old Master drawings owe their chief delight to an animation derived from a sensitive line and gradation in light and shade.



Certain forms of executive work require on the part of the artist almost unceasing practice, with little relief from routine. Final forms of expression, too, are often continuously repeated, and it is a matter of considerable importance to understand the nature of the artist's reactions to this kind of work, and how his interest in it is maintained. The pianist and dancer, with their hours of daily practice, and certain actors who have been known to perform in the same play for hundreds of consecutive nights, indulge in repetitious work which on a *a priori* grounds should be no more interesting than other kinds of routine work. Is this so, or can it be claimed that the artist's interest in his 'doing' is maintained by some special quality of interest peculiar to artistic execution? Such a view cannot be upheld. The interest of the artist in the practice of his work is maintained by application of the same principles by which practical interest is maintained in any kind of work. This problem will be treated under the subject of art and play.

In 1795 Schiller wrote '... Beauty ... is the object of the play impulse. Ordinary language fully justifies the name, for it commonly gives the name of play to whatever is most forced upon us, whether by nature or by our own mind, and yet is not accidental with respect to either. ... Man only plays when he is man in the full

meaning of the term, and he is only fully man when he plays.' Schiller here influenced thought to the extent that up to this day we read and hear it said that art is play. Far from it, and it is unlikely that Schiller ever intended this interpretation to be given to his words.

I might be sitting idly, waiting, my arm resting on a table on which are scattered some cigarettes. To pass away the time I might take a fancy to play about awhile to see, for example, how many cigarettes I can set upright end to end on top of one another. I begin this constructing by taking hold of one and with a little difficulty in the execution make it stand upright on the table. I place a second on top of it, or rather, I continue the attempt to do so, and for at least three or four minutes before succeeding. A third cigarette is even more difficult to balance on the top of these, both of which fall to the table several times before I finally get all three to stand for just half a second. I then finish.

For quarter of an hour I have been playing: constructing and executing by means of manipulation a number of cigarettes into an upright column. Yet I did not want this column for any purpose, and had I succeeded in building it ever so high I should then have knocked it down. My interest was purely and solely an interest in these activities themselves, an interest which ceased immediately the act or activity itself came to an end. This is play. All play is of this nature: an excitation of the constructive and executive activities without ulterior motive.

Sometimes the activity is more constructional, and therefore intellectual, as in chess and the higher forms of card games; at others it is more executive, as in athletics; while in some instances there is a more equal balance of the two activities such as we find in football, every movement of which is a complicated piece of construction as well as conscious executive skill.

The purer the play the less is it dependent upon successful result as a motive. As in all human activities, play presupposes an aim to be attained, and, therefore,

in the achieving must be conceived, constructed and executed to a special end. This does not prevent the mind from confining its interest to construction and execution, having as their end a mere finality to the activity.

It follows, therefore, that firstly, if constructing and executing be practised in their own rights, interest in them must be a presential interest. And secondly, that being presential, the awareness must be aesthetic. In other words play is the creation of aesthetic awareness or presence. This is undoubtedly true. In it we react to performance, i.e., to the activity of doing, in precisely the same manner as we react to any special object. This may come perhaps as rather a startling proposition to those who hold that aesthetic apprehension is aroused only in reaction to objects, but the very nature of the aesthetic perception affirms that it must be logically so.

Now we can reconsider what Schiller discerned when he wrote '... Beauty ... is the object of the play impulse. . . .' By 'beauty' he meant aesthetic awareness, which when harmonising within the mind is the beautiful. This, however, is not to imply artistic awareness: an awareness derived from an art form. The experiencing of aesthetic awareness is not—as repeatedly affirmed—only derived from systems or organisms of consciously related forms, namely, works-of-art, and its realisation in reaction to form does not necessarily make that form such a work. One confirmatory distinction can here be pointed out. Art forms result from an activity directed towards ultimate form—the work-of-art, which is the end in view. In play activity there is no interest in ultimate form other than as a measure of the activity which *was* the purpose. Forms of play, as such, are not art forms, but the activity in their making, if perceived presentially, is the creation of aesthetic presence. That Schiller did not formulate his discernment arose from the fact that he failed to differentiate the aesthetic perception from artistic form.

We must be on our guard against being led into

supposing that therefore all who play games experience aesthetic presence with that purity to which it can be experienced. Presential interest might, for example, be eclipsed by interest in result, which indeed may be the only motive for acting, particularly when encouraged by reward. There are not many persons, perhaps, about whom it can be said that their whole interest is centred in the play regardless of whether they win or lose the game. That this is generally acknowledged as the most coveted attitude to aim at in games, namely, to be interested in a game for its aesthetic value, for the presential values of constructing and executing, unaffected by result, is borne out by the fact that a man who plays in this manner is the very man with whom most men wish to play. The rarity with which such a one is met exemplifies the impure form in which the aesthetic outlook is experienced by most of us. Also, it should be noted that a game may not be carried on throughout with the same evenness of play. A boy playing marbles may begin the game in the spirit of pure play, but as it proceeds he may become keener and keener on the result, till his last two shots may not be viewed playfully at all.

We know, of course, that in actual practice this unevenness or fluctuating manner in which the play perception operates is its most general form of manifestation. Interest is shared interchangeably between presential perceiving of the activity and in assessing progress towards result. Interest in result, when viewed as mere finality, is not necessarily of a different quality from interest in the activity leading up to it. On the contrary, the ideal is for power to be interested in both the achieving and the achieved in their own rights, i.e., to react presentially to the occurring and occurred as a unified process.

Hobbies and recreations, although distinct from games proper, are prompted by a similar motive. There is, however, a feature in their experience which is more pronounced and of greater significance than in the

experience of games, and which forms a generalised distinction between the two types. It comes from the greater importance attached to the object or material upon which activity is to be expended. Choice as to what this shall be is made on account of the appeal or affectability of or fancy for something that has a special meaning for him who chooses and which itself arouses aesthetic presence maintained by the activity he bestows on it. Thus we collect postage stamps or old furniture, or apply ourselves to photography or to carpentry. In such hobbies aesthetic presence would be sought from the two-fold source—presential perceiving of the object (associating oneself with a thing which itself holds aesthetic meaning), and from presential awareness of the activity expended on it.

In games the interest is derived almost wholly from the activity, although it is possible and probable that considerable aesthetic appeal should reside from the first in the paraphernalia handled, as for instance in cards or billiard balls and their respective settings. In the course of time, certainly, the sight of a pack of cards or a set of billiard balls will arouse in a player an aesthetic thrill, but this would be due to the symbolic meaning accrued and for which they now stand, namely, for activity when in play. This is not the same as having from the first an inherent fancy for a thing—say, postage stamps. The hobby is then chosen on account of the discernment aroused by the presence of the stamps themselves—from a fancy—that is maintained by the acquiring and handling of stamps, as things of rarity, as things which are decorative and arouse imagery historical and geographic.¹

¹ It is impossible, of course, to determine the degree of aesthetic affinity which any one person may, at any given time, 'feel' towards a form. The relationship between this affinity and that arising from the handling is, in every instance, quite arbitrary. A pack of cards might arouse considerable fascination from the very first occasion on which it is seen in play. The playing-card is, indeed, as a practical-cum-artistic form, of general interest. Actually, card games are mathematical play, but the card as we know it is a semi-artistic

As of games and hobbies, so of work, for when the motive of work is the work itself presentially perceived, then it, too, becomes play in its true meaning. We regard it thus when coming from those persons about whom we say that their work has become second nature to them. The fact is upheld in the saying that work should be a man's hobby. Often, when there is no financial or other necessity to impel a man to continue work, he does so purely for delight in the performing. Those persons who advance the superior claims of handicraft work over that which is mechanically done base their claims on the considerations just enumerated. The former method encourages interest in the doing, the latter in the done. Hobbies, too, are treated to these rush methods of labour which—however advantageous economically—are sheer aesthetic or spiritual destruction.

Since the play spirit has been identified as the highest spiritual form in which games can be pursued, so also must it be identified with work. Thus we are led to envisage the truth contained in Schiller's further statement that 'man . . . is only fully man when he plays'. Such a view is in complete accord with the thesis of this book, namely, that the highest aspirations of man are

product superior to the necessities of this play. A game of bridge, for example, can be played with all skill by the use of slips of stiff paper, marked with numbers only or numbers and letters: four sets of thirteen slips marked respectively from 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D to 13A, 13B, 13C, and 13D. The first number of each set would be the equivalent of the ace; the last three of the knave, queen and king. These numbers, together with the dimensions and degree of stiffness of the card, comprise all there is of the practically useful, of the actually necessary; all else is artistic. This applies to the shapes of the suit symbols, the design of the court cards, all colours and the refined finish of the pack—to all of which there may be, certainly, some practical conveniences attached, but not such as to contradict their artistic character. It is the artistic which completely re-defines or re-shapes the bare mathematical symbols into imagery so different in kind as to evolve a new world of form. The abstract play of numbers is given concrete artistic reality, and it is the images of this idealised actuality that become the factual units on which we dwell in play and memory.

attained by living the aesthetic life: by choosing that which in the creating and when created shall activate the aesthetic presence which he seeks.

So far we can agree with Schiller, but it is to be denied that he believed play activity to be art. The explanations of art and play given here make it clear that in these two forms we have something distinct. Rather, however, must we revise our general conception of the play activity on the grounds that it is aesthetic activity, and is so through the same mental process by which objective form becomes aesthetic form—from the quality of perception brought to bear on it. And since any activity may, as objective form may, at any moment be perceived aesthetically, it follows that play activity is not confined to games, sport, athletics or to the many forms of recreation, but is an apprehension of activity that can be brought to bear on doing in any form. Games are games, but it does not follow that they are always carried out in the play spirit. They are not necessarily play at all. Many persons get nothing out of games. Games are not play to them. Indeed, work is much more play to some persons than are games to many so-called players. And play is not always a game. Much of the play of children is akin to the play of young animals, which, with the play springing directly from their desire for imaginative expression and that arising through the agency of a host of different kinds of toys, is not in the form of games: it is sheer play. Sheer exercise or activity of the limbs and other parts of the organism of animals and the newly-born child are sometimes referred to by being grouped together, as play forms. But this is too broad a generalisation. Some distinction must be made between involuntary actions originating from the release of accumulated energy of the organism and those voluntary actions incited, co-ordinated, and directed by the 'feeling' for play-exercise. The former activity is automatism with sensational effects; the latter involves subjection of the actions to imagic interplay. But to place all such actions into a single category is not possible.

The reader will not have failed to observe that the interest in all the activities referred to here is sustained by the effects of imagic interplay. Theoretically, those who are aesthetically interested in activity generally can be happy *doing* almost anything. The world to them is a playground. As a child uses a box of bricks, so would they build their habitations.

From which truism we are reminded that Schiller was not the first to divine the inspiring nature of the truth disclosed in his words. For when we remember that childhood is pre-eminently the age of presential perceiving, and in the play form, can there be misunderstanding of what Christ envisaged when he said, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven' ?¹

So, the activity of doing may be perceived presentially,

¹ Matt. XVIII, 3; and Mark X, 14. 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.' J. Warschauer, in *The Historical Life of Christ*, interprets these words as follows: 'To determine the exact meaning of the words "of such is the kingdom of God" may be impossible; they appeal, and rightly appeal, to the feelings rather than to the intellect. If the text represents the exact words of Jesus, He does not speak of the kingdom as the portion of the children, but says it belongs to those whose nature is childlike. By that quality of childhood which our Lord felt to be an indispensable qualification for entering the kingdom He can hardly have meant the innocence of infancy, with its pathetic appeal, for such innocence is really ignorance, which cannot survive contact with life. Neither, as we saw when dealing with the companion episode to this one, can the reference be to the supposed humility of childhood, which is not at all an attitude of the natural child. We are on surer ground if we assume that what struck Jesus was the receptiveness and truthfulness of children, their frank belief in and acceptance of all good things, not as due to any desert on their part, but as the good gift of a world or an order of things which means well. The Pharisees were ever intent upon accumulating, by strictest fulfilment of the Law and the traditions of the Elders, a weight of merits that should *earn* them—give them a claim to—heaven's reward; whereas the temper which Jesus sought to inculcate in His followers was that expressed in the words, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to *give* you the kingdom" (Luke XII, 32). It is in the latter, not the former spirit, Jesus holds, that the kingdom can alone be entered.'

i.e., aesthetically, as opposed to instrumentally, in precisely the same manner as are the image and the idea. When so perceived it is known as play activity rather than aesthetic activity, yet to differentiate them is impossible. It is most easily isolated and concentrated upon in games and, therefore, is popularly associated with that form of pursuit although common to all pursuits.

Play is then the name that stands for the constructive and executive activities when apprehended presentially—in their own rights. Being thus perceived, they are aesthetically perceived and the reaction is aesthetic presence. This, when creating affinity in the mind, is to be classified among the beautiful. The perception has established a state of visional or intuitive affinity between the mind and what is being done. Thus may the 'doing' of the pianist, of the dancer, of the actor, of the thinker, of the scientist, of the bank clerk, of the housemaid and of the labourer, each be beautiful, and equally according to the power of bringing to bear the perception that makes it so.¹

¹ The reader, with his knowledge of the nature of the aesthetic perception, will hardly have failed to perceive that the subjective sustaining interest in these activities is no other than that of the effects of imagic interplay.

SECTION FOUR

MODERN ART

CHAPTER XXIX

FROM CÉZANNE TO SURREALISM

WE return to where it was said of abstract design that it can be amplified by 'a definite subjective content or by making it representational'. The latter resolves itself into pictorial art, and the former, in which there is 'embodied into the abstract an idea, a "feeling", or what is the more "all-in" term—a consciousness', exemplifies the principles of extreme modern or post-Impressionist art.

Modern art did not immediately arrive at this completeness of subjective expression. Its initial stage and early growth were marked by an apprehension or consciousness of structure, to which all other consciousnesses were made subordinate.

To be brief, we begin with Cézanne (1839-1906). His awareness of nature was shaped by a strong sense of construction—particularly planal construction: solidity. The presence of any object perceived by him was formed in large part by this discernment. It was from this aspect that he criticised his contemporaries the Impressionists, whose work he found structurally unsatisfying.

Cézanne's mathematical intuitions were especially active, and his life became one arduous search for the means to express them. His apprehension of form was very strongly mathematical, presentially perceived, of course. He 'felt' the volume and weight of objectivity, in poise, which he endeavoured to express in ordered apprehensions of proportion, balance, planal deflection and rhythm—structural imagic interplay.

Hence the directing of his thought to basic structure, to the geometrical. Not for the sake of construction or for the mechanism of the designs themselves, but as

instrumental to realising nature as it impressed him and was idealistically discerned by him. Natural objects were structural masses and of a structural relation to one another. That is how he experienced them; an apprehension from which his own forms were developed as expressive necessities. His form-ideal was a vision of form expressive of the meanings embodied in structural relations. This was to be materialised by means of colour of a purity and an intensity to which the Impressionists had brought this medium in their expression of light. Ultimately, each brush stroke was to become the equivalent of (architecturally) a single constructive unit or (musically) an individual note in the harmonic structure.

The soundness of his search was incontestable. In spite of which, and owing to the heterogeneous character of impressions and the natural tendency for an habitual outlook to become fixed, it was only the more understanding of his younger contemporaries who were inspired by the truth of his vision.

Without attempting to enumerate the many and varied forces which operate preparatory to a change, the new outlook was favoured by certain mechanical discoveries which had appeared about this time and were themselves compelling a revision of ideas in the pictorial arts.

The wider use of the camera, reproductive printing, and developments in the three-colour printing process were giving rise to comparison between the artist's work and the mechanically-made reproduction, and were taking practical effect by supplanting the artist in domains that had till then been his.

It was evident that many paintings when reproduced in monotone were by no means easily distinguished from photographs; also that the cameraman could be employed more adequately than the draughtsman for certain purposes, notably the recording of topical events.

The fact was driven home, not without some uneasiness on the part of painters, that all distinctiveness

PAUL CÉZANNE



LES BAIGNEUSES

By courtesy of the Soho Gallery

SIR JOHN MILLAIS



By courtesy of the Tate Gallery

THE ORDER OF RELEASE

between a painting and a photograph lay in arrangement of forms: in design, and that this being so, it followed that design in pictorial art must be something different from what the mechanical instrument could produce if it were to be distinguishable from the photograph or even worth while.

Ideas on structure were also influenced by reaction to design in Japanese prints and Negro sculpture, which had been brought into Europe through increase in world travel. The vitality of these works was contrasted with their structural simplicity.

Whatever might be said of the reactionary forces, influences were such that, following Cézanne's vision, construction in the name of design emerged above all other apprehensions as the byword for the modern outlook on art.

Rapid strides were made. The naturalistic or representational as subject-matter claimed less and less attention. The object became a mere peg on which to hang the design. To certain artists, a landscape, a boudoir scene or still-life were no more than were the hat and coat to the window-artist. These were just material to be looked at abstractly for an abstract design.

Quite logically, if objects are to be made use of in this subordinate manner, they must not be allowed to intrude themselves or to interfere in any way with the main purpose—the expressiveness of the abstract relations. The shape of the design—the unity of the abstractions—is more important than the shape of the object depicted. Therefore, they must be bent into it, and not it into them. The popular term by which this disfigurement or dismemberment of the object became known was 'distortion'.

It was logical, too, that there should be no half-measures about distortion. If the importance of the design demanded that no natural shape should stand in the way of its completeness, it was but a step towards unity to demand that all natural phenomena should submit to its demands. The disposition of light and shade

must be subject to the requirements of the design. A painter must of necessity paint in the light, and if on account of the position from where the light comes it happens to lighten a particular part of the surface of an object, he need not paint it so if by leaving it out or by placing it elsewhere the effectiveness of his design is enhanced. So, too, may he act with regard to perspective, which was the more accurately described by being referred to as 'recession'.

The acceptance of distortion by the artist as a legitimate principle opened up a vast field for intellectual construction and a painting was adjudged of little consequence if not an intellectually constructed harmonic whole.

Most persons are appreciably sensitive to colour harmony. At least, they have something to say about colours, if only to notice whether they please or displease. But there is by no means the same alertness over the harmony of the other elements of form—lines, spaces and planes.

For example. Paintings of the nude in a rural setting are legion. Yet of how many of these can it be said that the shape of the nude figure has a unified structural relationship to the shapes by which it is surrounded—trees or flowers, maybe? A nude may be so placed as to be seated on the grass close to a stream with a tree nearby and clouds in the distance, and by naturalistic treatment to appear in the picture as the only object on the canvas having continuous unbroken lines and smooth spaces (the contours and surfaces of the body), perhaps also the only form with a stressed volume. This is not unity of form.

The structuralist will have none of this. He will paint nymphs in a wood, but those nymphs seen as shapes must have a structural relationship of form with the trees as shapes. This means that the shapes of the one will be affected by the shapes of the other, and that their elements—lines, etc.—shall form one single harmonious interplay. And it means, under the necessities

of this intellectual pulling about, that neither shape finishes up in the work-of-art precisely as it is seen in nature.

The use of distortion for emphasising formal unity would naturally cause it to become involved with the motive of the work-of-art. Dancing nymphs require a different rhythm from those seated. The one will be expressive of movement and the other of rest, representing respectively the dynamic and static. As the painter's motive for a 'composition' might conceivably be for the movement itself, a definite rhythmic interplay will have to enter into the structure, necessitating compromise of form throughout on its own behalf.

Distortion, therefore, was justified on the plea of omnipotency of design and its expression, and the accepted impotency of the object.

It was, however, evident that matters could not remain for long as they were, but would be forced on to their final logical conclusion—the disappearance of the object altogether. Its presence in any form was a hindrance. It obstructed organisation. Illustrative matter as the incidental form must go. It did go, and the geometrical, under the name of Cubism, stood supreme. Painting was freed of the object. Abstract painting was born. Either Picasso or Braque was first with the experiment about 1910, but which preceded the other is of little account as they were working closely together.

Design then was left bare. That which before had been looked upon as the scaffolding or mechanics of a work-of-art was now to stand on its own. Colours, lines, spaces and planes only were to be organised, and for whatever expression that might be found possible to put into them.

Although Cubism may seem to be explained by a survey of its formal development, we know that no formal innovation is adopted without some inner expressive cause. All innovations denote efforts expressive of a 'felt' inner need, or of a dissatisfaction with the expressiveness of the existing.

We wish then to know why it is that the artist, more and more, gave up trying to express his reactions to the natural world by means of objects which formerly moved him to artistic expression, but for which he came to have no artistic use. What forced him into giving undivided attention to construction? What now compelled him to aggrandise a former means into an end or daringly to believe it could be made so? The loss of meaning in what formerly moved him, the loss of philosophic or spiritual conviction about things. And for an artist to have no conviction is to have no aesthetic belief and no artistic expression.

Nothing confirms this truth more than the extent to which of recent years artists in search of spiritual need have tried to make philosophers of themselves. The philosopher in us initiates ideas, the artist illuminates them. The former creates by reason, the latter by intuition.

Questions and doubts, during the last few decades, on the significance and value of all our spiritual apprehensions and ideas have affected the artist no less than any of us. It has created expressional chaos.

It is idle to think that because the artist is never deprived of nature or is never unsurrounded by an environment of interest he therefore has subject-matter always at hand from which to choose the beautiful. He does not choose the beautiful, he creates it, from the meaningful—to him. And if the object which once had a meaning for him no longer affects him, he ceases to be interested in it. A mind that can discern in rural nature no more than phenomena of sensation is unlikely to express anything very profound in reaction to so limited

*The following five reproductions are
consecutively arranged for the purpose
of illustrating the passing on of visual
form from one generation to another.*

PAUL CÉZANNE



SEATED FIGURE

PICASSO



COMPOSITION, 1908

PICASSO



FIGURE. 1909

PICASSO



COMPOSITION, 1909

PICASSO



COMPOSITION, 1913

a meaning. It is from the failure to bring discernment beyond appearance that so much of present-day art does not rise above the decorative. The meaningful, when 'felt' and experienced as presence, is the true subject of art, and when meaning is uncertain or lacks true conviction there is a wavering in expression. Meaning today is uncertain for everyone.

To consider the stories illustrated in Victorian pictures is to realise the change which has taken place between then and now, and to understand why the sentiments of those pictures, apart from the manner of their presentation, could not appeal today. A familiar subject-matter, and typical of the age, is that which depicts an aged man seated before his cottage door, in the quiet of evening, smoking and in contemplation.

The sentiments to be apprehended from such a picture are not those of today. Such quiet is not to be had. If it were, it would not have the same value. Distractions fill its place. There was a sense of duty, perhaps of nobility, about work which is not emphasised today. Work is now looked upon chiefly as a necessity, lessened wherever possible by mechanical assistance. Consequently the old man's contemplation of his labours would be false today. So, too, would be another aspect of his contemplation and which no doubt the painter intended to convey. The thought of his God. Of this there was then a certainty where now there is uncertainty. Experimental science now largely supplants philosophic thought.

In such idealistically unstable and changing conditions, in what direction would the artist's thoughts be turned in search of stability and purpose? Deprived of his subject-matter, and unable to replace it, the artist could but turn to what was left him: the substance of it, the sensuous. Upon this he must concentrate in the hope of discovering through its constructive possibilities a new and as powerful a means of expression in place of that which had become impotent. This did not perturb him. He was satisfied that old forms were

played out and that his intellectual powers demanded utterance in new classical forms conforming to the scientific precision of the age.

* * *

What grounds were advanced for the belief that success would attend these efforts at abstract expression? They were several, and apparently sound. Other arts could be cited in justification. That no illustrative content to a work-of-art was necessary was stated to be abundantly proved by music. Sound, with no such content, free from all representation, stood acknowledged as an expressive power, and therefore colours, lines, spaces and planes must be capable of a similar power. This assumption seemed conclusive.

Architecture, which owed the whole of its expressive power to the organisation of the four visual elements in solid concrete form, afforded a confirmation. It became a commonplace to refer to visual design as either musical or architectural.

Then, it was said that the soundness of the theory was so easy of demonstration from the empirical point of view. Who has not stood gazing upward at some building or group of buildings which, rising and attaining a certain height, recedes to continue its ascent, to recede again and tower still higher into the sky? Who, gazing thus, has not experienced that feeling of grandeur and immensity effected by such an arrangement of form? And to what is it due? Vertically rising and receding planes! Of what importance is the building, *qua* building, as a vehicle carrying the planes? None. For will not any

material arranged in such a manner affect one equally? Certainly. Natural cliffs do. There are many gorges, which, by reason of the soaring and receding planes of the masses piled one behind another in ascension, give rise to similar 'feelings'. Receding banks of trees, too.

It is then to the organisation of the planes to which the building owes its power, and that, said the abstractionists, is all with which we need concern ourselves to give you the same effect when looking at our unrepresentational forms. We will give you pure art forms. You shall have visual music.

Such views contained truths the value of which could only be decided by actual experiment. Only from practical experience could the expressiveness of the projected abstract designs, to which was attributed a power of expression above the decorative and monumental, be satisfactorily appraised. Personal reaction to the works themselves must be the final judgment.

So the artists set about their work. The acceptance of abstract arrangements became universal. Research after research went on, theory after theory being explored by bodies of artists who formed themselves into groups representative of various -isms: Cubism, Spontaneism, Purism, Neoplasticism, Constructivism, etc., etc. The pure abstract form was only a single phase, though persisted in, of course, of the general post-Impressionist movement. As a whole, the movement is described by saying that it worked to find expression either through abstract design or through the reconciliation of representational subject-matter—invariably distorted or dismembered—with abstract design.

With what result? What did the quality of the expression of these works turn out to be?

As typical of what was claimed on behalf of post-Impressionism—its form and its expression—we will hear what some of those who initiated the movement and those who were associated with them have had to say.

George Braque has said¹ 'The subject is not the object

¹Quoted by Maurice Raynal, *Modern French Painters*.

of the painting, but a new unity, the lyricism that results from the mastery of a method'. 'The bits of glued paper . . . which I have employed in some of my designs . . . are one of the justifications of a new spatial figuration.' Hence, the object of the painting is a unity (a new unity), and such a unity may be a spatial figuration, i.e., an arrangement of related spaces. The resulting expression is lyricism.

Jean Metzinger, one of the original members of the Cubist group, speaking of the pictures says¹ 'All I ask is that it shall be well-made, that there shall be a perfect harmony between the parts and the whole and between these and the medium employed'. To him painting was 'the art of exciting imagination by means of coloured forms'.

Amédée Ozenfant, who formulated Purism, writes² that it was an attempt at 'creating in the spectator states of feeling and sentiment (an art of expression) comparable in kind to the allegros, the andantes, etc., of music. . . '.

Albert Gleizes, also one of the early Cubists, writing in 1920 said³ 'when this movement first found its wings, the painters themselves, in spite of all their efforts to explain their experiments on a rational basis, could, it must be confessed, establish no fixed rules or valid system. At most there was an aspiration towards more solid construction, a vague impulse towards different relations of forms, than those officially admitted. . . '.

Maurice Raynal, a critic personally acquainted with the founders and subsequent innovators within the post-Impressionist movement, has written⁴ 'Realism was banished as a hybrid art . . . for realism the Cubists substituted the emotional stimulation of compositions relying for their effect on the pure play of lines and colours.

'The first of these works seemed congested, sometimes compact, sometimes loose. They were brilliant sketches

¹ Op. cit.

² *Foundations of Modern Art*, by A. Ozenfant.

³ Op. cit.

⁴ Op. cit.



PLATE OF OYSTERS
WITH CARAFE, 1937

GEORGES BRAQUE

*By courtesy of
The Soho Gallery and
Paul Rosenberg*

which, for lack of a tested style, verged at times on decoration. It was hard at times to rise above technical preoccupations. After running the whole gamut of the resources of composition, the Cubists repeated themselves in numerous examples of a painting more grammatical than lyrical, the value of which lay in analysis alone.

'We no longer ask to be startled (that has been done now) but to be moved by some authentically human lyricism.'

These views are representative views. They speak more about the method than of the expression, thus affirming the importance which is given to constructional over 'felt' meaning.

The most generally used term descriptive of this constructive or abstract expression is lyrical, but musical and architectural run it very close. How lyricism is to be interpreted may be open to argument. But by granting the necessity of including musical appeal in the assessment of a lyric, and accepting the orthodox meaning as specially referring to poetry and expressing personal emotion, we shall not, by this inclusiveness, err at slightness of meaning. Lyrical, musical and architectural are the terms by which the expressiveness of cubistically-based post-Impressionist compositions are—it is claimed—most adequately defined. What does this mean?

It may mean anything. On the one hand it may mean no more than what can be expressed through the formally decorative and monumental. For decorative designs can most certainly be lyrical, and being so it would be a quibble to withhold from them the term musical. And the monumental is architectural.

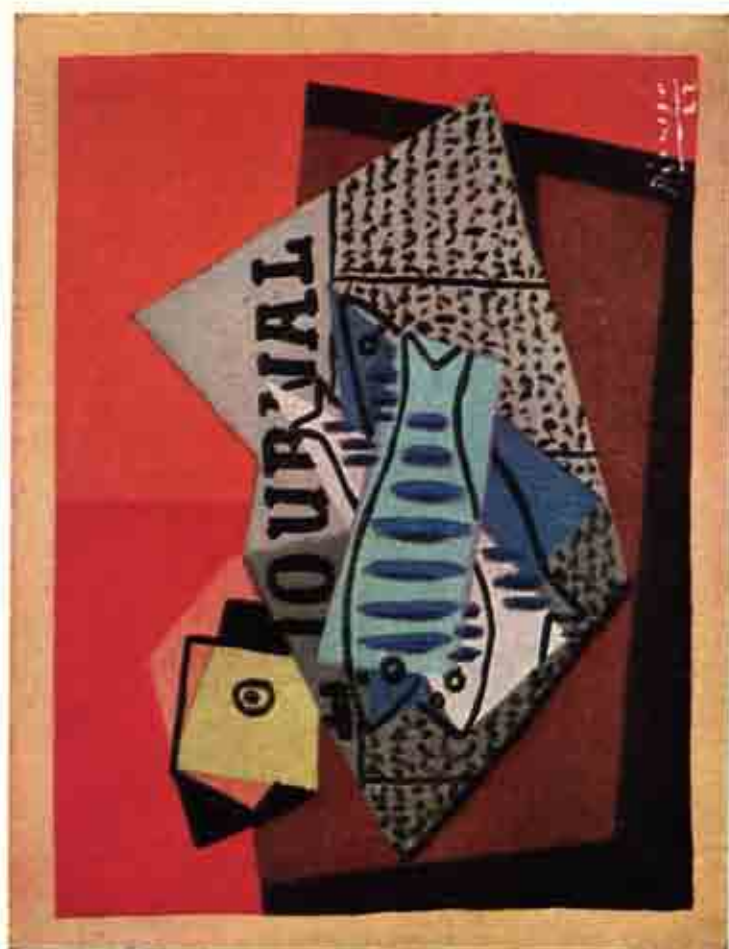
On the other hand it may mean an expressiveness that might include of mood everything expressionally possible, from the most tender to the most lofty, and of the highest emotional intensity. For to be expressive of what is found in the lyric, in music and in architecture, is to have a psychological embodiment of the deepest spiritual significance.

How much of this expressiveness then is in these works? Have they the expressive power of the lyric, of music and of architecture? We refer here to those works which are wholly abstract, with or without a definitely embodied consciousness into the design. Such works cannot attain the power of those to which they are likened. Their expressiveness may bear comparison with the more formally decorative and monumental, but not with the deeper and fuller expressions of the musical and architectural. The effect of 'the pure play of lines and colours' has not come up to expectations. It lacks meaningfulness and fails to maintain interest. The works are not without a certain emptiness. They are truly of the garden designed, but robbed of its flowers.¹

* * *

¹ As principal exponent of Cubism, what has Picasso said that bears on this judgment? There are various sources from which we might draw, but nothing ought to be more authoritative, I think, than that which is to be found in Gertrude Stein's *Picasso* published in 1938.* On page 35 we read: . . . 'Picasso . . . recommenced the struggle to express in a picture the things seen without association but simply as things seen and it is only the things seen that are knowledge for Picasso. Related things are things remembered . . . remembered things are not things seen, therefore they are not things known. And so then always and always Picasso commenced his attempt to express not things felt, not things remembered, not established in relations but things which are there, really everything a human being can know at each moment of his existence and not an assembling of all his experiences. So that all this last period of pure Cubism, 1914-1917 . . . there was no longer any hesitation . . ., no technical problem stopped him. But after all, this problem remained, how to express not the things seen in association but

* Messrs B. T. Batsford.



PABLO PICASSO

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STILL LIFE WITH FISH

'Fishes', by Picasso, is a good example of that kind of semi-abstract painting referred to here, of which the inclusion of certain recognisable units, distorted or dismembered, is wholly subordinate to the abstract. The artist, presumably, at the time of its execution, had before him some fish on a newspaper, laid on a table in a corner of a room. From these objects he has abstracted this well-thought-out and very complete, yet frigid, design of spaces, lines, colours and planes. For those readers for whom this type of painting has aroused no previous interest, it is advisable to look at this reproduction frequently, if only transiently. He will then most surely find out something about the value to him of formal design, that is, of the meaningfulness, of formal interplay, and of the effect of its absence from pure naturalistic painting.

Was a miscalculation made in the support given to the theory? There undoubtedly was. It arose from failure to understand the manner in which the material and spiritual ingredients of musical and of architectural form are associated. The specific expressiveness of these forms is due directly to this association.

Music is an abstract art of sound, and sound abstractions arouse emotion to greater intensity than visual abstractions. And for a very good reason. We ourselves are musical instruments.

The sounds we utter: their rendering in timbre, the things really seen. . . . All his life this had been his problem.'

On page 38 there is confirmation of the above. ' . . . he had made a series of drawings, . . . they were really cubism, that is to say a thing that existed in itself without the aid of association or emotion.'

Nothing could be more explicit, clearer or freer of ambiguity than this, subject to one proviso—that we understand what is meant by 'things seen'? For when we look at Picasso's work, we find, for the most part, very little of 'things seen' about it! We notice, however, that the work does support the observation that it has been conceived free of association and 'feeling' in relation to the object, and that it is *based* on the thing seen. So that if we say that he expresses *not* the thing seen but *of* the thing seen, and that only, we can then agree that the description quoted is entirely in accord with the work.

From which we may infer that the judgment under criticism is correct, and that posterity will come to the opinion that Picasso's contribution to the arts is to be evaluated within the limits of the decorative and monumental as defined within these pages. Which means that he did not consciously try to embody into his work a 'feeling'-content beyond that which is inherent to the monumental, and that, therefore, he does not consciously use form symbolically for 'feeling'.

'La Source' is a good example of the monumental and of work to which Picasso set these limits. Its content is fuller than the pure monumental because of the objects, which carry their own content; but this is adventitious to the artist's aim. Is it, however, for this reason a more convincing example than one chosen from work which is technically of a different and more purely abstract order, with a lesser content, and which may be found more *interesting*, but not necessarily as exalting?

That Picasso can do anything he wishes technically will probably be conceded by all who know. He is an incomparable draughtsman of great sensitivity and an unerring designer—in any medium.

pitch, intensity and rhythm, are inwardly generated, and as forms of expression they are very generally associated with definite moods and emotions, and of every quality. This gives to sound the most firmly embodied meaning of all art media.¹ Thus embodied, it has a unique power when acting as an external stimulus for awakening emotional response. Nature has done this.

So strong is the meaning—emotional and imaginal—of certain sounds, or succession of sounds, that there is hardly any exaggeration in asserting they hold the power of the literary word, from which angle music may be viewed as not quite of the abstract purity it is supposed to be. The funeral toll of the church bell is nothing but an externalised human groan, alike in low pitch, slow pulsing rhythm and muffled tone, a quality of sound pregnant with imagery. It is in fact, as a single repeated sound, more deeply informative and moving than would be a verbal sentence conveying the reason for its ringing.

Our reaction to sound is clearly more intense than to colour or line, which are always external to us. Their

Also, if he wish, he can augment the content of his work with subjective 'feeling', even if, where found, as in his early work, it be of a sentimental quality and not very different from the popular. Beyond this he has not willed. He has been content to conceive within the limits of a decorative and monumental vision and to expend his energy in pouring forth constructive achievements—graphically, of every conceivable type—which, as an output, must be described as nothing less than prodigious. Relatively unassuming as many of these works are, all bear the mark of vitality. Apart from what is inherent to such work, Picasso has no message with which to embody it. He is more a poet of craft and of the constructive than of symbolic content. He is satisfied with a garden truly designed. Flowers are not his concern. Absence of this quality of the 'felt' from Picasso's discernment accounts, I think, for his return at times, and for periods, to naturalism, towards which, in a rather negative way, he is impelled. His vision has been astonishingly static, although the diverse forms of his expression would suggest otherwise.

¹ It is probably correct to say that every word spoken is emotionally adjusted to the occasion. Sound and emotion are fused inwardly.

relationship with our inner selves is of a weaker physiological connection. We do not emit colours or lines when under stress of emotion. Music alone, of all the arts, has this strong physiological relationship between our inward experience and its outward expression. Were it not for this unique organic connection, music would not have any greater emotional power than that of lines or colours. Its designs or compositions, when heard, would have no greater effect upon us than one of pure decoration, in keeping with the designs of the wallpaper and of the carpet of the room in which the music was being played.

So it is that no combination of lines alone, or colours alone, has the power to arouse 'feelings' of such acuteness or intensity as combinations of sound. The great power of lines and colours lies in their being attributes of an object, where, but for our abstracting of them they are always seen. In that condition the power of colour is enormous. To mention but one instance, the colour of the hair in sexual attraction, and which as often as not controls the situation. Colour as an integral part of an object has a power of intensifying the imagination which it has not by itself.

Unlike sound, which as a single element is able in the form of music to stand on its own, none of the elements of visual form has, before the advent of contemporary work, ever been employed with this aim. With this exception, they are, when concentrated upon as abstractions, 'applied' to or shaped into some objective form, functioning as decoration to that something, or forming a decorative entity themselves of the concrete thing they form. The rood screen referred to is such a 'thing', which owes its expressive power in large part to what we absorb from it as a thing and from its appropriateness to a particular environment, where as such it is no longer truly abstract, but a decorative 'object'.

It is precisely for this reason that colours, lines, spaces and planes composing architectural form have an

expressive power to which in the abstract they cannot rise. As 'applied' to architectural 'objects', or themselves forming the object, they are functioning, as experience has informed us, in their most expressive condition—as attributes of an object.

Thus has experiment corrected the theory. The four visual elements of the painter cannot function to their highest intuitive value when functioning as abstractions. Their greater significance lies in being an integral part of an object, in which capacity the painter employs them if he is to express his discernments with the fullest and truest conviction. Which means that he is tied down to having objective subject-matter of identifiable objects with associative content. This does not imply that there need be naturalistic treatment, but it affirms the necessity of an objective anchorage for the abstract. The object is not expressionally impotent! Abstract art cannot escape its limitations.



Post-Impressionist art, however, does not cease here. Its onwardness in metamorphosis continues.

We have seen how naturalistic forms, played out and failing in inspirational content, came finally to be discarded in favour of abstract forms, and how the expressiveness of these has scarcely been found to rise above that of the formally decorative and monumental. The true value of these pure abstractions and of the more abstract Cubist works lay in the conception that impelled them—in the importance of structure rather than in the examples expressing it. They lack fulness of content. The

FRANCES HODGKINS



STILL LIFE

In the possession of the author

works are symbolically limited, spiritually unfilled.

This is contrary to what was looked for. Post-Impressionist artists know as well as any that a work-of-art which aims at something beyond the decorative, however thorough or novel in construction, is not what is intended if that something said is not of interest and not said 'movingly'. A work-of-art must express a vision, a 'felt' discernment. Nothing less can satisfy. This striving was never absent from the most ardent abstractionist, who, at least, looked for its fulfilment in 'lyricism'.

There could be no return to the old visions and sentiments. They were of no interest. Whence then was to come the fuller consciousness for embodiment into the new forms? This is what Surrealism has endeavoured to determine.

Surrealism, as the word implies, means above or beyond realism, but as every form of the spirit is assumed above the world of actuality—for actuality is what is meant—its significance lies in just what kind of vision it might be.

The origin of Surrealism is more literary than graphic, in fact, as a revelation in outlook, its expression is not to be confined to the arts. It is to enter the social and political fabrics and ordinary conduct.

As Cubism is a protest against the natural and haphazard forms of nature in favour of greater order, so Surrealism is a protest against the conventionally ordered (the unnatural, let it be said!) and inhibitory consciousness of Society in favour of a freedom which does not necessarily mean disorder by complete absence of every form of relatedness (although, in a great measure, this is what actually happened), but shall be a spiritually autonomous freedom with a responding freedom in form. If Cubism is the mechanising of form, Surrealism means the de-mechanising of it.

In their groping after form that should give definition to their affections, the Surrealists were at first encouraged by those works of the Cubists which were built up of materially inharmonious pieces of objects patch-worked

together. These abstractly designed pictures of juxtaposed bits of objects on the canvas produced reactions novel to the conventional. It would come as a natural sequence to these reactions when considered in relation to a general seeking for content, that such designs should be followed by others expressive of feeling formed by the intentional juxtaposition of objects themselves not experientially related to one another. Experiments on these lines became the vogue. As a consequence, we had pictures of coffins suspended from telegraph wires. Objects as subject-matter were restored and employed as intuitive symbols opposed to each other, thereby expressing a sort of hollow mysticism or unearthliness. By judicious contrast, and at first under the disciplinary influence of Cubism, many interesting and genuine works-of-art were painted from this motive.

The de-mechanisation was brought about by a complete shifting of the mental focus from the external object to the consciousness, with an almost anarchic disregard of all objective art forms in favour of the chance forms of the inner vision. To the Surrealist, his own consciousness is supreme. He contemplates and analyses it—imagery and feelings—and brings their meanings, as far as possible, to the idea.¹ He no longer speaks of expressing the sea, the river, the field, the house, the nude, the flower, but terror, horror, despair, equilibrium, flight, speed, nihilism, intractability, entanglement, the antagonism of matter, the growth of sadism.

The consciousness which is of interest to and moves the Surrealist arises, nevertheless, in the same manner as any other consciousness or reaction, namely, from the objectively seen or the subjectively visualised, and is then formulated into the idea. Imagery is, therefore, basic to it, and is of interest according to a certain uniqueness of character which is consistently sought, namely, the unexpected, the incongruous, the extra-

¹ Concerning the embodiment of ideas into outer form, see Chapter XXX.

MIRO



COMPOSITION

By courtesy of the Lefevre Gallery

gant, the bizarre, the macabre, the diabolic, the irrational—derived especially from the dream, chance phantasy, the hallucinatory and the pathological.

Impelled rather from the desire to find than from a vision to express, the movement gathered inspirational force from the theories of Freud, whose researches into the unconscious were giving dream imagery a special significance.

Freud was popularising the theory that dream imagery is symbolic of unconscious desires, of desires repressed from conscious life by inhibitions demanded of the social life. Dream imagery, irrational on account of its disconnectedness and unsequential character, revealed the instinctive and deeper impulses striving for expression which the rationalised forms of Society stifled. Reason, materialised into inhibitory social form, was an imposition repressing the instinctive and therefore natural life of the individual. Dreams, a consciousness freed from conscious control, were an outlet for these repressed longings, and were a manifestation of wish-fulfilment.

That these views have since been modified¹, does not do away with their attractiveness for encouraging a belief that irrationally related imagery viewed symbolically might reveal fundamental truths which rationality keeps hidden within, and which might lead to enlightenment and the invigorating of a new mental orientation so needed in these days of spiritual disquiet. The Surrealist aim might be regarded as expression founded on the primitive instincts or impulses.

Bearing in mind, that, to the Surrealist, no inspiration could be had from a return to naturalism, his bias in favour of dream imagery was much strengthened because it seemed to offer the only means of escape from a rapidly approaching deadlock: the sterilisation of expression through the rigidity and limitation of Cubist forms. By its means (1) a veiled move is made towards the object without open acceptance of naturalism; (2)

¹ It is well to contrast this outlook with that of the social group as a creative force.

the consciousness or 'feeling' arising from this irrational imagery should symbolise a state of the unconscious and therefore be more primordial than the socially conventional; and (3) the 'feeling' could be directly expressed through this imagery without requiring naturalistic arrangements.

A dreamer awakes, endeavouring to retain certain images which appear more clearly than others seen vanishing in the background, and he tries to piece these together. He is in the ship's cabin talking to the captain; in the sea by the towering side of the ship with a huge fish staring at him; being grinned at from over the gun-whale by the captain whose face is now three times its normal size; climbing through a small hole in the ship's side to fall among a number of large box-like shapes that contract and expand as if they would crush him. This, surely, is imagery for which he is looking, and particularly as he is aware of having had many such dreams, in which, so it appears to him, he is ever unable to stay and make a stand against phenomena that would destroy him. Here, indeed, must be something of the unconscious revealed and worthy of reflection.

That such imagery should, as a disclosure of the unique, first be found *interesting* and reflected upon factually or scientifically, is immaterial to a subsequent decision to give it artistic form, but if, eventually, a work-of-art is to come of it, a time will come when the aesthetic manner of perceiving must take over. The forms—the inciting imagery, the imaginatively affected impression and the conception—must be perceived purely from an aesthetic standpoint, namely, *presentially*. If not, and scientific *interest* is confused with aesthetic awareness so that the attitude of perceiving is one of classification founded on no more than observances of fact, the resulting design or diagram will record just fact, with a value, if any, more nearly scientific than aesthetic.

There is, indeed, much Surrealist work in which the absence of artistic order would suggest a derivation from

such non-aesthetic standpoints. In particular there are those of which the inciting imagery, looked upon as a subconscious revelation, has been recorded as far as possible without conscious intervention. The 'picture' then represents an uninhibited consciousness and is without artistic order. The nearer this method can be brought to perfection, the more do these formations become a species of psychic automatism. They and other versions of Surrealist symbolisation represent a form of research more psychological—which, as stated, is exercising so strong a fascination of a pseudo-mystical nature over the contemporary artist—than artistic.

The Surrealists' regard for aesthetic 'feeling' and disregard for artistic form is also exposed by the attention they have given to a certain type of natural object, valued for the 'feeling' only. Consciousness,¹ 'feeling' or presence is experienced in reaction to any and every object or shape seen or known, and Surrealists are well aware of this. They have given demonstration of it by making collections of such objects which 'present' the particular affection they seek. These *objets trouvés*, however, are not works-of-art. They are no more so than is any other object to be picked up at random and which differs from that sought after by the Surrealist only because it happens to stimulate a different quality of reaction. Neither are they to be ascribed to art when hung inharmoniously together within a frame or when representations of them are painted together for purely psychological effects. Where is the art? Define it! There is no upholding such a claim other than by establishing the wider claim that every object perceived is a work-of-art.

The Surrealist's choice of form in materialisation is, therefore, extensive, ranging from the abstract to the representational, and is of any order. He might keep

¹ Consciousness is a comprehensive term used in too general and loose a way by Surrealists. But, as the aesthetic essence of any consciousness derives from 'feeling', which is what these artists imply in their positive interest, we can, in this section, make use of these two words interchangeably without misunderstanding.

to pure abstraction, or, if more inventive, create object-like abstract shapes or units of a personal kind. He might, perhaps, choose a single image from among all he sees—the grinning face; the staring fish; his desperate struggle in the water, or combine all into a representational *mélange* or caricature. He has means, too, for suggesting mental backgrounds and margins. Not being tied to objectivity in any way, he has complete freedom to invent as he pleases. Indeed, within the formal categories of the automatic, abstract and representational, there are states of rendering of whole images, half images, distorted images, composite images, disguised images and private images, any of which may be freely augmented by associated images as in the manner of the poet; and all may directly ‘present’ the consciousness or be allegoric. All these forms of imagery are rendered by means of every technical device. Difficulty for the onlooker in apprehending the consciousness expressed is not lessened when the forms embodying it consist thus of unfamiliar shapes or units belonging to a private vocabulary and offering no clue as to the imagery or idea which was basic to them in the artist’s mind.

It will at once be apparent that this process of picture making is not in accordance with the precepts governing the preceding movements. By such means, all that is traditionally fundamental to a unifying art process is, to varying degrees, sacrificed to ‘putting over’ the freely-imaged consciousness. The Surrealist has said that tradition no longer counts. Every picture then is a law within itself.

The swing of the pendulum from the practice of the principles expounded by the Cubists to the practice of the freedom upheld by the Surrealists is so complete as to confound even the most credulous in his wish to learn what is truly basic to these contradictory practices. The essential of the one is cancelled out by the indispensable of the other! There is nothing surprising about the Surrealist’s primary aim—the search for content. Surprise is in their utter overthrow of what the Cubists fought so hard to attain—the re-birth of construction:

an unsurpassable contribution. For art is a condition of design: what the artist 'chooses to express must be subservient to his conceiving a form that shall be visually satisfying'. This is the minimum to be looked for in his constructive effort.¹

The entire neglect of design as a thing of order, during the secondary stages of Surrealism, was no contingent oversight fortuitously occurring while the artist attended to and perfected other aspects of his art. It was deliberate dissolution. No sooner were the misunderstood aims of the Cubists being generally assented to and acclaimed variously as the re-discovery of formal order, of design, of organisation, of a creative vision equivalent to architecturally and musically conceived form, in effect the birth of a new classical renaissance, then, as suddenly, it all collapses like a house built with a pack of cards! Is it to be wondered at if the interested follower of these diverse forms were to throw up his hands in bewilderment and doubt at ever coming to know what is essential among them, when the members of the factions, taken together, do not agree among themselves?

Amid this apparent chaos, it will, however, be conceded that the process is distinguished by certain marked features. These can be summarised as follows. Firstly, the object returns as a symbol no longer mistrusted: its value is accepted and it is granted a status of affectability equal to that of any ingredient within the design. Association is thus reinstated as a main source of 'feeling'. But, secondly, there remains the strong prejudice against naturalistic and traditional *arrangements* and this leads to the seeking of irrational arrangements to serve as the affecting or inciting forms (from dreams, etc.). These, it is contended, thirdly, liberate 'feelings' from the unconscious, which must be analysed and then

¹ There are some historically well-known examples of pictorial work in which the idea, accepted as of unique visionary character, predominates and has been rendered without subservience to formal design. These, very obviously, are ideographs, and have little enough to do with art.

ideated for the purpose, fourthly, of extracting the essential (a universal principle now dominant under the influence of primitive art) from the unessential, and, fifthly, as 'feeling', be materialised again into an unnaturalistic arrangement. In a word, this is a complete process of phantasy-making, and we have it forced upon us to ask if, as an aim, it is as misplaced as at first it might appear to be?

In a generalised sweeping view of art, how much of it can be declared free of phantasy? The question is not set in metaphysical terms with the intention of promoting enquiry into ultimates, where a coming upon obscurity might compel us to aver that *all* is illusion: *maya*, but in terms of common distinctions between what we understand as fancy and actuality. Here, in this book, *reality* has been defined as inclusive of both, and if the nature or meaningfulness of this element of phantasy be undefined but capable of being experienced as an affection, are we not yet free to believe that by reconciling and conjoining it to conditions of actuality—to factual truth—we perceive our goal? Thus are the affections of love and faith embodied into outward form. For in this manner is the expression of these feelings known to each of us. And have we not found that if from such a unification there is created a unity both circumstantially acceptable and workable and from which issues the power of survival, we have the efficacious? and, in a multiplicity of such occasions, the potential of philosophic truth? Is it not then by this means, namely, by a creative phantasy which shall be no less the expression of love, uniting itself to truth in subjection to a qualifying experience, that we anticipate the presences of the future? For what is this but the simplicity of beauty¹ and truth being forged into a quality we call good? Then must it be, since beauty is a basis for practical idealism, that art can help towards this efficacy by its conceptions taking the form of a determined phantasy. Phantasy must be admitted to the constituents of the good reality.

¹ Defined as a quality of affinity.

Let us look at the Lurçat reproduction and ask what has the artist done in the rendering of this open sea, a rendering almost modest by comparison with some, in deviation from the conventional? Here is the spaciousness of a watery wilderness treated in a phantasmic manner. With what result? When we have recovered from our first impulse to criticise according to naturalistic standards, and have accepted the artist's departure from these, do we not find the construction more vitally defined intellectually and the 'feeling' evoked fuller, more certain and more concentrated? Does not this imagery when so formulated express a new vision, an idealisation, the quality of which (if not of too desirable a kind for many persons!) regarded in terms of its acceptability and contribution to the presential life, shall decide whether it will live on? Look at the design and observe how the horizon has been dealt with. Had it been naturalistically treated, it would, viewed as a line, have cut across the picture from side to side, dividing the surface into two sections. This line, considered as a component of design, is 'felt' by many painters of the sea to be commonplace, restrictive, uninteresting and ugly. Pictures are to be seen where these objections have been successfully overcome, but the number of seascapes which have not been painted because the problems involved have not been successfully solved will never be known. Observe here, then, the terraced sea and land; the stepped-up horizon; the pivotal rock and spray; the impossible human figure (abstractly in keeping with the context); the tree, in isolation, terrifyingly related to the surrounding forms. The 'feeling' that called this phantasy into being has attained to the hierarchy of art, which, if expressing the requisite qualities, may, in after time, serve to create reactions that shall permeate the actualistic life.

Is it then by its contribution towards uncompromising phantasy that Surrealism will ultimately be judged?

Of what has been achieved, it is interesting to observe that the artists who, so far, have made and are making

reputations in this movement, are those who, like Klee, Miro, Masson and Marcoussis among others, reveal an orderliness with a sensibility for subtlety and vigour in contrasts which is quite traditional in their manipulation of one or more of the visual elements. What they do, they do well. By what standards these works will eventually be rated none can foresee. The prevailing outlook tends to indirect use only of the dream and to revert more to the imagery of experience (actual) for 'felt' meaning; and, in the materialisation, to *design* a freely imaged phantasy or imaginary dreamlike conception, while relying upon all methods of suggestion and association for fulness of expression. To turn thus to actuality for inspiration, and to design the conception, is to make the Surrealist process less complicated, more comprehensible and nearer the traditional. At the moment, however, there is nothing final about Surrealist art. In the vanguard of painting, unfettered freedom is still permissible!

It is possible that Surrealism, in its all-embracing attitude towards form, might be lending itself to a widespread extension of this diffusion of interest. By a complete change in orthodox outlook, it is perhaps pointing out to us through the incongruous—even the horrible—that any and all forms are of interest and can be looked at presentially; that, in fact, it is helping to bring aesthetic perceiving into its own rather than advancing the cause of artistic form. Yet, as we have learnt, Surrealism is not today so neglectful of organisation.

Of its delving into the meanings of preconscious¹ and unconscious symbols, as part of a seeking for content, much experience has been gained in sensing and segregating basic 'feeling'. At first the effort revealed little beyond what we are accustomed to associate with the 'lower regions', disclosing itself as an attempt at illuminating and of adding some encouragement to the prevailing sensational excesses made possible by an already de-inhibited outlook. But its compass expanded,

¹ We were living organisms for millenia before possessing consciousness.

JEAN LURCAT



LE BAIGNEUR

By courtesy of the Lefevre Gallery

and, as is usual in the development of such movements, initial bounds were broken to follow independent renderings. And now, in dissipation, its adherents are fostering a quality of presence impelled from a 'region' very different in 'altitude' from that on which the movement was initiated. Could it, by making good its pretensions, lead to, or even add something to, a new orientation of outlook for the enriching of mankind, then conjoined to the new structural forms created as the outcome of Cubism, post-Impressionism should live as the movement which made possible an aesthetic expression no less virile and widespread in its appeal than any of the great expressional periods classified into history.

This is optimism, certainly, but justified by what we see. For we are able to stand back and view the building of visual form as if it were detached from its greater whole: life, to see it as a complete independent cosmology, a whole process of life-building in miniature. And having taken heed of the disintegration through which it has been passing, together with the visions of integration ever operative in counteraction, no one who has observed these forces at work can have the least doubt as to the new builders' vitality and ultimate conquest. And if the way of assessment, of control and of spiritually-impelled construction of form, from its basic manifestation—sensation, can be learnt thus in miniature, only absence of power within the greater itself, namely: life, can prevent that wider outburst of confidence for which we look.

CHAPTER XXX

THE ABSTRACTIONISTS' AIM

WE will now consider by the help of reproductions, a few further examples of abstract painting, and of painting in which objectivity is subordinate to the abstract.

The problem for the onlooker is not to decide whether such pictures are legitimate or not—they are—but whether they contain meaning for him, and whether that meaning is worth while.

Let it be remembered that a single line drawn on a clean sheet of paper may be acclaimed if wished, and logically, a work-of-art by the person who asserts that as objective presence it is decorative and has intuitive meaning for him. There have been 'pictures' with very little more marking on the paper than this. And 'sculpture' as simplified—a piece of stone shaped just 'off' the round, of which its like in their thousands can be picked up off our pebble beaches. Art may, as all else, be reduced to absurdity.

In the light of the foregoing analysis, one cannot do better in an attempt at elucidating these works, than do so side by side with what the artists themselves have had to say about them and of their aims in general. It is believed that both the works and the comments illustrate and express aims all of which are covered by this review.¹

It is for the reader to look at these reproductions in conjunction with those which have already appeared,

¹ It is not intended that these works and comments should be accepted as in any way representing permanent outlooks of the artists who expressed them. They may or may not do so. They serve here only as examples of the kind of work, and of the views that go along with the production of such work, as is here under review.



ICARUS

JOHN ARMSTRONG

and, reinforced by what the artist says, to form impartially his own conclusions. In the materialisation of a theory lies the proof of its worth.

Let him be open-minded by remembering, too, that the forms he now appreciates in life were not so learnt in a day.

Briefly, as there is no work-of-art executed without abstract relationships aimed at, the whole matter as an individual problem is to be decided by answer to the question: how far or to what degree can abstraction be carried in pictorial form, that it shall yet contain or be something more than the decorative and monumental by giving rise to an intuitive unity of satisfaction? This unity, as we know, depends, on analysis, on the meaningfulness perceived in the form as a decoration, a construction, a subject-matter and an execution.¹

¹ The meaningfulness of execution is as revealed by those qualities of form imparted to the material (the sensuous) in the physical process of performance, handling or making: organic growth. In certain media, the effect or 'appearance' of the combined qualities is referred to as texture, or more distinguishingly so, textural form.

Henry Moore

Each sculptor through his past experience, through observation of natural laws, through criticism of his own work and other sculpture, through his character and psychological make-up, and according to his stage of development, finds that certain qualities in sculpture become of fundamental importance to him.

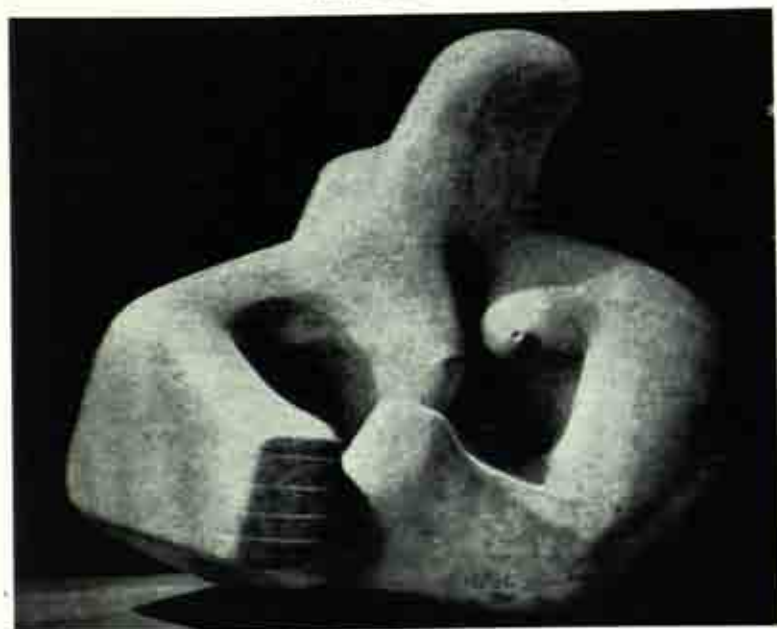
Complete sculptural expression is form in its full spatial reality.

But besides formal qualities there are qualities of vision and expression. . . . Abstract qualities of design are essential to the value of a work, but to me of equal importance is the psychological, human element. If both abstract and human elements are welded together in a work, it must have a fuller, deeper meaning.

Between beauty of expression and power of expression there is a difference of function. The first aims at pleasing the senses, the second has a spiritual vitality which for me is more moving and goes deeper than the senses.¹

¹ Extracts from *Unit One*, published in 1934 by Messrs Cassell.

HENRY MOORE



FIGURE, 1931

By courtesy of Messrs Cassell

JOHN BIGGE



ABSTRACTION, 1933

By courtesy of Messrs Cassell.

John Bigge

Every epoch produces (or is produced by, if you prefer) its own peculiar material environment. The necessity of adapting its psychology to this environment and of liberating its spirit within it demands an art that is essentially *of* its today and *for* its tomorrow.

Today is an epoch of revolution, not only of the economic and social environment, but of the spiritual and intellectual life of man. At the present moment few people 'know where they are', either socially, morally, mentally, or spiritually.

So, in the art of today, the chief characteristic is a revolutionary sentiment; a searching for a new content, a new form to contain it and a new technique to devise that form.

Sentimentality and Romanticism seem out of place today. . . . I realise that abstract art is not very palatable. . . . An abstract picture, whether it makes use of material or imaginary form . . . must keep its content pure; there must be no association of the forms either with function or symbol. It must be logical in construction, but with its own self-imposed logic. Its forms must appear solid within space (not like cut-out pieces of paper applied to a flat surface), and yet it must dispense with both modelling and perspective, which belong to the world of material experience.

The psychological training necessary for abstract painting seems quite as difficult as the acquisition of the technical experience and the aesthetic knowledge. In fact, every morning I find it more difficult.¹

¹ *Unit One.*

Tristram Hillier

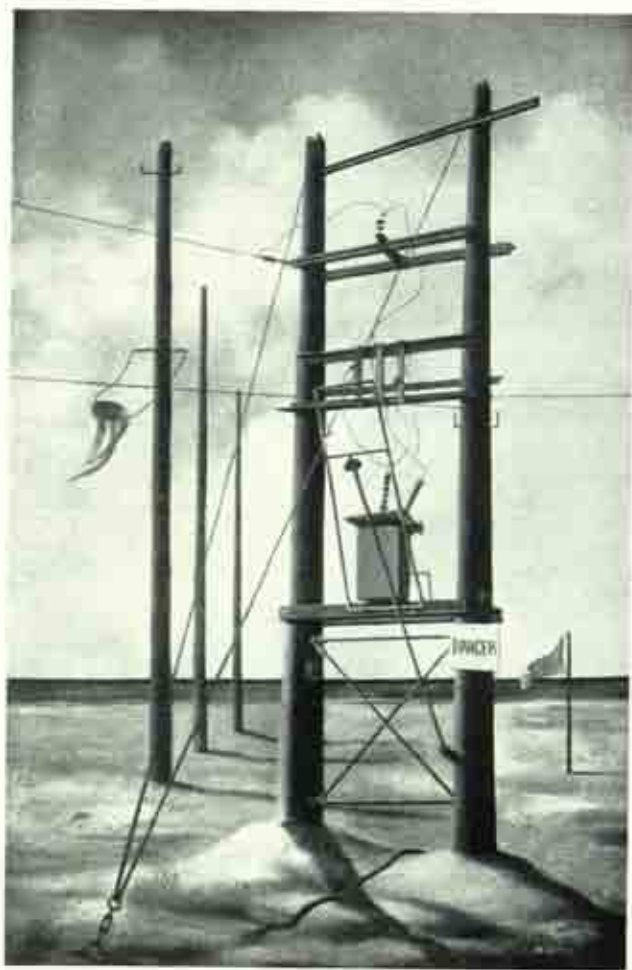
The basis upon which I work varies according to my visual reaction. At times the plastic form revealed in a group of objects so completely subordinates for me any associative feeling that I know of no adequate means of expression but a use of purely abstract shapes; on other occasions so strongly am I impressed by the relation of one mass to another that, while depicting recognisable objects, I allow myself a deliberate distortion of perspective in order to emphasise the rhythm which I feel.

Generally, however, my aim is to build up a composition in a representative manner assembling objects which have a mutual plastic complement and a similar evocative nature irrespective of their individual functions. For example, the sense of desolation engendered by the sight of a neglected and rusted anchor lying upon some deserted shore may be more potent than its functional association of mooring a ship, and it seems not unreasonable that, in depicting such an object, one should surround it with broken chains, abandoned newspapers and other things evoking the same sentiments and fulfilling the structural requirements of a composition, although they may provoke a feeling of inconsistency in point of practical association. It appears to me a very practical form of symbolism. . . .

For the design of my pictures I rely upon my natural sense of balance and not . . . upon numerical proportions; for the essence of what we understand as art lies in that order which is the outcome of asymmetry. . . .¹

¹ *Unit One,*

TRISTRAM HILLIER



PYLONS, 1933

By courtesy of Messrs. Cassell

EDWARD WADSWORTH



By courtesy of Messrs Cassell

COMPOSITION ON PINK BACKGROUND, 1933

Edward Wadsworth

A picture is no longer a window out of which one sees an attractive little bit of Nature; nor is it a means of demonstrating the personal sentiments of the artist; it is itself, it is an object; a new unity expanding the idea of the term 'beauty'.

Robert Schumann said: 'Only when the form becomes clear to you will the spirit become so too.' Today we say: 'The form is the Spirit.'

Considered technically, a picture is an affirmation—a statement of plastic facts in space—an adventure—a harmony of balanced relationships stated by the purest (i.e., most economical) means at the artist's disposal which will be dependent on his mental and spiritual state.

Art participates in the beliefs of each epoch. The machine is our Saga and can be beautiful. It can be a new form of aesthetic expression in itself and can even enhance Nature.

A picture is primarily the animation of an inert plane surface by a spatial rhythm of forms and colours.

It may subsequently contain symbols representing persons in landscape, but in the first instance the colour will be determined by the character of the shapes.

The determining character may also, as in the case of the Virgin's cloak, be of a literary quality.

I prefer the most direct means: the simplest forms and colours . . . and to avoid the equivocal.

The spirit of our epoch is one of synthesis and construction and any work-of-art which does not express this spirit does not belong spiritually to our age.¹

¹ *Unit One.*

Ivon Hitchens¹

(a) What are you trying to express in your painting?

To extract and show clearly in line, tone and colour and plane the unity of appearance, the visual harmony of life, wherein each part is relative to the whole. This is usually a visual reaction to Nature, but at times it becomes a psychological one.

(b) Do you work from Nature?

Not always, but usually, and then it is a question of the lapse of time between the first reception and the final creation.

The painting may be an immediate response to a visual sensation, or the product of an indefinite period of digestion and consideration—but usually in landscape or still-life painting it is worked *in situ*.

In any case the result must be governed by the pictorial claims of the painting surface.

(c) Have you a clear conception of the picture before you begin?

I have a fairly clear idea of what has to be done, though it is never clear how to do it. Consequently, it may be necessary to make several versions of the same subject. When there is only the desire to paint, the urge has to take form while working. From the moment when the painting surface is chosen, the work should grow with its own personality to meet the painter's creative thought, else the result will be devoid of life.

(d) Are your paintings purely decorative?

A painting, like a human being, will look decorative in a well-proportioned body, but it must have other virtues as well. All great paintings are decorative, but no great paintings are purely decorative.

¹ Catalogue for exhibition held at Zwemmer Gallery, March 1934.

IVON HITCHENS



POPPIES AND GREEN BOWL, 1937

By courtesy of the Lefevre Gallery

To the works here reproduced and of the views accompanying them, I will ask, does a perusal of them add anything to what has been said in helping to enlighten interpretation of art? No new point is raised. In the views expressed there is a measure of agreement as to outlook. There is also diversity. And even conflict between the stated aims and their practice as materialised in the work.

There is general agreement that the work-of-art is the result of a reaction to nature: of a visual reaction; that there must be interrelation of its parts, and that it has a psychological content, i.e., that the forms are symbolic. Mr Henry Moore, in the first of his paragraphs quoted, implies the development of a form-ideal.

Elsewhere, the symbolic is not admitted. Mr Bigge writes that 'An abstract picture must keep its content pure; there must be no association of the forms either with function or symbol'. Yet he admits the necessity of psychological training. For what, if all his forms are to be stripped of the symbolic? Mr Wadsworth, granting priority to abstract considerations, does not rule out symbols representing persons or landscapes. Why this limitation?

There is some discrepancy between what is said and done. Mr Bigge, for example, writes of abstract work, that 'Its forms must appear solid within space, and yet it must dispense with modelling . . . which belongs to the world of material existence'. How can a solid appear immaterial? The artist must know that to model is merely a method of rendering planes. Is it the method to which he objects, or to the rendering of planes? Only the latter can be assumed, for it is by the rendering of planes that material appearance is most given to objects, which is what he wishes to take from them. His 'Abstraction', which is reproduced here, is presumably illustrative of his thesis. Are there no planes rendered in 'Abstraction'? To me, they are very strongly rendered. I interpret four distinct planes, rendered by three or four 'somethings' suspended in space, and which no

mental control can prevent my intuiting into objects. These intuitions break into the unity intended.

* * *

Much is contended about symbolism and association, and there certainly is nothing about which more can be said than the nature of the psychic content put into and symbolised by a work-of-art and of the form of the imagery which expresses it. Under different headings the subject has been fairly exhaustively dealt with in the preceding chapters, and it is thought unlikely that the views expressed on these problems are to be misunderstood.

We may, however, recollect that in the expression of objectivity—which is a form of symbolism better distinguished by being referred to as representationalism—any object may be represented so long as it is not perceived primarily as representative form but as presentative form in subjection to a form-ideal. If it be an idea that is to be symbolised, then the only change in significance brought about is that we are a stage further away from the image which is to express it, and which must be found and rendered in like manner to all other imagery. That is all.

Painters can express only through images, and images have to be found for whatever it is desired to express. If an artist, experiencing a presence, wishes to express an awareness abstracted from it and formulates involuntarily or even desires to formulate the awareness into an idea—desolation, joy, anger, peace, infinity, etc.—that idea, in order to be visually expressed, must go back into

imagery by finding its symbol in imagery. And when found, we are taken back to where we were, namely, to the point where the artist has to choose between making his imagery subordinate to the idea, i.e., incidental, or subordinate to his form-ideal, i.e., conceptual—form representatively or form presentatively conceived.

If, *after* having looked at water falling over a water-wheel and being impressed to the point of expression, we then bring an essential ingredient of the awareness to idea as either motion, or power, or progress (it was at one time), or ingenuity, or economy or to any other concept, the problem before us is as it was before ideation took place, and whatever we intend to emphasise as idea must now as then be subject to the same principles of rendering. So would it be were a work-of-art to come about initially from reaction to an idea and not from imagery. The idea must be symbolised by imagery which must be rendered conceptually and not incidentally.¹

Of association there are as widely contending attitudes. It is very evident that many of the theories tried out through modern forms have broken down from insufficient understanding of how greatly meaningfulness in form is due to association. Not that artistic expression necessitates a knowledge of meaning in terms of psychological form and process, but today the man if not the artist seems to require it, and the effort to attain the knowledge has led the artist into no end of indecisions and confusions.

At the very beginning of the modern movement the artist came to believe that the associated interest attached to an object and the feeling of sentiment aroused by it, were suspect. Associated sentiment caused him to be interested in objects that had little or no artistic possibilities for him.

Aware of this, he was constantly on the alert, and eventually became shy of having anything to do with an object to which he was sentimentally attached. He would have rid himself of all associated interest. This

¹ See Chapter XXXI.

attitude, in conjunction with others to which allusion has been made, was an additional influence in keeping the artist away from expressing discernments that were genuine to him, but became, for the reason stated, out of fashion.

It is needless to say that his attempt at eliminating the associative content, that quality of meaningfulness which plays so important a part in our aesthetic reactions to life and in our expression of them, was of course, doomed to failure.¹

Association, as embodiment, conscious and unconscious, is the very essence of a thing's meaning to us, and of life's meaning. Our instincts have been formed by association, an association so inevitable and enduring that results in adaptability. Adaptability is conformity to persistent association. All objects are therefore impregnated with fused associated meanings. The form of the association only is what we need take notice of.

It has previously been affirmed that an object must not be painted when a recalled association takes precedence over the visual: not when the association be the only reason for painting. To paint any old thing in our possession because of a memory image, which is the equivalent to painting a finger-post with its surrounding forms for no reason other than for a happy hour or two spent in their midst, regardless of whether the forms can be artistically unified, would not result in a great work-of-art. Association of this kind leads us to be blinded, as it were, by kindly feelings towards the object, as we might be towards a friend, whose true character we cannot see on account of our love.

¹ There is a thoughtlessly held view that the object is the only aspect of form with an associative content. Indeed, much modern work has been constructed on this false belief. Yet, as we know, it is quite impossible for lines and colours to be any less so embodied than objects, and all artists are aware of the associatively-based content of the more conventional linear designs. It is quite false to suppose that we rid the work-of-art of association by dispensing with the object.

But if we look upon this attachment as no more than prejudice in the object's favour, are we still to withhold rendering it? A painter might come to know that he has a prejudice in favour of yellow objects, and that these have always an unusual significance for him not 'felt' in connection with objects of any other colour. He would be happy painting in the belief that yellow has some deep psychological meaning for him, a true feeling experience of the soul, which he must express. And then, one fine day, some dear old aunt tells him that his love for yellow objects is due to the love he once had as a child for a nurse who wore nothing but yellow dresses. He would have to turn to her and say: 'Why have you told me this? I can now no longer paint yellow objects. I have been painting these things only for their association. Already I have had to give up painting finger-posts and any personal belongings, and now all objects that are yellow. You may perhaps be able to explain similarly why I am moved by relations of black and yellow? Did this nurse wear black ribbons and trimmings to her yellow dresses? But no, please don't tell me anything more or I shall soon be left with nothing to paint.'

Views which lead to such an impasse are not practical. To attempt to delve into the origin of an object's meanings would be to involve us in confusions and impossibilities that might easily lead to our throwing up the business of painting itself. Associative content is not to be dealt with in this way. Associative elements, as ingredients of an impression, are a cause in the choice of subject-matter. There is no perceived object without associatively-formed meaning. The presence is loaded with associative elements experienced in the 'felt' form. Every new experience with an object, that is, each time it is seen—which is also a new experience with its colours and lines—leaves upon it, as it were, a fresh associative deposit, which helps form the object's future affectability. In a later apprehension of its presence the associative cumulation is re-experienced as visual or as intuitive affection.

The only form of association that need be guarded against is that which recalls and gives rise directly to another and distant image and which is the direct and only cause of interest in the perceived object.

In practice, our only concern is that associative interest, especially if consciously allusive, must not be allowed to override the form-ideal by forcing the object or subject-matter into being rendered incidentally.¹

¹ There has been practised at the present time a very much more violent type of association than anything contemplated here: a form of caricature. It is the so-called 'double image'—a visually most common and disruptive form of image-making at which we have all played in the presence of red-hot coals, clouds, stained walls, rocks, pools, trees, shadows: anything—and which is being tried out in work receiving attention far in excess of its significance.

CHAPTER XXXI

NATURALISM

SURVEYING the post-Impressionist movement as a whole, it is possible that the most disturbing aspect of it is the movement's disregard of naturalism. Since the future is likely to witness a considerable relaxing towards this disregard, it will be appropriate to make a few brief observations on naturalism as a form of art which is, when conforming to certain principles, as legitimate a form as any other. We will speak first of that inferior form which does not express these principles.

Extreme abstractionists tell us that naturalistic, representational or academic art—if, by these, one and the same kind of painting be intended—as practised by the older academicians is not art at all. The form of art implied by this censure, whatever name may be given to it, is that of which the aim is to depict an object exactly as it is found in actuality. It is incidental painting, from the fact that everything incidental to the form's structure is made primary in observation and portrayal. This is the thesis, but in actual practice it does not work out so. Certain very structurally-simple objects might perhaps be reproduced faithfully, but, for the most part, the different degrees to which this ideal is carried out makes the modifications from imitation far too distant and variable to fall under a single indictment. The assertion, therefore, cannot be accepted as it stands.

The most pronounced form of naturalistic art is, as a class, probably the Society portrait. Not portraiture as a whole, but that particular branch of it named. This form of painting, together with most commemorative works-of-art, certainly cannot be taken too seriously as art. Image-forming, in all its aspects is, creatively, at low ebb. To some extent, and owing to the conditions

by which these works come to be produced, they are in a category by themselves.

Here, in the shape of a sitter, is form, good or bad in artistic possibilities, and of which the artist, by his acceptance of it, binds himself to the production of a likeness as his primary objective. The essence of a portrait is that it should be a likeness. This is the aim which the artist must never lose sight of, and which he must make a primary and not a secondary consideration.

The real significance of objective form to a *free* artist lies in his reaction to or impression of it, and the expression of which is conceived by him.

This is the outlook that portrait painters endeavour to bring to bear upon their sitters. But they are handicapped from the beginning, not only because they start with the aim of obtaining a likeness to a given form, but because the owner of that form insists upon its being carried out to his satisfaction. Skilful adherence to facts is required in order that the sitter and his friends, or those who commissioned the work, may find in the portrait what they see in the original, and from which they may receive a similar reaction uninterfered with by the intervention of the artist's mind. Satisfaction to the sitter is assured by mellowing the facts in accordance with a recipe for flattery.

Therefore, the formula for the conventional portrait painter is to react to and to express a sitter's own impression of himself.

Portrait painting, were it to adhere strictly to this formula, would be little more than reproduction. Fortunately, there are many degrees of adherence, and for this good reason it is impossible to generalise for portraiture as a whole. Nevertheless, there is much work done by adhering to the formula as closely as is practically possible, and it is this work that is being singled out now for criticism.

Yet, even in the execution of work of this character, the artist is not without his idealisations such as they are: an individualistic rendering by which his work can

always be distinguished from any other. In spite of which, his individuality does not save him, for its free indulgence is intentionally sacrificed to attaining the primary aims of producing a likeness and of pleasing.

What must this outlook lead to? If, in the main, one is not allowed to use one's own 'feelings' to discern, or to conceive, one can only execute, which too would be of a restricted kind. So, if reproduction be too harsh or perhaps inaccurate a term with which to describe this kind of painting, the result of compulsion upon the painter, even if optionally accepted, is inevitably to make him less of an artist and predominantly a craftsman, and his work a craft.

It is possible that the painter is fundamentally fitted for this task. Facility in craftsmanship is itself often an approach to art: the operating of the craft-impulse as opposed to the art-impulse. A young person may become an artist from motives arising from either end of the scale, so to speak. He may be highly sensitive and 'feel' impressions intensely, and be driven on by them to find a craft suitable through which to express himself. Or, the first desire to be an artist may come from the discovery of craft-power—skill in drawing, facility in the use of words, or in handling a keyboard—to be led on by this power to find something to express. The approach is reversed. Here it is the man's executive ability, his craftsmanship that first opens his eyes and draws him into the fold, and creates the desire to express something. With the man of impressionability the material to be expressed is there, and he is spurred on to find a craft through which to formulate conceptions, and, by practice, to become an executant. If he has no craft with which to express himself he must remain forever content with the enjoyment of his inner but outwardly unexpressed visions. We know him as a great lover, and he is the *craftless* artist. The world is filled with them.

A single artist will command both art and craft, although a marked leaning or incentive may impel the

development of one more than the other. A conventional portrait painter has given himself over to craft. In being obliged to approach his subject from this angle, his chief interest becomes centred in the executive skill with which he carries out his work. It is not the model that stirs him to paint. He is unmoved by the presence. Any sitter will do for him. Were he too aesthetically affected he would have to curb himself in like manner to the literary artist who, as a journalist, enters Fleet Street to bow to the dictates of forces other than those of art.

It is true that as he proceeds with his picture he will endeavour to, and often does, put into the work as much of himself as he dare, but it must be subordinate to the primary aim—his client's pleasure.

The nature of these Society portraits is brought about by the nature of the demand for portraits by the public, a demand which not only influences the artist to carry out his work as a craft, but as a craft commercially undertaken. This must be stressed, in justice to those who so strongly, if too positively, condemn naturalistic art, and because of the influence which these portraits hold over the artistic consciousness of the public. It should be realised that their relation to pure art in painting is that of journalism to literature.

Every Society portrait painter knows that artistic presentation is not the primary quality asked for from him, and that as a supplier of 'likenesses' to pattern he is a commercial producer. His interest, therefore, becomes that of a commercial man, whose principal aim is to supply an utilitarian want for money. Society portrait painters are suppliers in the full meaning of the word, and not offerers, which is the attitude of those who work as genuine artists.

This is understandable, and meritorious, provided the claims made on behalf of the work are limited to what it is. Portrait painters work to public demand, and what they do is in order and to purpose. As an occupation it is as useful as many another calling. But, as a craft, it is comparable only to other skilled crafts.

This, the portraitist is quite conscious of. If he becomes aware that you are sensitive to aesthetic impressions he will tell you that his own sensibility makes him wish to paint differently and something else. Thus have Gainsborough and others lamented.¹

It must be understood that these remarks apply only to the commercialised Society portrait, and not to those works by artists who work to a formula different from that by which these portraits are executed.

These painters cannot paint in this way—circumscribed in vision and presentation. They paint only as free artists receiving from the sitter something in which they become interested. Without this interest they will not paint, or rather they cannot, and, if persuaded, will do bad work. They are the painters who struggle against adversity for recognition. They are the painters with whom the public will not at first have anything to do, and who are liable to have their work returned to them. Also, these artists, painting as artists, are those who, through determination or favourable circumstances, have been able to uphold the higher standard, and from whom have come and continue to come those masterpieces of portraiture which are equal to the best in any kind of painting. And to paint a portrait that is both a good likeness and fine painting, which is to fuse the incidental form into a form-ideal, is a very difficult matter.

It is worthy of note that the ranks of these artists would be augmented manyfold—and from among the commercially influenced—were the public to demand it by allowing the painter to paint as he apprehends.

¹ Most recently have we learnt from Sir John Lavery that 'I have felt ashamed of having spent my life trying to please sitters and make friends, instead of telling the truth and making enemies'.

Then, the upholding of representations of state or municipal ceremonies as art, which are, in conception and execution, akin to the Society portrait, is injurious to a proper appraisal of the values of art.

The impossibility of making a successful work-of-art when the recording of an idea or incident is the direct aim, is perhaps better understood from such subjects as state or civic ceremonies than from any other. In these, the occasion in all detail is required to be adhered to as a record, and every unit of form—people, their clothes, etc.—be painted as it is seen, as a piece of pure description. This forbids any possible harmonising of the parts, even into a conventionalised art form, let alone a form of the artist's own.

A painter has no more difficult task when carrying out such a commission, than to please his patron in his interpretation of facts. This is especially true if the work is to commemorate and is for public presentation. It is exceptional to find a patron of such a work, whether acting individually or as a member of a committee, whose criticism is not confined to this standpoint, which is most often his sole standpoint.

It is scarcely possible that an artist should ever have received a commission of an equestrian character, for example, from a committee composed of a veterinary surgeon, a tailor, a saddler and a bootmaker. Were such a catastrophe to happen, one may feel sure that by the time he had finished with the horse's teeth, the rowels of the spurs, the coat buttons and the soles of the boots, he would never again wish to squeeze a tube of paint.

The public does not want its commemorative works to be of art. It thinks it does, but it practises otherwise.

If art be the materialisation of imagined form of a personally experienced presence (a municipal hero), then, that is not what the public wants. It has no wish to have an interpretation which reveals a conception different from its own. It wants, as of the Society portrait, a representation executed without the intervention of an image-forming mind. These paintings and statues are

required as faithful reproductions of the things depicted, executed with skilful adherence to facts, to which the public may respond directly, as it would, and in its own manner, to the originals. The public is aware of its wish, but is false to itself in believing it to be a wish for art. For, undoubtedly, its opinion, as expressed through its commissions and criticism, voices the view that the greater the art the less is it a public monument.

So may we ask, is there any reason why the public should not have what it wants in this matter? Apart from art, is there anything that should restrain us when, to commemorate a man or event, it is wished to do so by setting up a likeness of that man or a factual record of that event? There appears none, provided we cease to look upon these records as works-of-art.

If interested in music or literature, politics or business, is it not appropriate to adorn one's room with photographs and naturalistic reliefs or busts of those persons most distinguished in these realms, with which we may indulge at pleasure in imagery, idea or intuition? These records supply a need other than art. If they be not art forms, they can none the less be aesthetic forms—if aesthetically apprehended. They help to create the presence in which we wish to live.

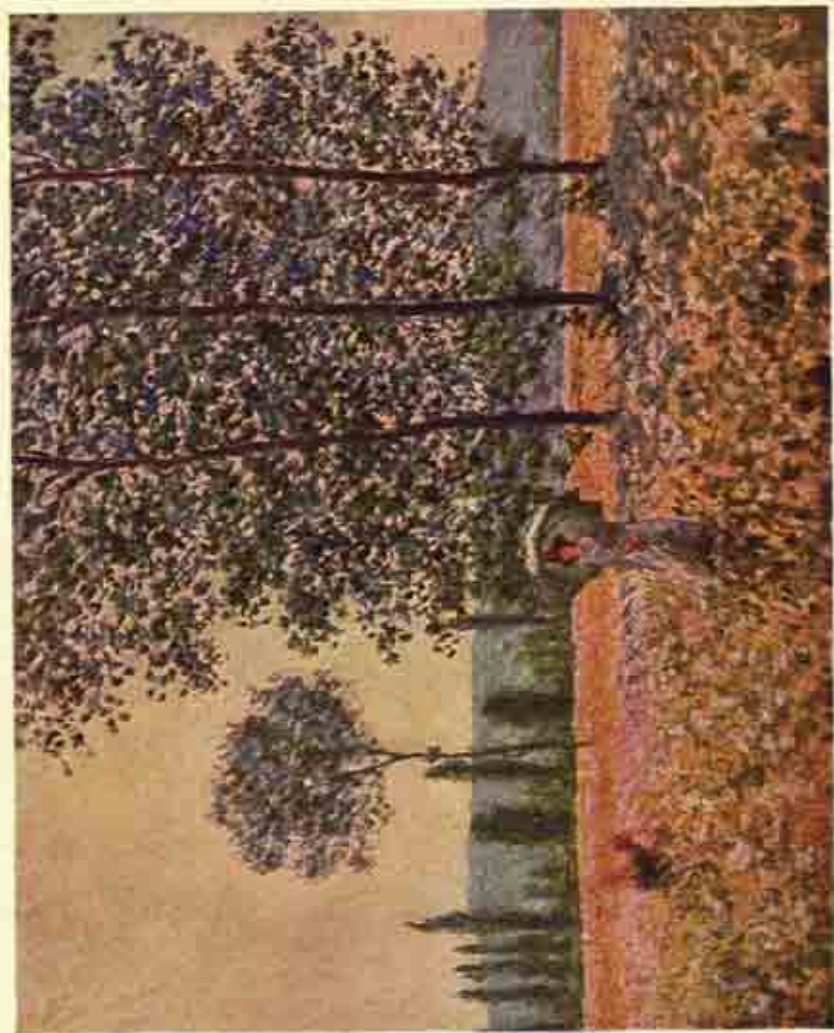
Reproductive and descriptive work have a special purpose to serve in the recording of facts, but when applied to the graphic and plastic arts there seems some difficulty in acknowledging the need and in recognising such work when seen. Factual painting certainly stands for artistic work in the eyes of the public. No doubt, not a little of this lack of discrimination arises because we do not signalise so definitely in these arts, as we do in literature, those forms that are desired and made use of only for this purpose. In literature, the private letter is accepted as something created for the purpose of communicating facts. Art is not looked for in it, although it may be there. Neither with its greater evidence is it sought in journalism, which also is factual in purpose. Yet it has become a convention to look upon the

presentation of form when executed in paint, ink or crayon, or even bronze, primarily as art, although we deliberately create records with these materials for no other purpose than that of journalism. Magazine illustrations are literary drawings as journalistic as the letterpress surrounding them. A truthful transcript of a state ceremony is pictorial journalism. So are the hundreds of war statues erected around the country. The writer on the staff of a newspaper is content to be known as a journalist. The draughtsman of illustrations supplied to a magazine calls himself an artist, yet he is the equivalent in his profession to the journalist in his.

It is also misleading to put these reproductions into art galleries. In them they hang or stand, upheld as representative of something of which they were never intended, passing as artistic creations, instead of being accepted for what they are—records or souvenirs to commemorate facts and to preserve the memory.

The art gallery is not the place in which to hang journalistic depictions of state or municipal ceremonies or magnates; they should be confined to the municipal hall or other public buildings, which are their proper homes. And thereafter the public must not pretend it was in search of art or point to these monuments as such.

If, by good fortune, a situation should occur where a *work-of-art* is required to commemorate and to be placed in a public highway, then the artist should be made to understand so, and he will know that it is the spirit of the man or deed as interpreted by him that is desired, and that the form should be as appropriate as possible to the setting in which it is to repose. It would then be conceived in a form based on the architecturally abstract, which all such monuments should be.



No. 1328

SUMMER—CLAUDE MONET

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Naturalistic painting, however, can be and is something very different when the making of it is not, so to speak, taken out of the painter's hands. It is then work, even when academic, conceived and executed to the dictates of the painter himself, and may be purely artistic in conception. It is prompted by an aesthetic impression of sheer imagic interplay, and in its construction the artist practises to varying degrees most of the principles enunciated by the moderns. He emphasises perhaps what is out of date but not necessarily out of art.

Were a modernist to be asked his opinion upon Victorian painting as typified by Leighton, Landseer, McWhirter and Leader, he might retort that such work was negligible. Most moderns would probably agree. And if asked why, he might answer that it was naturalistic, and as such was without design and approximated to hand-coloured photographs. This again might be agreed to.

But may there not be a fallacy in this generalisation? For supposing the next question were to ask if he appreciated the Impressionists—Monet—for example, and he answered that he did. Many moderns do, and Monet's paintings figure continually in exhibitions with advanced modern work. What then of naturalism, for may not Monet's work be adjudged the peak of this form of painting?

Then truly it is not for their naturalism that the Victorians are disliked. It must lie in their treatment of it. And if the Impressionists mean something to a critic, then clearly modern abstract forms, however much he may think them essential to great art, are not in fact to him all that is great.

It is noticeable, and with little wonder, how severely Rembrandt is left alone by the uncritically favourable to extreme modern work. And for the reason that to admit his greatness is, by inference, to modify much that has been written and said which limits great art to work in which the modern abstract pattern is stressed. The fallacy of such a limitation comes from forgetfulness

that good art may arise from an outlook that is not only basically constructive but is basically decorative, objective or executive. Whichever it be, it can, at most, be only a matter of predominance, for no artist whose outlook is fundamentally objective, let us say, can produce a work that is not, to some degree, decorative and constructive and of a certain executive quality.

The facts concerning freely-conceived naturalistic paintings may be stated as follows. Consider a picture such as might have been painted by any of the four aforementioned painters, or by Millais or Napier Hemy. Consider what principles of form are disclosed in this kind of work. No pondering is necessary to observe that the shape of the object is what controls the design. In fact, such a picture is not a design: it is a composition—a 'compost' of objects. And in being a composition, the objects are arranged and unified by the help of certain conventional compositional forms or frameworks, by selection and elimination, and by the attaining of balance, rhythm, recurrence, contrast, etc. But in this care of the object, the wider application of abstract principles or concepts is sacrificed. In certain instances, the similarity to photographic form would appear very exact. For the artist-photographer develops a very different vision from that of the topical photographer. He does not photograph anything and everything. He, too, composes, and by such means as selection, balance and contrast. In these paintings, colour would seem to be the visual element most abstractly thought about and rendered. Unity is aimed at through tonality, which may, as a result of this limited vision, reach no higher a value than the decorative framed into an otherwise conventionally or naturalistically constructed pattern. Line conforms to the object's outlines, certain of which, however, follow or even 'make' the rhythmical framework of the conventional pattern adopted. Spaces (of objects and intervals between) are related essentially for material balance and not lyrical interplay. Recession is scarcely ever rendered rhythmically, but with the

purpose of making objects 'stand out' and emphasise actuality. The naturalist is as much informed about technique as are the idealist and abstractionist, but he employs his knowledge in the above interest.

There are, however, naturalistic paintings, as we have learnt with regard to the portrait, in which the objects are not treated in this actualistic manner, but are fused throughout into an abstract rendering by means of one or more of the formal elements. See, for example, the idealised and constructed colour renderings of Monet; the rhythmical manner in which the later Renoir and Degas have handled recession: of the ordered movement activated as the eye is drawn from one surface to another. So it is of all good paintings, whether the treatment be of lines, colours, spaces or planes. And it follows that these higher standard paintings cannot be referred to as naturalistic. Natural form is their basis only, and the difference between them and the former may be generalised simply into that of good art and bad art.

To accentuate this differentiation, let it be noted that the reference to Renoir's work does not include such a painting as the well-known 'La Loge', which is so frequently acclaimed a masterpiece. Notable as this picture is as an example of sheer painting, that is of subtlety in tonal rendering—which, however, is more local than general, for it is decidedly 'pretty'—it is lacking in all aspects of spatial design. There is no indication that the painter, when executing this picture, so much as thought of space or rhythmic recession. The objective aspect controlled his outlook. It is, therefore, parochial in conception, and is a work to which the remarks in the immediately preceding paragraph would not apply. The Renoir of the future has not here arrived. He is to be seen in the accompanying reproduction of 'Baigneuse'—a presence brought to animation from sheer abstract fusions, by which the relative positions of the units of matter (of the objective pattern) give to the enveloping space an equal actuality, and together,

conjointly poised, create an overriding expansiveness of vision beyond the meanings of the visibly finite.¹

Wherein lies the significance of the horizon (in general) apart from the expanded vision it brings forth conjointly with the distant beyond? The eye has but to fall on the afar off 'line' for the mind to animate, according to the quality of its vision, the space it apprehends. Here in this work of Renoir's where all matter and space are visible and poised within a limited dimension, the discernment is no less expansive than that of an horizon with its unseen beyond. There is an awakened apprehension that is without finality. It is the beyond of the horizon revealed without loss of the infinite. This discernment of the integration of matter with space, of the defined or formulated with the undefined or unformulated, of the finite with the infinite, of the rational with the intuitive is a condition to attaining the highest state of spiritual affinity between the self and its environment. All the greatest artists reach its expression.

To bring support to these remarks upon the consciousness of space, it may be observed that many modern pictures which are composed of what might seem to be meaningless posts or stays are, by motive, spatial designs: the demarcating or enclosure of or giving shape to space. This is to create or give actuality to spatial form, for space exists to the mind only by contrast with matter. It is apprehended in terms of the here to there, the here and the there being points or positions established by something objective.

The great part which is played in our awarenesses by three-dimensional space becomes apparent when we reflect on the frequency of our conscious experience of it in life and on the importance of this consciousness to our environmental affinities. Indeed, space consciousness is, correctly, a persistent constituent of the visual

¹It is regrettable that the spatial quality here spoken of as forming so important a part of the content of this painting is not found in the reproduction as it is in the original. It is, perhaps, more evident in the Hodgkins reproduction.

RENOIR



BAIGNEUSE, 1915

outlook. Apart from our perception of the here-to-there of objects in relation to their spatial settings, the presence of every room is conditioned by its dimensions. So also is this true of streets, country roads and lanes, the openness of meadows, vistas from high mountains and the starry heights of night, and our passing to and fro among these varied spaces give rise to continual conscious contrasts.

Use of the object in art form requires no defence. Paintings are not to be condemned because they depict natural objects, but only when, in artistic treatment, the painter's outlook does not permit of his subject-matter being raised above objectivism by a form-ideal. It is the treatment wherein idealisation or abstraction is carried no further than in the objectivism of the Society portrait. In extreme objectivism the object reigns supreme, each and all preserving their identities in their own rights, whereas in a work-of-art an object should lose all characterisation apart from those characteristics needed to relate it to the whole, of which it is a part. The status of an object and the characterisation of its attributes—colours, lines, etc.—do not exist by right of the object but by right of the work-of-art or presence to be. The identity which any object retains, or is given, is permitted it only as a unit subordinated to an interplay in characterisation of the whole.

This is clearly seen in a well-constructed novel where the acting-characters as 'objective'-matter may be likened to the objects in a painting, and as units functioning in conformity with the whole, yet identifiable, are given and maintain only those attributes which are appropriate and necessary to the parts they play in relation to the whole.

Opposed to this is the novel of extreme naturalism of which the writers, for want of imaginative power, add little to what is a mere description of their own and their observed happenings. This is the equivalent to the painter's naturalistic illustration, and is not great writing, unless the characters and events are held

together as a unity by something more than what is incidental to each.

Also, we find writers doing as the Victorians did in painting, namely, making ideas the predominant interest in the work irrespective of whether the character-forms through which the ideas are presented have artistic significance: have been born as a result of directed imagic interplay. If not, this is painting for ideas. A number of present-day novelists, of no mean reputation, are more intent upon the expression of ideas as pseudo-philosophers than upon imagery as artists.

The most general statement, perhaps, that can be made on naturalistic art is that the closer the presentation approaches natural form the less is it an art form, and therefore, the less is it art. Were it possible to reproduce objects exactly as we see them, we have at the end exactly what we had before. This is imitation. When the aim is imitative, art has fallen to a craft. The result may certainly be viewed aesthetically and in the same manner as the object itself may be, but this does not make it an art form. The problem is one entirely of degree in idealisation of the object.¹

* * *

Then what of the musicians who essay to represent steam-engines, farm-yards and other objective forms by means of their sounds? Do they not appear to let themselves down in the eyes of the painters, of those who, at least, have been so constant in faithful emulation

¹ Academic art in the non-representational arts implies work which is designed only by means of the conventional and commonplace forms of those arts.

of the structural principles of music as a non-representational art?

There is no aesthetic wrong in sound-representation, provided it is subject to the same consideration that governs design in painting, namely, that the primary appeal of the aural form shall be to the ear, as visual form must primarily appeal to the eye. This implies presentative treatment. That music may be supplemented or supported by words or scenery as an aid to visual imagery or to meaning generally, need not in the least affect its quality for this appeal. It is unlikely that much music is composed unprompted by imagery or ideas of some kind in the artist's mind. Absolute music is probably as scarce as abstract painting. For we must not forget that to compose to a programme does not necessarily mean composing to visual imagery only. It may mean composing to a 'felt' presence—an affection. This is signified in numberless titles, such as *Summer*, *Night*, *Fantasia*, *Capriccio*, etc. Yet, is it possible for even the composer himself to say if and when visual imagery is present in his mind supporting the affection? At any rate, there need be no deviation from a construction based on imagic interplay of sound.

However, it is doubtful whether, because of an established association, the introduction of representative sound into the midst of conceptual sound can ever be made wholly successful. The sound-content of a composition must have evenness of abstraction, otherwise it would resemble a painting of which certain of the parts are objective in treatment and others abstract. In music, where perhaps the effects of this are a little less noticeable, the method is nevertheless, for some persons, to break harshly into the unity of the work. On the other hand, the artist may justify himself by affirming that all sounds of the composition have an objectively symbolic evenness for him. This may be. His own conceptions may have become associated in his mind to objectivity, but, in being his own they have not necessarily that association for others.

If the appraisement of music necessitates dragging in the assistance of another art, even if it be only programmatic words, then it is failing in its expression.¹ And if this latter be allowable, thereby asserting the importance of literary guidance, then it must be allowable in painting. The Victorian story-picture with a title to assist interpretation (which is now labelled literary painting, and is taboo), must be permitted to return!

¹ See Appendix p. 218.

CHAPTER XXXII

A COMMENT ON ARCHITECTURE

THERE is something about modern architecture which is relative to our point of view. The modern theory of Functionalism is a principle that subjugates architectural design to utility, and upon its success or ill-success in this respect, has it aesthetic form or not. This, in view of what has been written about the aesthetic and utilitarian outlooks as distinct apprehensions, will be recognised as a movement away from art.

Utility and art are not to be confused because what is useful may also be beautiful, or come to be thought so. Such an after discovery would be entirely fortuitous to the conception which led to the design, which in its making was constructed with no thought other than for utility. This is not to give expression to the aesthetic outlook, which is to plan presentially and not practically. Were Functionalism, which is definitely admitted by its adherents to be designing for utility, to become general and absolute in practice, architects would cease to be artists. Indeed, at present, by their forced attention to this aspect of planning and of constructional work, which, with quantity surveying and the necessity of keeping up to date their knowledge of materials and appliances, and costs, takes up far the greater part of their thought, it is difficult to believe that they have not already ceased to be. Certainly, many buildings erected now, do little to reverse this view. There is not one single presentially conceived line on the façades of many of these. Every detail betrays an utilitarian purpose.¹

¹ This is not a contentious opinion as to what might be beautiful or ugly, but a factual statement that during the planning of these buildings neither the 'feeling' for beauty or ugliness was operating in the architect's mind! They were not conceived as works-of-art. This is admitted by architects who have designed these buildings.

That architects, however, should today be giving their attention almost exclusively to the utilitarian aspect of building is not, perhaps, altogether out of keeping with the age in its descent to a more material, physical, sensuous plane as a foundation for its future ideals.

First and foremost a house is protection for the body against cold, wind and rain, which in more positive terms means a 'functioning' for health and comfort.

Conceptions as to what is a healthy and comfortable dwelling have undergone considerable change during the last two or three decades. Labour-saving has taken a more pronounced form, and its actualisation is assisted wherever possible by the construction of the building itself and through mechanical appliances necessitating further constructional adaptation.

The employment of steel, concrete, glass and other new materials has opened up new possibilities for forms in building, economically devised.

Imbued with the feeling that the older artistic forms are played out and do not now express either the psychological or practical outlooks of today, it is not surprising that in affirming these outlooks, there should be sought an expression which would for a time sweep away the aesthetic for an entirely utilitarian aim. It is the natural order of progression in things of use.

Artistic design follows economic design in articles of use. We have seen it so in the construction of motor-cars, gramophones, wireless sets, etc. As things of practical purpose, use had first to be established and construction confined to this aim. It may, therefore, be supposed that a similar progression will take place with regard to buildings as soon as the new practical demands have been given form.

If, however, this is to occur with success—that we are to have beautifully conceived in addition to usefully conceived buildings—it is to be believed that the practice whereby the man who plans for utility as builder, contractor or engineer—whatever he may be called—must be one and the same person as the artist, will have to

undergo modification. It is difficult to see how a working knowledge of all the practical requirements of modern building can combine with an aesthetic sensibility necessary to produce great art. Architects themselves are heard saying with some scorn that their profession has become one of engineering. This implies a condition which, were it to gather force and spread itself over the arts in general, would foreshadow terrible consequences for the future of humanity. This suspended evil can be apprehended only by realising the extent to which our forms in their infinitude, including the most utilitarian and commonplace, are transformed by a vast superstructure of artistic embodiment.¹

So far as the man in the street is concerned when confronted with 'functional' buildings, he need not in the least feel embarrassed over his failure in artistic appreciation. These buildings are not intended to be aesthetically looked at. It is convention that compels us to do so. They are to be considered from the standpoint of utility. There are some exceptions, important exceptions, but an aesthetically mathematical appraisal will cover all there is to be had of the beautiful from most of them. To experience more will be due to him who looks.²

¹ The natural human impulse is to apply art to all form. An apt example is given in Chapter XXV in illustration of the growth of the form-ideal. In this ensemble of forms the number of distinguishable arts is many, and it would be difficult to separate the artistic from the practical. The synthesis, however, is clearly more conformable to what might be termed 'live' art than it is to utilitarian form. The basis or framework only is utilitarian, as it is of a cathedral and with what goes on in it.

² There are, certainly, those designers who, while leaving their façades plain (except for window and door openings), give their aesthetic attention solely to relating the masses or volumes of a building in order to bring about an animated interplay between them. Unfortunately, affective animated interplays of volumes only are not so easy of attainment. Styles of architecture can be studied, and variations of them be passed as good without exceptional talent on the part of the student designer. But enlivening arrangements of plain squares, cubes and rectangular blocks cannot

be learnt. You either have the flair for this form of exact intuitive fusion or you have not, and those who have are remarkably few. Besides, when successful, can the result be acclaimed sufficing? A wall cannot be left dumb! It must be made to speak aesthetically, if only through textural qualities. Unless façades are treated from this standpoint, we cannot have affective architecture.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE TREND OF MODERN ART

NO one who interests himself in post-Impressionist forms can fail to observe the experimental nature of the movement from beginning to end. There is still no finality, individualism is rampant, giving effect to what has so often been heard in artistic circles during the last two decades—'You may do as you like' and 'No one knows where they are'.

For the moment, the spirit of man twines in turmoil like the storm-tangled boughs of a forest. Notwithstanding, the entanglement from which artists have striven to free themselves has resulted in work done which, although co-existing with much that is misdirected and trivial, includes, within its set limits, art of the very highest order.

In appraising thus highly the forms of modern art there is the knowledge that in doing so it is impossible to review impartially the ideas of one's own age with those of others. In particular is this so with forms of the immediately preceding past, with which perhaps the present is most in opposition.

Persons who are affected by modern forms tend to look on these as a great advance on preceding forms, and to believe that there were never any so expressive. Yet this is a very ordinary attitude when filled with enthusiasm by an outlook which has been attuned to a particular form. Fashion succeeding fashion is viewed in this manner. Nevertheless, there is a complete and genuine change reflected in present-day forms, and no one can be foolish enough to think that this is significant only of caprice.

What really concerns us is the extent to which these forms, experimental and transitional as they are, are

indicative of a new orientation of outlook, an outlook of a kind that shall lead to a stabilised ideality. It is, however, our powerlessness to assess thus the present that must fail us with regard to any attempt at prediction. For who can say what ideals are foreshadowed by the materialisations of today?

In spite of which, the ideals born of a single age are not alone in directing form. Their expression is ever held in control by principles which are the heritage of the past. Yet, while the application of these differs as widely as current ideals differ, we can at least modestly survey the changes in our own forms with a view to asking if they be of a fundamental nature, and if so, what may be their significance?

Forms of art are being subjected to that same logic of enquiry which has impelled our seeking the fundamentals of all that is revealed to us as experience. As the enquiry proceeds new renderings become manifest, giving rise to new problems—for it is the intellectual aspect that has become uppermost—to be resolved into new conceptions followed by their formal expression. Old forms disappear. They no longer suffice. They are torn asunder for knowledge of what their parts might individually express.

In painting, this analysis covers all possible means of expression, the basic elements of form being worked upon separately and exploited to the limits of their power. Hence the removal of the naturalistic as a hindrance to the discovery of the affectability of colours and lines in their own right and of their structural power; also for experiment in spatial relations and planal rhythm. The reduction of perception to the bare ocular, stressing sensuous and decorative values, and of the monumental to mere spatial solids. Hence, too, the attempt to isolate sensations as expressible concepts. Also, the endeavour to bring the subconscious to light, not as an ingredient of a fuller expression, but as the expression itself.

It will be noted that there is here no form of expression which is not fundamental to the art and which has not

entered into the expression of the pictorial arts since these arts have existed. But they have not been exploited individually as they are now and in a manner which has become almost a science.

So may this be said of insistence upon the intellectual character of construction, and that in complying with this demand the visual elements be viewed throughout as abstractions; that therefore they take priority in organisation over the object: a priority which subjugates the object to artistic necessity or compels its rejection; that there be acknowledgment of the geometrical, thus embodying a greater measure of the mathematical and monumental; and simplification: whereby to attain a more forceful unity; and withal, a fusion of subjectivity and objectivity, of subjective conceptualism with objective incidentalism that shall result in new form. These aims are all indicative of principles the rightness of which cannot be questioned, and which, being fully understood and rightly applied under intuitive guidance, are necessary to the production of any art that aspires towards the good.

There is then no principle or practice implied which can be acclaimed as new or peculiar to the present age. For which reason, the outstanding feature in the actual practice of modern painting would appear to be that stressed application to which reference has been made: that testing or trying-out of all that has gone towards picture-making in the past, although upon no principle that has not in some form or other been applied and applied many times before by traditional art.

Behind this, however, and in conformity with man's outlook today, as an entirety which includes every phase of his activity, there is a searching for new forms—new syntheses—to express, by making intelligibly satisfying, his new intellectualised outlook.

This new outlook has been formed as the result of his increased knowledge of natural phenomena (through science) and the increased technical means (machinery and its products) put at his disposal for the achieving of

his desires. Thus has perception undergone change, followed by as drastic a change in conceptions, which require new forms for expression. For unquestionably, old perceptions have—perceptions of every attitude towards life—under pressure of an accumulation of two centuries of accelerated scientific enlightenment and mechanical assistance, and of ideas to which these have given birth, crumpled with a suddenness and with a universality not previously remembered. So, apart from the causes referred to above, it can scarcely be doubted that the artistic instability of the period has been greatly aggravated by its own activities at exploitation *in extremis*.

The new knowledge has been bringing about new forms. And, so far as formal construction is concerned, it seems that, rather than discovery there has been re-discovery, a re-discovery of the principles of structure, of their rational character, and (here perhaps more discovery than re-discovery) of a freedom in application before now undreamed of. So, if there be truth in what is here envisaged, it is difficult to conjecture otherwise than that painting will ultimately return stabilised to a pictorially objective form, which, when viewed in perspective within the main current of art, will not appear with that break in continuity which might be inferred from certain work today. But, in order that the onward flow may proceed with a renewed inspiration there is yet another discovery to be made, namely, that the 'intelligibly satisfying' can be realised only when the intelligible is in the service of a spiritual aim. Rationalism, as an aim in itself, unleashed from the service of a presence, is sterile. The astronomer is not an astronomer because of the opportunities afforded for exercising his reason. That he may do in a hundred ways. He is so because the presence of the heavens is that on which he wishes to dwell, and his intellect makes this possible.

It is so with the artist. He must be possessed of a love upon which he wishes to dwell, when a life devoted to a constructional technique makes this possible. Of our

undirected activities it is unavoidably noticeable that our hobbies are chosen and undertaken in this spirit and manner. It is a matter of doubtful speculation today, as to how greatly in the future, art will make itself felt through new satisfying techniques, or by the qualifying of form chosen because of its necessity for practical living. Let our last words be on this note.

CHAPTER XXXIV

LIFE: INTUITIVE HARMONY

IT has long seemed, in the general consciousness, that the aesthetic spirit has been limited far too exclusively to the work-of-art and artists.

We behave very differently towards the ethical-religious spirit. When thinking of what is religion and of its expression, we do not think only of the religious service, which with its objectified ritual may be described as a work-of-religion in correspondence with the work-of-art. Neither is the priest looked upon as the only exponent of its expression. We hand over the prerogative to no one. We think and are conscious of the religious spirit, whether secular or orthodox, as belonging to each of us, and we are aware that it is efficacious only in so far as it pervades the daily life.

Are we then to be satisfied with a lesser awareness of a consciousness of something which we possess to no less a degree, and which is as fully practised? And of which the former may indeed be but a part. For is not the whole man, man completely unified in apprehension and expression, aesthetic man?

Difficult though it may be to see ourselves thus, are we not helped towards such a vision, if, observing the apparent environmental affinity of the feathered world around us, we endow its members with intelligence and ask: what—in terms of our logic—should we assume to be the quality of their reaction to their activities and surroundings? Could we believe it to be other than aesthetic, *even when the activities conform to material needs*? And being so, cannot we learn something from this imaginary insight, be it only of the distance we have strayed from our 'natural' and aesthetic inheritance?

¹ See Appendix.

to uphold mercenary processes and issues conflicting with it?

Should we not therefore acknowledge the aesthetic presence more consciously, to come to know it intimately as the power by which is attained the unification we each seek in life? The unity we experience in reaction to a single work-of-art is but a moment of unity uniting but a fraction of the unifiable within us. The soul is a whole, seeking complete aesthetic unification with its universe. The specialised arts in forming artistic unities form only purified units of a greater unity.

There is a manifestation of aesthetic unity more generally practised in life perhaps than any of which mention has been made.



The actor's basic endowment for his form of expression is the intuitive power of 'feeling' himself a character which is at one with an environment, an environment of situations and events, peopled with other characters as units in a design, into which he fits, and 'feels' intuitively in unity. He 'feels' his part, which is to dramatise himself. He then acts. And, if successful, the form he presents becomes fused into the design as a dramatised unit of the whole. There is created a unified presence.

Is this form of dramatisation as represented by the actor when on the stage confined to him or his like and such circumstances? We know it is not. It is, as are all art forms, only the artistic projection of an aesthetic awareness common to all.

From childhood onwards we dramatise and adapt

ourselves to every environmental condition and circumstance as units conforming to or establishing forms expressive of presence. Not only from compulsion, by which forces superior to our own compel our adoption of forms expressive of a presence not of our vision, but from personal impulses we endeavour to fit ourselves into chosen surroundings wherein to play our parts in creating the presence of our longing. In complying with or making use of conventions we are but practising the technique pertaining to this great play of living.

This seeking we fulfil incidentally in childhood by play, by showing off and by imitation of others. As we grow older the form of the acting changes. We continue to imitate others, but now because we know that we should like to be as they. We admire the part they play and it may be the part we have learnt we have to play. The impression they make on us is what we ourselves desire to express. So we play up to the characters—real, historical, or fictional maybe—to which we aspire, hoping thereby to play an equal part and to be successful in evoking a like spirit: the object of our striving.

To help in the creation and maintenance of this presence we choose for our intimate friends those who, themselves, as co-actors playing alongside us, seek to express this same presence. Most of our acquaintances are chosen on account of our practical interests, but when these interests do not operate our choice is directed towards those with whom we think we can intuitively fit. And so, especially, and individually, we seek to unite ourselves more enduringly to one whom we believe can help in creating jointly the presence aspired for.

We reverse the method by trying to bring the décor and costumes of this play—if the metaphor may be enlarged upon—into harmony with ourselves the players. It is for this reason that the interiors, and exteriors also, of our habitations—so permanent a part of our environment—whether of the home, business, profession or institution, are conceived in keeping with the spirit of what is enacted in them. Some persons are greatly

affected by this unity. It is a commonplace how some writers and thinkers work better when surrounded by paraphernalia—books, etc.—associated with their work. The unity formed increases the awareness of the part they play.

To arrange thus the décor is only to emulate the compulsorily conditioned surroundings in which commercial and professional people work, and which, if they could, they would not alter. The conditions have come to be apprehended as the appropriate setting.

So of the costumes: of our attire. Clothes have great influence on the minds of persons. By what clothes stand for they help to unify oneself to the spirit or atmosphere of the occasion, which as a 'felt' experience is purely intuitive.

In time we cease to follow incidentally. We know ourselves; we know the spirit that is ours, our desire and our necessity; and we know the forms by which it is kept alive within us, forms that have now become our form-ideals and are those we follow, and alone in the creation of which we are happy—in the possession of our own ideal presence. We, as units in a design, the greatest of all designs—that of the universe—have found our true parts, attained through the consummation of the only true reality: intuitive unity. Thus we say that men of a kind thrive only in certain atmospheres.¹

Intuitive reality, as unity or disunity between ourselves and our environment, is ever present to consciousness and is, perhaps, that form of consciousness to which we refer when in general we speak of 'Life'. No distinction can be drawn by what is meant here by emotionalised intuitive presence and what is understood as 'Spirit'. It is the immanent light of each by which our

¹ The individual has long been aware of this, but recent investigations by anthropologists have revealed the fact that whole societies have languished and even suffered extinction from causes which have prevented the pursuit of their ideals. It is no fable that 'man cannot live by bread alone'. From the very beginning of his recorded history there has been co-extensive development of utilitarian and aesthetic needs.

individual lives are animated and enriched, the light that emanates for co-ordination with the light of others in orchestrated spiritual wholes—unities in the eternal music of becoming.

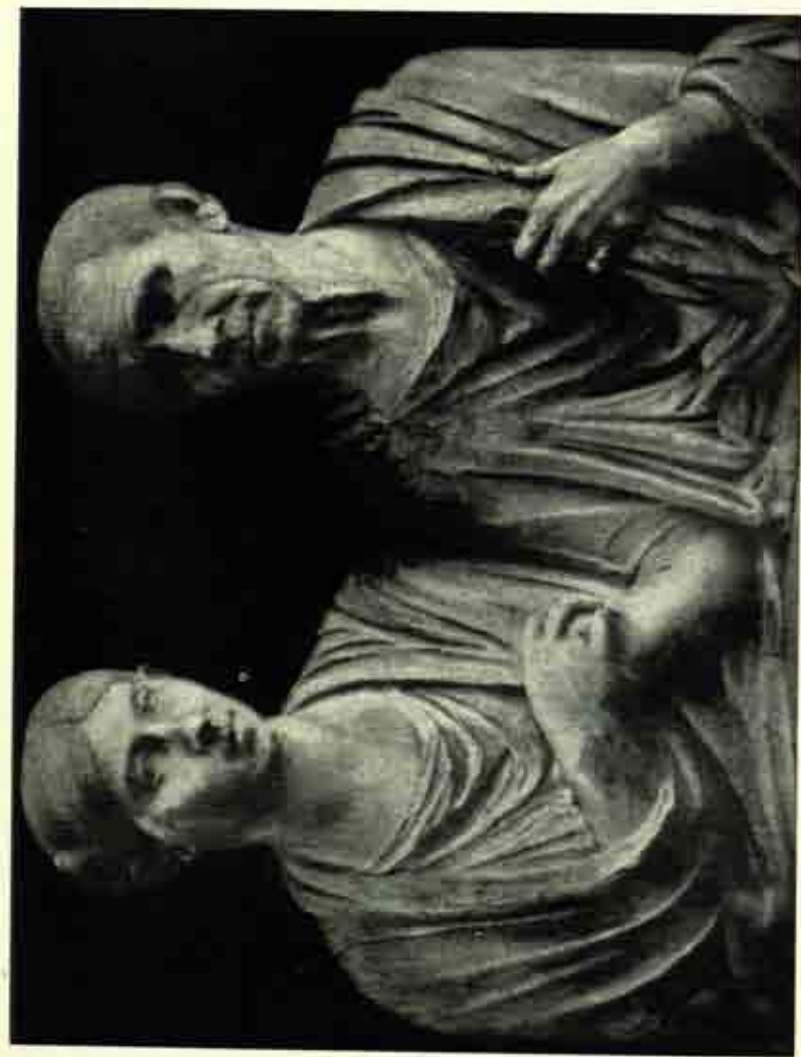
'... From thy presence showers a rain of melody.'¹

The final goal in a man's endeavour is not the work-of-art but aesthetic presence, to the attainment of which the work-of-art is but a means. It assists in the achieving of this aim in so far that by impelling us to view its subject-matter aesthetically we discern in the work an accentuation, a new utterance or new forms expressive of the presence we seek, and a new understanding. We assimilate the expressions and readjust our outlooks to a wider and more impassioned vision. We actually see and become more acutely aware of an expanded environment. Through the vision of a single poet we more intensely envisage such naïveties as the taking of afternoon tea and evening in the woods. Why, in actual circumstance, may not we, too, see thus? We unceasingly do, of course, though not always with that arrested awareness which brings with it a heightened sense of reality.

A oneness with one's environment is a oneness with one's universe, being a unity extending far beyond the confines of the visible, into the space beyond, the past and the present, with a vision of the future, which is the life of the true poet within us, and, as intuitive harmony, is the fullest and deepest experience of the aesthetic spirit and life.

A completely unified presence constitutes a harmony-in-discernment of all the ingredients present to consciousness. Moralists in every age have striven to stabilise a consciousness of this nature. But, in the cause of morality, they would bring only certain ingredients to ideation and, in thus abstracting these for special attention, would dwell on a consciousness resolved into and limited to 'conscience'. In aesthetic unity of

¹ Shelley.



ROMAN SCULPTURE

Vatican

consciousness these ingredients enter in the 'felt' form and are not formally indentified. To be thus in affinity with form is to establish a veritable state of love.¹

So we may close with words which are more than a paraphrase:

Beauty is love, love freedom—that is all
We know of worth, and all we need to know.

¹ See Appendix.

APPENDICES

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Feeling, when initiated from a sensory stimulus (an irritation of the skin, for example), would, as a consciousness, have its meaning augmented intellectually by knowledge of the cause of the irritation. A still further intellectual augmentation would arise from apprehending the significance or meaning of this knowledge. This, itself, in turn, would be responsible for further feeling. For instance, when (firstly) an experienced feeling of irritation is (secondly) seen to come from an insect bite which (thirdly) is known to be poisonous, this third constituent of the consciousness might then indeed (fourthly) produce in the form of emotion the most marked organic effect of the whole experience. It is convenient that this subsequent and final augmentation of feeling derived from the intellectual activity should be distinguished from the initial sensationally derived feelings of the bite and be referred to as emotion. When therefore intellectual activity is the dominant cause of a consciousness, as it is in art awareness, the word feeling would then stand for this intellectual or cognitive content or discernment and its emotion. This is the meaning with which it is used in this book, although it must also be understood to include any sensational effects involved.

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Emotion, as an impelling force, may at all times be the determining factor in what shall or shall not be expressed, and to a degree varying with the intensity, will mould the form of what is expressed. But this is a general condition of expression in every form and in no sense peculiar to or a distinguishing feature of art form. It is more than probable that a man's every action has a

necessary emotional backing or impulsion followed by an emotional imprint on what he accomplishes. In this sense we can speak of the expression of emotion, but it has no meaning apart from what the emotion stands for in revelation of the cognitive ingredients with which it is consciously and unconsciously associated and embodied.

Those who persist in believing that aesthetic process is intelligibly explained by the bald statement that aesthetic activity is the expression of aesthetic emotion, should be consistent and speak in like manner about the practical activity: that it also is fully explained by the assertion that it is the expression of the utilitarian emotion. But does this make sense? Having just killed the man whose property I am to inherit and which I overpoweringly desire to possess at once, should I be giving an understandable explanation of the nature of the expression (the deed) if I were to say it was the materialisation of an utilitarian emotion? It might be true, but as an explanation of all that is intelligible and practically significant about it, it would be meaningless. Yet is it any more illuminating when the equivalent is said of a work-of-art?

It may be contended, however, that in practical matters we work for practical results and not for emotion. Certainly, but this does not rid us of the emotion, which is there as the impelling force just as it is there impelling the work-of-art. Also, it exists as we contemplate the practical result, and in as great strength for some persons as it is for others when in reaction to artistic result.

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In using the word intuition in the sense that implies a 'peering into', it may be defined as a reaction in awareness, discernment or knowing of the mind, knowledge which, freed of logical reflection, is an apprehension of unconscious and conscious psychic elements, introjected into and cognitively animating the object or subject-matter.

An intuition is an involuntary release or outflow of intellectual activity from knowledge about, or from meanings held of the form and its qualities being perceived, a synthesised reaction, into an awareness under influence of the disposition: innate directive psychic tendencies. From being dispositionally-influenced it must, to varying degrees, be phantasmal in character. When pronouncedly of this nature, it must too be capable of adjustment to accepted actualities before being affirmed a new reality of positive value. Phantasy, as a constituent of aesthetic presence, may thus be an ingredient of form which has definite practical validity.

In being unwilling, involuntary and spontaneous, this reaction is initially of the nature of an affection—a knowledgeable affection which is not necessarily ideated (i.e., brought to the idea), and while remaining an affection, is experienced in a state of faith. It is creative, though unreasoned, judgment. In spite of its unreason, it is, to the individual, believed in and accepted by him as the most valued of all knowledge. For him. It comprises his beliefs, which remain beliefs till supplemented by other beliefs. For which reason it is incessantly being acted upon in practical life and materialised in works-of-art.

APPENDIX TO PAGE 36

Verbal meaning, to serve its purpose of identification, must for the most part be limited to the agreed in meaning or in fact. Whereas, the knowledge immanent in the activity of intuitive contents is of an outreaching radiative nature, extending far beyond the intellectually conceived. The nomenclature by which we identify intuitive contents as concepts reveals little of the contents' full meaning which can only be experienced, and—possibly—never revealed to the understanding. Art is the form through which these meanings are most fully defined.

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We learn from experience that there is no fixed relation between these two constituents: the intellectually discerned and its emotional accompaniment. Beyond question, the majority of our aesthetic discernments (which are illimitable and continuous) are experienced without any noticeable emotional change, but there are occasions, of which we are all aware, when emotion is not only in control, but is overwhelmingly so.

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Sensations arise directly from the stimulation of the senses, and are the simplest forms of cognition. They are basic psychical units. Consciousness of sensation was the birth of knowledge, as it still is for the new-born child. But as this very consciousness is mental formation, i.e., intellection, sensations are never experienced in a pure or isolated, or what would be a mechanistic state. Such a state would be below consciousness.

Nevertheless, experience informs us that, by concentration, attention can be centred on sensation, so that it occupies the greater part of our consciousness at the expense of interest in the higher intellectual forms. Sensation can be indulged in for its own sake. The nearer this indulgence gets to the pure sensation, the less awareness is there of intellectual forms—inclusive of the intuitive—outside those instrumentally employed in evoking the direct effect of the physical stimulation: the sensation-feeling. Thus there follows a diminishing intuitive presence and a consequent stilling of the aesthetic activity. Any aesthetic activity which might accompany reaction to a sensation is not of sensation, *qua* sensation, but of intellection (imagic interplay), in relation to which the sensation is the sub-structure on which the intellectual super-structure is formed and is stimulated. This applies equally to sensations of all the senses.

Sensations therefore, are assumed, absolutely and

relatively, the lowest form of psychical phenomena, their nature being assented to as of a sensuous or physical kind. This does not, however, lessen their importance for stimulating and sustaining intellectual activity.

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Although lines, spaces and planes are here referred to as of the seen and direct sense perception, thereby giving to them the same basic status as is held by colour, colour is, in fact, the only visual sensation. But, by subjection to mental construction, it is raised to the constructed status of those forms of which it is basic. Therefore, all four are perceived as belonging to one sensuous level and may be correctly referred to as either the visual, sensuous or sense elements of form.

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This statement refers to aesthetic appraisal of the music as distinct from the *understanding* of what it may represent or of what might be the idea or affection on which it is built. Lucidity upon the nature of inciting forms is, in all art, always helpful towards representational interpretation, but it can in no way affect the judgment of what is good or bad music from the pure artistic standpoint of sound which is organised to the vital needs of aural appeal. Of painting we cannot speak so strongly; some kind of clue as to the nature of the subject is, for purposes of affective interpretation, more necessary to the visual appraiser, and for the reasons given: colour has not the emotional-meaning content of sound.

APPENDIX TO PAGE 208

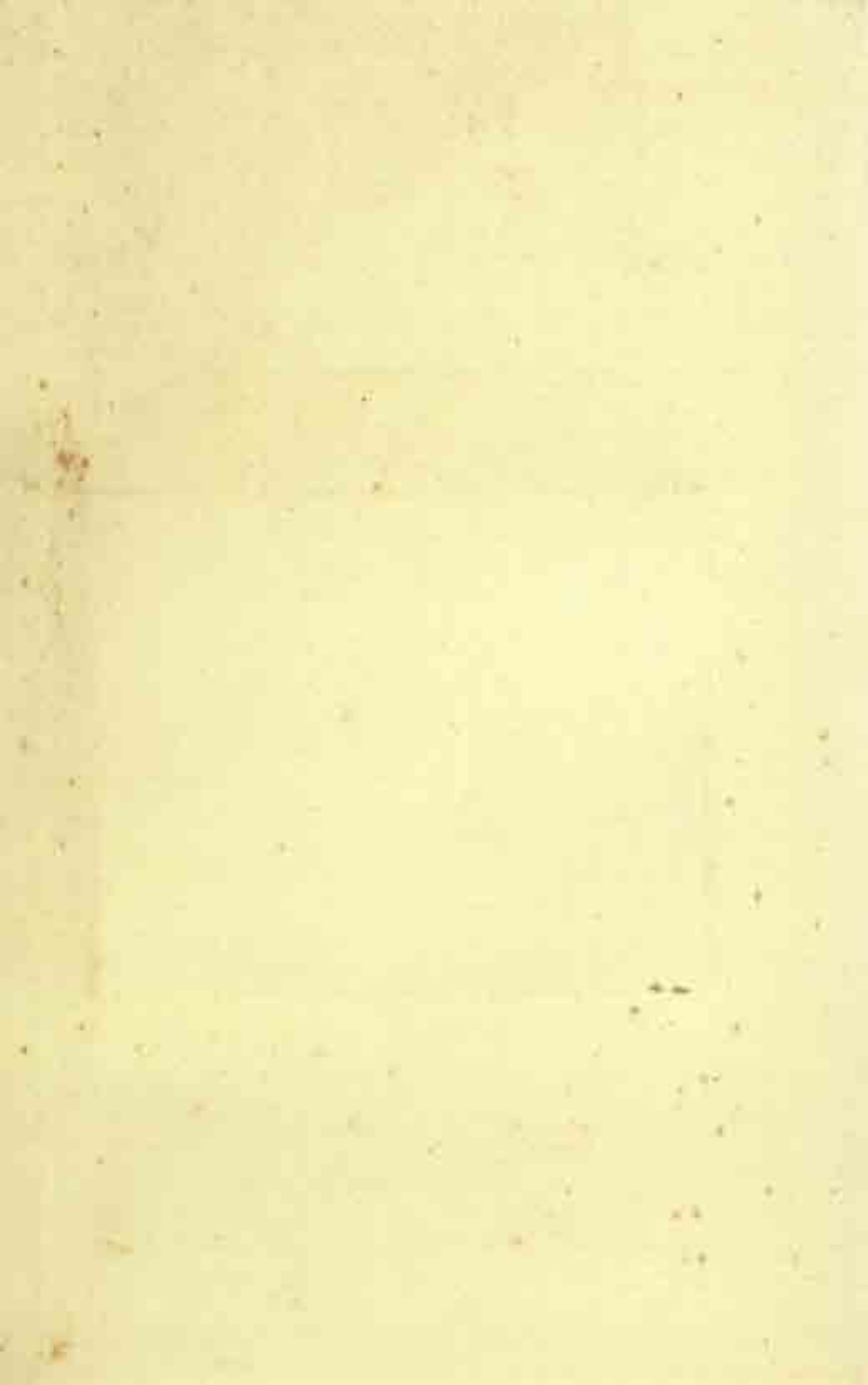
The adjustment between the ego and the form which it perceives (object, idea or action) and by which we pass to the aesthetic outlook may, in its discriminative and assimilative or prehensile activity of adaptation, operate without conscious direction. The generating of this free and 'natural' form of union results in the

'felt' or intuitive world. Thus, founded on a consciousness of unmeaning sensation, there was evolved the initial world of knowing, that is, the *affective*, cognitive and excitational, as between the organic and its environment. Through an enduring of this free 'natural' process over an immeasurable duration of time, the affective gradually 'crystallised' out of its mental nebulosity to assume shape, namely, that of the *intuitively distinguished*, which was subsequently to divide into separable units of the consciousness and be projected into objectivity and slowly *formulated* into categories of characteristics and behaviour. We call these ultimate formulations rationality. The time has come for art, in this now transmuted yet more understood world of rationalised forms, to serve in the restoration of the aesthetic affinity, of the free 'natural' process, to its primacy in the consciousness. This affinity is our heritage and—if we wish—our heaven. Co-ordination between the aesthetic and economic forms of living, portending a maximum of freedom and happiness, in which economic endeavour shall become subservient to aesthetic aim, now lies before us as the great social determination of the coming eras. Aesthetic necessity shall direct economic compulsion. This is the problem of aesthetic conversion as envisaged in Chapter XXVIII.

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Let us not think that human love between the sexes, which is but a single manifestation of love, lies in a distant realm from that spoken of here. Nothing of the kind. Such love is not inaccurately described when characterised as reciprocated 'felt'-affinities stimulated by the sexual impulse and engendering a single presence. From the spiritual aspect, the affinities are seen as simple aesthetic discernments, and the state of two persons working jointly for the single presence as a mere quantitative extension of the aesthetic aim. And this, it seems, is the implied and tacit avowal of proposal and acceptance between such a two.





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