THE ANALYSIS OF SOME TYPES OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT

(An attempt to discover a more satisfactory method for the study of the philosophy of Aesthetics)

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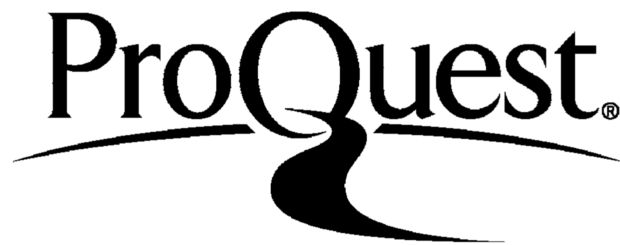

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THE ANALYSIS OF SOME TYPES OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT.

(An attempt to discover a more satisfactory method for the study of the philosophy of Aesthetics.)

The thesis is intended primarily as an essay in method. It is an attempt to determine the philosophical significance of the very varied data of Aesthetics, e.g. Metaphysical theories of the nature and status of Beauty, psychological analysis of experience, etc. This involves in the first place the discovery of the correct starting-point and leads to a discussion of the false simplification which may arise if the metaphysical question is introduced too soon. The theories of Lascelles Abercrombie, Clive Bell, Croce and Kant are criticised from this point of view. The possibility is next discussed of finding the correct starting-point in either the analysis of objects or of experience. An examination of theories such as those of the psycho-analysts, of S. Alexander and of W. McDougall leads to the conclusion that the correct starting-point lies in the analysis of a range of situations in which both objects and experiences are involved. These situations

all involve an Aesthetic Judgment of one kind or another and can best be understood through the analysis of the Judgment. The generally accepted form of the Judgment - "This is beautiful" - is taken and the conclusion is reached that it is far more important to understand the reference of the "This" than the meaning of the predicate.

The relevant situations seem to be of four chief types. An attempt is made to determine what is common to all. The concept of Externalisation is suggested and its relation to such concepts as Bullough's "Psychical Distance" and Richards' "Equilibrium" is discussed.

The remainder of the thesis is devoted to the discussion of how externalisation is involved in the four types of situation, i.e. those yielding only the Aesthetic Minimum; the artists' process of Inspiration and Externalisation in a medium; the nature of the work of art and of the recipient's appreciation of it; and the experience of natural beauty.

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CHAPTER 1

THE METAPHYSICAL QUESTION

This thesis is primarily an essay in method. It is necessary to emphasise this point at the outset, because, as the argument develops, it will become increasingly obvious that to treat in adequate detail all the ground covered here would be far beyond the scope of an undertaking of this kind. But if the prime interest is one of method it is permissible to cite in illustration of the advantages which the employment of a particular method would confer, this aspect of the subject or that, without exhausting the possibilities of every such application. The object of the thesis is admittedly ambitious. The investigation was undertaken in the belief that much of the present confusion and lack of finality in the study of aesthetics arises from a mistaken view of the philosophical significance of the subject matter which is being accumulated on all sides; and, furthermore, that the essential import of the topic is a philosophical one. Aesthetics is something other than appreciation, criticism, or creation, although it makes use of the data provided by all three. One need not read much of what has been written on the subject to become aware that the boundary marking off the territory of philosophy

is very soon overstepped. Any consideration of the characteristics of particular works of art or of the nature of what is commonly called aesthetic experience must lead, swiftly and inevitably, to questions which are philosophical and to which philosophy alone can give an answer. But there is need for caution concerning the kind of philosophising which may result. It has often been thought that the prime business of the philosophy of aesthetics is the solution of the "central problem" of the subject, as Clive Bell puts it: namely, what is the metaphysical nature and status of Beauty, how is it connected with Ultimate Reality, or the scheme of things as a whole, and so on. R.G. Collingwood may be quoted in illustration of this point.

> "The philosophy of art is the attempt to discover what art is .... But to answer the question what art is can only mean placing it in its relation to our other activities. Hence the only possible philosophy of art is a general philosophy of man and his world with special reference to man's function as an artist and his world's aspect of beauty."[1]

It may be agreed that a solution of this "central problem" would set a crowning glory on the study of Aesthetics, and the problem itself is one which must be faced at some stage of the argument, if only to discover whether it is a

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1. Outline of a Philosophy of Art. p.7.

problem capable of solution, but the point which seems to need emphasis is that one cannot expect to be in a position to face it at the outset. Theory as to the nature of beauty, is, of course, important, but what is more important, especially at the beginning, is the philosophical instrument which we employ in order to arrive at that theory. What matters is how we treat the subject-matter which lies so abundantly to hand, and the belief in which this investigation is undertaken is that, dealt with by the right method, the complicated and difficult problems of aesthetics will either give themselves away as pseudo problems, or, if genuine, may be so arranged as to suggest by their conjunction, the correct solution. This may seem an ambitious claim, and the purpose of the investigation is admittedly ambitious, although the method itself is, in contrast, singularly lacking in presumption, since, as will be seen, it is a painstaking, step-by-step one, which proceeds from particular observations, testing its terms and statements as it goes, being content to understand before it theorises, to analyse before it constructs. Not only must one not expect to be able at the outset to give a metaphysical account of the nature of beauty, but one must avoid making general statements at all for as long as possible. It has seemed to me, in my reading in the subject, that for the moment we have gone as far as we usefully can, by

independent, piecemeal investigation of particular problems, and that there is scope for a revision of the whole topic from a new point of view. What is being progressively studied along such lines as the introspective analysis of aesthetic experience, or the experimental study of appreciation, is, of course, of great value; but it seems as if, without some guiding principle, we may go on saying the same kind of thing over again and accumulating the same kind of data, with no very clear idea of what we are going to do with it when we have collected our material. This, surely, is where a philosophical treatment is required. What I want to do in the present research is to try to envisage Aesthetics as <u>one</u> problem (and it seems justifiable to do this without first attempting a statement of what, precisely, that problem is), and making an analogy with the ordinary psychology of thinking, where to analyse the data of the problem is often half-way to solving it, since it usually brings that flash of "insight" without which we merely fumble in the dark, to try to find a way of marshalling all these independent lines of research so as to reveal the philosophical significance of each. This will involve both finding the correct starting-point and then proceeding by the correct method from that starting-point.

But here, at once, a difficulty occurs, and it is a difficulty which will recur again and again in the course of

the enquiry. For in order to proceed at all one must use words, and words, especially scientific or philosophical terms, are often capable of a variety of interpretations. This seems particularly true with regard to Aesthetics, so much so that were it practicable it might be well to discard the whole of the existing furniture of terms and to manufacture new ones as the need for them arose. It may be necessary from time to time to do the latter, as the terminology of Aesthetics is not only ambiguous, but inadequate also. The question of inadequacy of terms is one which need not be faced before the development of the argument makes it unavoidable, but the ambiguity attaching to existing terms is relevant at the outset, for the interpretation given to the very term "aesthetic" may affect the range of material selected for investigation, either by limiting it unduly or by including too much, or, and this is a slightly different question, it may bias the course of the argument by pre-directing the attention to one aspect of the subject to the prejudice of others perhaps equally important.

That the term has been used with a varying range of application, if not with actual differences of meaning, may be seen from the following quotations. Croce, perhaps, gives it the widest possible application when he talks of intuition as the "aesthetic fact", and includes under the term the intuition of both artist and non-artist, and that in the

presence of natural beauty or of works of art.

"I observe in myself that in the presence of any sensation whatever, if I do not abandon myself to the attractions and repulsions of impulse and feeling, if I do not let myself be distracted by reflections and reasonings, if I persist in the intuitive attitude, I am in the same disposition as that in which I enjoy what I am accustomed to call a work of art .... Artists are those who have the power of persisting longer than other men in the moment of intuition or sensation, and of helping others to persist in it."[1]

Lascelles Abercrombie, on the contrary, would keep the term "aesthetic" to refer to what is often called "beautiful nature" as distinct from the realm of art. He distinguishes, that is, "aesthetic" and "art", and says, "Keep these two terms separate, and make them refer to different, though related studies." And again, "The beauty of things in general aesthetic experience is what we call the beauty of nature: it is the beauty that just happens to us, in contrast with the beauty that is deliberately induced in us by art."[2]

For Roger Fry, to take a last example, the specifically aesthetic state of mind is that arising from the enjoyment of

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1. Problems of Aesthetics. p.

2. Towards a Theory of Art. p.p. 12 and 31.

works of art.

"If we compare in our minds responses experienced in turn in face of different works of art of the most diverse kind, as, for instance, architectural, pictorial, musical or literary, we recognize that our state of mind in each case has been of a similar kind, we see in all these different expressions a general similarity in our attitude, in the pattern of our mental disposition, and further that the attitude common to all these experiences is peculiar to them and is clearly distinguishable from our mental attitude in other experiences. I therefore suggested that we might conveniently label this kind of mental disposition the specifically esthetic state of mind."[1]

These three quotations, and others might be given in addition to these, seem to indicate at least a possibility of difference as to the interpretation to be given to the term "aesthetic". Ought one, then, to equate aesthetic and art as Roger Fry does, and begin with the consideration of the kind of experience arising from the contemplation of pictures and sculpture, or the enjoyment of music and literature; or should one, with Lascelles Abercrombie, seek the purely aesthetic character of experience in the appreciation of "nature" (using that term in its widest sense) and consider

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1. Transformations. pp. 1-2.

art as a special but not inevitable development from this; or, finally, as Croce does, make aesthetic identical with intuition and include in its scope any sort of unrelated unintellectualised sensation whatever?

The last possibility seems at the outset the most promising, for it at least avoids the contingency of leaving out what may be important, but even it is already open to the criticism that it may be biased, for it is not content merely to state that Aesthetics must begin with the study of experience but makes a number of statements about the nature of that experience.

If one is to discover anything of value, one ought, it would surely be agreed, to begin in as unbiased and non-committal a way as possible. Something, of course, must be taken for granted. In Aesthetics, as in all other branches of knowledge, one must assume that certain facts are indubitably known, that something is <u>given</u>, before one can begin at all. The task of philosophy is to discover what, precisely, the relevant facts are, and what is their correct analysis. The ideal method of procedure is that which starts solely with these given facts and deals with them in such a way that nowhere does personal prejudice enter, nowhere is a point of significance lost, and nowhere is an unjustifiable inference or assumption made. It is this sort of method which I want, if I can, to apply to the

data of Aesthetics.

Such an ideal is very far removed from that construction of a metaphysical theory to which reference has been made above, and is very much more difficult of attainment, if one may judge from the ease with which thinkers of very different types, and starting from very different premises, forsake this, the proper business of philosophy and proffer a solution of the metaphysical problem. The common characteristic of all these attempts seems to be that they effect a false and misleading simplification. This is, I think, true both of those thinkers who begin their investigation from the standpoint of experience, and of those who approach the topic with a theory of philosophy consciously in mind. It may be of interest, before the attempt is made to outline the correct method of investigation, to give some examples of these mistaken methods.

There is, first of all, the artist, intent and eager about the business of creation, and curious, in the intervals of production, to know what it all means, why he does this or that, and what it is that emerges as the result of his intense activity of spirit. Often, seemingly, anxious to talk about himself, perhaps only seeking to understand himself, we find him writing letters, memoirs, journals, treatises on painting, and finally even launching into the business of philosophy proper and producing Theories of Art, Treatises on Beauty, or

asking, What is Art? And one must ask, is he reliable? Is what he says true or relevant for philosophy, whatever may be its truth and interest for art as such or for psychology? It is obvious, of course, that within the sphere where he ought to be most reliable (i.e. when he is talking of his own experience as artist, or of his attitude to his creations) he may supply data which is more than usually valuable, since he has an immediate and intimate view of the matter which no "layman", however honest and painstaking, can hope to achieve, and this, admittedly, though he may be entirely unaware of the psychological or philosophical import of what he says. One has only to instance Keats's Letters or Coleridge's Biographia Literaria (and indeed, to compare them with Middleton Murry's study of the Sonnet on Chapman's Homer in Studies in Keats, or Livingston Lowes' treatment of The Ancient Mariner in The Road to Xanadu)[1] to demonstrate just how valuable the artist may be. But, cases of this sort apart, it is true to say, I think, that it is very difficult for the artist to limit his utterance to the sphere of art proper, and further, that as soon as he speaks as philosopher and not simply as artist, his utterances need to be received with the greatest caution. For the mere fact that anyone comes to the philosophy of art as artist, and with all the practising artist's pre-experience of conception

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1. A fairly detailed reference to these two books will be made later in the argument.

and creation, lays him peculiarly open to the type of error now under consideration, namely, that of leaping at once from particular observations to the most general question of all. One of the safest principles on which to rely is, that in the philosophy of Aesthetics very little can be said at once, but it is just this temptation to say too much at once which the artist finds so difficult to withstand, and that because his pre-experience prejudices his approach to the subject. For the artist the most important thing is almost unavoidably his own experience at the moments when he is, as it is often called, "inspired". As he looks back on his past experience it must surely appear to him as mapped out, characterized as "his" by these peaks of supreme experience.[1] It is natural, then, that the artist should begin his study of Aesthetics from this point, and the very quality of his experience renders him liable to make a wrong use of it, and to leap almost in one stride to conclusions not only as to the nature of beauty but also of what he often likes to call "the universe itself". It is probably true that for anyone who has genuine artistic sensibility, aesthetic experience of any kind is of a peculiar fullness and perfection. The artist's impulsive experience

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1. What Lascelles Abercrombie calls the "impulsive experience" of the artist and defines as, "This is what happened to the artist and moved him to design its communication in a work of art." <u>Towards a Theory of Art</u>. p.56.

and his rhythms of excitement throughout the process of creation must undoubtedly be so. So that the rest follows easily. He sees in the work of art, and in beauty generally, as he experiences it, the consummation of order and coherence and unity, and that often brought, under the guidance of his idea of form, out of the greatest apparent chaos. As André Gide expresses it:

"It is important to remember that the struggle between classicism and romanticism also exists inside each mind. And it is from this very struggle that the work is born: the classic work of art relates the triumph of order and measure over an inner romanticism. And the wilder the riot to be tamed the more beautiful your work will be. If the thing is orderly in its inception, the work will be cold and without interest."[1]

So that the artist can scarcely avoid making the conclusion that this order and unity has a significance greater than that of the mere work of art, and is indeed characteristic of the sum of things, i.e. this is what the Universe itself is like, had we only the clarity of vision to see it, disregarding the unconscious premises on which his conclusion is based, viz.

1) This is what I, as artist, should like the sum of things to be like.
2) This is what the sum of things ought to be like.

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1. Quoted by Herbert Read. Reason and Romanticism. p.93

This initial preoccupation with experience would seem to be at the root of Lascelles Abercrombie's theory. As early as 1922, in Towards a Theory of Art he seems unable to content himself with answering the very pertinent questions he asks at the outset of his enquiry, viz. "What is the nature of this stuff? Why do I call this thing Art and not that thing?"; but, (as far as one can judge from the immediate juxtaposition of the queries) translates this into, "Do we lump this great variety of things together because they all have a peculiar function or because they have a peculiar way of effecting a function?" [1] and from thence proceeds to relate Art to the scheme of things as a whole. From this follows his obsession with the Absolute and his definition of Absolute Beauty as, "the whole universe and sum of things experiencing itself and judging its self-experience to be beautiful."[2] And again, "The self-experience of the universal subject judging its own experience with eternal finality will be absolute beauty. Note, too, that experience in totality can only be presented for judgment in perfection of the form which we have already taken as the typical condition of the judgment of beauty."[3] By this he means that the work of art is the epitome of the Universe. It, too, is a "world which experiences itself."[4]

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1. Op. cit. p.11.
2. Ibid. p.41.
3. Ibid. p.42.
4. Ibid. p.43.

One may well ask what all this means. To the critical reader it sounds more like mysticism than ratiocination. In his later development of the theory,[1] Professor Abercrombie himself admitted that he feels driven more and more towards a mystical view of beauty, (and he seemed, but mistakenly, I think, to consider that this was also more philosophical). It is now definitely asserted that "experience, in the sphere of Aesthetics, _is_ reality," i.e. that "behind which you cannot go." This point of view was further developed in his lectures on Aesthetics given to the British Institute of Philosophical Studies, in May 1930. The phrase, "experience is reality", is now not to be restricted, in its application, to the sphere of Aesthetics. It is to be taken literally; although, as Aesthetics deals with pure experience as such, it deals in a peculiarly direct way with reality itself. "In art we have the very type of reality asserting itself." Beauty now becomes a "transcendent value", and in aesthetic experience we get a glimpse of "something beyond", (and this in spite of the fact that experience _is_ reality, is the ultimate).

"Reality" is at best a rather vague term, and the artists do not seem trustworthy when they go beyond art to philosophy. What, for example, to quote briefly (and therefore

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1. In a discussion paper given to the Aesthetics Section of the British Psychological Society, March 1930; not, I think, subsequently published.

perhaps unjustly) from Vernon Blake's, Relation in Art, is one to make of such statements as, "Art is, so to say, a symbol of the universe or rather a suggestion of the possible essential nature of the universe as it is perceived by the artist. The greater the extent of this perception, the more general in applicability the symbol drawn from it, the greater will be the work of art."[1] Or again, "Art is created by man as a parallel to the universal idea."[2]

This drawing of wrong inferences from the data provided by experience, although perhaps peculiarly characteristic of the artist, is not restricted to him. It is an error also liable to attack the layman of superior sensitiveness, where his enthusiasm is unchecked by a philosophical training, or where, as may be the case in the example now to be considered, that of Clive Bell's theory, he has something of the artist's urgency to create but lacks the necessary corresponding urgency to express his desire in a medium. Mr. Bell begins by positing a peculiar kind of experience occasioned by art, and then attempts by means of a simple relation of Cause and Effect to isolate some one essential quality in the work of art which is the cause of this experience, its effect in the recipient. This quality he calls "Significant Form", and if, as is natural, one asks, "Significant of what?" the answer seems once more to

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1. Op. cit. p.43.
2. Ibid. p.71.

be, "significant of the universe." I think it is profitable to give the whole argument here in some detail, as it will serve as an example of this general type of mistaken method. That his emotional response is all-important for Clive Bell may be seen from the very first page of his book, Art.[1] "Only those for whom art is a constant source of passionate emotion can possess the data from which profitable theories may be deduced." And again, "The starting-point for all systems of aesthetics must be the personal experience of a peculiar emotion. The objects that provoke this emotion we call works of art. All sensitive people agree that there is a peculiar emotion provoked by works of art. I do not mean, of course, that all works provoke the same emotion. On the contrary, every work produces a different emotion. But all these emotions are recognizably the same in kind."[2] The next step in the argument is to conclude that sameness of effect must be produced by sameness of cause. "This emotion is called the aesthetic emotion, and if we can discover some quality common to all and absent from none of the objects that provoke it, we shall have solved what I take to be the central problem of aesthetics. We shall have discovered the essential quality

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1. The page references which follow are to the Phoenix Library edition.

2. Op. cit. p.6.

in a work of art."[1]

I propose to leave criticism aside for the moment and to continue the argument. "Either all works of visual art[2] have some common quality, or when we speak of works of art we gibber."[3] If one asks what is this common quality, the answer is that referred to above. "Only one answer seems possible, Significant Form."[4]

The fact that the theory goes no further, that he says, "In pure aesthetics we have only to consider our emotion and its object,"[5] and that if the significance means anything for aesthetics, (as apart from its meaning for metaphysics, which must be considered in a moment) it means "significance as an end in itself," is an indication of the main weakness of his treatment. This may be characterised as a failure to see the importance of analysis, a failure almost inevitable to the artist or to the aesthetician whose approach is coloured by the peculiar intensity of his experience of beauty. It is for this kind of reason, I think, that Clive Bell leaves "Significant Form" unexplained when he is trying to account for aesthetics simply as such. Form that is significant, i.e. that is "an end in

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1. Ibid. p.7.
2. He later extends his theory to other forms of art and to "objects" arousing similar, i.e. aesthetic, experiences. cf page 25. "The pure mathematician rapt in his studies knows a state of mind which I take to be similar, if not identical."
3. Ibid. p.7.
4. Ibid. p.28
5. Ibid. p.11.

itself," really means nothing more than, "I, as a sensitive person, value this kind of experience more than anything else," and when he does try to "explain" it, all he can do is to re-iterate how much it means to him in other terms. Thus he says, "What is the significance of anything as an end in itself? What is that which is left when we have stripped a thing of all its associations, of all its significance as a means? What is left to provoke our emotion? What but that which philosophers used to call, "the thing in itself" and now call "ultimate reality"?[1] obviously meaning by this, unconsciously, "It is so valuable that it is worth the whole universe," so that the theory appears, consciously as, "It is significant of the whole universe," i.e. it is "ultimate reality." One can perhaps find reasons for this failure to analyse. Our power to introspect our emotional experiences is notoriously deficient - "Feeling neither knows nor is known" - and this over-emphasis on the emotional character of aesthetic experience (ignoring or overlooking the fact that it may be a very great deal besides emotional) may be responsible for the numerous false steps in the argument. Why, it may well be asked, look for some <u>one</u> quality at all? Why should the matter be so simple as this? And why should the relation between quality and emotion be one of simple Cause and Effect? Why, except that the value of his own experience really constitutes

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1. Ibid. p.p. 53-54.

the basis of the argument, so that this, which seems to him most valuable must be the epitome of all that is most real, i.e. is significant of Reality,[1] itself?

Starting from experience then, one may in the type of theory illustrated above very quickly reach the end of the investigation. But although it may conceivably be true that art is the epitome of the Universe, or that Beauty is the Ultimate Reality, a great deal of painstaking investigation must be gone through before one can either assert or deny a conclusion of such magnitude. Mr. Bullough's remark is significant here: "In so complex a phenomenon as Art, single causes can be pronounced almost a priori to be false."[2] Simplicity is not in itself a criterion of truth.

I have attempted, in the preceding pages, to show what may be the result when the artist or the layman makes his approach to the philosophy of Aesthetics through the experience of art, but this is not the only kind of pre-experience which is liable to lead to a mis-interpretation of the facts. This same desire for simplicity is also liable to influence the philosopher who comes to a consideration of the data of Aesthetics with a well-developed theory of metaphysics. He is likely to see in the phenomena of beauty only what confirms

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1. It is significant here I think that the capital letter is slipped in unexplained. See p.54.
2. Psychical Distance. British Journal of Psychol. Vol.V. Pt.2 p.100.

his theory, disregarding relevant facts which would invalidate it. This may be illustrated briefly from the theories of two thinkers of this type, Kant and Croce.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to state definitely from what standpoint Kant began his study of Aesthetics or what was his purpose in constructing his theory. From the fact that he came to it only after having completed his theory in the realm of Logic and Practice, one would be inclined to conclude that his account of the nature of beauty was conditioned by his already developed thought on Metaphysics. His own words seem to point to the same conclusion. "A Critique of pure reason, i.e. of our faculty of judging on _a priori_ principles, would be incomplete if the critical examination of judgment, which is a faculty of knowledge, and, as such, lays claim to independent principles, were not dealt with separately. Still, however, its principles cannot, in a system of pure philosophy, form a separate constituent part intermediate between the theoretical and practical division, but may when needful be annexed to one or other as occasion requires."[1]

One might put the matter somewhat on these lines. His metaphysic, up to this point, had adequately accounted for two of the main branches of experience. In the theory of the

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1. _Critique of Judgment_. Translated J. Creed Meredith. p.4.

Understanding was included all experience giving cognizance of objects. Into the theory of Reason all the aspects of Practice could satisfactorily be fitted. The functions of Cognition and of Conation (or "desire", as Kant calls it), were adequately accounted for. There remained Feeling. There remained also, Judgment, and perhaps it is not too fantastic to speculate whether Kant were not a little uneasy about Judgment. In the Critique of Pure Reason he had dealt with Judgment as the faculty of "subsumption under rules ..... whether this or that does or does not stand under a given rule." It is immediate in its exercise, in the sense that it is something "given", is "mother wit" cannot be taught, only exercised. In this capacity of mediation, it has its part to play in the sphere of both Understanding and Reason. But is it, in itself, worthy of such exalted company? In the Preface to the Critique of Judgment Kant says that it must have "a peculiar principle belonging to it - and some such it must contain in itself *a priori*, for otherwise it would not be a cognitive faculty the distinctive character of which is obvious to the most commonplace criticism."[1] He admits that the discovery of this principle of justification "must be a task involving considerable difficulties," and his own solution of the problem seems to be to take the pieces of the jigsaw

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1. See J. Creed Meredith translation. pp.4-5

which he has ready to his hand and to fit them into a completed picture which to the critical observer seems 'neat' rather than convincing. His problem may be expressed diagrammatically thus:

Cognition	Conation	?
Understanding	Reason	Judgment
Logic	Ethics	?

As the result of this, Judgment is connected with the third aspect of consciousness, namely, Feeling. It can only be within the realm of Feeling that Judgment exercises the right kind of pronouncement. It cannot give cognizance of objects, nor regulate practice, so that it must have as its own peculiar _a priori_ sphere, objects in their character of producing pleasure or pain. But because of the whole weight of the Critical Philosophy behind it, certain important limitations must be set to this sphere, i.e. it is in the realm of Beauty, where pleasure and pain are immediate, and disinterested, that the Judgment of Taste operates. The judgment of Beauty is not, "Is this object of such and such a kind?" but, "does it have such and such an effect on my feeling of pleasure and pain?" And certain characteristics of Beauty, as he explains it, follow inevitably, it seems, from his Critical theory, not from his personal appreciation of the

facts. One may cite, in illustration, the four Moments of Beauty, viz. that it pleases by an entirely _disinterested_ satisfaction, that it is, apart from concepts, represented as an object of _universal_ satisfaction, that it has "the _form of purposiveness_ without representation of a purpose" and that it is the object of a _necessary_ satisfaction.

Creed Meredith disagrees with this interpretation. He thinks that Kant did not come to the question of Aesthetics because he consciously felt his system to be incomplete, but that his consideration of it was "due to the converging results of different lines of thought, arising from the consideration of different concrete problems, viz. those of aesthetics and of organic life. Kant would never have discovered the Lacuna if he had not had the means of filling it ready at hand."[1]

However that may be, the approach to the subject would surely be admitted to be metaphysical, and the resulting theory does not seem to reflect any very obvious experience of the beautiful on the part of its creator.[2] The result of this method of approach seems in its turn to be an over-simplification, although of a different type from that which resulted from the artist's preoccupation with experience. For Kant, also, wants to reduce the nature of beauty to something simple, to some _one_ thing; it must have a "principle" furnished for it. And so he eliminates as superfluous or contaminating much that

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1. Op. cit. Introductory Essays. p.XXI.
2. See below, concerning free and dependent beauties.

to immediate experience seems necessary to the full effect of beauty. True beauty, he says, must be pure or formal. "Charm or emotion" are to have no place in the judgment by which something is to be described as beautiful. Emotion is "quite foreign to beauty." Further, "the colours which give brilliancy to the sketch are part of the charm. They may no doubt in their own way enliven the object for sensation, but make it really worth looking at and beautiful they cannot."[1] Akin to this is his statement that true beauty is "Free", i.e. it presupposes no concept, no consideration of <u>what</u> the thing is, and as examples of this he gives flowers in nature, parrots and humming birds, designs a la Grecque, foliage for framework or on wall-paper, fantasias, and music, "not set to words". Dependent beauties, on the contrary, do so presuppose a concept and are therefore limited, as, for example, horses, man, arsenals, palaces.[2]

The same sort of over-simplification is found in Croce's theory. His metaphysical theory, of Creative Idealism, led him on the one hand to disregard certain obvious differences, as that between the artist as creator and the layman as appreciator,[3] and on the other to relegate the work of art

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1. Op. cit. p.67.
2. cf Op. cit. pp.72-73.
3. "Homo nascitur poeta: some men are born great poets, some small. The cult of the genius, with all its attendant superstitions, has arisen from this quantitative difference having been taken as a difference of quality." <u>Aesthetic</u>. trans. Douglas Ainslie. 2nd Edition pp.14-15.

(in the sense in which this means the physical object, the statue or landscape) to a mere occasion for the kind of experience which he terms intuition, expression or beauty, indifferently. That this is the result of his metaphysics may be seen from the following quotations. His theory, he says, "denies, above all, that art is a physical fact: for example, certain determined colours, or relations of colours; certain definite forms of bodies; certain definite sounds or relations of sounds ..... And if it be asked why art cannot be a physical fact, we must reply, in the first place, that physical facts do not possess reality, and that art, to which so many devote their whole lives and which fills all with a divine joy, is supremely real; thus it cannot be a physical fact, which is something unreal."[1]

Thus it appears that both experience on the part of the artist, and metaphysics on the part of the philosopher, may be untrustworthy guides to the understanding of the phenomena of Aesthetics, leading each in its peculiar fashion to a simplicity of treatment and theory which disregards relevant material. It cannot be too often repeated that the topic of Aesthetics is one of the utmost complexity, and this must be kept clearly in mind throughout. The experience of the artist may be so valuable to himself that he feels that this must be

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1. The Essence of Aesthetic. trans. Douglas Ainslie. p.9.

"real" if anything is: and a metaphysical theory may for its creator, seem so true that it *must*, *a priori*, account for the phenomena of beauty, but the starting point for the investigation of the subject must be sought in the consideration of much more pedestrian matters than the nature of Reality or the metaphysical status of Beauty. The first business of the philosophy of Aesthetics should be to discover what are the relevant facts, and the subsequent method should be one which allows the facts to be analysed without bias, simply on their own merits as facts. The main pre-occupation of the present research will be the further elaboration and validation of this contention.

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or ill-founded metaphysics, philosophy must deal with it in precisely the same way as it would deal with any other body of data, i.e. we must not think that the keen-ness of the emotional delight we may take in beauty allows us to shirk the task of patient ratiocination we should consider necessary if the subject to be investigated were, say, logic or metaphysics.

Again, to consider for a moment the other possible point of departure already dealt with, it may be the case that if one's theory of metaphysics were correct, it would allow one, as Kant thought, to make _a priori_ statements about Aesthetics. At any rate, if correct and complete, it must obviously be found adequate to include the phenomena of beauty. But if it is used to account for those phenomena, after having first been constructed without reference to them, it is liable to prejudice one's view of the facts, and the theory of aesthetics which results may seem to others to bear no relation to the nature of beauty as manifested in actual experience. Perhaps no philosophical speculation can be undertaken with a complete absence of metaphysical bias, but as far as possible, the facts to be investigated should be considered on their own merits, simply as facts.

Keeping this principle in mind, I wish now to turn to the more positive side of the investigation and to attempt to

discover what those facts are; what it is that furnishes the relevant material for the study of aesthetics.

One suggestion which presents itself naturally here, and which is perhaps the one that to unreflecting opinion might seem the most obvious, is that this material is to be found in a set of objects, situated in the external world in the same way as the plain man considers tables and chairs to be objects so situated. "Works of art", examples of which would be statues and pictures, would be considered the correct name to give to at least one class of such objects. It might then be thought that beauty was simply a character of the objects in question. John Laird seems to come near a view of this kind. "It is difficult to see, therefore, why so many philosophers and critics hesitate to ascribe beauty to things in the same sense as they ascribe colour or shape."[1] And again, "Things may certainly be beautiful when they bring delight, and the beauty (and therefore the value) of these delightful things is a predicate of them just as certainly as their lustre is a predicate of my lady's diamonds."[2]

So far, then, one may think that there is a set of objects having claim "in their own right" and simply as objects of a particular kind, to provide the material for aesthetics.

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1. <u>A Study in Realism.</u> p.139
2. Ibid. p.144.

But even among this class of objects one meets at once with difficulties, for such works of art as plays, novels or musical compositions, do not seem to be 'objects' in quite the same sense as do pictures or statues. Moreover it very soon becomes apparent that works of art do not exhaust the relevant subject matter. For the reason why they seem to constitute a class of objects of a particular kind would universally be admitted to be that they rightly merit the application of the predicate beautiful.[1] But this predicate is also often ascribed to what, following Susan Miles, may in this connection be called "natural objects". Her definition is as follows.

"By a natural object is meant a mountain, a flower, a haystack, a cloud, a hut, a bird, a stream, an animal, a human being, or anything else that we can be directly aware of through our sense-organs, and that has been either not modified at all by men, or modified from motives apparently utilitarian."[2]

"Directly aware of through our sense- organs" certainly

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1. As John Laird truly remarks, although it may be disputed that this predication is of the same type as the predication of lustre to diamonds, as his analogy would seem to suggest. The problem of the interpretation to be given to the predicate "beautiful" must be attacked later in the argument.

2. <u>Intuition and Beauty</u>. Monist. July 1925. p.427.

seems to give a range of objects in the sense required. But a doubt very soon arises as to whether all the objects so denoted are on the same footing. If they are to have the same status in aesthetics as have works of art, they ought, it would seem, to have a "positive claim" to the predicate beautiful, but on a preliminary survey of the facts this does not seem to be equally apparent in all cases. Sunsets, sea-scapes, waterfalls, woodland scenery, seem, like works of art, to be secure from attack, since failure to think them beautiful would to the plain man (and at this stage of the argument, if one is to advance as free from philosophical bias as possible, the attitude of the plain man is not to be despised) appear due to some peculiarity in the observer rather than to a dubious claim on the part of the object. But in a great number of cases other than these, the ascription of beauty to natural objects would seem, to unreflecting opinion, quite unintelligible. Does the subject matter of aesthetics, then, consist of 1) Works of art, 2) Beautiful nature; so that there are some natural objects which, through a character inherent in themselves, remain outside the sphere of the topic?

If so, one of two conclusions must follow, but both, when examined seem to lead to the rejection of the theory that beauty is a genuine character of an object simply in virtue of its <u>being</u> an object. If beauty is to be discovered

through the analysis of objects as such, it must have the same meaning in art and in nature or a different one. If it has the same signification in both it follows, since nature is obviously prior to art, that the essence of beauty per se must lie in some quality of "beautiful nature", and that art which is genuinely beautiful merely copies or imitates or tries to reproduce this objective quality. But the almost universal testimony of the artists themselves is against the acceptance of such a conclusion. For the artist does not invariably seek the genesis of his creation in "beautiful nature". Indeed, if one may trust such a creditable witness as Roger Fry, he may go deliberately to what the plain man would call the ugly for his inspiration.

"In such circumstances the greatest object of art becomes of no more significance than a casual piece of matter; a man's head is no more and no less important than a pumpkin, or, rather, these things may be so or not according to the rhythm that possesses the artist and crystallises his vision..... In so far as the artist looks at objects only as part of a whole field of vision which is his own potential picture, he can give no account of their aesthetic values. By preference he turns to objects which make no strong aesthetic appeal in themselves ..... objects of the most despised periods or objects saturated for the ordinary man with the most vulgar and repulsive

associations, may be grist to his mill....... He is more likely on the whole to paint a slum in Soho than St. Paul's, and more likely to do a lodging-house interior than a room at Hampton Court. He may, of course, do either, but his necessary detachment comes more easily in one case than the other."[1]

Lascelles Abercrombie expresses the same opinion. "So far then from art having to originate in beautiful experience it can actually give us the paradoxical impression of beauty conveying a sense of unbeautiful things. Is agony beautiful? We have Michelangelo's "Dawn". Is a corpse beautiful, and the grimaces of weeping? We have Mantegna's "Dead Christ". Is eternal damnation beautiful? We have Dante's "Inferno". Is drunken lechery beautiful? We have Burns's "Jolly Beggars"."[2]

If, then, the artist may find his inspiration in any object whatever, it follows that for him, at any rate, when he views nature _as_ artist, there is not this clear-cut distinction between "beautiful" nature and nature which is aesthetically irrelevant, and that his purpose in creating is not simply to reproduce a beauty which exists independently of himself as a

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1. _Vision and Design_. p.34. The references throughout are to the Phoenix Library Edition.

2. _Towards a Theory of Art_. p.59.

character of certain objects in nature.[1] This leads to the conclusion that beauty does not mean the same thing in art as in nature, since for art, at any rate, some reference must be made to the artist's personal apprehension. So that, although at present nothing has been said to prohibit the conclusion that beauty in <u>nature</u> may be discovered by an analysis of objects, enough has been said, I think, to suggest that such an analysis will not provide an explanation of the whole matter, since it is inadequate in the realm of art.

Arguments may also be brought, however, to show that even where the layman seems most objectively aware of a beauty in nature which exists independently of himself, something may be due to his own apprehension, particularly to his past appreciation of art. Roger Fry's remark about "necessary detachment" is of importance in this connection. For just as the genuine artist may revolt from things which convention has established as "fit subjects" for artistic expression, feeling that their aesthetic possibilities have been thereby exhausted, so, by a reversal of the process, it may be this same convention which canalises wrongly the aesthetic sensitiveness of the layman and makes him genuinely to feel that there is a hard and fast line to be drawn between "beautiful nature" and "nature <u>per se</u>" as regards their relevance for aesthetics

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1. This point will be further elaborated in Ch.5.

and that it is possible to pick out a range of objects having a character bringing them within the sphere of aesthetics (although he would not, of course, express it in this way) and sharply distinguishing them from other natural objects not possessing such a character. Thus he is easily moved by a flaming sunset and would call it beautiful, but does not so easily appreciate the aesthetic value of a pencil of September sunlight streaking a yard heaped with bricks and rubbish; yet, given another century or so of modernist developments in painting, the latter might seem to him as "natural" a beauty as the former, and, freed from conventional bias, he might even now, like the artist, be just as readily moved by the one as by the other. I think that these residual effects of art are often at work in situations where the beauty of nature seems, as it were, "forced" on us, or where, as in the case of a sunset, we frame the judgment of beauty on a mere glance and as the result of habit. Sometimes, of course, one can put one's finger on the actual source of the influence. Thus I, personally, can never see a flattish stretch of country, massed elms, and a soft blue and white sky, except as a landscape of a particular period of English art. The influence of Canaletto, also, is obviously at work in my appreciation of the turret of St. Pancras's Church seen above clustered plane trees and bathed in sunlight of a peculiar thick quality, while a pair of aged hawkers, with their

basket of mouldering flowers always, since the comparison was suggested to me by a friend, form a picture by Daumier. On a great many occasions, of course, one may be quite unconscious of this influence, and I do not wish to suggest that there is no such thing as a pure, personal appreciation of natural beauty.[1] But I think that facts such as those just referred to are arguments in favour of rejecting the conclusion that the essential aesthetic fact is to be found simply in the analysis of a certain class of objects constituting "beautiful nature".

The problem may now be attacked from the slightly different standpoint to which this rejection leads. Suppose that now, still keeping to the method which seeks to find the solution of the problem in the analysis of objects, these objects are re-classified into 1) Works of art, 2) Natural objects. From this it would follow that the essential aesthetic fact could be discovered through the analysis of any object whatever. Arguments can be brought to show that such a conclusion is untenable, but the suggested classification is of use in that its examination leads to the detection of what is the genuine significance of the generality it expresses. It is not true that every object possesses some

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1. The problem of natural beauty must be given more detailed consideration in a later chapter.

inherent aesthetic character, but it is true that every object is capable of entering into a genuine aesthetic complex. The examination of this contention leads to the rejection of an analysis of objects as the correct starting point for the philosophy of aesthetics.

To begin with examples: I may stand and stare at my shadow, soft and blurred against the lighter grey of the hair-cord carpet. Or I may contemplate with a like satisfaction the long line of a factory wall, with its regular pattern of bricked-in windows. From introspection it seems that if sunsets are to be included in the data of aesthetics, things of this kind must be also, since my attitude to them all seems to be the same. Nor does it seem true to say that there are some objects which by an inherent character make it impossible that this attitude should be taken to them, since even the sight of a dead horse, its head in a pool of bright blood against the metallic blue of the roadway, may, in spite of its obvious humanitarian appeal, call out nothing but appreciation of its pleasing pattern of form and colour.

But although any object whatever may, in this way, at some time or another come within the scope of aesthetics, it is obvious that not every object does so on every occasion on which it is an object for some recipient, and this failure to evoke the aesthetic response is so much more frequent, and the conditions under which the correct response is evoked

appear so much more incalculable than in the case, say, of ordinary perception, that even if it were true that all objects without exception possessed some literal aesthetic character this would seem to be trivial and unimportant. For there would still remain the problems of the conditions rendering this character operative or the reverse, and of the source of the obvious differences of value <u>within</u> the vast range of objects thus characterized. Although to the unbiased observer there seems something in common to the contemplation of the blurred shadow and the enjoyment of a painting by Van Gogh, the <u>differences</u> between the two situations seem much more important. Moreover, what constitutes the resemblance between them seems to lie not in their characters as objects at all, but may also be discovered in situations where there is no object in the sense that the painted canvas or the shadow-splashed carpet are objects. Lascelles Abercrombie gives some interesting examples of this type of situation: nurse-maids enjoying a "good example of a mourner" at a funeral, although the occasion is tragic, Coleridge damning the fire at a piano factory as a failure because all the pianos were not burnt.[1] A similar attitude may be taken towards two actions, perhaps equally praiseworthy and valuable from the point of view of ethics, but characterized respectively

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1. See <u>Towards a Theory of Art</u>. pp.25-26.

by what may be called provisionally a certain quality of grace and clumsiness. The same sort of factor may also be said to enter into the appreciation of what is sometimes called the "neatness" of an argument or proof, as distinct from its logical persuasiveness.

If it is argued that such examples as these ought not to be included in the data of aesthetics, the reason for such an objection will be found, I think, to lie in the fact that one would not naturally call the "objects" of these experiences beautiful, and this is, of course, true. One cannot call a proof or a surgical operation beautiful except by an extended and incorrect application of the term, but what should be concluded from this is not that such cases do not come within the scope of aesthetics but that the scope of aesthetics is not bounded by the applicability of the predicate beautiful. Support may be gained for this contention from I. A. Richards. He holds that, "Anything judged to be beautiful is either a work of art or a natural object",[1] and points out that, "It is very necessary to distinguish the sense in which merely putting something in a frame or writing it in verse gives it an 'aesthetic character' from the sense in which value is implied."[2]

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1. Foundations of Aesthetics. p.10.

2. Principles of Literary Criticism. p.16.

This last remark, while needing some qualification, (for, as I hope to show in the later development of the argument, both the types of object to which Mr. Richards refers have some degree of value) suggests the solution of the problem concerning objects. It is just this concept of value, when correctly interpreted, which leads to the detection of the aesthetic sine qua non and to the rejection of an analysis of objects as such, as the requisite starting point. The root of the difficulty here is to be found in the inherent ambiguity attaching to the term 'object'; for what is an object in the external world, even if that object is what would commonly be called a work of art, seems on a great many occasions not to be an 'object' for aesthetics, and seems moreover only to become one when brought into relation with the right kind of recipient. While the recipient seems, as in some of the examples given above, able to make his 'aesthetic object' out of imagined or conceptual material, or so to transform the material furnished by perception as to make it almost unrecognisable as such. One seems, then, to need throughout a reference beyond the object to the subjective side of the situation, and this necessity has been implicit throughout the argument as it has so far been developed. To give but one example, it has been obviously at work in the account of the residual effects of art on the appreciation of

nature. If one simply takes 'objects' in the literal sense and analyses them, no matter with what minuteness and accuracy, one will either discover nothing beyond the characters of objects and will fail to detect the essential fact for aesthetics, (although many of the facts so analysed, such as the disposal of volumes or the gradations of colour in a painting, may of course be relevant for a complete account of the matter) or one will be forced to go beyond the consideration of objects as such. Thus the value of such acute analysis of pictures as is found in the writings of Roger Fry lies not merely in what it tells us about pictures, but in the assistance it gives to our personal appreciation or in the light it throws on the purely theoretical question of what forms are aesthetically moving. For example he says, concerning Rubens's Altarpiece of St. Augustine at Antwerp:

"The unity is so self-contained, the lines return so completely into the pattern, that we cannot imagine its being continued outside the limits of the frame. The parts cohere like the atoms in a molecule, so that we feel that the detachment of one part would break up the whole conformation. Now, such a disposition affects the mind vividly, and predisposes the imagination to be moved by the images which present themselves to the eye with such a single impact, but it can hardly be accomplished without sacrifices. Even a

Rubens, exuberant inventor and vital delineator as he was, in order to accede to the demands of so vigorous a scheme of pattern, has to give to some of his figures more strained and more theatrical poses than either their characters or the situation quite demand - and that precisely because in those rhetorical gesticulations of arms and legs, there is a greater flexibility and flow of contour than in poses more self-contained."[1] In connection with this, reference may be made to I.A.Richard's reminder that the real import of such terms as form, composition and harmony, is a psychological one. Even such a robust realist as John Laird seems to acknowledge the subjective side for he says, "Things may certainly be beautiful when they bring delight," and, finally, some suggestive remarks on the relevant meaning for aesthetics of the word "object" are made by P. Leon in his article, "The Work of Art and the Aesthetic Object."[2] He denies that the "aesthetic object", or that of which we are aware in artistic experience, is identical with the "work of Art".[3] So far is this from being the case that there is not even a necessary correspondence between the qualities which the

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1. Introduction to Reynolds's Discourses. pp. XV and XVI.
2. Mind. Vol.40. 1931.
3. The latter he uses to stand for the material object.

material has in its natural state and those which it fittingly expresses or conveys when used as the medium of art

"Stone has its own quality, its own spirit, character, self. We are aware of it when, through hours of walking through an Alpine Pass far from all life and vegetation, or in rock-climbing or wandering in a moraine, we become permeated with the massive dumbness, stillness, death, pride or cruelty of stone. But what artist would or could ever express this in stone? This immobility and death, moving and "winged" words or tones and pigments express. On the other hand, stone is used to fashion a winged Victory, live rippling muscle, wind-like drapery, soaring cathedrals. It may speak any language but that of stone and death, be anything but stony. (Are not dead knights and ladies on tombs the least successful achievements of statuary?) Similarly wood, too, whether in the living or the felled tree, has its own quality. But it is not in wood that we should express this. The business of artistic work in wood is to be anything but wooden. It would seem that in art the material is raised to the n'th degree of selflessness and speaks of anything but itself."[1]

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1. Ibid pp.286-7. It may be objected that in his remarks about the so-called "natural" characters of stone, Mr.Leon is already imputing to the object qualities which have their origin in his own mental states, but, allowing for a certain fancifulness of language, there is, I think, a certain amount of truth in what he says.

In thus moulding his material to express qualities other than its own, the artist is guided by what Mr. Leon calls the "aesthetic object", and this is embodied in the material work of art as "aesthetic meaning". It is this which is apprehended in artistic experience. The "aesthetic object", though itself "sensuous through and through", differs, even if it is itself "sound or colour or what is seen", in important respects from ordinary sound or colour.

"The aesthetic object then is primarily imagined sound or colour or shape and only secondarily and subsequently sense-produced and sense-apprehended, while ordinary sound or colour or shape is primarily sense-apprehended and only secondarily and subsequently given in imagination in the form of memory images. Thus the aesthetic object differs from the work of art, which also is primarily an object of sense-experience."[1]

Further consideration must be given, later, to this problem of what, precisely, is the "aesthetic object" in the appreciation of a work of art, and reason will be found, I think, for disagreeing with Mr. Leon, but for the moment, having reached the conclusion that the philosophy of aesthetics cannot usefully begin with an analysis of the characters of objects as such, an examination may be attempted of the other

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1. Ibid. p.292.

possible starting point, which is already indicated by this rejection of objects.

This is to be found in experience. If the data of aesthetics is not furnished by an analysis of a set of objects is it more helpful to look for it in the consideration of the qualities of experience? The fact of experience has obviously been considered of extreme importance by investigators otherwise of very different persuasions. Thus, Lascelles Abercrombie says, "For art - and for aesthetics generally - objects as such do not exist, but only experiences,"[1] while Kant remarks that the aesthetic question is not, "Is this object of such and such a kind?" but, "Does it have such and such an effect on my feeling of pleasure, and pain?" Croce also, as has been indicated, exalts the Intuition or Experience into the primary place, making it identical with Beauty, and giving to the material work of art a position of only secondary importance.

Experience is, of course, indubitably part of the "given" in the present sphere of enquiry. One of the facts which we indubitably know is that, given certain conditions (what precisely they are is not, at the moment, important) we do have experiences sufficiently alike to be labelled "aesthetic". No one, I think, would want to deny this, although considerable

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1. Towards a Theory of Art. p.90.

difference of opinion is found concerning the account which should be given of the nature of those experiences. The chief point at issue seems to be whether what is commonly called aesthetic experience differs in some unique way from other experiences, so as to constitute a particular kind or species.

This is a problem which must be considered in some detail shortly, but there is a more general problem to be considered first; namely, what is the philosophical interest in aesthetic experience as such, no matter what its analysis. In dealing with this problem, also, certain things must, I think, be taken for granted. The most important of these are that we do know experience directly and can get at its qualities by introspection. It may be thought that in deciding to begin at this point I am already making assumptions at least as great as those I have deprecated earlier, for it may be queried whether we do know experience directly. I am not here referring to the still more fundamental problem of Acquaintance and Description, nor to any distinction, of the kind made by N.O. Lossky in his book, The Intuitive Basis of Knowledge, between 'experiencing' and 'knowing', by which he wishes to indicate that before the active process of discrimination and comparison which constitutes knowledge begins, reality is presented as "dark, formless, unconscious."[1] Experience as

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1. Op. cit. p.225.

we commonly encounter it is obviously not of this formless kind and it may be queried whether the existence of such a type of experience is ever more than an inference, although I should like to mention in passing the possibility, which I shall have to examine later on, that the experience of the artist preliminary to creation may be of this kind. But the question under consideration at the moment is rather how we make the step from experience to the analysis and communication of experience. Even if experiences are conscious and formed, to "live through" them is a different matter from communicating their characters, and it seems, moreover, that the more completely and intensely we do the former the less conscious are we of taking that "over-against" attitude which is essential to the latter, so that we seem presented with the paradox that the most valuable part of our data is the least communicable. But an escape may be made from the difficulty, and that I think, legitimately, by bursting one's way through it, i.e. although it is a commonplace of psychology that experience is fugitive and changing, that to examine it we must forever pursue it from behind and recognize it by its effects on later experience, and although as Mr. Richards says, in most cases we do not judge our experience from within but "by memory or by other residual effects which we learn to be good indices to its value,"[1]

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1. _Principles of Literary Criticism_. p.75.

yet the fact remains that we _do_ analyse our experiences, whether by introspection or retrospection, and do communicate the results of that analysis, and there seems no adequate reason for believing that in so doing we have lost our hold on the original experience or have effected a change of attitude so fundamental that what we say no longer has application to the material as originally presented.[1]

So that it seems legitimate to begin the present enquiry on the assumption, if it is such, that we do know the characters of our experiences, and can communicate them accurately. A return must now be made to the question raised earlier, viz. what is the _philosophical_ interest in experience? The analysis of experience, in itself, may take one no further than psychology. It may be expressed, from the experient's point of view, as, "I have a mental state of such and such characters", "I feel thus and thus", and so on. This will, of course, furnish some of the data for the aesthetic philosopher, and he cannot disregard this element of psychology. His findings must in one respect be based on the findings of the psychologist and his results must be in line with them. But his interest in the analysis of experience is rather different from that of the psychologist and it must now be

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1. The fact of the possibility of error, being, as it is, merely accidental, is, of course, irrelevant here.

asked, where, in the psychological analysis of experience does something of import for the philosopher arise? This problem can best be approached, I think, by considering some of the ways in which it has been thought to arise. It seems possible to group all these under one main contention, i.e. that analysis of the experiences produced by art, natural beauty and so on, reveals a special "kind" of experience, and that the aesthetic problem is thus solved. Art is, or beauty, means, that which arouses this special form of experience.

It must, of course, be admitted that if this were so and there were a peculiar kind of experience rightly called "aesthetic", this would be of considerable importance for the philosopher, but I think it should also be stated with some insistence that even so it would not by any means exhaust his concern with the topic. Moreover, as I wish now to go on to show, a consideration of the results arrived at by attempts to solve the problem in this way, and to explain the nature of this so-called "kind" of experience reveals the fact that the real concern of the aesthetic philosopher is not this merely psychological analysis of experience at all.

The discussion may be begun by a reference to the theory already dealt with in some detail, i.e. that of Clive Bell. If this theory were true it would afford, perhaps, the most satisfactory explanation of the matter, for it would enable one to pick out some one quality found in aesthetic

experience and nowhere else, namely, "an" aesthetic emotion with, as far as one can judge from his treatment, the same claim to be considered "specific" as anger, fear or curiosity. Thus, as he says, "The starting point for all systems of aesthetics must be the personal experience of a peculiar emotion ...... All sensitive people agree that there is a peculiar emotion provoked by works of art," and so on. But, as was shown in the first chapter of this study, Clive Bell does not give an analysis of this emotion or describe it further. He merely states its existence as an indubitable fact, and for this reason his theory is not very helpful, as it is open to anyone to deny the fact as categorically as Mr. Bell asserts it. This I.A.Richards does. "Introspective analysis," he says, "has not convinced psychologists that the postulated emotion can be admitted. It is not otherwise known, has never been described, and is much in need of identification."[1]

A more precise attempt to designate the emotional aspect of the aesthetic experience has been made by Professor S. Alexander.[2] He defines the problem thus.

"Is there, or is there not, a specific aesthetic emotion, or is the aesthetic attitude or feeling nothing but ordinary feelings or attitudes towards the subjects of art in a certain condition of refinement and complication? .... If the claim

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1. Foundations of Aesthetics. p.56.
2. See the Herbert Spencer Lecture for 1927, Art and Instinct.

for a peculiar aesthetic emotion is to be maintained, it must be traced to some impulse in human nature, we must at least trace its affiliation with some recognized impulse or instinct. We must be able to put our finger on the particular side of us to which art makes its appeal."[1]

He finds this impulse in the tendency to construction, and says, in another essay, "The passion proper to the artist and communicated to others in minor degree, the aesthetic impulse with its aesthetic emotion is of a specific sort. It is, I believe, the formal impulse of constructiveness which is an outgrowth from or a modification of the instinct of constructiveness which we share with such animals as the bee, the beaver or the bird which sings for courtship or builds a nest for its young..... In particular it has become diverted from practice and contemplative - seeks not practical gratification but is satisfied for its own sake."[2] He admits that the emotional aspect of aesthetic experience does not consist <u>solely</u> of delight in construction, but is complex, and as he says, "contains many elements blended into one, corresponding to the various elements in the impulse itself. There is the predominating element of sheer constructiveness, the delight in making: there is the element of synthesis or the constructional element, that of composition; and there is the

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1. Op.cit. p.3.
2. <u>Artistic Creation and Cosmic Creation</u>. pp.13-14.

sensuous pleasure of the material, in poetry the mere pleasure, improperly called beauty, of the words as sounds and of the images they convey, as well as the added pleasures of metre and rhythm and rhyme which partly trench upon the pleasure of the composition."[1]

But none the less, "the aesthetic emotion is the constructive emotion,"[2] and, "Merely to influence the passions of the spectator about the subject and to work from the passions congenial to the subject matter is to produce not art but illustration. In poetry - if sympathy with the subject as such, even if it be pity and fear in a tragedy, prevails over the delight in the words and their construction and destroys the equipoise of sounds and their meaning, the result is not poetry but illustration or sentiment."[3]

If one examines this theory one is led to the conclusion that in spite of its appearance of greater clarity it is not much more satisfactory than that of Clive Bell and for the same reason, namely, the desire to isolate some one element as the essentially aesthetic one. Such phrases as "the predominating element of sheer constructiveness," and, "the aesthetic emotion is the constructive emotion," are illustrative of this, and one

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1. Art and Instinct. p.17.
2. Ibid. p.22.
3. Ibid. p.23.

is reminded again of the warning of Mr. Bullough to which reference has already been made: "In so complex a phenomenon as Art, _single_ causes can be pronounced almost _a priori_ to be false." Moreover, the choice of constructiveness as the essential element does not seem a very happy one, for "delight in constructiveness" is a very vague term. If it simply means that the work of art, which obviously _is_ a construction, causes pleasure both to its creator and to those who experience the finished creation, no-one would wish to deny this, but there is still to be explained the peculiar _form_ of this delight if it is to be satisfactorily distinguished from other forms of delight not essentially aesthetic. Prof. Alexander attempts to explain the difference through the concept, "construction raised to the level of contemplation", and states that this holds good both for artist and recipient, but there seems some confusion here. If one is meant really to take construction as the essentially aesthetic element in the complex, it does not seem true to say that this is any more "contemplative" for the artist than for the bee or the beaver. As far as pure _constructiveness_ and its accompanying excitement are concerned, is it not true that at _any_ stage of its manifestation it is, as Alexander says, "pursued for its own sake"? i.e. one cannot picture the beaver as consciously setting about building its dam _in order_ to provide a home. It would

seem as if the excitement so far, again, as pure constructiveness goes, possesses both beaver and artist in much the same way, and 'contemplation' seems an odd word to use in this respect. And surely the artist _is_ interested in the practical issue of his excitement in so far as he wishes to make a "what" of a _very_ definite form, and has rarely if ever been known to destroy the "what" once it has been satisfactorily completed? It probably is true, among many other things equally true and important, that the artist enjoys the constructive aspect of the creative process, but to isolate this as the essential element is again to effect a misleading and useless simplification. The same sort of criticism seems true if one considers the case of the recipient. It does not seem correct to say that his attitude is primarily one of judging, "This is well done." He _can_, of course, contemplate the constructive aspect of the work of art, but surely to take this attitude is normally to cease to experience purely aesthetically. And those elements which Alexander speaks of as, "passions congenial to the subject-matter ---- sympathy with the subject as such," and so on, seem equally as integral a part of the whole as the "delight in constructiveness".

Finally, even if the theory is taken at its own value, the emotional accompaniments of construction are admitted, even by McDougall with his passion for specific "kinds" of feelings,

to be much less well-defined than those of flight or pugnacity, and he himself, as a matter of fact, says nothing of their nature. So that one does not seem, even here, to have got to the root of the "peculiar emotion".

McDougall's own solution of the problem may serve as a further illustration of the kind of theory in which the attempt to find the aesthetic sine qua non through a simple analysis of experience may issue. He finds the explanation of the appeal of art in the sex instinct. The influence of this instinct, he says, is seen directly in such things as dance and song and the writing of love letters, where "the conative energy of the instinct maintains all the activities that appear to be means towards the attainment of the instinctive end." And where the direct connection is not apparent the fact may be explained by "invoking the principle that the means to an end tend, when that end is long pursued, to become desired as ends in themselves; and where the end of an instinct is not explicitly defined in consciousness, as is so frequently the case with the sex instinct, this conversion of means into ends is no doubt especially apt to occur."[1] The pleasure afforded by art is to be explained by the "innate organization of the perceptual side of the sex instinct," i.e. "The sex instinct is so organized as to be excited by these

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1. Social Psychology. pp.401-2. The references are to the ninth edition.

impressions", the examples he gives being the music of the male nightingale or the evolutions of the male pigeon as they affect the females of both species. In the sphere of human psychology the appeal of art to the sex instinct is sometimes direct, sometimes more obscure.

"That the stimulation of the sex instinct in men and women yields a pleasurable excitement even when there is no anticipation of further indulgence of it, is sufficiently shown by the extent to which the lower forms of art, literature and public entertainment rely upon a titillation of the sex instinct in making their appeal to the public. When the plastic and pictorial arts represent beautiful human forms they make appeal to the same element, but in their higher expressions they present these objects in such a way as to evoke also wonder and admiration, a respectful or even reverential attitude which prevents the dominance of the sex impulse over the train of thought, and, arresting its bodily manifestations, diverts its energy to other channels. This diverted energy then serves to reinforce the intellectual activity required for the apprehension of the various subtle harmonies of line and light and colour: that is to say the energy liberated by the appeal to the sex instinct is utilized in enhancing the activity of the purely aesthetic apprehension."[1]

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1. Ibid. p.403.

What this "purely aesthetic apprehension" is McDougall does not say and admits that "it remains a very difficult problem to explain how and why these modes of expending the sex energy assume the forms which we regard as specifically artistic. This is perhaps the most fundamental problem of aesthetics."[1]

A few remarks may suffice to dispose of this solution of the problem. It in its turn seems too simple (not to say crude) to be plausible, and, moreover, seems to reveal a serious misunderstanding of what art is. For surely the "lower forms of art" referred to are simply not art at all, while the sex instinct, if excited, does not enhance but destroys the "purely aesthetic apprehension". Finally, McDougall himself, by his reference to this last-mentioned fact, really admits that he has not touched the real problem, even if it could be solved in the way he suggests.

This same failure to grasp what Art is, is apparent in a good deal of the writers of the various psycho-analytic schools, and consideration ought perhaps to be given to some of their findings at this point. The literature here is of considerable dimensions and I cannot attempt to deal with it

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1. Ibid. p.402.

all, but for my purpose it is, I think, sufficient if I can show what in general writers of this school claim to be able to do and how far these claims, when adequately substantiated, are relevant to the philosophical study of aesthetics.

The question here is slightly different from the one which has been considered up to this point, for we are not here concerned with the detection of some peculiar "kind" of emotion, or other *sui generis* character of experience, although Freud, in the much quoted passage from the Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, seems to hold that the root emotion of the creative experience is frustrated sex.[1] But the method may profitably be dealt with here since it too consists in the analysis of experience, not now simply of conscious experience but of those levels of mind normally inaccessible to introspection.

The scope of the claims made for the psycho-analytic treatment of art seems to vary from writer to writer and even within the investigations of any one writer from time to time, for it often seems that Freud, for example, goes on to substantiate a claim which he has previously stated to be outside the limits of his enquiry. Thus he says in one place, "The nature of artistic attainment is psycho-analytically inaccessible to us,"[2] and again, "As a matter of fact

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1. See Op.cit. p.315.
2. *Leonardo da Vinci*. p.128.

pathography does not aim at making comprehensible the attainments of the great man,"[1] yet a good deal of this particular study seems directed to precisely those ends.

For example, he expresses the general fact of creation and appreciation thus:-

"A kindly nature has bestowed upon the artist the capacity to express in artistic productions his most secret psychic feelings hidden even to himself, which powerfully affect outsiders who are strangers to the artist without their being able to state whence this emotivity comes."[2] And he later expresses the belief that the typical characteristics of Leonardo's paintings (together, presumably with the appeal they make to the recipient) can be traced back to what he calls "the inhibitions in Leonardo's sexual life", particularly to his very early experiences with his mother, and to the phantasy (which Leonardo recalls as a genuine memory of infancy) of the vulture which brushed his lips with its tail as he lay in the cradle. cf. "It seems as if the key to all his attainments and failures was hidden in the childhood phantasy of the vulture."[3]

Moreover he even goes so far as to state that his "specific talent" as artist, painter and sculptor was "probably enforced by the early awakening of the impulse of looking in

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1. Ibid. p.115.
2. Ibid. p.78.
3. Ibid. p.129.

the first years of childhood," (this impulse being the means by which his early-aroused sexual impulses were sublimated), and traces the subsequent rises and declines in his power as artist to the degree of this repression and sublimation.

Leaving criticism aside for the moment, the method may be further illustrated from the writings of Bandouin. In his study of Verhaeren[1] he seems at times even more sanguine than Freud. "The new psychology would almost seem to have been specially designed to explain the poet,"[2] and also, "We have laid the foundations of the psychology of art, of a science of aesthetics ..... without forfeiting the sense of beauty."[3]

The essence of this "science" lies, as with Freud, in the probing of the unconscious of the artist. Bandouin claims that the business of the aesthetician is to disclose, "the secret soul of the man of genius" and when this has been done the investigator is able to say, "This moves because of so and so" in precisely the same way as the doctor, after his analysis of symptoms, is able to say, "you suffer because of so and so."

This reference to the doctor and to the concept of "suffering" throws, I think, much light on the main weakness

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1. See Psycho-Analysis and Aesthetics.
2. Op. Cit. p.16.
3. Ibid. p.33.

of investigations of this type, and is linked with the criticism made at the outset of this section, namely that psycho-analytic theories are vitiated by an initial failure to distinguish good art from bad and by the tendency to consider all artist creation as, almost, a symptom of a pathological state. For at the end of his study of Verhaeren, Bandouin reaches the following rather startling conclusions. The best poems will be those which are "the outcome of a very strong and very precise condensation of images", since by this means they utilise "situations in the external world to symbolise the internal conflicts of the poet."[1] They guide us into the most intimate recesses of the poet's soul. It is poems of this kind which move the reader most, though neither poet nor reader may be intellectually aware of the sources of the conflict. In his consideration of Verhaeren's lyrical dramas (which he compares with the Divine Comedy and with the plays of Sophocles as revealing the collective unconscious) Bandouin shows the inherent flaw of this method reduced to the absurdity which is its logical conclusion. For he is of opinion that if the analysis of poetic material commonly considered second-rate brings to light the fact that it is thus pregnant with unconscious meaning and revelatory of the internal conflicts of the poet, we should reconsider our

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1. Ibid. p.204.

opinion and place it in the first rank! This he considers particularly true of Verhaeren's plays.

Apart from this remark Bandouin nowhere seems to consider the dramas at their aesthetic value as dramas, and this failure is characteristic of writings of this type. Freud is consistently silent as to the artistic merit of Leonardo's paintings. He, like Bandouin, is solely concerned with the unconscious life of the <u>man</u>. It may be helpful, and indeed necessary to consider the "life" experiences of the artist, and even, among those experiences, some which would come in the category of the unconscious, but before doing so it is surely necessary to have some criterion enabling one to distinguish between material which is relevant to the purpose and that which is not, and this the psycho-analytic theories nowhere seem to provide. Verhaeren, for example, does not seem to represent the only, nor perhaps even the most typical species of poet. He seems, even on Bandouin's own showing, to have gone through very violent upheavals in his "life" experiences, and to have been of a neurotic type. His violent death, too, has at least been suspected of being suicidal. On these theories generally <u>any</u> form of symbolisation of unconscious conflict would have to be equally valuable aesthetically, and this leads to the same absurdity as the theory defining art as <u>mere</u> "Expression". Roger Fry, being himself an artist of merit, may be allowed to speak with some authority

on this point. In his essay, Psycho-analysis and Art, he distinguishes between those employers of artistic medium mainly concerned with creating a phantasy world for the fulfilment of wishes, and those, genuine artists, concerned with the proper business of art, namely, the "contemplation of formal properties." He further avers that artists are not symbolists. "They alone (with the scientists) are seeking to make constructions which are completely self-consistent, self-supporting and self-contained - constructions which do not stand for something else, but appear to have ultimate value, and in that sense to be real."[1] He also makes, in the same paper, the pertinent remark that "the discovery of the origin is not the explanation of the phenomenon", and this criticism may be applied to the psycho-analytic theories, I think, in two useful ways. Firstly, any theory which depends for its data on something right outside art, in the "life" experiences of the artist (and those not even in themselves but as problematically interpreted by the psycho-analyst),[2] must be received with the utmost caution. And, secondly, even the psycho-analysts themselves admit that the connection between "life" and "art", as these terms have been used above, is obscure; that how the artist is thus able to sublimate his repressed impulses is not susceptible of explanation; so that

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1. op. cit. p.15.
2. cf Freud's dogmatic assertion that Leonardo's early "memory" of the vulture must be a later phantasy.

simply to state that he does so obviously takes the matter no further, and leaves the assertion a mere assertion.

After a survey of these attempts to solve the problem of aesthetics by the analysis of experience, one may well despair of getting any value from the consideration of "experience" at all, and may even be tempted, with I.A.Richards, not only to deny the existence of a specific aesthetic emotion, but to denounce the aesthetic experience itself as a "phantom". One quotation must suffice here to illustrate his attitude to the question.

"The world of poetry has in no sense any different reality from the rest of the world and it has no other worldly peculiarities. It is made up of experiences of exactly the same kind as those that come to us in other ways..... This is no severance between unlike things, but between different systems of the same activities. The gulf between them is no greater than that between impulses which direct the pen and those which conduct the pipe of a man who is smoking and writing at once, and the "dissociation" or severance of the poetic experience is merely a freeing of it from the extraneous ingredients and influences."[1]

But the one conclusion, I think, does not necessarily follow from the other. It may very well be the case that

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1. Principles of Literary Criticism. p.

there is no one specific quality marking out the aesthetic experience as *sui-generis*. Certainly the upholders of a specific aesthetic emotion do not seem to be successful in defining its nature,[1] since they seem either, like Clive Bell, to leave it completely unexplained, or like Professor Alexander, to seek to "explain" it in terms of some other, recognized emotion. It may further be conceded that if the one specific character is not to be found in emotion it is not likely to be found at all, for the vicious habit of hypostatising what are merely aspects of a complex whole does not seem to attack the cognitive aspect of experience in the same way. No one is likely to postulate a special "kind" of perception to be found only in aesthetic experience. This suggests, I think, the reasonable attitude to be taken to the whole matter. It is not to be expected that the "elements" of the aesthetic experience, whether emotional or otherwise, will be entirely different from those of other experiences. If it has perceptual characters, they will be like those of other experiences more obviously perceptual; if it involves awareness of form or arrangement, this awareness will not differ from a

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1. It is, of course, extremely difficult to "define the nature" of *any* emotion, so that the inability to do so would not *in itself* be a sufficient proof that the postulated emotion did not exist. But something more positive than one actually finds in the arguments of those who do postulate it, is needed, I think, before one can accept the contention.

like awareness where the interest of the experient may be purely practical or theoretical. Finally, if it has emotional aspects, it seems only reasonable to expect that these may be very varied, but will not be *sui generis*, and that while, on some occasions, one may experience even that "wonder and admiration, a respectful or even reverential attitude", of which McDougall speaks, or any other of the whole range of emotions, on other occasions these qualities may not, so far as one can tell, be present at all. It is obvious that at some times the experience seems much more definitely emotional than at others, and at times this emotion seems to take the form more of a general "excitement"[1] than of any one of the commonly accepted catalogue of "the" emotions, whether one thinks of these as "distanced" (as may be meant by Professor Alexander's concept, "raised to the level of contemplation") or as experienced literally and non-aesthetically.

But all these facts can, I think, be accepted, without giving up the claim of aesthetics to have, as part of its data, a special domain of experience, since the peculiar character of the experience may lie in its totality, not in any one of its so-called "elements". L.Arnaud Reid, in his recent book, *A Study in Aesthetics*, seems to me to express a sound attitude

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1. What some people like to call the "aesthetic thrill", and seem to wish to take as the criterion of whether they have, in any particular case, genuinely had an aesthetic experience or not.

to this question. In asking whether there is "an" aesthetic emotion, he says, one must first ask, are there "special" emotions at all? The theory that there are is "untrue, if it is meant that each emotion is in some obscure way unique, <u>sui generis</u>, containing nothing in common with any other emotion. It is obvious if it is meant that each emotion, being a psychosis, is therefore concretely different from every other psychosis."[1] He thinks that the latter is the only tenable view, and that if we accept it the questions of "an" aesthetic emotion or even of "an" aesthetic experience need not trouble us. "To have an aesthetic experience is not to cast off human nature", and yet, "aesthetic experiences as a class are noticeably different in many ways from any others. Emotion is a psychosis in which, through organic and conative affective disturbance in relation to a particular object, there is experienced a certain degree of excitemant. The concrete character of any emotion depends upon each of these factors and upon their relations to one another. If this is true, every single emotion will be concretely different from every other, though some emotions, resembling others, may be classified roughly in certain groups." Aesthetic emotions, if thus considered, are genuine facts, and are, indeed, "aesthetic experiences with stress laid on their <u>excitement-aspect</u>."[2]

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1. Op. cit. p.135.
2. Ibid, same page.

An attempt must now be made to sum up this rather lengthy discussion of experience, and to show its bearing on the development of the main argument. The conclusion to which an examination of such typical analyses of experience as those described above leads is, I think, that however pertinent at some point to the philosophical study of aesthetics they may be, they do not, in themselves, provide any more satisfactory a starting-point than does the analysis of objects. The mere analysis of experience is obviously not philosophical at all, but psychological. And where this psychological analysis is used to provide a solution of a philosophical problem, as when some quality of experience - such as the sexual instinct, the interest in construction or the fact of unconscious conflict - is suggested as the 'explanation' of the appeal of art, the result, as has been shown, is liable to be too simple to be convincing. Moreover, this analysis of experience, even if correct, is concerned with only one aspect of a problem which is in reality two-fold. The detailed explanation of this statement must be deferred to the next chapter, but certain things concerning it ought perhaps to be said at this point. Just as the consideration of objects was found to involve a subjective reference, so the consideration of experience involves an objective reference. Whatever account is given of the nature of aesthetic experience, this does not exhaust the field of the enquiry. It is equally

important to enquire what kinds of objects, or what qualities of objective situations, fittingly arouse this kind of experience. This is where the necessity arises for a criterion of good and bad art, the lack of which was seen to lead to such unsatisfactory results in the psycho-analytical theories of art.

What all this amounts to is, I think, that the philosophical study of aesthetics might equally well be begun from either angle of approach, but that neither objects nor experiences must be considered in isolation. The following chapter must show in detail how this is possible.

CHAPTER 3

JUDGMENT

The conclusions reached at the end of the last chapter seem to involve some degree of contradiction. It was there concluded that the philosophy of aesthetics cannot begin with an analysis of objects, if that term is taken to refer to literal objects in the external world, nor with the mere analysis of experience as a psychological occurrence, and yet it was affirmed that both the objective and subjective aspects of the material must be considered, and that with equal impartiality. This apparent contradiction arises, I think, from the fact that in the sense in which aesthetics is correctly concerned with them, "objective" and "subjective" are inextricably interwoven, each reflexively implying the other, so that the attempt to separate them or to give either a prior and isolated interpretation can only lead to error. To decide what, precisely, is the aesthetic object, and what, precisely, is the nature and relevance of aesthetic experience, are two of the main problems of aesthetics, but nothing of value can result from the attempt to solve these problems before the enquiry has begun. The proper business of aesthetic philosophy lies, at any rate in its initial stages, not here,

but in the analysis of a certain fact or set of facts. It is true that these facts arise from what may be called the synthesis of objective and subjective elements, but, as will shortly be shown, the facts should be arrived at and formulated so as to make them susceptible of philosophical analysis without any initial interpretation of either the objective or subjective aspects.

The general character of these facts may be expressed in this way. Man, in the presence of certain aspects of his environment comments on it in a particular way. This formulation is not wholly satisfactory, for what has already been said about the possibility of constructing an aesthetic object out of imaginal or conceptual material makes the use of "environment" misleading, and what must later be said about the creative processes of the artist will make the term "comment" seem an extraordinarily inadequate and colourless one. But the precise wording of the formulation can be amended if occasion arises, and is not, perhaps, important, if it can be shown that what it attempts to express is a true fact, i.e. if it is a class of situations of this type which furnishes the relevant subject matter of aesthetic philosophy.

The chief concern of the present chapter must be to establish the truth of this contention. But at the outset one great difficulty occurs. Part of what is involved in

this process of confirmation will be the determination of the precise meaning to be attached to the terms "objective" and "subjective" in this connection, and yet, if the enquiry is to begin at all, some meaning must be given to the terms at the outset. This latter statement is in apparent contradiction to the remarks with which the chapter opened, but it is, I think, legitimate to begin in this way, if it is pointed out that the initial assignation of meaning is only methodological.

Since in at least some cases the relevant aesthetic situation arises apparently from a relation between experient and material object, it is proposed that this initial and methodological interpretation given to the terms under discussion should be that which has been criticised in the previous chapter, namely "objects" in the literal sense, and "experience". This will both give continuity to the treatment and, by revealing the difficulties to which even this degree of interpretation leads, may help towards the clarification of the genuine significance of the terms.

If the remark about synthesis is taken seriously, the varieties of situations resulting from this synthesis of objective and subjective will appear, on the face of it, well-nigh endless, since important differences may arise from both aspects, and it is at least possible that every situation

so resulting may be in some sense sui generis and unique, and therefore should receive separate consideration. But at this stage it may suffice to indicate some of the chief possibilities of difference which thus emerge.

From the objective side, as thus initially interpreted, will arise differences of the kind indicated in the discussion of objects in chapter two. It is at least possible that the resulting situation will be different according to whether the objective constituent is a work of art or an aspect of non-artistic nature, taking the latter term in its widest sense. Further, it has yet to be decided whether all the arts are on the same footing, so that the question must at this stage be left open that the varieties of medium may make differences which must be considered. And this leads to the query whether one should not make a like distinction within the realm of nature and consider separately situations within this class where the objective constituent, is, say, seen, heard or felt, and so on. That this contingency is not unworthy of consideration is indicated by the fact that almost all discussions of non-artistic beauty have been confined to visual phenomena.

Turning now to the subjective side, a fresh difficulty arises, for it does not seem possible simply to take "experience" as the subjective aspect affecting the total situation and to

outline the variations which might arise from differences in the nature of experience, in a way parallel to the above discussion of objects. It is not possible at this stage of the argument to state positively that the general type of aesthetic experience should be sub-divided, still less is it possible to give an account of what, in the experiences, constitutes the necessity for division. There is not, at the outset, an indisputable set of experiences in the same way that there <u>was</u> a set of objects. But it is possible to indicate what must be the causes for these varieties of experience if they do occur, and this is perhaps all that is relevant at the moment. If there are differences in experience these must arise either from differences in the object occasioning the experience, in some such way as has just been considered, or (since experience is obviously always the experience of someone and it is impossible to separate the experience from the experient) from some quality of the experient. The main difference that would have to be considered under this heading is, of course, that between the artist and the non-artist or layman. It is possible that this difference is not an important one[1], but it should at least be considered in any study of aesthetics which claims to

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1. cf Croce, "All men are born poets."

be serious and complete. Questions of the following kind should be discussed. Is the artist's attitude to his completed creation different in some important way from that of any other recipient, no matter how sensitive and well-equipped? Does the artist, for example, experience the "real" poem or picture, while the other recipients obtain only a series of approximations, of varying value, to this? Or, on the other hand, is the artist, because he has created it, unable to appreciate the creation, except technically, when he has completed it? The pre-occupation with a particular medium may also affect the artist's attitude to other works of art in the same medium as his own, making him either more than usually sensitive or, equally possibly perhaps, making him at times so critical of technique that he fails to be moved profoundly. One should also consider the attitude of the artist to works of art in media other than his own; whether the fact that he is, in his customary reactions to any one branch of art, more, or less, sensitive has any effect on his own creations. To take one example, is the literary artist who is outstandingly insensitive or outstandingly sensitive, to music, likely to produce prose or poetry of lower or higher value, rhythmically? Well-authenticated evidence along these lines might have important bearings on the relation or lack of relation between the arts.

This would give one large division of the field of possible variation. Another arises from the artist's relation to nature. Taking for granted the fact that the artist has some sort of "impulsive experience", as Lascelles Abercrombie has named it, preliminary to creation, the query arises whether this is of the same kind as the layman's appreciation of nature, or whether the fact that it is to lead to an artistic creation makes it _ab initio_ of a different species. It is possible, also, that the pre-occupation with a particular medium affects the artist's ordinary appreciation of nature, e.g. the painter may be peculiarly sensitive to shapes and colours, so that he has more and fuller purely _aesthetic_ experiences of these as exhibited in natural phenomena than does the layman. Or it may be that he either has impulsive experiences or else fails to be moved at all. He may not be able to see "likely material" purely aesthetically but may at all times, and not only when what he sees is afterwards to be transformed into some creative work, "see the world through his medium" as J.M. Thorburn expresses it.[1] There is also the problem of whether the artist's periodic absorption in some piece of creation makes him, throughout that period, more than usually insensitive to the purely aesthetic appeal of things around him. Is it imperative that, for the

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1. See "_Art and the Unconscious._" Ch.IV.

successful incubation of his project he should shut himself away from the distracting appeals of sense?[1]

Parallel to all these problems concerning the artist are a like set appertaining to the layman. It is not necessary to enumerate all these, but the fact that any one recipient may have some department of nature where he is peculiarly sensitive or some form of art where he is peculiarly insensitive, to take but two examples, might have considerable importance according to whether it was decided that these subjective factors did or did not form an essential and integral part of the total complex. As an example of a theory where facts of this kind have been thought thus significant one may quote the distinction made by Susan Miles in her article on Intuition and Beauty,[2] in which she considers the subjective factor to be an essential part of the resultant situation in the appreciation of nature but not of art.

"A complex whole of which beauty may be predicated will not, when a work of art is one of its constituents, include any of the emotional experiences of the spectator."[3]

"When we pass an aesthetic judgment upon a complex whole of which a natural object is a constituent, we pass a judgment

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1. J. Middleton Murry has made a detailed study of this question in relation to Keats. See "The Feel of not to Feel it" in Studies in Keats. pp.62 ff.
2. Monist. July 1925.
3. Op. cit. p.429.

which depends on our own personal act of apprehension and its accompanying emotion."[1]

"This difference in respect to emotional experience seems to be involved in the fundamental distinction between nature and art."[2]

In some such way as has been indicated, by combining these varying objective and subjective factors, the range of situations to be considered would be arrived at. But at this point the objection may be raised that in the discussion of experience as affected by the character of the individual recipient and by the nature of the object occasioning the experience, a different reference of the terms subjective and objective has been substituted for the original one; and it may be suggested that this substitution really gives the significant reference of the terms and not that relation holding between objects as such and experiences which has recently been discussed. For, it may be said, in the above discussion of experience, has not the objective side been constituted by precisely the same set of factors as in the original opposition, and is not therefore what the philosophy of aesthetics has to consider really experience as affected subjectively and objectively, and does not this reduce to that

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1. Ibid. p.430.
2. Ibid. p.429.

analysis of experience which has recently been condemned?

The objection, as put, is not a valid one, for 'experience' here has not been analysed into its components, but viewed in its relation to the total situation. Yet the objection is useful since it illustrates the contention made earlier, that even so much division of the aesthetic situation into its objective and subjective aspects as has been effected here leads to confusion of thought if undertaken before the correct philosophical principle which should control it has been understood. In the foregoing discussion, the subjective aspect, namely "experience" has been treated in some detail and has been found to involve a reference beyond itself to something objective, as well as a reference behind itself, as it were, to the experient, but had the objective aspect been given the same degree of analysis it would have been found equally implicative of the subjective side, and the objection might equally well have been put in the form that what the philosophy of aesthetics has to consider is a range of objects as affected in accordance with two factors. One of these would be the object in the literal sense, the "metaphysically objective" if the phrase may be permitted, but the other would be constituted by just those factors, the images, emotions, past experience of the recipient, which have recently been considered as typically subjective.

The plain truth of the matter seems to be this. As was

suggested at the end of the previous chapter, it would be equally possible to construct one's theory from either angle of approach, but whichever aspect is taken as the starting-point must not be considered in isolation from the other. A way must be found of so formulating the situation that it can be considered without bias, as a whole.

Thus, to take the approach from experience, aesthetic philosophy is not concerned with experiences simply as such. As experiences,and as far as the psychological analysis of them goes, they are all on the same footing. The concern of philosophy is whether they are valid experiences or not. It is obvious that if this is so, the experiences must have taken some more "external" form than is found in the mere onward flow of consciousness. The testing of validity involves evaluation and comparison, and for this to be possible, experience must be expressed as referring to a "what". It is here that the objective reference comes in. Whether that reference is to a literal object, as might appear at first sight to be the case in the appreciation of a statue or of a natural landscape; or whether to what has been called the psychologically objective, as may be thought true of the example of the enjoyment of a "neat" proof, need not be decided at the outset even if it were possible to do so. It may even be said that it is important not to attempt a solution of the problem at this point, nor of those as to whether the "what" is a common or a

private "what" or whether the total situation which thus becomes available for philosophical analysis does so because of some character peculiar to itself. It may be that <u>no</u> experience is susceptible of philosophical analysis until it has been formulated so as to include this objective reference, but this larger question can be ignored. All that is essential here is to find the particular formulation relevant for aesthetics.

It is difficult to decide how important in making urgent this formulation is the fact of error and of change of opinion. If we could by no manner of means be mistaken in our experience of the beautiful it is possible that the matter might have rested with the mere experiencing, or at any rate with a psychological analysis of it. But it is obvious that A may experience this or this about Y (taking Y to stand for any aesthetic object) while B either experiences otherwise or fails to be moved in any very definite way. So that in this case at any rate it becomes necessary to find a way of formulating the experiences of both A and B in order to get beyond private experiance to common discussion. Both A and B need to be able to indicate precisely <u>what</u> it is which occasions their individual experiences, since apparently these cannot have arisen from the same origin, and to express precisely the relevant character of the experiences thus occasioned in them.

Portrait of a Young Girl – Mainardi.

To face page 81.

Analogous to this are the cases where any one individual may feel perhaps intensely about a certain "work of art" (the use of the inverted commas may serve to indicate that no opinion as to its value as art is intended) only to discover, with the lapse of time or the development of knowledge, that the thing no longer moves him; or where he may come to appreciate a work which at one time had no aesthetic significance for him. Everyone, probably, could find many such instances in his own experience. A detailed personal example may help to bring out the philosophical significance of facts of this kind.

When I first became familiar with Mainardi's "Portrait of a Young Girl", I quite definitely disliked it. The workmanship seemed crude, particularly the flatness of colour and the monotonous regularity of the rendering of the hair. The girl, too, seemed uninteresting viewed from the human standpoint. I am unable to recall exactly how the portrait changed in significance for me: whether there was some moment of revelation which I have forgotten, or whether the process of transformation was a gradual one, but for some time, at a later date, the picture seemed to me one of the most beautiful things I knew. Beautiful as art, in the colouring, rhythm of the painting, poise and placing of the head, and so on; and, moreover pleasing in the not- purely-artistic sense that the young girl's face seemed literally to have changed its

character, appearing now very attractive in its gentle, naive sweetness. At the present time, although the portrait still has my artistic approval, the experience it occasions in me has become much less intense, or at least much less emotional.

It may be said that in the first of these three stages I was not having an artistic experience at all, that I had failed to see the genuine aesthetic object. Certainly some of the facts determining my opinion were not aesthetic facts. But the very fact that it is thus possible for the recipient to fail in artistic appreciation and for what on all occasions equally seems to be the _direct_ object of apprehension thus to change its character makes it imperative to arrive at a method of determining precisely what the genuine aesthetic object is and what the genuine aesthetic reaction. _What_, in the above example did I consider 'ugly' and what 'beautiful', and in which of the alternative situations was I genuinely affected? How much of the content and reference of my experience was aesthetically relevant? What philosophical explanation is to be given of the surprising fact that the girl really did seem to look _different_ during the first and second stages of my changing opinion?

These more critical and obvious cases of disagreement and change, however, merely exemplify in an extreme form a problem which is equally relevant whether the experience be valid or invalid. The facts of error and disagreement may draw

attention to the problem, but do not exclusively constitute it. This problem is that with which the chapter as a whole has been concerned, namely the discovery of some principle by the aid of which both the subjective and objective aspects may be considered without bias as occasion arises, and their correct significance determined. The necessity for a particular kind of formulation arises from the nature of the relevant aesthetic situations, apart from the question of error. Where there is difference or change of opinion the "what" in at least one instance must have been a private "what", and this raises the larger question whether it is in all cases thus private, i.e. it is equally imperative to discover what in all cases is the precise interpretation to be given to the objective aspect of the situation.

This reverts to the problem raised on page eighty of the present chapter, - namely what is the particular formulation of experience relevant for aesthetics. The thesis to be developed here is that this formulation is to be found in a judgment of a particular kind. This arises from the fact that the situation is itself one of judgment, as was implied by the use of the term "comment" in the original account of the aesthetic fact, but the comment is, of course, of a particular kind and its character must be reflected in the form of judgment adopted. It is obvious that the mere externalisation

of experience may issue in judgments which are not aesthetic. For example, the judgments may refer simply to experience, as when A says, "The experience I had from reading this novel was a worthless one," "My thoughts this morning were thick and turgid," "This was an aesthetic experience," and so on. Some of these judgments upon experience may be aesthetically relevant in that they express something about the experience which the aesthetic philosopher needs to know, but they do not furnish the required starting-point. This must be a judgment of such a form that it adequately symbolises the essential character of the aesthetic fact, with its two-fold reference, outwards to the objective, inwards to the subjective, and yet must be as non-committal as possible. That is, the judgment must not express a completed theory, of the nature of beauty for example, but must be a trustworthy instrument for the construction of theory. For this reason, such judgments as "Beauty consists in the imaginative or sensuous expression of unity in variety[1]" are not what is needed. The form of judgment required is one which expresses in a general way the peculiar character of the aesthetic fact, but which arises spontaneously from it before any <u>theory</u> as to the interpretation to be given to its terms has been constructed.

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1. B. Bosanquet. <u>History of Aesthetic.</u> p.30.

Thus the general form of the symbolisation, "X judges that p is q," must be filled out so as to be expressive of this peculiar aesthetic character. As it stands the formulation is obviously inclusive of much that is not aesthetically relevant, since any character whatever may be the interpretation of q. It is true that when he judges aesthetically the individual is also aware of many things which are apparently of the same type as those he is aware of in non-aesthetic situations, e.g. Pictures have colours, as have the walls they hang on, statues have weight and solidity, and so on. But these facts are not important. What must be sought is a formulation of the peculiarity aesthetic character of the complex, i.e. how must the scheme, "X judges that p is q", be filled out so as to express the aesthetic fact.

Through the inclusion of X, the formulation may appear particularly adequate to deal with the problem of the possible difference contributed by the character of the individual recipient (artist or layman, and so on), yet this element cannot be analysed by itself in isolation from the rest of the complex. It is only important in so far as it does affect the total situation and the consideration of its effect can be best approached from the analysis of the objective constituents of the complete act of judging, namely what is judged and what is predicated of it. A complete analysis

of these will include a reference back to the individual performing the act of judgment where this is necessary. What is essential, therefore, is the filling out of the "p is q". Various alternative propositions suggest themselves as the interpretation of this, e.g.

> This pleases me.
>
> This is aesthetically satisfying.
>
> This moves me.
>
> This has Significant Form.
>
> This is beautiful.

Others might be added, but these are, I think, sufficiently varied to bring out the main points. The choice of 'This' as the logical subject will be justified in detail shortly. Its advantage at this stage is that it enables <u>any</u> type of relevant situation to be referred to indifferently, since judgment is always passed upon a "somewhat", whatever is the ultimate analysis of it.

In some of these alternative expressions the subjective reference is explicit, as in "This moves <u>me</u>", "This pleases <u>me</u>", but, unexpected as this may seem on a first view, these formulations are not the most satisfactory ones. For the use of "me" may be misleading if it suggests that the attribution of aesthetic value is a personal and subjective matter. It may be so, but there are no grounds at this stage for making such

an assertion. Moreover the predicate "pleases me" does not sufficiently single out the aesthetic situation from others. Something should be added akin to "pleases after a particular manner", and even so it is not satisfactory, since it cannot be concluded at this initial stage that "pleases" is the relevant predicate. These criticisms apply also to the formulation "This moves me".

Such an expression as "This has Significant Form", on the other hand is unsatisfactory for the opposite reason, that it is too definite, implying that a considerable amount of constructive thought has already taken place. Of the other two suggested forms of the judgment, "This is aesthetically satisfying" might be thought suitable, since it would be adequate to express <u>any</u> of the relevant situations, but its predicate is merely tautologous, since what is <u>meant</u> by a relevant situation in this connection is one that is aesthetically satisfying.

As will shortly be indicated, provided the form of judgment is correctly chosen, the precise term used for the predicate is not of great importance at the outset. But since the aim of most investigations on aesthetics is the formulation of a definition of beauty, it is proposed here to take as the general form of the objective constituent, the one usually adopted, namely, "This is beautiful", since the use

of the term 'beautiful' may furnish an opportunity of testing some current conceptions and of enquiring whether it is in all cases an adequate predicate. The objective constituent does not, of course, symbolise the whole of the aesthetic fact. For this the complete form "X judges that this is beautiful" is required. But, as was stated above, reference to the X is best made through the analysis of the objective constituent, "This is beautiful". This will in future be referred to as "the judgment" in preference to "the proposition", as this may keep in mind the fact that it does not symbolise the whole of the relevant judgment-situation.

That the essential character of the aesthetic fact is one of judgment must be more fully supported in the next chapter. But at the outset the adoption of a judgment of this type as the starting-point for investigation may be seen to have the following advantages.

The choice of "This" as the logical subject of the judgment makes clear the objective reference of the situation while avoiding any unjustified specification of its nature. The reference of the logical subject may be either to the psychologically or to the metaphysically objective. Just what, precisely, is its reference is probably the main question which the philosophy of aesthetics has to answer, and the judgment as thus formulated affords the best means of doing so,

since it clearly defines the problem without in any way prejudicing the solution of it. It is equally possible at the outset that the reference of the "This" may be to a literal material object or to the experience of the recipient framing the judgment. All that the subject of the judgment specifies is the indisputable fact that the judgment is passed on something.

This particular choice of logical subject also has the advantage that the judgment may be used to guide the analysis of any one of the relevant situations, whether these arise from the appreciation of a work of art, or of an aspect of natural beauty, or of the "merely aesthetic[1]". It thus affords a common ground of analysis and comparison and opens the way to that impartial consideration of particular instances on which alone can conclusions concerning the degree of importance to be attached to these differences in the objective occasion be based.

The same advantages follow in respect to the possible differences contributed by the nature of the individual recipient. It has been suggested already that these can usefully be considered only as the analysis of the judgment "This is beautiful" makes it necessary, and now that the correct principle of investigation has been made clear it is possible

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1. This concept will be analysed in the next chapter.

to arrive at the solution of the difficulties concerning the interpretation to be given to the terms "objective" and "subjective" which were discussed in the earlier part of this chapter. It should now be agreed that the objective reference in the total situation is adequately represented only by the logical subject of the judgment, and that the analysis of this may with equal probability involve a consideration of either 'objective' or 'subjective' factors as originally discussed.

Another point of interest arises from this choice of logical subject. 'This' is essentially a symbol which refers to the particular, and although, of course, nothing as to the specific nature of that to which it refers can be deduced from the form of the symbol, its employment here as logical subject may serve to emphasise the fact that aesthetics is concerned with the individual and not with the general, and must construct its theory from the analysis of particular instances.

One other point arises from the logical character of the subject of the judgment. Although 'this', as used in the judgment, "This is beautiful" is not merely a demonstrative symbol, since what it refers to is not of the same type as in a judgment such as "This is red", yet its use indicates that there is a demonstrative element in the total situation. This is reflected in the fact that the individual experient <u>seems</u> in all cases equally to be in a direct relation to the objective occasion

of his experience, even when he afterwards, as in the instance of the Mainardi portrait, changes his opinion of it, or when, as sometimes happens, two experients in the presence of the same objective occasion differ radically in the judgment they pass. This raises from another angle the problem of what is the nature of the aesthetic object, which has been stated more than once already to be a central problem for the philosophy of aesthetics. The character of the logical subject of the judgment may serve to emphasise the necessity of discovering what precisely it is which seems thus in direct relation to the experient, and why, if thus direct, it can yet apparently change while the objective occasion remains the same.

One danger which may arise from this suggested method of investigation should perhaps be mentioned here. The statement that the aesthetic judgment as a whole[1] adequately symbolises the aesthetic fact by its synthesis of subjective and objective into what, following G.E.Moore, may be called the organic unity with whose analysis aesthetics is concerned, must not be translated into the theory that in the objective constituent of the judgment-situation, i.e. "This is beautiful", the logical subject refers to an object and the predicate to

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1. i.e. as inclusive of the act of judgment as well as the actual judgment which is pronounced.

experience. It might be thought, on the basis of such failures to appreciate as have been instanced above, with the facts of change and development of opinion, that the character denoted by the predicate 'beautiful' is not 'other than' the individual recipient in the same way as are the characters denoted by such predicates as 'square' or 'solid'. This is certainly true in so far as the predicate does symbolise what has been referred to here as the individual's comment or attitude,[1] but this would be no less true if, after the process of investigation, the essential feature making the judgment of beauty possible were found to lie in a purely perceptual character of some object. The true subjective reference is to be found in the "X judges that ....", and the import of both subject and predicate, "This" and "beautiful" must, at the outset, be taken to be "significant of some kind of relation" rather than "meaning this or this", and it is this relation which must be analysed and understood. In doing so, it may be emphasised once more in conclusion, the important problem is the nature of whatever is referred to by 'This'. Even if it were decided to begin the investigation by considering what is meant by the predicate 'beautiful' this would be found to involve an analysis of that to which the predicate is applied, in order to discover what, among its qualities and

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1. i.e. "beautiful" is a value predicate.

relations[1] constituted its character of beauty. It may not be necessary to attempt an analysis of the concept of beauty at all except in this connection: i.e. the predicate may simply be the sign that a certain complex has come into existence, and the nature of the complex may differ very widely on different occasions without necessitating a variation in the meaning of the predicate, as denoting some one character of the whole. Whether this proves on investigation to be so or not, it seems, once more, that the problem is best attacked through the analysis of the nature of the complex. The rest of the investigation must be devoted to this problem of analysis as it presents itself at various levels of complexity.

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1. Including in the latter term, of course, those arising out of its relation to the individual recipient.

CHAPTER 4

THE AESTHETIC MINIMUM

In the previous Chapter some attempt was made to show how great a variety of situations, all relevant for the philosophy of aesthetics, arises from the synthesis of the objective and subjective elements of its contributary material, and it was stated that ideally each of these should be given individual analysis. Something of this will be attempted in the course of the investigation, but before this can usefully be carried out, an attempt should be made, first to determine whether there is anything in common to all these situations, and whether this gives what it is proposed here to call an "aesthetic minimum," and secondly whether within the class of situations thus delimited any broad grouping can be made. It might be supposed that the first of these statements must be implied by the fact that any one situation is included in the data of aesthetics, and this is true in so far as in every case the judgment "This is beautiful" is equivalent to "Here is a situation relevant for aesthetics," but it *might* be the case that all these situations had nothing in common beyond the fact that they were thus relevant. So that it seems justifiable to ask, is there any useful sense in which in *all*

cases, "This is beautiful" can be taken as equivalent <u>simply</u> to "This is aesthetically satisfying," and is this <u>all</u> that it means in every case, or (and this leads to the second of the two topics) has the judgment in broad classes of cases a significance additional to this, but for the emergence of which the first character is necessary?

The latter is the thesis I wish to maintain, namely, that in all situations relevant for aesthetics there is something which can be called the "aesthetic minimum," and which provides a principle of exclusion and inclusion. But this is not an adequate and sufficient explanation in <u>every</u> case, although it seems the only relevant factor in some, i.e. I am here differing from Croce,[1] whose theory of beauty is that it is a universal which contains individuals but no species.

Within the total class of situations satisfying the conditions of this aesthetic minimum there seem to be four broad types, arising from that synthesis of objective and subjective discussed in Chapter 3, and affected in varying degrees from both sides of the relation, and it seems possible,

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1. "A classification of intuition expressions - is not philosophical: individual expressive facts are so many individuals, not one of which is interchangeable with another, save in its common quality of expression. To employ the language of the schools: expression is a species which cannot function in its turn as a genus." <u>Aesthetic</u>: Trans.D.Ainslie, 2nd Edition, pp. 67-68.

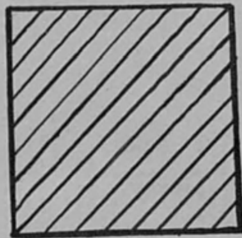
in the first stage of the investigation, to deal with these <u>as</u> four types, disregarding the possibility that important differences within the types may be contributed by the more individual factors (particularly of the subjective aspect) which have been mentioned.

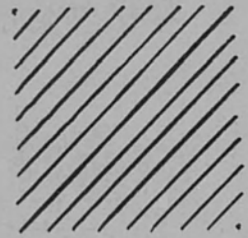
It is obvious that behind a statement of this kind there must be a set of reasons arrived at through a process of inductive research, and it might be thought more in keeping with the method of investigation which has been advocated here if the conclusions were stated at the end and not at the beginning, but I think it can be shown that providing the reasons justifying the conclusions are subsequently revealed, greater clarity may be attained by first stating the conclusions and then working back, through the justification, to the restatement of them.

In dealing with these four types, bearing in mind what has been said about the mutual implication of subjective and objective in the total complex, it seems justifiable to name them indifferently, as seems the more convenient in any one case, from the object, material or psychological, constituting one aspect of them, or from the experience aroused in the individual recipient through the medium of the object. The ideal procedure would be to recreate actual examples of the four types of situation here and now, and as far as is possible

this will be attempted. But there are, of course, enormous difficulties to be overcome here, and some of these, from the very nature of the type of situation which it would be desirable to recreate, are, as will be seen, insuperable.

These four types may be arranged in a hierarchy or order, according to their degree of aesthetic value. At the lowest level are situations of the type which may be called the "merely aesthetic." This phrase may, at the outset, be interpreted indifferently into terms of its objective or its subjective constituents, when the former may be called a "merely aesthetic" object or the latter a "merely aesthetic" experience, provided it is borne in mind that finally an analysis of both these terms must be given. This type seems to contain the aesthetic minimum and very little, if anything, else, and its essential feature seems to be incorporated into _every_ type of relevant situation. This statement must be justified in detail at a later stage of the argument, but one example of the sort of fact which is meant may be given here. Everyone is familiar, no doubt, with the fact that in visiting a picture gallery or attending a concert, "saturation point", due to fatigue, is often reached. After this point it is still possible to go on looking at the pictures or listening to the music, and with a certain degree of interest, but the whole complex seems to have shrunk in size. One sees something in the pictures, one hears some-





To face page 98.

thing in the music, which is known <u>not</u> to be the whole, although one can no longer comprehend what the whole would be like. It seems that here the situation, which is capable of being much <u>more</u>, has become a "merely aesthetic" one.

The analysis of the "merely aesthetic" and of the other types of relevant situations, will be given in detail in this and the subsequent chapters. During that analysis it would be profitable, I think, to turn back from time to time to the examples of those situations which are now to be given (or to others comparable to them, if this is preferred) and to re-create the actual situations from the material here given. One of the dangers in any theoretical discussion of aesthetics is that the actual data from which the theory ought to be constructed may be lost sight of, so that the resulting conclusions do not fit the facts. This difficulty is not entirely surmountable, for the reproductions of pictures here given can only be reproductions, and apart from this the only form of art which it is possible to use is literature, so that it is conceivable that only one of a set of equally important but not perhaps entirely comparable situations may be recreated. But the method, it is hoped, is as near to the ideal as it is possible to get.

First, for an example of the merely aesthetic: Of the squares given on the opposite page, it seems to me possible with <u>ease</u> to treat the one on the right-hand side as a merely

aesthetic object, or (to translate the phrase into its subjective equivalent) to obtain from it a merely aesthetic experience. This seems much more readily achievable in this case than in that of the left-hand square. This has not only proved so in my own personal experience but has been supported by the spontaneous preference of a considerable number of individuals, when confronted with the two squares, for that on the right-hand side. The comparison is not at the moment significant except in this particular connection, although it will be referred to again when the attempt is made to analyse the concept of the "merely aesthetic"; so that the left-hand square may be disregarded. In order that the relevant situation should be recreated, all that is required is to contemplate the right-hand square, as far as possible, simply as it is in itself. It should perhaps be pointed out that there is nothing particularly significant in the choice of this example rather than another. It was selected because it seems sufficiently complex to illustrate the required fact and sufficiently simple to make its merely aesthetic character the only significant one. If a more complex example had been taken it would still have been possible to view it merely aesthetically, but special conditions would have been necessary to ensure that this response was all that was called forth. If the example calls out no response which, on introspective evidence, it seems justifiable

to describe as aesthetic, others may be substituted, after the concept of the "merely aesthetic" has been more fully explicated. A shape, such as a lamp or a star, cut out in cardboard and tilted at various angles with a strong light behind it, so that a variety of shadows is thrown on to a sheet of paper, would serve equally well, or one of the examples given in Chapter two of the type of the line of factory windows or the blurred shadow on the hair-cord carpet.

Next in order of value and complexity to the merely aesthetic is that type of situation which I propose here to call the "purely aesthetic appreciation of nature." Reserving, again, the analysis of what constitutes its peculiar character, it is proposed now simply to give examples which it is hoped will lead to the re-creation of the situation. The chief obstacle to this is the necessity for the employment of words, for it is possible that if the words serve adequately to recreate the situation they may in themselves form a work of art, and the appreciation of their fitness may enter as a component of the total complex. To avoid this, I propose to give some extracts from Wolf Solent, a novel, by J.C. Powys. It seems to me that this purely aesthetic appreciation of nature may form part of the "stuff" of a longer poem or of a novel, where its artistic significance lies only in its relation to the whole and where the value of the words is simply in their power to evoke the relevant imagery. So

that it seems possible, in reading the following passages, to give oneself up to the images called out, trying to feel as if one were in the presence of the things described, without criticising the form of expression.

"The atmosphere was cooler when they came out of the church. Its taste was the taste of an air that has been blown over leagues and leagues of green stalks full of chilly sap. It made Solent think of water-buttercups in windy ponds, and the splash of moor-hens over dark, gurgling weirs."[1]

"It was along the edge of a small tributary full of marsh-marigolds that they approached the river bank. Gerda was so impatient to hear a water-rat splash that she scarcely glanced at these great yellow orbs rising from thick, mud-stained stalks and burnished leaves."[2]

As a last exaple of this type may be given the following extract from one of my own journals, since its purpose merely to recapture an experience of the type now under discussion, and its particular choice of subject, will lead on to the contrasted example of the next type.

"You climb the sandhill in the dust and heat, and as you reach the crest, there before you is the sudden, aching beauty of the sea. Such a sweep of empty wet sand from point to point of the bay, and the water so gentle and pale, with a tiny curl of white where it laps on the shore."

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1. Op. cit. p 29.
2. Ibid. p 104.

Contrast with this the following sonnet of Keats:

"It keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from where it sometime fell,
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
O ye! who have your eye-balls vex'd and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the sea;
O ye! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody -
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!"

This exemplifies the third class of situations; those arising out of the appreciation of art. Any other work of art, literary or otherwise, may be substituted for the above in order to recreate the situation, if it is preferred. This sonnet of Keats has been chosen, apart from its obvious artistic merit, because its subject (i.e. the non-aesthetic topic of it, _not_ the artistic theme, which would involve the particular manner of presentation) is the same as in the last example of the second type, and so may later serve as a basis for comparison, and also because it is possible to indicate, although not to re-create, the situation of the

fourth type parallel to it.

The sonnet was written while Keats was in the Isle of Wight and appears in a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, April 17th, 1817, in this context:

"Yesterday I went to Shanklin .... a most beautiful place - sloping wood and meadow ground reach round the Chine, which is a cleft between the cliffs of the depth of nearly 300 feet at least. This cleft is filled with trees and bushes in the narrow part, and as it widens becomes bare, if it were not for primroses at one side, which spread to the very verge of the Sea, and some fisherman's huts on the other, perched midway on the Balustrades of beautiful green Hedges along their steps down to the sands. But the sea, Jack, the sea - the little waterfall - then the white cliff - then St. Catherine's Hill - 'the sheep in the meadows, the cows in the corn' ..... From want of regular rest I have been rather narvous - and the passage in Lear - 'Do you not hear the sea?' has haunted me intensely."

Then, with no introduction comes the sonnet quoted above, and later on the letter continues:

"I had become all in a Tremble from not having written anything of late - the Sonnet over leaf did me good. I slept the better last night for it - this Morning, however, I am nearly as bad again."

The significant passages here are, "But the sea, Jack,

the sea!", and the reference to King Lear, "Do you not hear the sea?" The significance of the latter will best be revealed in the fuller treatment of the topic which must be given in the next chapter. The texture of the whole passage makes it clear, I think, that the first of these phrases refers to the experience from which the sonnet On the Sea arose. Following the procedure of Lascelles Abercrombie this will be called here the Impulsive Experience of the artist.[1] This gives the last of the four relevant types of situation. This type has a peculiar status. It is obvious that, whatever its characteristics, it cannot, as could the other types, be re-created from an example. Moreover it cannot even be interpreted or understood, except indirectly and by imaginative grasp from the record of it given by the artist. One may wish that direct understanding were possible here. It would be extremely satisfying to one's intellectual curiosity if one could know exactly <u>what</u> lay behind Keats's exclamation, "But the sea, Jack, the sea!" but from the nature of the case this is impossible. All that one is given is the <u>sonnet</u> in its completed form, not the germ of the sonnet at the moment of its creation. Keats

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1. "The experience which art exists to express, its motive or origin or inspiration, I shall call impulsive experience; this is what happened to the artist, and moved him to design its communication in a work of art." <u>Towards a Theory of Art</u>. p.56.

could not have been more explicit in his reference to the latter. Had he been, he would either not have writtmn the sonnet at all, or, supposing him to have deferred the attempt to recapture the original experience until after the sonnet had been written, would have described not the pure impulsive experience but something coloured and distorted by the subsequent constructive process. This statement is admittedly dogmatic, and it is proposed to leave it so here, since this type of situation is of such peculiar interest and importance that it must be treated in detail in the following chapter.

This gives the range of relevant situations. It must now be shown, first, what it is that is common to all and which merits the name of the "aesthetic minimum", and, secondly, in what way the four types constitute a hierarchy of values. The clearest method of showing this seems to be to consider the first and simplest type in isolation, leaving the discussion of how this minimum enters into the other complexes until a later stage of the argument.

In discussing the aesthetic minimum several points must consistently be kept in mind. Remembering what has been said about the mutual implication of objective and subjective any remarks about the characters of objects or the qualities of experience must be interpreted as, in a sense, dealing with an abstraction, yet both must be considered if the total complex

is rightly to be understood. The method of investigation, also, must be one which arises out of the consideration of the aesthetic judgment. Leaving out of account for the present whatever interpretation may ultimately be given to the predicate of the judgment, the question to be answered at this point is, what, in the type of situation now under consideration, is the analysis to be given of the logical subject of the judgment? To what does the "This" refer?

The problem is best approached from the subjective side of the complex. The essence of the aesthetic minimum lies in some _attitude_ on the part of the individual recipient: the aesthetic attitude. To seek for the aesthetic minimum here is more profitable than to seek it in the mere analysis of experience, for an attitude must always be taken _to_ something and therefore implies an objective reference of some kind. Moreover there is an essential connection between this way of approach and the problem of the analysis of the aesthetic judgment, for the aesthetic attitude has implicit in it an element which gives rise naturally to the judgment, so that the question may be reformulated as, what, precisely is judged of an object when it is made the reference of an aesthetic judgment of the simplest possible kind? An answer to this question involves the consideration of both subjective and objective aspects, for it will not only necessitate the evaluation of what qualities an object must

have to constitute it an aesthetic object, but will also include the analysis of experience in order to discover the significance of the <u>aesthetic</u> character of the judgment.

The analysis of the concept "taking the aesthetic attitude to", should be on these lines:- Our normal way of experiencing does not imply anything so static as "taking an attitude". Experience, as we know it by living through it, is continuous, ever-flowing, perpatually changing, so that even to speak of "an" experience is to effect a certain degree of abstraction. This onward flow of experience is not shut up within a closed circle, but perpetually plays upon and is played upon by a succession of objects. This seems true, however we interpret "objects", metaphysically. But the attention of the subject of the experience is for the most part fixed on some end to be attained, this end, as soon as attained, passing into some other end, with the consequence that objects as involved in the process, are considered not as they are in themselves and for their own sakes, but as means to the desired end, or as signs or symbols calling for one response or another on the part of the experiencer. Even the elements of experience itself seem often to have only this signatory value, as when, in the case of a rapid thought process we snatch the meaning and relevance out of a succession of extremely fragmentary images without letting any one of them develop.

But it is possible for both objects and experience to take on a different character. From time to time something seems to happen to the onward flow of experience. It is, as it were, checked or interrupted, so that for the moment the intricate network of past and future is broken across. As the result of this the characters of the immediate experience come to clarified expression in a way which does not usually occur. This check to experience is usually initiated from without, and the experience remains orientated to an object. Something strikes the attention and focusses the fugitive experience on to itself, so that what the individual is aware of is not that his experience has been switched on to a different plane or has become clarified and elaborated, but that an object of a peculiarly satisfying kind has been presented to him. He becomes aware of an object or set of objects of such immediate interest that the mere contemplation of them is satisfying in itself. This contemplation of objects for their own sakes is equivalent to passing upon them an immediate judgment of value. They are cognized as having a value which depends simply upon their own character, not on any properties arising from their relations to other things or from their practical or ethical import. This constitutes the aesthetic judgment and to judge thus is to take the aesthetic attitude. This attitude is distinguished from others, such as the moral, critical or

practical attitudes by the fact that it, unlike them, does not involve a reference beyond either the immediate object of apprehension or the immediate characters of experience. Simply to let the immediate experience develop is to experience aesthetically, and to take the aesthetic attitude, whereas the other attitudes depend on the making of associations.

It was stated above that in experiencing aesthetically the individual is usually aware of the characters of the object rather than of the quality of his own experience, but it is possible for experience itself to become the object of contemplation, in which case the individual stands "over-against" it, and passes the judgment of immediate value upon it. For example, where the individual has a wealth of past experience of natural beauty it may very easily happen that a vivid image is "touched off" by some quite trivial and valueless object, so that the attitude is taken to, and the judgment passed on, the images aroused and not the object at all. An instance of this occurred recently in my own experience, when, on seeing the half-completed picture of a pavement-artist, on which was represented roughly a yellow evening sky cut across diagonally by a slope of dark hillside, I experienced a very vivid memory image of an actual scene of this kind and reacted with considerable intensity to it, my experience having the character of a genuine appreciation

of natural beauty, in spite of the fact that I had scarcely glanced at the object arousing it. Here, experience itself had become the object of appreciation.

But of whatever kind the object of aesthetic appreciation is, certain things remain true both of it and of the experience which it arouses. One of the most outstanding of these is that the characters of both experience and object are more clearly differentiated. The qualities of the object become more vivid. Things are literally more clearly perceived and on some occasions can almost visibly be seen to change their appearance as the result of the aesthetic contemplation of them. Concomitantly the elements of experience are less diffused and vague. This is, of course, what one would expect. Whatever qualities were possessed potentially by an experience, would naturally come to fuller and clearer expression if there were no need for them to issue in action and if they were allowed to develop in relation only to themselves, than if they were either in conflict with other opposed tendencies or were "spread over" and diffused into the ordinary flow of experience.

These facts, however, must not be interpreted as meaning that the emotional characters of experience are therefore of greater intensity. The cutting off of emotion from its natural expression in action does not in this case,

as when it is baulked of its goal by outward opposition, result in a piling-up of tension, but leads to a different way of feeling, which is at the same time both weaker and clearer. It may be expressed as knowing what it is to feel anger or fear rather than being actually moved by the one or the other.

Roger Fry very clearly expresses this character of the aesthetic attitude.

"The needs of our actual life are so imperative, that the sense of vision becomes highly specialised in their service. With an admirable economy we learn to see only so much as is needful for our purposes; but this is in fact very little, just enough to recognize and identify each object or person; that done, they go into an entry in our mental catalogue and are no more really seen. In actual life the normal person really only reads the labels, as it were, on the objects around him and troubles no further."[1]

In the secondary, imaginative life, however, a different kind of vision is attained, whereby things are regarded with "intense, disinterested contemplation." On looking at things in a mirror, for example, he says,

"It is easier to abstract ourselves completely, and

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1. Vision and Design. pp.24-25. Phoenix Library edition.

look upon the changing scene as a whole. It then, at once, takes on the visionary quality, and we become true spectators, not selecting what we will see, but seeing everything equally, and thereby we come to notice a number of appearances and relations of appearances which would have escaped our notice before."[1]

The character of emotions also changes. "The need for responsive action hurries us along and prevents us from ever realising fully what the emotion is that we feel, from co-ordinating it perfectly with other states. In short, the motives we actually experience are too close to us to enable us to feel them clearly. They are in a sense unintelligible. In the imaginative life, on the contrary, we can both feel the emotion and watch it."[2]

But to talk, as Mr. Fry does here, about emotion implies that the situation under discussion has become much more than "merely aesthetic". <u>Feeling</u> of some kind must be present as a consequence of the fact that the aesthetic judgment is a value-judgment, but in the simplest cases this feeling element is not anything that could be called a specific emotion. (Hence the futility of seeking the essence of the aesthetic fact in the analysis of a peculiar kind of emotion.) Emotions

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1. Ibid. pp.19-20.
2. Ibid. pp.26-27.

may form part of the total complex, but they are not essential to its aesthetic character. To experience aesthetically one need not be emotionally "moved" at all. The feeling element may simply be that tone which is given to the experience by the cognition of an object which satisfies conation in the mere experiencing of it. All that is essential for the aesthetic minimum on the side of experience is that the experiencer should be in the right attitude of receptiveness, of refusal to be "carried on" in any of the multitudinous ways open to him. The refusal, of course, is not a conscious, volitional decision: if it were so, and if the experience had to be maintained by an effort, it is obvious that one would cease at once to experience aesthetically. One is held by the object and by the satisfaction afforded by the mere contemplation of it. A good example of how the aesthetic attitude may be broken into and destroyed by the intrusion of something beyond the immediate experience and its object is given below. Here again, of course, the situation contains much more than the aesthetic minimum, but the principle is the same.

"At last, however, he came to a halt. He was describing, as all young poets are for ever describing, nature, and in order to match the shade of green precisely, he looked (and here he showed more audacity than most) at the thing

itself, which happened to be a laurel bush growing beneath the window. After that, of course, he could write no more. Green in nature is one thing, green in literature another. Nature and letters seem to have a natural antipathy; bring them together and they tear each other to pieces. The shade of green Orlando now saw spoilt his rhyme and split his metre. Moreover, Nature has tricks of her own. Once look out of a window at bees among flowers, at a yawning dog, at the sun setting, once think, "how many more suns shall I see set", etc. etc. (the thought is too well known to be worth writing out) and one drops the pen, takes one's cloak, strides out of the room, and catches one's foot on a painted chest as one does so. For Orlando was a trifle clumsy."[1]

It seems true to say, then, that merely to let experience develop, in the way which has been described, is to experience aesthetically. This may be what Lascelles Abercrombie means by his "pure aesthetic experience; that is to say, ... experience that does not look outside itself for its value."[2] But the concept "letting experience develop" must be further analysed, and its connection with the other three types of situation in which, if what has been said above is true, it is also a factor, must be made

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1. Orlando. Virginia Wolfe. p.18.
2. Towards a Theory of Art. p.22.

clear.

The common factor in all these situations seems to be one of <u>externalisation</u>. What is externalised will vary enormously in complexity and value, as well as in actual content, so that the difference between, say, the contemplation of the print of a bird's foot on the snow and the hearing of Bach's <u>Aria in D Major</u> may well appear specific, but there is none the less something common to both situations. In the simplest cases the fact of externalisation in itself is the most important characteristic, although of course what is externalised must have a certain content, and this may imply certain characters in the aesthetic object. In the more complex cases the mere fact of externalisation seems to become relatively less important as what is externalised increases in value, but it is nevertheless indispensable as the means for the emergence of that value.

Where experience "develops", as has been stated above, what happens is that some "shock" or "jar" is given to the ordinary flow of consciousness, so that the present moment of it, with its characters, is put "over-against" the recipient, and <u>could</u> itself become an object of contemplation, although this does not commonly happen. The usual result is that the experience is "externalised" <u>on to</u> some object, in the form of what has been called an immediate judgment of value.

Externalisation in this its easiest and most simple form demands the minimum of effort on the part of the experiencer. It is possible in a good many cases to bring this lowest type of situation into momentary being by deliberate exercise of a certain kind of conscious selection but there seems a subtle difference between these occasions and those where the aesthetic object is spontaneously manifested, and for the most part the recipient seems relatively passive, in that the thing happens to him rather than is brought about by him. But this passiveness is apparent, not real, for if the problem is considered, as it must be, from the standpoint of the object also, it will be found that the reference of the "this" in this type of situation is, directly, to a psychological and not to a metaphysical object. In this sense it is true to say that the aesthetic minimum is contributed by the mind, in that it is possible for anything at all to be viewed aesthetically provided that it does give scope for this activity on the part of the experiencer. This gives a lower limit of simplicity. Reference was made earlier to the fact that in the aesthetic situation the object held the attention and, by focussing the experience upon itself, brought about that developing or flowering which constitutes its aesthetic character. It is obvious that if this is to happen the object must not be too simple. A mere dot would fatigue

the attention and stifle rather than develop the experience focussed upon it. This is probably the reason why the left hand square[1] was so much more recalcitrant to aesthetic apprehension than that on the right. It is so complete that nothing is left to the imagination, whereas in contemplating the right-hand square some activity is demanded of the mind in order to hold the diagonal lines together and to see them as a unity, supplying, as it were, the bounding line in imagination, but <u>not</u> actually seeing it as there. This example reveals an important character of the objective side of the situation. Whatever can be viewed aesthetically must be capable of having a certain unity given to it through the activity of a mind. In the case of a work of art, this unity is, in a sense, really 'in' the picture or poem, and the individual recipient does not create but only apprehends it, and here the mental activity from which the unity arose must be sought further back, in the Impulsive Experience of the artist.[2] In the realm of the "merely aesthetic" the

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1. See opposite p.98.

2. This must not be interpreted as meaning that in apprehending the work of art the individual recipient is <u>more passive</u> than in a "merely aesthetic" situation. <u>Mental activity</u> is <u>always</u> demanded. This gives the criterion of distinction between, say, genuine literature and "dope", and will be referred to in more detail very shortly.

unity, which may, if it is preferred, be called the form of the thing, may also be said to be 'in' the aesthetic object, since the potential qualities and relations of any one thing may justly be called infinite, but, as has been stated, something must, in their apprehension, be demanded of the apprehending mind. Selection seems essential, and in this sense it is true to say, I think, that there is something inherently intellectual in every form of aesthetic apprehension. It is never true to say, even in the case of art, that all that the recipient has to do is simply to "let himself go" to the stimulus or progression of stimuli afforded by the object. If he is to grasp the thing as a whole, and to become aware of its form, he must, in a sense, provide the form himself by his own mental activity. This mental activity seems involved, also, in the concept of judgment or appraisal which has been shown to be fundamental to the aesthetic situation. For this reason, Lascelles Abercrombie's remark that aesthetic experience is "the most primitive and fundamental thing in conscious life"[1] does not fit the facts, and I.A. Richards seems nearer the truth when he says,

"The fact that roses, sunsets, and so forth are so often found to present harmonious combinations of colour may appear a little puzzling by this account.[2] But the vast

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1. Towards a Theory of Art. p.14.
2. The account, itself, to me, more than a little puzzling, is not important in this particular connection.

range of close gradations which a rose petal, for example, presents, supplies the explanation. Out of all these the eye picks that gradation which best accords with the other colours chosen. There is usually some set of colours in some harmonious relation to one another to be selected out of the multitudinous gradations which natural objects in most lightings present; and there are evident reasons why the eye of a sensitive person should, when it can, pick out those gradations which best accord. The great range of different possible selections is, however, of importance. It explains the fact that we see such different colours for instance when gloomy and when gay, and thus how the actual selection made by an artist may reveal the kind and direction of the impulses which are active in him at the moment of selection."[1]

In some cases it is extremely easy to make this selection and to grasp the unity of the whole, cutting it off, as a unity, from its surroundings, but I do not think this fact can be taken as meaning that some things _have_ an aesthetic character while others have not, and it is not necessary to invoke a conception of this kind in order to explain why some things occasionally and certain things almost persistently, fail to evoke the aesthetic response. The fact that the form which is apprehended must in all cases be a figured or

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1. _Principles of Literary Criticism._ p.155-6.

filled form, as Croce puts it, may make the necessary detachment at times difficult or even impossible. Anything that chimes too concordantly with some life experience of the individual will tend to evoke a life response and set in motion a chain of experiences reaching far beyond the relevant demands of the moment. For this sort of reason, too, some things _appear_ to be inherently ugly or repulsive, while others are so habitually responded to in a practical way that they really cease to be perceived as they are in themselves. But these facts are accidental and not essential, and anything that the mind can grasp in itself and as a unity having related parts _can_ be viewed aesthetically.

This merely aesthetic apprehension has a two-fold, or two-directional character, which arises from the fact of externalisation and which forms an essential feature of every type of relevant situation. In the aesthetic attitude there is something which it might be useful to call "ambivalence" if the word had not already a very precise technical meaning. Bullough's phrase, "the antimony of distance", (of which much must shortly be said) perhaps expresses the fact as clearly as anything. When an object is viewed aesthetically it seems at one and the same time to be engulfed or embraced by the personality and to be held off from it. It is made by the recipient and yet seems to stand off from him in a way peculiar to its type. This "standing off" is also seen in

the way it seems to stand out from other objects. Anyone who is at all accustomed to the aesthetic manner of apprehension must have had repeated experience of the way in which casual and unnoticed things may suddenly, as it were, shake themselves free from the surroundings in which they were embedded and almost visibly "click into shape" like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. This may happen quite unexpectedly and in connection with unfamiliar material, or it may equally well be partially apprehended and familiar things which thus gradually heave themselves out of their accustomed surroundings until they burst into a whole which gives the aesthetic "shock" with its accompanying externalisation. As an example of the first may be given the following extract from the personal journal.

"As I woke I heard the turkeys. The sunny morning was sending them crazy with excitement. Each almost burst its craning throat, shouting its one clear note with all its strength, launching the only song it knew into the gleaming, sparkling air. And because they were all at different ages, all their notes were differently pitched, and as I listened, suddenly out of the dissonance of piercing sounds leapt four clear notes, each perfectly in tune. It was, for an instant, like one of the changes rung from the Norman belfry in the valley. Four clear, full notes, and then the clamour began again."

In the same sort of way I have, after months of

discontented apprehension of the chimes of a church clock, cracked and jangling, suddenly realised on a frosty night that they had overtones purely and clearly in tune. I purposely give these examples because they are concerned with things heard, whereas so much of the discussion in aesthetics seems devoted exclusively to the characteristics of aesthetic seeing; but the fact is of course equally true of visual phenomena, in which case they seem, when viewed aesthetically, to form a sort of picture.

Some interesting remarks on this way of apprehending are made by Leo Stein, in The A.B.C. of Aesthetics. This book has the merit of being based on an honest desire to bring the relevant facts into being and then to analyse them impartially. As the result of prolonged contemplation of a variety of objects, with a view to answering the question, "What does the painter see when he paints?" he comes to conclusions which have a good deal in common with those reached above. He distinguishes aesthetic from scientific objects. The latter are essentially inventorial, known piece by piece, the parts remaining the same in character whether apprehended separately or as related in the whole. The former, on the other hand, although genuine objects of cognition, are known in a radically different way. What he calls "making a picture" is the essence of aesthetic apprehension.

"Let anyone look at anything that lies before him on the table, or in anywhere in the room, or outside the window. Let him have it clear in mind that he is to prevent his attention from becoming inventorial. Let him, that is, look at the things before him, no matter how numerous, as a single object and without making a list. Let him persist in doing this for a while without allowing his mind to wander, or to become hypnotised. To get this result he must let his eyes move freely without strain, passing from one object to another in order to keep them together, not to separate them. If he succeeds in doing this he will find what is before him to be a picture....... Getting to know what is before one, in a certain way, is picture making. This is in essence what aesthetic activity amounts to."[1]

Leo Stein does seem here to have grasped the essential fact, that for the emergence of all grades of aesthetic value there must be a preliminary taking of the right attitude: what has been called here the "aesthetic minimum". Where his treatment fails is in the assumption that this is <u>all</u> that is necessary. For example, he over-emphasises the purely cognitive element and under-estimates the importance of emotion, concluding that because in <u>mere</u> aesthetic apprehension no emotion is present therefore emotion is <u>never</u> an

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1. Op.Cit. pp.75-76.

essential element in the total complex, whereas the truth seems to be that the aesthetic minimum, although essential for the emergence of all types of situation is not in any sense an adequate explanation for the nature and value of all. No good can come of the attempt to find one simple and complete explanation for the aesthetic significance of all the various types of relevant situation. This is the root cause of the weakness of Croce's theory. He, like Leo Stein, seems to have grasped the importance of the aesthetic minimum, when he says,

"I observe in myself that in the presence of any sensation whatever, if I do not abandon myself to the attractions and repulsions of impulse and feeling, if I do not let myself be distracted by reflections and reasonings, if I persist in the intuitive attitude, I am in the same disposition as that in which I enjoy what I am accustomed to call a work of art." This is in fact true, but what is not true is that <u>what</u> I enjoy is the same in all cases, as Croce wishes to affirm. Nor is it true that the quality of my experience is similar, either in content or value, in every case.

This raises the question of the significance of the predicate of the aesthetic judgment. If what has been said above about the difference in value of the various types of

situation is true, it follows that to use the same predicate to describe the aesthetic character of all is to deprive the term of any useful significance. Ordinary usage supports this contention. The fact that the predicate "beautiful" is commonly applied to such things as sunsets and sonatas but not to the chance arrangement of papers on a desk or to the print of a bird's foot is significant of a genuine distinction, but has led to the disregard of the less valuable type, so that it has seemed that the scope of aesthetics was exhausted in the analysis of works of art and "natural beauty". These two types, however, are so complex that analysis of them may proceed on very different lines, (all perhaps aesthetically relevant) with the result that the central problem escapes notice. There is a felt difference between the beautiful and the merely aesthetic and it would be satisfactory if some device of language could be found to indicate it precisely. If "beautiful" is kept to indicate whatever it apparently does indicate as applied to a work of art, then it can only be misleading to say that the merely aesthetic is beautiful. But it is doubtful whether any satisfactory term could be found for the predicate of the judgment in these simplest cases and it is perhaps not necessary to assign a predicate to the judgment at all here. The essential preliminary is the detection of the requisite

conditions for the emergence of any and every type of aesthetic situation, as has been attempted here, and it is more fruitful to look for these in the simplest cases than in the more complex. The judgment, "This is beautiful" was selected as a starting point for the enquiry because, being in common usage, it reflected a conception which requires analysis, but it was stated when this particular formulation was selected that its adequacy for all types of situation must subsequently be tested. The course of the argument has now led to the conclusion that it is <u>not</u> an adequate formulation as regards its predicate for situations <u>merely</u> satisfying the conditions of the aesthetic minimum. This does not detract from its value as a guide to investigation, for the chief aim of the philosophy of aesthetics is not to assign a meaning to beauty but to analyse certain facts. Not all these facts have the character of beauty, but all are correctly formulated in an aesthetic judgment of one kind or another. When the aesthetic attitude has been taken, very little more may come. One may simply be aware of a satisfying form, an aesthetically unified whole, and need not be moved, emotionally, at all, and the general character of this type of situation is so different from the more complex types that "beautiful" does not seem a fit predicate to apply here. Yet it is essential to understand the nature of this simplest type

of situation if the more complex types are to be analysed from the correct point of view. If the facts, of all grades, are viewed impartially, something of the nature of what has here been called the aesthetic minimum will be found to be common to all.

This contention receives support from the fact that something equivalent to the conception of an aesthetic minimum is to be found in a good many contemporary theories of aesthetics, although nowhere (except, perhaps, in E. Bullough's discussion of Psychical Distance) has it received separate treatment as an aesthetic principle. It is not possible here to do more than indicate a few of these parallels. Reference has already been made to Croce's "persisting in the intuitive attitude", and to Leo Stein's picture-making. A somewhat more detailed account should be given of Mr. Bullough's extremely valuable discussion.[1]

'Distance', as used in the phrase 'Psychical Distance' has primarily a metaphorical meaning, although this meaning is connected with and perhaps derived from the literal meaning of the term, and literal distance in space and time assist in the creation and maintenance of Psychical Distance. The latter is achieved by looking at things objectively,

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1. _'Psychical Distance' as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle._ British Journal of Psychology. Vol.V. Pt.2. June 1912.

emphasising only their objective features, and interpreting even subjective affections "not as modes of our being but rather as characteristics of the phenomenon."[1] This has obvious connections with the conception of externalisation discussed above, and both conceptions have something in common with the theory of einfühlung or empathy, although to admit this is not to accept that theory in toto, a thing which neither Mr. Bullough nor I would wish to do. Mr. Bullough himself makes explicit reference to the theory: "Distance," he says, "is essential to the occurrence and working of empathy."[2] One may also mention in this connection Worringer's principle of Abstraction. Jung's distinction between Introverted and Extraverted Art, and T.E.Hulme's conception of Vital and Geometric Art. All these theories of course involve much more than mere distancing, or the aesthetic minimum, but may all be said to imply a conception of this kind.

Two other topics in connection with Distance should be considered here. One is the quality of the experience which results from the operation of the principle, the other is that "Antimony of Distance" to which reference has already

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1. Op.cit. p.89.
2. Ibid. p.117.

been made.[1] Distance has a negative and a positive aspect. Negatively it means the "cutting out of the practical sides of things and of our practical attitude to them." Positively it means "the elaboration of the experience on the new basis created by the inhibitory action of Distance."[2] By this Mr. Bullough seems to mean very much what Mr. Fry means by the greater clarity of apprehension in the secondary imaginative life. The conception of the Antinomy of Distance is an important one. For true aesthetic apprehension the object must <u>both</u> evoke a personal response and be held off from the personality. This applies equally to the lay recipient and to the artist during his cycle of conception and construction. For example, "Tragedy trembles always on the knife-edge of a personal reaction,"[3] and rightly so, for the most desirable condition for art and for aesthetics generally is "the utmost decrease of Distance without its disappearance."[4] Again, from the point of view of the artist, the more vital and personal the original experience is to him the more powerful will be the completed work, provided only that Distance can none the less be maintained.

Finally some account may be given of I.A.Richards'

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1. See above. p.120.
2. Ibid. p.89.
3. E.Bullough. Op.Cit. p.104.
4. Ibid. p.94.

theory since it seems to imply Distance (although he nowhere mentions the conception explicitly) and since the analysis given of the experience-side of the complex which constitutes the aesthetic situation has much in common with that of the present treatment. Mr. Richards denies the fact of aesthetic experience as a distinct kind, if this means that its specific nature is due to some one quality peculiar to itself. Yet he does admit a type of experience which "marks off a field which cannot otherwise be defined and also explains why the objects therein contained can reasonably be regarded as of great importance. The limits of this field do not correspond with those set by a naive use of the term Beauty, but it will be found that the actual usage of careful and sensitive persons not affected by special theories corresponds as closely with this definition as with any other which can be given."[1] The definition referred to is that of Synaesthesis or Equilibrium. The theory is based on a particular analysis of the concept of value. Anything is valuable which satisfies an appetency or impulse, and the importance of an impulse is decided by "the extent of the disturbance of other impulses in the individual's activities which the thwarting of the impulse involves."[2] The experience of beauty has

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1. <u>Foundations of Aesthetics</u>. p.72.
2. <u>Principles of Literary Criticism</u>. p.51.

extreme value for this reason. The impulses aroused are of the same kind as those of ordinary, non-aesthetic experience, but the degree of systematisation is much greater. The impulses aroused are harmonious, systematised, balanced. When we experience beauty we are in a state of equilibrium, which must not be confused with passivity, inertia or over-stimulation.

"A complete systematisation must take the form of such an adjustment as will preserve free play to every impulse, with entire avoidance of frustration. In any equilibrium of this kind, however momentary, we are experiencing beauty."[1] This theory has obviously much in common with the account given in this chapter of the flowering or developing of experience when it becomes aesthetic, and Mr. Richards himself makes statements which seem to imply if not to posit directly, the fact of the aesthetic minimum. Thus he says that the experience of some degree of balance if not of complete equilibrium is not confined to the arts. "Although for most people these experiences are infrequent apart from the Arts, almost any occasion may give rise to them."[2]

He also seems to admit the detachment involved in the concepts of Distance and Externalisation. In the experience of beauty, "Our emotion assumes a more general character and

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1. Foundations of Aesthetics. p.75.
2. Princ. of Lit. Crit. p.248.

we find that correspondingly our attitude has become impersonal."[1] There is even something approaching an analogy to the Antimony of Distance.

"As we realise beauty we become more fully ourselves, the more our impulses are engaged. If, as is sometimes alleged, we are the whole complex of our impulses, this fact would explain itself. Our interest is not canalised in one direction rather than another. It becomes ready instead to take any direction we choose. This is the explanation of that detachment so often mentioned in artistic experience. We become impersonal or disinterested."[2] And again, "We become less 'mixed into' other things. As we become more ourselves they become more themselves."[3] That this detachment is what has been called here the aesthetic minimum is further indicated by the fact that it is thought by Mr. Richards to work in two classes of situations; one where it is a mere condition of communication, as when the content to be communicated is put in a frame or expressed in verse, and the other where the device of communication leads to the experience of value or beauty.

"This kind of detachment and severance from ordinary circumstances and accidental personal interests may be of

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1. Foundations of Aesthetics. p.75.
2. Ibid. p.78.
3. Ibid. p.79.

special service in these supremely valuable communications, since it makes the breaking down of inhibitions more easy."[1]

It is hoped that the above exposition has been sufficient to establish the validity of the concept of an aesthetic minimum. The next stage in the argument must show how this functions in the other more complex types of situation. Clarity and coherence demand that the next to be considered should be the Impulsive Experience of the artist, and to this the next Chapter will be devoted.

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1. Principles of Lit. Crit. p.249.

CHAPTER 5

THE ARTIST AND "NATURE"

Where the situation contains little if anything more than the aesthetic minimum[1], it yields, as has been shown, a minimum value. It has been argued in the previous chapter, as against the view of I.A.Richards, who wishes to draw a clear distinction between the pseudo-aesthetic character given by putting a thing in a frame or writing it in verse and the kind of situation where value is implied, that value, although, as in this case, sometimes of a minimum level, is always a genuine factor in the complex. If this were not so there would not be that continuity between the various types of situation which seems in fact to exist. Because of this low level of value, externalisation in this type of situation is very easily achieved; so much so that, as has been indicated, it often seems done <u>for</u> the recipient because of some character of the object, although this is

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1. i.e. if its aesthetic character is exhausted in its 'merely aesthetic' aspect, not if it is something which <u>could</u> give a fuller experience, although at the moment <u>it is</u> not doing so, as was suggested might occur in the case of art under certain conditions.

probably not an accurate account of what in fact occurs. In such a case, the judgment follows immediately on apprehension and is even, as it were, one of the main characters of the apprehension itself, but the judgment passed, if it comes to explicit formulation, is not one of beauty. Nor could the awareness or appraisal of beauty ever arise out of a situation in virtue of its merely aesthetic character. This is true both for the layman and for the artist. For the layman the situation yields its totality immediately, and this totality does not contain anything that could justly be called beauty; complete externalisation takes place at once. This fact makes it impossible that the creative process of the artist should take its rise in a situation of this kind. Externalisation is a common factor in all types of aesthetic situation, but the process of externalisation pertinent to art is a very much more complex one, and the situation from which it arises is different in very important ways.

It is this process of externalisation and the analysis of this type of situation which must receive consideration in the present chapter. This involves, in the first place, a discussion of the Impulsive Experience of the artist. The expression was first used, I think, by Lascelles Abercrombie in Towards a Theory of Art, and his treatment of

the subject is of outstanding value, but he does not seem to me to go far enough in the direction of what may be called particularisation. Although there is, as has been stated above, something in common between all types of aesthetic situation, externalisation is involved in the process of creation in a way so peculiar to itself that the original experience from which it arises has a unique character. This, Lascelles Abercrombie does not explicitly seem to recognise. He avoids Croce's error of levelling all types of experience down to the one fact of intuition, and goes as far in the direction of particularisation as to distinguish between aesthetic and artistic experience as arising from nature and art respectively. He also recognises the fact of the creative experience of the artist, but does not seem to locate the origin of the distinction between aesthetic and art <u>here</u>, as one should, but in the experience as expressed in the completed work of art. "The difference between the actual experience and the experience recorded in art will, I think, soon appear so great that we may properly regard it as specific,"[1] he says, but the original experience is apparently considered to be of the same kind as the ordinary aesthetic experience of the layman. The following quotations make this fact clear.

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1. <u>Towards a Theory of Art</u>. p.13.

"There is a certain kind of experience or way of experiencing things out of which the activity called art arises. We see a sunset and we enjoy it. We just happen on it: it fades and the experience finishes. You may remember it, but a remembered experience is very different from the experience itself. Suppose, however, someone has, as we say, painted it. Why, then it is captured and established: it is made permanent."[1]

"Art records a deliberate and consciously directed activity which is also very exceptional, but it arises out of experiences of actual life which just happen to us - to which as they occur we merely respond, and which, far from being exceptional, we shall find are a universal aspect of all mental action. This is what I shall hereafter call aesthetic experience: it is the most primitive and fundamental thing in conscious life. Aesthetic experience, then, is the experience which is presupposed by all art but does not necessarily - does in fact quite exceptionally - result in art: and this is the experience which, as a feature of life as a whole, and not of any specialised life, forms the field of the aesthetic science."[2]

This does not seem a true account of the facts. The thesis to be put forward in this chapter is that the Impulsive

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1. Ibid. p.12.
2. Ibid. pp.13-14.

Experience of the artist is different, right from its initiation, from the ordinary aesthetic experience of the layman. If this were not so, it does not seem as if the 'activity called art', of which Lascelles Abercrombie speaks, could ever arise. When the layman sees a sunset, it <u>does</u> 'just happen' to him; it fades and the experience finishes. But the Impulsive Experience of the artist is not of this kind. Professor Abercrombie would, no doubt, agree with this in so far as he would not wish to maintain that the two experiences could ever be interchangeable. But if they are, as he says, the same in kind, how is it that in the one case the experience leads to artistic expression, while in the other the experience is in itself sufficient? The logical conclusion must surely be that there is some difference in the two experiences themselves, so that the one type <u>demands</u> expression, and that in a <u>medium</u>, while the other does not. Otherwise one is committed to the conclusion that <u>any</u> expression of <u>any</u> experience would constitute art. One has only to contemplate some of the extremes of Surrealism, or to think of the psycho-analytic explanations of art, to agree that this is not a conclusion to be accepted lightly. Moreover, it must appear as at least odd, if the Impulsive Experience is the same in kind (and therefore, presumably, as satisfying in itself) as ordinary aesthetic experience, that the artist should ever

go to the labour, often extreme, of externalising it in a medium.

The fact that he is compelled to do so provides the clue to the understanding of the whole problem of art. Intimately bound up with this is the problem of medium. As J.M.Thorburn puts it, "The problem of medium is the key to the problem of art",[1] and the factor of medium is important as far back as the initial Impulsive Experience of the artist. It is this which makes the process of externalisation imperative, and for this reason it seems nearer the truth to say that the essence of art lies in the fact of externalisation than to seek it in expression as such or in communication. The correct account of the matter is not that the artist wishes to express an experience which he has already achieved explicitly and completely, nor that he wishes to communicate this experience to others so that they may share in it, but that something happens to him which compels him to set about a process of experimentation and manipulation resulting in the creation of a work of art of one kind or another. Art is not the translation of an already explicit experience into a medium. If 'experience' is important at all in this connection (and its employment as a concept has led to so many misconceptions that it might be a real help to do without it) it is that the process of externalisation in a medium is necessary

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1. Art and the Unconscious. p.37.

for the artist to realise the implications of the original experience. But in this process of externalisation the original experience does not persist unaltered, nor is it <u>this</u> which the recipient of the completed work of art appreciates or enjoys or comes into contact with. In a sense it is true, perhaps, that the completed work of art does tell the recipient how the artist felt about something or other, and in this sense the latter does communicate an experience to the former, but it is not the Impulsive Experience, for this is <u>not</u> explicitly apprehended and, as was stated in the previous chapter, is not recoverable after the process of construction has taken place. It may frequently happen that the artist does not realise how he felt until he apprehends his own completed work of art, and he would very often, perhaps, not himself express the matter as 'feeling about' at all, but as an imperative urge to 'get the thing right'!

Professor S. Alexander has an interesting passage on this topic.

"The action is wrung from him by the subject-matter, through the excitement it produces, in the same way as turning his eyes to a colour or sniffing an odour by his nostrils is wrung from him through the nervous excitement the colour or odour produces in his brain. And just as the object known is revealed through the ordinary reaction to it; so the work of art is revealed to the artist himself through the productive

act wrung from him in his excitement over the subject-matter. Accordingly he does not in general form an image (if he is a poet, say) of what he wants to express, but finds out what he wanted to express by expressing it; he has, in general, no precedent image of his work, and does not know what he will say till he has said it, and it comes as a revelation to himself."[1]

This seems truthfully to render the facts about 'expression'. It is also applicable to the question of communication. Although, as has just been stated, the artist does communicate something, his _purpose_ in setting about the process of creation is surely not this, nor is the aspect of communication the most important one in a work of art. Too much emphasis on communication is liable to end in distortion of the facts. Thus, when a poet such as Lascelles Abercrombie says that no-one would build bridges if there were no-one to go over them,[2] and a novelist such as Agnes Muir Mackenzie remarks that she would never have gone to the trouble of writing her book if she knew it would never be published,[3] and apparently intend their remarks as illustrations of the fact that the essence of art is communication, one can only reply that they are both, for the moment, misinterpreting the facts.

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1. _Artistic Creation and Cosmic Creation._ p.9.
2. See, _Towards a Theory of Art. p.48._
3. See, _Process of Literature._ p.20.

If the nature of the Impulsive Experience is really such as has been indicated above; if it is not explicitly apprehended, either by the artist at the moment of its occurrence nor by the recipient of the completed work of art, it may be thought that nothing can be said about it. It is true that it is not possible to get direct evidence as to its nature. The only person who could conceivably provide this would be the artist himself, but, as was stated in the previous chapter, if the experience becomes explicit to him, it is not liable to lead to the creation of a genuine work of art, and if it is described after the process of creation has taken place it is almost sure to have been distorted by that process. But it is nevertheless possible to say with a considerable degree of confidence what these original Impulsive Experiences must be like, by arguing backwards from the nature of the completed works of art, by studying the characteristics of the artist as revealed in his spontaneous introspections, and by making analogies with the other types of aesthetic situations. All three methods will be used in the subsequent course of this chapter.

The very fact that it is impossible to get direct evidence about the Impulsive Experience is in itself an argument in favour of the view taken here of its nature. If the essential characteristic of this type of experience is not the explicit apprehension of an object of a certain kind but

the initiation of a process, one would expect the artist to shy away from its explication, and if he refers to it at all, to do so only indirectly.[1] In the case of the passage from Keats quoted in the previous chapter it seemed fairly certain that the phrase, 'But the sea, Jack, the sea!' referred to the Impulsive Experience from which the sonnet on the sea arose. With regard to the quotation now to be given it is not possible to point to any precise poem connected with the significant phrases, nor is it possible to say with any certainty that the phrases in question do refer to an Impulsive Experience, but from the fact that Keats himself underlined and emphasised them it seems justifiable, in conjunction with the phrase, 'of which I shall say nothing at present', to conclude that they at least represent a different and peculiar way of experiencing. It should perhaps be mentioned that the letter quoted from refers to Keats' journey to the Isle of Wight in April 1817, and that the first draft of Endymion was finished towards the end of November of the same year.

"As the Lamplight crept along the following things were discovered - 'long heath broom furze' - Hurdles here and there half a mile - Park palings when the windows of a House were

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1. A remark of this kind can only, of course, be conjecture, and the same criticism may be applied to a good deal of what follows, but it is, I think, conjecture that is supported by facts which are not conjecture and that justifies itself by the coherence it brings to the phenomena of art and of the creative process.

always discovered by reflection - One Nymph of Fountain - N.B.Stone - lopped Trees - Cow ruminating - ditto Donkey - Man and Woman going gingerly along - William seeing his Sisters over the Heath - John waiting with a Lanthen for his Mistress - Barber's Pole - Docter's Shop - However after having had my fill of these I popped my Head out just as it began to Dawn - N.B. this tuesday Morn saw the Sun rise - of which I shall say nothing at present."[1]

Keats's attitude here is, I think, typical of the genuine artist. It is not possible for the artist to give an explicit account of the nature of his Impulsive Experiences because, as has been observed above, they are not of a kind susceptible of description. Yet the artist does give a considerable amount of information about these experiences in an indirect way, and from what he says about them and about himself, it is possible to construct a fairly detailed picture of what they must be like.

One thing which emerges very clearly from the artists' reports is that these Impulsive Experiences are of supreme value to them. This, coupled with the fact that the artist, because he is an artist, is not adapted for or accustomed to analytical or logical forms of thinking, often leads to a rather mystical way of recording the experiences, and, if the artist goes beyond recording to interpretation, results in

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1. Letter to George Keats. Letters. Buxton Forman 1931 Edition Vol.1 p.16.

the unsatisfactory philosophising condemned in the first chapter of this study. This element will be obvious in the quotations which follow, and certain conclusions concerning the nature of the Impulsive Experience may be drawn from it.

Shelley speaks of the creative moment in this way.

"Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, 'I will compose poetry.' The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet."[1]

Rubens expresses the same attitude in his description of the landscape painter.

"The landscape painter should not limit himself to the representation of exterior surfaces of the earth and the

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1. A Defence of Poetry. pp.49-50. (Belles Lettres Series. Heath.)

physical phenomena which are there to be found. He should ever find in the fact some passion which dominates him and should develop in painting, a feeling suitable to the subject. The true painter of nature is he who, like Albert Dürer, feels the breath of divinity shudder out of nature under his brush when he lowers heaven on to his canvas and makes the blossoming images of spring or the harsh aspect of winter descend."[1]

Delacroix remarks, "If I am not agitated like a serpent in the hands of a Pythoness, I am cold. This must be recognised and accepted and it is a great happiness. Any good work I have done has been done thus."[2]

For Beethoven, too, music brings experiences of the highest value.

"Necessarily I despise the world which does not intuitively feel that music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy."[3]

For Pizetti, inspiration is "a mystery which a kind of reverential diffidence permits me to unravel", while Casella calls it "sacred, a kind of blessedness of spirit which can only be connected with divine revelation."[4]

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1. Quoted by J. Lindsay. Inspiration. p.55.
2. Ibid. p.79.
3. Ibid. p.87.
4. I am indebted for these last two quotations to an unpublished paper by Philip Vernon, entitled "An Attempted Psychological Analysis of Musical Composition." See later in this chapter.

What the artist is feeling after when he makes statements of this kind is a true and important fact; namely, that the Impulsive Experience is one of a very high level of value. But its value is of a different kind from that which has already been discussed in the treatment of the aesthetic minimum and does not differ merely in degree. This may perhaps be expressed by describing its value as potential rather than as actual, i.e. it has value not in itself, but with reference only to what it leads to; the process of creation and its product the work of art. Thus it is significant that in the above statements the artist is much more concerned with how he feels than with what he apprehends. Described from the point of view of the artist the characteristic quality of the situation often seems to be that of excitement. Mozart describes this in the well-known passage beginning, "My soul gets heated", and the phrase might be paralleled from the records of many other artists. The experience may be better understood by making a comparison with what was said in the previous chapter about the type of situation yielding the lowest level of aesthetic value. There it was stated that some 'shock' or 'jar' was given to the ordinary flow of experience, so that it was switched on to a different plane, where its characters and the complementary characters of the object were more clearly and coherently apprehended. In this type of situation Distance was found to be synonymous with Externalisation,

since complete explication took place at once. With regard to the Impulsive Experience of the artist, however, Distance and Externalisation are not synonymous terms. Both are involved in the complete creative process, but whereas Distance takes place at once, Externalisation is a long and complicated process, only finally achieved with the completion of the work of art. When the artist has a genuine Impulsive Experience he, too, like the layman in his ordinary aesthetic experiences of whatever kind and value, is switched on to a different plane of experience. Where this happens suddenly and unexpectedly he may be acutely aware of what is happening, and in such cases is likely to describe the event in terms of excitement or of mystical participation in some higher kind of reality. But this is not invariable. Where the artist is long-practised in his art the excitement aspect may die out of the situation. In some cases, too, the artist may not even be aware of the actual moment of inspiration.[1] Individual differences of temperament, or the particular kind of medium employed may also contribute something to the quality of the Impulsive Experience as regards its excitement aspect.

This is perhaps especially likely in the case of music, since almost all composers seem to find something inexplicable

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1. Reference must be made later to this fact, when the question of the "incubation period" consequent to the Impulsive Experience is being considered.

in the emergence of their conceptions, cf. Beethoven,

"You will ask me where I get my ideas. That I cannot tell you with certainty, they come unsummoned, directly, indirectly - I could seize them with my hands, - out in the open air, in the woods, while walking, in the silence of the nights, at dawn, excited by moods which are translated by the poet into words, by me into tones that sound and roar and storm about me till I have set them down in notes."[1]

The nature of the medium will have effects reaching far beyond this particular aspect of the experience and will determine to a large extent its total character. These effects must be considered in detail shortly, but certain things can be said about the nature of the Impulsive Experience without reference to them.

Whatever the medium in terms of which the Impulsive Experience is conceived, complete Distancing takes place at once. This is probably in part a result of the fact that the experience <u>is</u> conceived in terms of a medium, and indirect support of the truth of the contention that it is so conceived can be seen in the fact that to condemn a work of art because it 'harks back to nature' is, on analysis, found to be pretty much the same thing as to say that it might just as well (or as badly) have been done in one medium as in another.

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1. Quoted by J. Lindsay Op. Cit. p.88.

In such a case the resulting product shows that the maker of it first 'had an idea' and then translated it into a medium. This is not what happens if the Impulsive Experience is a genuine one. The true artist has his original creative experience in terms of his medium. The experience is separated at once from the conditions and criteria applying to the ordinary run of experience and becomes subject to a new and different set of laws. It is, as it were, heaved right out of non-artistic reality, and contains implicit in itself its own specific quality of unity and coherence. The term 'implicit' is extremely significant here, for this statement about the Impulsive Experience must not be interpreted as meaning that the artist, once he has had a genuine Impulsive Experience, has nothing more to do than to let it unfold easily and automatically. If he is passive anywhere, he is passive about the coming of his inspiration, although even here, as the practice of Cesar Franck and Bach show,[1] it is possible to do something to induce the emergence of the original idea. The significance of the implicit unity of the Impulsive Experience is rather that if it is genuine, it will withstand any amount of subsequent labour and attack on the part of the artist as he subdues his sometimes refractory medium. In this 'distanced' experience, the artist's personality is of supreme importance. He experiences 'something'

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1. Both these composers are said to have stimulated their creative activity by playing the works of other musicians.

(it is not possible to be more precise at this stage) with peculiar intensity and concentration, and engulfs and embraces it with the whole force of his personality, so that he seems to 'be' the experience rather than to 'have' it, and the relation of ~~the~~ subject and object is not applicable. Here, if anywhere, is the truth of Schopenhauer's contention that in aesthetic experience the subject-object relation is transcended. For this reason one cannot express or account for the situation in terms of judgment. In the case of the 'merely aesthetic', the balance of subjective and objective was easily and harmoniously attained. The antinomy of distance was seen in the fact that something was embraced by the mind and yet held off from it and so judged immediately and for its own sake. In the case of the artist's Impulsive Experience this balance is achieved only after the process of Externalisation has occurred. At the moment of experience the first aspect of the process is predominant. The experience has, as it were, been taken too far in and the artist has yet to free it from himself through his manipulation of medium.[1]

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1. This statement needs expansion if it is not to be misleading. The self from which the artist has to free the experience is his self as artist, not as ordinary experient. It is true that the Impulsive Experience is intensely personal in that the artist is profoundly moved or at any rate profoundly interested, but it is art-personal not life-personal. This is implied by the initial fact of Distance and is borne out by the two-fold attitude towards the object being created which, on the testimony of the artists' themselves, seems universal. To take but one example, from Keats, concerning the sonnet, 'Why did I laugh tonight'.

"It was written with no Agony but that of ignorance; with no thirst of anything but knowledge when pushed to the point though the first steps to it were through my human passions - they went away and I wrote with my Mind."

Letter to George & Georgiana Keats 1819. Letters. Buxton Forman 1931. Vol.11. p.343.

As a consequence of this fact, it is only after the process of externalisation has been completed that the judgment is applicable. This is true for the artist as well as for the layman. At the moment of conception the artist is not 'over-against' something. There is no 'This' to which a predicate may be applied. The 'This' only comes progressively into existence as the constructive process continues.

This account of the Impulsive Experience is admittedly dogmatic. It must now be supported by the kind of indirect evidence referred to earlier in the present chapter.

To be complete, this evidence should, it may be thought, include an answer to the question, 'What makes a man an artist?' but in the present state of knowledge it does not seem possible to answer this question if the answer must involve going behind the phenomena of his activities as artist. Attempts have been made to do this, but the results have not so far been very profitable. The banalities of psycho-analysis have been referred to already. A man is not an artist simply because he lacks the vitality or capacity to satisfy his desire for power or love or admiration through life. If repression and frustration are the germs of art, why are we not all artists? Nor does it seem any more helpful to attempt to answer the question along the lines suggested by Agnes Muir Mackenzie.

"What makes a man an artist in the first place is the

innate possession of a 'complex derived instinctive disposition' (i.e. of a certain arrangement and balance of innate tendencies) which leads him to react strongly to the emotional significance of objects perceived, by means of a particular activity - the attempt to separate the idea of the emotionally charged experience from himself, and give it an existence of its own apart from his. The material medium through which this activity will work - i.e. the particular art that he will practise - is determined by the fact that his physical organism reacts more readily to one class of sensory stimuli than to another."[1]

This sort of explanation leaves all the chief questions still to be answered. For example, what is the nature of the 'complex derived instinctive disposition'? Is it really innate, and does the fact whether it is so or not affect the nature of the artist and of his productions? How is the tendency to react connected with the desire to externalise it, and is it true, finally, that the use of a particular medium for externalisation is dependent on a particular character of the <u>physical</u> organism?

But although it does not seem possible to answer the question 'What makes a man an artist?' in <u>this</u> sense of 'makes', yet it is possible to describe the characteristics of the artist when he is talking or acting as such, and for the present

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1. <u>The process of Literature.</u> p.41.

purpose facts of this kind are all that are needed. One of the most concise and illuminating accounts of the artist's nature in this sense is that given by Roger Fry.

"If ever we get at a psychology of artistic creation as opposed to the psychology of aesthetic apprehension, we shall have to count this urge towards production as one of the determining factors. But we shall have to recognise that it may become disastrous if it outruns too far that sensibility which without it may perish and leave no record behind. It is possible that some of the most aesthetically gifted people have never expressed themselves for want of this creative energy, whilst the world is filled but too full by the insensitive productivity of the merely creative. For the production of the greatest art there is needed not only great sensibility and creative energy, but also the synapsis between them must put up just the right amount of resistance to hold back the sensibility from too immediate an outlet in creation."[1]

This statement, being that of someone who is himself an artist, and who shows consistently in his writings that he possesses to an unusual degree the ability to analyse accurately and scientifically both the process and the products of creation can be received with a considerable amount of confidence, especially as the conclusions which it states are supported by a great deal of evidence from other sources.[2] From the

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1. Transformations. p.176.
2. What follows must not, of course, be attributed to Mr.Fry, but I think he would not object to this interpretation being given to his remark.

synthesis of these two factors, the urge towards production and the abnormal sensitivity, emerges that way of experiencing characteristic of the artist. Where there is also the 'right amount of resistance between them' of which Mr. Fry speaks, the way of experiencing is seen in its purest form as the Impulsive Experience preliminary to creation, but it is probable that the artist's ordinary form of apprehension is also affected by his pre-occupation with a particular medium. The factor of medium is, indeed, the vital one, as was indicated earlier. What the artist is ultra-sensitive to is the characteristic quality of his medium, while his urge to production is an urge conditioned by the possibilities and limitations of the medium. For a genuine work of art to result (whether it is completely successful or not will depend on certain additional factors) the balance between sensibility and productivity must be rightly maintained. Where the original experience has been a sincere one, i.e. conceived in terms of the medium, this will in fact be the case, and the consequent process of externalisation will have certain characteristic qualities resulting from the 'right amount of resistance'.

Support for this theory may be gained in the first place by consideration of certain cases where one of the two factors seems to operate to the exclusion or over-shadowing of the

other. The fact that either sensibility or creativity may temporally assume the predominating place may be of extreme value and importance to the development of the artist, although at the times when this occurs nothing may be produced, or, if something is, it may be of very little value artistically. Whether a man is born an artist or not, the artist in him is certainly not born ready made, and he has to cultivate his capacities both of Vision and of Design,[1] his ability to 'feel' and his ability to 'execute', and both these powers may be exercised in comparative independence.

To consider the question of sensibility first: it is extremely probable, judging from the testimony of the artists themselves, that every artist has a large number of what may be called abortive or incomplete Impulsive Experiences, which do not ever get externalised because, although in a sense conceived in terms of the medium, they were not completely Distanced or 'engulfed' in the way necessary for genuine externalisation, i.e. the subsequent manipulation of material was not implicit in the experience. Sensibility has outrun the essentially productive factor. It is so natural for the artist to 'see the world through his medium' that he easily gets excited about 'likely material' without always experiencing a genuine impulse to discipline the

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1. These terms were first used, I think, by Mr. Roger Fry. cf. his 'Essay in Aesthetics'. Vision and Design. p.16. Phoenix Library Edition.

excitement to the creative process. Where this happens, the artist is quite likely, if he has any facility in verbal expression, to describe the experience, as he is not likely to describe his genuine Impulsive Experiences, and these descriptions are extremely valuable indices to the specific nature of the artist.

The following extract from a letter of Vincent Van Gogh to G. Albert Aurier shows the artist as consciously aware that too great sensibility may hamper productivity.

"Les émotions qui me prennent devant la nature vont chez moi jusqu'à l'évanouissement, et alors il en resulte une quinzaine de jours pendent lesquels je suis incapable de travailler."[1]

Not every artist gives testimony to this extreme of sensibility, although something of the same sort may be the true explanation of Shelley's remark about the mind in creation being like a fading coal, but a great deal of additional evidence can be adduced that these abortive Impulsive Experiences are a genuine part of the artists' psychology.

Delacroix, in his Journal, makes frequent reference to this sort of experience. After visiting a friend and describing with minute detail the exact quality and texture

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1. Quoted in G. Albert Aurier, Oeuvres Posthumes. p.267.

of his daughter's skin, he remarks,

"C'est un souvenir précieux à garder pour la peinture, mais je le sens déjà qui s'éfface."[1]

He also speaks of the difficulty of capturing all his moments of inspiration, and refers with regret to all the paintings he might have made. He describes how they seem to wait their turn like people in a shop, and yet, when he begins work on them, it is impossible to breathe life into them. I think it is legitimate to conclude from this that the original experiences were not genuine Impulsive ones, and this is further supported by the fact that Delacroix found it at times difficult to decide which he should attempt first. "Je suis, depuis une heure, à balancer entre Mazeppa, Don Juan, Le Tasse et cent autres."[2]

There is also the classic instance of Coleridge, to whom Southey wrote, "You spawn plans like a herring." Coleridge himself spoke of the 'bubbles that boiled in his idea-pot', and his manuscript note-book is full of lists of 'My works' and of conceptions for books which came to nothing. This topic has been brilliantly treated by Mr. Livingston Lowes in The Road to Xanadu, and the following quotation from that work very concisely sums up the point in question.

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1. Journal. Vol.1. p.44.
2. Ibid Vol.1. p.73.

Speaking of the Note Book he says,

"In those bizarre pages we catch glimpses of the strange and fantastic shapes which haunted the hinterland of Coleridge's brain. Most of them never escaped from their confines into the light of day. Some did, trailing clouds of glory as they came. But those which did not, like the stars of the old astrology, rained none the less their secret influence on nearly everything that Coleridge wrote in his creative prime. 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', 'Christabel', 'Kubla Khan', 'The Wanderings of Cain', are what they are because they are all subdued to the hue of that heaving and phosphorescent sea below the verge of consciousness from which they have emerged. No single fragment of concrete reality in the array before us is in itself of such far-reaching importance as is the sense of that hovering cloud of shadowy presences. For what the teeming chaos of the Note Book gives us is the charged and electrical atmospheric background of a poet's mind."[1]

The same sort of facts seem true also of the composer. In a paper entitled 'An Attempted Psychological Analysis of Musical Composition',[2] Philip Vernon gives a great deal of very interesting evidence to show that the 'raw material' of inspiration in Music is what he calls '<u>Chants Intérieurs</u>',

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1. Op. Cit. p.30.
2. Given to the Aesthetics Section of the British Psychological Society 1932; not as yet published.

or tunes running in one's head. All musical people probably have these Chants Intérieurs, consisting of idioms, scales, cadences and sequences of music already heard, and for the non-creative musician they may be likened to the syntax and words of language as embodied in ordinary verbal imagery. But for the musical composer, these Chants Intérieurs are not only much more vivid, but different in kind, being creative and not merely reproductive: the composer reorganises his raw material.

In addition to occasioning experiences which may, as has been suggested above, be likened to abortive or incomplete Impulsive Experiences, the artist's sensibility to his particular medium also seems to affect to a large degree his experiences that are not thus definitely related to creation. Whether this is so for all the arts, or whether it is a peculiarity of some types of media only is a point that much needs investigation, so that what follows is put forward more as a suggestion than as a well-supported statement of theory. What the suggestion amounts to is that the artist will tend at all time to 'see the world through his medium', and in this way to acquire the store of material within which his creativity can function, since he cannot be supposed to create in a vacuum. Part of this material will be gained from works of art in the medium which he himself employs: the poet will

be peculiarly sensitive to poetry, the musician to music and so on. Roger Fry's analysis of paintings and Vernon Blake's treatment of the concepts of Plastic Logic and of the Plastic Idea[1] give strong evidence on this point. It is also probable that the musician has reproductive as well as original Chants Intérieurs. Philip Vernon, in the paper referred to above, seems to suggest this. All this is, of course, obvious, but what does not seem to be so generally recognised is that this sensitivity to the qualities of the medium may amount almost to self-hypnosis. Both Keats and Shelley seem to have had something of this attitude to poetry. There is the well-known remark of Keats, "Whenever you write say a word or two on some Passage in Shakespeare ..... I find that I cannot exist without poetry - without eternal poetry - half the day will not do - the whole of it - I began with a little, but habit has made me a Leviathan,"[2] and this passion for poetry apparently often took the form of being obsessed by some one line, as in the example quoted in an earlier chapter, of the passage from Lear, "Do you not hear the sea?" Keats himself refers to the same sort of peculiarity in Shelley. "Does Shelley go on telling strange stories of the death of Kings?" he asks later in the same letter, and Leigh Hunt explains the reference thus - "Mr. Shelley was fond of quoting the passage here alluded to in Shakespeare and of applying it in the most unexpected manner.

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1. See Relation in Art, Chs. 8 & 9 and Passim.
2. Letter to Reynolds, April 1817.

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground
And tell strange stories of the deaths of kings.

Going with me once in the Hampstead stage, in which our only companion was an old lady, who sat silent and stiff after the English fashion, he startled her into a look of the most ludicrous astonishment by saying abruptly, 'Hunt, For God's sake -' etc."[1]

Van Gogh seems to have had very much the same sort of hypnotic delight in Japanese Colour Prints, and in the paintings of Monticelli, Gauguin, the Dutch school and others.

This absorption is probably necessary for the artist to realise to the full the subtleties of his medium and it is reasonable to suppose that even natural phenomena are apprehended by him as coloured by the qualities of that medium. This is easiest to see in the case of painting. Van Gogh's letters to his brother are full of records of this way of seeing nature, and one feels as one reads that although what he sees is obviously affected by his medium, yet he has 'made' the picture in words, and is not recording anything of the nature of an Impulsive Experience, either abortive or genuine. While in England, for example, he repeatedly describes landscapes and scenes viewed through mist - Hyde Park at daybreak, the sun setting or rising in a haze, the streets in the evening, all are described in this way. It is interesting to note that

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1. This is quoted as a footnote to the passage from Keats's Letter given above. See Buxton Forman 1931 Edition of the Letters Vol.1 p.27.

what was apparently among his earliest attempts at drawing has also something of this quality.

"I have sketched a drawing representing miners, men and women, going to the Shaft, in the morning through the snow, by a path along a hedge of thorns: shadows that pass dimly visible in the twilight. In the background the large constructions of the mine and the heaps of clinkers stand out vaguely against the sky."[1]

This question of the connection between the characteristic way of viewing nature and the artist's creations must be considered later. For the moment, further evidence may be given that the artist does see nature in this way. The fact was very clearly illustrated for me when spending a holiday in the country with a landscape painter. Her way of looking at nature was different from mine, or so it seemed to me, not simply because she was more sensitive but because she was sensitive in a different way. For although she could explain to me something of her feeling about what she saw, and thereby heightened my appreciation and affected my attitude to landscape permanently, I know that I did <u>not</u> experience as she did. This was particularly so in the appreciation of clouds. Her landscapes very often include effects of cloud, and one feels, in looking at them, that the sweep of hill or down focusses itself under the massing of cloud, rather than that the clouds mass themselves

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1. <u>Letters to his Brother</u>. Vol.1. p.215.

above and harmonise with the pattern of fields or trees. She was able with some success to explain to me what she felt about clouds, how they had what she called 'texture', and I appreciated as I never had before, the fact that they had depth, volume, were massed in a three-dimensional space, range behind range. But for her there was obviously something more. The clouds, for her, were tangible: she observed once that they were extraordinarily solid, that one felt one could take them in one's hand and feel their contours, as one might mould clay, and yet, as put on to canvas, this solidity must never over-balance their essential insubstantiality. They must appear as cloud, not marble. It seemed to me that the clouds, as she saw them, were 'seen' if the term may be permitted, with the hand as it swept the canvas, or moulded the paint with the palette knife.

Goya, also, gives evidence of a way of apprehension very much in line with the above.

"I can only see masses in light and masses in shadow, planes which advance or planes which recede, reliefs or backgrounds. My eye never catches outlines or details."[1]

It seems reasonable to suppose that this characteristic way of viewing natural phenomena is not confined to the painter; that the literary artist may tend to apprehend things 'under

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1. Quoted by J. Lindsay, Inspiration, p.81.

the form of words' or according to their emotional or psychological import, the sculptor in terms of plastic thought, the musician in those of rhythm, harmony and so on. This would not mean that every experience of the artist must be so coloured, for it is obvious that a great deal of experience would be recalcitrant to this way of apprehension. The suggestion is made simply as an example of one of the topics which should be investigated if the method advocated here were completely carried out.

It is time now to return to the other aspect of the problem at present under consideration: the question of productivity. This can, I think, be disposed of more briefly. It is obvious that without the urge to productivity a man is not an artist. It is equally obvious that however genuine his inspirations and delicate or profound his sensibility he has to acquire his technique. Leonardo da Vinci's notebook studies of anatomy, or Van Gogh's patient copying and recopying from the '_Exercises au Fusain_' and the '_Cours de Dessin_' are only two examples of a practice which is universal. Involved in this urge towards productivity, if the artist is a genuine one, is that desire to 'get the thing right' to which reference has been made earlier in the chapter. As Van Gogh said, "I much prefer to think about how arms and legs are joined to the body than to worry whether I am an artist in the highest or the

lowest sense."[1]

Herbert Read also thinks that the distinct quality of the artist lies in technical skill, or the ability to express.[2] He quotes with approval the following statement of Konrad Fiedler.

"The artist is not differentiated from other people by any special perceptive faculty enabling him to perceive more or with greater intensity, or endowing his eye with any special power of selecting, collecting, transforming, ennobling or illuminating, but rather by his peculiar gift of being able to pass immediately from perception to intuitive expression; his relation to nature is not perceptive but expressive."[3]

This view seems to undervalue the importance of sensitivity. For genuine art there must be both sensitivity and the urge towards expression. To accept the truth of this conclusion it is only necessary to consider the countless examples which present themselves of works where technical proficiency allied to poverty of feeling produces 'illustration' in all its forms.

Vernon Blake well expresses this two-fold requirement of art in his statement that for art to be genuine it must not only "Give us a certain feeling of admiration for things

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1. J. Meier-Graefe. Vincent Van Gogh, p.64.
2. See Art Now, p.144.
3. Ibid pp.42-43.

that are workmanlike and well done" but must also convey "artistically valid relations".[1] It is interesting that he criticises the paintings of Cezanne and Van Gogh on the grounds that they satisfy only the latter criterion, since from one point of view the Impressionist and Post Impressionist movements may be described as one of the many revolts from verisimilitude and mere technical efficiency which have occurred in the history of art. What this kind of revolt implies, as regards the characteristics of the work of art, must be discussed in the following chapter, where the problem of Distortion and its relation to Impulsive Experience must be fully considered. In the present connection the significance of such revolts lies in the evident intention of the artist to return to artistic sincerity. This leads the argument back to the discussion of the nature of the Impulsive Experience and of the way in which <u>both</u> sensitivity and creativity are involved in it.

It was suggested above that the essential factor here is that of medium. It may now be added that if medium is genuinely involved in the original experience there <u>will</u> be 'resistance' between conception and expression. At any moment, out of the way of experiencing which has been stated here to be characteristic of the artist, a genuine Impulsive Experience may emerge. The general characteristics of this type of experience have

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1. <u>Relation in Art</u>, p.88.

already been described dogmatically.[1] It was stated that the genuine Impulsive Experience was heaved at once and completely out of the ordinary run of non-artistic experience, that things were apprehended in a different way. A good deal of evidence can be found for the truth of this contention. De Sanctis well describes the creative moment from the point of view of the artist in words.

"The early time of a poet's inspiration - that tentative time which is so highly dramatic - is hidden to criticism .... When a subject comes into the brain of a creative writer it at once dissolves that part of reality which suggested it.... To create reality, the poet must first have the force to kill it.... And the first real moment of creation in that tumultuous, fragmentary world is the moment when those fragments find a point, a centre around which they can press. It is then that the poet's creation comes out from the unlimited, which makes it fluctuant, and takes on a definite form - it is then that it comes to birth. It is born and lives, or rather it develops gradually, in conformity with its essence."[2]

John Livingston Lowes gives an account of how Goethe conceived his Werther, in terms very similar to those of De Sanctis.

"For two years, as Goethe relates in Dictung und Wahrheit

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1. See earlier in the present chapter.
2. History of Italian Literature. Vol.1. pp.177-8. The whole section, on Dante, is of interest.

the stuff of Werther occupied his mind without taking form. Then he tells us what happened. He received one day the startling news of his friend Jerusalem's suicide, and as he says, 'at that instant the plan of Werther was found; the whole shot together from all directions, and became a solid mass, as the water in a vase, which is just at the freezing point, is changed by the slightest concussion into ice'."[1]

This essential detachment of Distancing of the Impulsive Experience can be paralleled from the other arts also. Wagner describes it in this way.

"I endeavoured to describe the powerful effect of vital impressions on the temperament, how they hold us captive, as it were, until we rid ourselves of them by the unique development of our inmost spiritual visions, which are not called forth by those impressions but only roused by them from their deep slumber. The artistic structure, therefore, appears to us as in no wise a result of, but, on the contrary, a liberation from the vital impressions."[2]

Further support can be gained from the testimony of painters. In their records, the contention takes the form that the artist does not in any sense 'copy nature'. A few quotations only can be given here.

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1. The Road to Xanadu. pp.147-148.
2. Quoted by J. Lindsay, Inspiration, p.93.

Van Gogh's Letters are full of references to the relation of art to nature.

"Tell Seurat I should despair if my figures were correct; tell him that if you take a photograph of a man digging, in my opinion he is sure to look as if he were not digging.... tell him it is my most fervent desire to know how one can achieve such deviations from reality, such inaccuracies and such transfigurations that come about by chance. Well, yes, if you like, they are lies; but they are more valuable than the real values."[1]

"One begins by plaguing oneself to no purpose in order to be true to nature, and one concludes by working quietly from one's palette alone, and then nature is the result."[2]

"I often feel very sorry that I cannot induce myself to work more at home, from imagination..... How glad I should be one day to try to paint the starry heavens, as also a meadow studded with dandelions in the sunlight. But how can one ever hope to succeed in doing these things unless one resolves to stay at home and to work from imagination?"[3]

This opinion, that 'nature' may get in the way of the artist's process of externalisation even when to the casual observer he is, to all intents and purposes, as in painting a portrait or a landscape, 'copying nature', is expressed by other artists. In one way it is perhaps true to say that the

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1. Letters of a Post-Impressionist. p.23.
2. Ibid. p.30.
3. Ibid. p.44.

painter is nearer to nature than artists in any other medium, since the act of crystalisation, when the Impulsive Experience shakes itself free from non-artistic reality, which in the case of the literary artist takes place wholly within the mind, seems, in the case of the painter, often to happen, as it were, independently of himself, in the world around him. This is reflected in the fact that the painter will often go into the country 'to paint', and seems much more definitely to seek his inspiration in the things around him than does, for example, the artist in words. This seemed very clearly to be the case with the landscape artist to whom reference has already been made in this chapter. She used to stalk the Dunstable Downs day after day with her eye cocked 'for a bit of something to paint' as she expressed it, and day after day would come back to contemplate a minute patch of jade green, where a waterproof sheet covered an as yet unthatched rick in a cornfield on the swell of Ivinghoe Beacon a mile away. This seemed to be the focus round which, when everything was ready, the picture was to fall into shape. This hypnotism with some item of the visual field may be the painter's equivalent of the poet's hypnotism with a line of poetry, and its purpose may be to facilitate the emergence of the Impulsive Experience. This experience, for the painter, often seems to take the form of an instantaneous vision of some aspect of the apprehended scene

which may not be at all accessible to the percipient who is not an artist, and may not, even to the artist himself, appear again for a very long time, if at all. Matisse definitely stated this to be the purpose in painting,[1] and Picasso expresses very much the same idea.

"I see for others, that is to say, so that I can put on canvas the sudden apparitions which force themselves on me."[2]

But, even so, nature may 'get in the way', and the artist is not, in his subsequent process of externalisation, merely copying or reproducing this instantaneous vision. Picasso, again, provides an interesting example of this, if one may trust the testimony of Gertrude Stein. In describing how Picasso painted her portrait she writes,

"All on a sudden one day Picasso painted out the whole head. I can't see you any longer when I look, he said irritably."[3]

The landscape artist referred to above also expressed the same sort of attitude, in describing a painting of a stream seen under thick leafage. As visioned originally, the stream to her looked bright purple, and it was this which seemed to her important, in its harmony with the colours of bough and leaf and crumbling mould. But she found this vision

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1. See Herbert Read. Art Now. pp.71 and 79.
2. Ibid. p.123.
3. Gertrude Stein. Autobiography of Alice B.Toklas. p.57. The face was apparently painted in again 'out of his head' while Gertrude Stein was in Italy. See p.61 of the same work.

extremely hard to grip hold of, for as she painted and looked from time to time at the scene, the stream ceased to look purple at all, and all the colours became progressively dulled and muddied. Yet even although she had, in a sense, found her inspiration in a seen landscape, the description she gave of the process of painting the picture showed clearly that what she was trying to do was not to 'copy nature'. She was very emphatic that the essential thing was to keep the whole in mind throughout. If one got absorbed in some one part, as she did in the texture of a leafy branch at one corner of the picture, one found that it had got out of focus with the rest and either needed toning down itself or necessitated a heightening of the rest to restore the harmony. Epstein's method when doing the portrait bust of Professor S. Alexander provides an interesting parallel to this. He seemed to the observer (Professor Alexander himself) to work over the whole head at once, a minute alteration in one spot necessitating harmonising alterations all over.[1]

Space forbids the giving of further examples, but I think it is justifiable, on the basis of what has been said above, to draw the general conclusion that the artist, in the process of externalisation subsequent to his Impulsive Experience is not in any sense trying to copy something seen or heard which had an existence apart from art and complete in itself. Once

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1. See S. Alexander. Beauty and Some other Forms of Value. p.67.

the original experience has occurred, non-artistic reality ceases to be relevant in itself and the artist works on a new basis, seeking by the manipulation of his medium to establish a set of relations which hold, not between art and life, but wholly within art. What the artist has to do is to realise the implications of his original experience.

The actual method of effecting this realisation must, of course, vary both with the individual artist and with the nature of his medium, and it is beyond the scope of this research to deal adequately with this question. All that is possible here is to give some account of what seems to be the essential characteristic of <u>any</u> process of externalisation, no matter what the medium employed. This involves a consideration of that factor of 'resistance' to which reference has already been made.

It seems to me that where the creator is working on a genuine artistic impulse this resistance will always be present and will involve what may be called an 'incubation period' between the original experience and the achievement of its externalisation in a medium. Moreover, this externalisation will always involve some degree of 'hacking' or wrestling with the medium, i.e. the process involves struggle and costs the artist something. That it does so is not always, of course, equally apparent, but this only means, I think, that the place where the struggle occurs may vary or that the artist may not

always be aware of the actual moment of inspiration. If the 'hacking' takes place on the conscious level, the artist is keenly aware of the element of struggle, and may shape and reshape, alter and experiment, until the thing adequately embodies his conception. This may seem most obviously true of the sculptor, but can be paralleled from the other arts. There are, for example, literary artists who work out their rhythms with a conscious, intellectual balancing of syllables which reminds one very forcibly of the 'musical logic' of Bach. Seurat's process of building up his colour harmonies by the calculated addition of dot to dot illustrates the same point. But even in cases such as these, when the greater part of the struggle seems to take place on the conscious level, unconscious mental activity plays an important part. It is here that the 'incubation' of the conception takes place, and in this context and with this interpretation, the importance of the unconscious can scarcely be over-estimated.[1] It is as affecting the sub-conscious mental activity of the artist that his 'life' experiences of all kinds are important. These 'life' experiences may contribute much to the creative moment itself and may also be of extreme importance for the subsequent externalisation of the conception, providing the food on which the

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1. The distinction between the use made here of the concept of 'the unconscious' and that characteristic of the various psycho-analytic schools in their analysis of artistic creation will, I think, be sufficiently clear from what follows to render further discussion unnecessary.

Impulsive Experience may be nourished.[1] John Livingston Lowes, in the work referred to earlier in this chapter,[2] has given a very detailed and convincing account of the relation of the 'Ancient Mariner' to this kind of experience, tracing back almost every image in the poem to some item among Coleridge's voracious reading. He remarks, "To follow Coleridge through his reading is to retrace the obliterated vestiges of creation." His treatment is especially interesting in the present context because he lays great stress on the importance of 'incubation'. No one of the facts which Coleridge gleaned from his reading was reproduced, in the poem, as originally apprehended, but all were reshaped and reborn as the requirements of the artistic conception necessitated. One example only of how this took place can be given here.

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1. Conscious 'life' experiences subsequent to the Impulsive Experience may also contribute much to its development. This is seen most clearly, perhaps, in the case of a longer literary work, such as a poem, play or novel, where, after the conception of the theme, all kinds of ordinarily trivial and unnoticed phenomena take on a new significance and are apprehended in a way conditioned by the developing conception; but the fact could no doubt be paralleled from the other arts.

2. The Road to Xanadu. The whole treatment is of extreme interest in this connection, but only a brief reference can be made to it here.

Coleridge had read, in Captain Cook's Voyages, of small sea animals which, during a calm, swam about emitting colours bright and gleaming as gems, blue or 'pale green tinged with a burnished gloss', which in the dark glowed like fire. In the same work he had read of the sea being 'covered with a kind of slime'. In Priestley's Optics also, he had read of luminous fishes, and, in a paper contributed by Father Bourze to the Philosophical Transactions, of luminous tracks in the wake of ships which were brightest where 'the water was more fat and glutinous'. In another article in the same volume of the Transactions, he had read of the sea seeming to smoke and to emit fire, again having the appearance of oil. Out of these scattered memory images, when the demands of the developing poetic conception necessitated it, was forged the following,

> "The very deep did rot: O Christ!
> That ever this should be!
> Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
> Upon the slimy sea.
>
> About, about, in reel and rout
> The death-fires danced at night;
> The water, like a witch's oils,
> Burnt green, and blue, and white."[1]

It is reasonable to conclude, on the basis of Coleridge's own testimony, that this re-shaping of the original images was done in what Mr. Livingston Lowes calls 'the deep well' of the unconscious, and that the images as required by the poem

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1. For the complete analysis of this particular passage, see The Road to Xanadu, Chap.5. pp.79-89.

sprang complete into consciousness. Mr. Lowes brings out the importance of subconscious incubation by contrasting Coleridge's genuine poetic productions with what he calls his 'joiner's work', in which the elements were patiently and consciously put together, and not enough time elapsed between reading and re-emergence. He considers that the "Destiny of Nations", "Joan of Arc", and a sonnet on Godwin, are literary exercises of this kind. The importance of this suggestion lies, I think, not in the _conscious_ nature of the actual process of composition but in the absence of time for incubation.

For work of genuine artistic merit this incubation period must be present, and where, as in certain cases, very little if any time _seems_ to elapse between the inspiration and execution, the true explanation is, I think, that the genuine moment of inspiration lies further back, perhaps unrecognised as such by the artist. In this connection it is interesting to note that Mr. Lowes thinks that Coleridge's proposed _Magnum Opus_ the Six Hymns to the Sun, Moon and Elements, which never got beyond the consideration of its possible raw material, bears a direct relation to the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner", itself, as he says, "to a remarkable degree a poem of the elements."[1]

Even more to the point is Mr. Middleton Murry's account

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1. Op. cit. pp.75-77.

of the genesis of Keats's sonnet, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer".[1] The poem was written with astonishing speed between daybreak and breakfast, immediately after returning from a night spent, with Cowden Clarke, in reading Chapman's translation of Homer. Mr. Murry's explanation of this rapid composition is that the ostensible 'subject' of the poem is not the real one. The sonnet expresses finally and perfectly 'the ardour of exploration' which had already found incomplete expression in a great deal of Keats's poetry of this period, notably in, "I stood tiptoe upon a little hill" and in, "Sleep and poetry". He traces back the images of the sonnet through their less expressive antecedents in these earlier poems, e.g. the sea, the cliff at Margate, the moon swimming into the blue, the planet, the ocean sprinkled with islands. His final account of the matter is that "the actual composition of this great poem was but the conscious last of a whole series of unconscious acts of poetic creation. And we may hazard the guess that it is this long period of unconscious preparation which distinguishes the great poem from the merely good one."[2]

The interpretation I should give to this is that the genuine Impulsive Experience took place prior to all these attempts to express the theme, and that the reading of Chapman

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1. See J.M.Murry, <u>Studies in Keats</u>, p.15 ff.
2. Op.Cit. pp.32-33.

provided the emotional impetus effecting the release of inhibition and allowing what had been developing below the surface to spring into consciousness. This statement cannot, of course, in the case of the Keats sonnet, be proved, but I should like to give in support of it, if I may do so without being thought presumptuous, a comparatively trivial example from my own experience.

The following epigram sprang into my mind immediately after the incident recorded had occurred.

> Out of my tumbler, on my knife,
> I landed a gnat, and saved his life.
> Hark to the shouts of the Cherubim!
> God is pleased I rescued him!

I was quite unable to account for its sudden emergence until some months later, when, on rereading Katherine Mansfield's Journal, I came upon this passage:-

"And God looked upon the fly fallen into the jug of milk and saw that it was good. And the smallest Cherubim and Seraphim of all, who delight in misfortune, struck their silver harps and shrilled, 'How is the fly fallen, fallen!'"[1]

The important thing here seems to me not that the epigram might be considered a mere imitation of the passage from the Journal[2], but that on looking back to the original reading of

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1. Op.Cit. p.101.
2. As a matter of fact I think it is in its very small way as independent a reshaping of the material as the "Ancient Mariner."

the Journal I can now clearly recollect feeling about the passage (especially the last phrase) in a way which I can only describe as 'kinaesthetically'. This quality of kinaesthesis seems to me to be what effects the essential preliminary detachment of the Impulsive Experience and to be its essential character.[1] It is also reflected in the essential kinaesthetic factor in all art, no matter what the medium, and is obviously connected with the question of Einfühlung. The whole topic may be more clearly approached from the point of view of the work of art and of the recipient's relation to it, and this must be attempted in the next chapter.

Before doing so, one possible criticism must be dealt with. It may be objected that the theory put forward here is applicable only to literature. It is certainly true that in my own case it was suggested by the study of literature but it has seemed to me to be supported by my subsequent study of artists in other media. Picasso, for example, seems to have relied to a great extent on the subconscious. In a statement made to M. Zervos,[2] he remarks,

"I don't know in advance what I am going to put on the canvas, any more than I decide in advance what colours to use. Whilst I work I take no stock of what I am painting on the

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1. It has been suggested above that the moment when the artist realises what it is he wishes to produce as the result of this experience may come much later.

2. Quoted by Herbert Read. Art Now. p.123.

canvas. Every time I begin a picture, I feel as though I were throwing myself into the void. I never know if I shall fall on my feet again. It is only later that I begin to evaluate more exactly the result of my work."

I do not wish, however, to give the impression that I think this chapter in any way supplies a complete and fully substantiated theory. As was stated at the outset, the present research is intended primarily as an essay in method, and it is obvious that a great deal of further research along the lines suggested here must be undertaken before any well-authenticated conclusions can be reached. But it is hoped that the next chapter will make more clear the fact that the method advocated here is the correct one.

CHAPTER 6

"THE PROBLEM OF ART"

The title of this chapter calls for some explanation. In calling the chapter "The Problem of Art" I do not want to suggest that I think there is only one problem of art. The topic of art, if one includes in it, as the argument of the previous chapter was meant to suggest should be done, the problem of the Impulsive Experience of the artist, provides the major portion of the whole subject-matter of the philosophy of aesthetics, and includes a large number of very difficult and very important problems. It is not the purpose of this chapter to try to solve all these problems. To attempt to do so within the limits of the space which is all that can be afforded here would be simply foolish. I am not going to make any attempt, for example, to discuss in detail the nature of the various arts. A large number of very attractive questions present themselves in this connection but have had to be abandoned with regret as not strictly relevant to the purpose of this research. What that purpose is has been already stated, i.e. to attempt to discover the

precise philosophical significance of the subject matter of aesthetics and to determine the correct philosophical method of dealing with it. What I want to do in this chapter, if I can, is to review the facts of art from the point of view of philosophical common sense and to suggest what, among the mass of material presented for consideration, are the facts of central importance for philosophy. I have called the present chapter "the problem of art" because I wish to emphasise again the conviction expressed in the previous chapter, namely, that the problem of art is essentially the problem of medium.

But the enquiry cannot begin with the consideration of particular media. The present chapter can be satisfactorily constructed only in close relation to the previous one. The treatment of the topic of the Impulsive Experience of the artist, and of his conscious and subconscious mental processes, was necessarily largely psychological, but the facts as there discussed have a clear relevance for philosophy. That relevance is, however, indirect rather than direct. This is connected with the fact that the Impulsive Experience is itself in a sense known only indirectly and by inference. It was stated in the account given of that experience that what he is to create is not explicitly apprehended by the artist at the moment of the occurrence of the experience, that he is not "over-against" something, and that the concept of Judgment is not applicable here. It was stated, moreover, that the 'This'

of the Judgment only comes progressively into existence as the process of externalisation takes place. It was necessary to give a prior consideration to the topic of the nature of the artist's Impulsive Experience because the characteristics of the work of art can only be intelligently understood as they derive from this, but strictly speaking the interest of philosophy begins only when the process of externalisation is completed and when some individual recipient is apprehending the work of art[1] which is the product of that process.

Two factors are of importance in the relation thus established, namely, the characters of the object and the nature of the individual's experience. These have been discussed in chapters two and three and the conclusion was there reached that the analysis of both can only usefully be approached through the consideration of the aesthetic judgment. In the case of the appreciation of art, as in that where the situation yields only the aesthetic minimum, judgment is essentially involved, since the characteristic feature of the total complex is that something is presented for immediate appraisal, and is accepted or rejected on its own merits.

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1. "Work of art" is used here in the sense in which the plain man (if he exists) would use the term. What this means is easiest to see in the case of painting or sculpture, when the phrase would refer to the painted canvas or the worked piece of stone, i.e. no opinion is as yet intended as to whether this material object is the genuine <u>aesthetic</u> object.

It is in this sense, as determining the attitude of the recipient, that judgment is important, for it is obvious that the recipient does not always consciously <u>frame</u> a specific judgment while he is apprehending the work of art. If he consciously judges at all he is much more likely to do so afterwards, on reflection, as the whole which he has been apprehending settles into shape and is realised <u>as</u> a whole. This is especially likely, perhaps, in the case of the appreciation of a drama or a novel, where the shape of the whole is only progressively realised, but is probably true of all art. While the individual recipient appreciates he is, in the presence of art as of the "merely aesthetic," absorbed in what is presented to him; his attention is held by the object and he gives himself up to its enjoyment. This fact, I think, provides an additional argument in favour of the view put forward in Chapter three, that in the analysis of the aesthetic judgment the 'This' or logical subject is of much more importance than the predicate, since its initial reference is to that "aesthetic object" which commands the attention of the recipient, and on which judgment is passed. It is not necessary to go over this ground again. The chief point which emerged from the discussion of subjective and objective in that chapter was that the determination of the precise nature of that "aesthetic object" and of its relation to

material object on the one hand and to experience on the other was a problem of the first importance to the philosophy of aesthetics. It is this problem, as it exemplifies itself in the phenomena of art, which must be discussed in the present Chapter. That this method of approach enables one to disregard, during the first stages of the enquiry, the very difficult question of the meaning of the predicate "beautiful" is shown by the fact that the nature of beauty will be revealed as the result of the complete analysis of the "aesthetic object."

In that analysis, as it has so far been attempted by aestheticians, the chief question which has been discussed seems to have been how far the aesthetic object is identical with the work of art in the sense of a literal, material object, and how far it consists of mental constituents, and the result of these enquiries often seems to be an exaltation of the mental factor at the expense of the material one. Reference has already been made to some of these conclusions, so that a brief quotation will suffice here to call them to mind. Lascelles Abercrombie, for example, remarks, "For art - and for aesthetics generally - objects do not exist, but only experiences.[1]" and, again, "Beauty is not a quality of things, but a judgment of the experience of things." [2] P.Leon, also, distinguishes

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1. Towards a Theory of Art p.90.
2. Ibid p.40.

the aesthetic object from the work of art on the grounds that the former is "primarily imagined sound or colour or shape and only secondarily and subsequently sense-produced and sense-apprehended," while the latter is "primarily an object of sense-experience," [1] and holds that it is the aesthetic object rather than the work of art which is the genuine object of appreciation. Reference may also be made to Professor S. Alexander's theory that beauty is a tertiary quality, depending on characters imputed to the material by the mind. One quotation in illustration of this must suffice here.

"The beautiful is in a sense illusory .... The Hermes looks not merely marble but alive and divine and playful. Hence beauty attaches, as has long been an aesthetic commonplace, to the appearance and not to the practical reality of the work of art, which is beautiful only if the mind is there which can add to the palpable material the features which the artist has embodied in it."[2]

There is also the remark of Roger Fry, that "Our reaction to works of art is a reaction to a relation and not to sensations or objects or persons or events." [3.]

I do not wish to deny that there may be a great deal that is both true and valuable in views of this kind, although

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1. The Work of Art and the Aesthetic object. Mind N.S.vol.40 p 292.
2. Beauty and some other Forms of Value. p.36.
3. Transformations. p.3.

I think that any view which emphasises the purely mental side lays itself open to the danger of ending in Crocean Idealism, but the real problem does not seem to me to be this one of the relative importance of material and mental. In a sense it is not only true but obvious that all art depends on a mental factor, since, for example, the individual recipient must use his eyes in order to see the Hermes at all. It is also true that any art has a material side, since it may be said that music has only a potential existence until the score is played or sung, while the art of literature consists of words not merely arranged to express a logical development of thought but chosen for their rhythmical and tonal values, thus requiring, in order to attain actuality, overt or imaginal recitation. But these two arts of music and literature do not seem to be "material" in quite the same way as do sculpture or painting, or at any rate, what the artist or the recipient adds or imputes seems of the same _kind_ as the medium in question. So that if _all_ the arts are considered with reference to this question of mental and material, I think it becomes clear that the point at issue is not so much does art consist of something mental added or imputed to something material, but does the artist, whatever the medium he employs, depend for his effect on something genuinely contributed by the recipient. This is obviously a question of the first

importance, and is, in effect, the same question which has already been stated here to be central, namely what is the nature of the "aesthetic object"?

In attempting to answer it, I wish to begin from the common-sense point of view that the artist, as the result of his impulsive experience, constructs an object of one kind or another, and to consider these objects first of all solely from the point of view of the artist. In all the current discussions of objective and subjective, mental and material, and so on, there does seem to me to be a real danger of forgetting that after all the chief thing that we do in the appreciation of art is to look at pictures or statues, hear music, recite poetry, or read novels, and that these objects are the result of a specific activity on the part of the artist. This being so, it seems much more natural to begin the attempt to understand their nature by viewing them in relation to that activity, than by considering the quality of the experience which they occasion in the recipient.

At this point I wish again to emphasise the importance of medium. Although I think that certain things can be said which will be applicable to <u>all</u> forms of art, I do not wish to suggest that these things in themselves will constitute a complete account of any one of them. Whatever statements are made in this general discussion must be translated into the

terms of the media of the several arts, and as thus translated will function so differently that the resulting arts, together with the corresponding experiences on the part of the recipient, will be specific. Some attempt will be made later to support this contention; but for the moment the discussion may be confined to those characteristics which have just been stated to be of general application.

I think that any discussion of the nature of art, from whatever angle it views its topic, must begin from the standpoint that the complete range of so-called "works of art" can be divided into two clearly distinguishable classes. One of these will consist of pseudo "works of art", namely those produced for reasons other than the artistically relevant ones. The other will comprise those which are the outcome of a genuine artistic impulse. As examples of the impulses leading to the production of works of the first class, may be given sentimentality, sex, unrecognized wishes for power, or for self-aggrandisement, a desire to be saleable, or to be thought a member of the newest "movement" of the moment. The kind of objects which will result from these impulses will be such works as the novels of Ethel M. Dell, perhaps the whole of "Repository Art",[1] Chaminade's _Automne_, or those poems of Walter de la Mare in which he seems to be turning out verses

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1. See Eric Gill's amusing and penetrating discussion of this. _Beauty Looks After Herself_. pp.30. ff.

"up to sample" as regards the glamorous use of words. If it be asked, how does one know that works of this kind are only pseudo-artistic, I think the only possible answer is that appreciation and analysis of the genuine variety develops a palate or sense which enables one to reject the other kind on immediate judgment. It is, I suppose, the same sort of argument as that put forward by John Stuart Mill in Utilitarianism, where the reason given for rejecting some types of pleasure as less valuable than others is that any man who has genuinely experienced the higher cannot be satisfied with the lower.[1] But when, on the other hand, one comes to ask how one knows the genuine work of art, the answer is rather different. There is, of course, in this case also, the immediate 'palate' or taste at work. This is seen in the fact that one can sometimes feel, on apprehending a work of art, that it did arise from a genuine artistic impulse, although one also feels that the attempt at externalisation has not been altogether successful. But one can, in addition to this immediate sensing of genuineness, apply certain tests, on knowledge gained through later analysis and reflection. The genuine work of art will have certain characteristics. These

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1. I am aware that this distinction would not be accepted by all writers on aesthetics. The psycho-analysts, for example, would apparently not need to make the distinction. But I think that failure to do so reveals an inability to feel what genuine art is.

must shortly be described in detail, but before this is attempted it is necessary, I think, to make a further remark concerning the distinction here drawn. The statement that the genuine work of art is the outcome of a genuine Impulsive Experience does not mean that the artist must always be consciously aware that it ought to originate thus. I have no means of determining exactly how or when, in the course of history, the artist purely as such came into being, but he is, I should imagine, a comparatively modern phenomenon. It is obvious that the artists of the Italian thirteenth century were no less genuine artists because they were perhaps inspired by strong religious feelings or merely undertook works on commission; or those of primitive societies because they may have hoped to effect magical results by their scratchings on rock and bone. To take a more modern example, The Ugly Duckling is no less a genuine work of art because it, like a great number of his tales, is really concerned with Hans Andersen's own emergence from obscure poverty to world-wide fame.[1] On the contrary the self-conscious artist is much more likely to miss artistic sincerity, just because he can be self-conscious about his intention.

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1. See The Life of Hans Andersen, by Signe Tostvig.

Clive Bell expresses this fact well.

"For an artist to believe that his art is concerned with religion or politics or morals or psychology or scientific truth is well; it keeps him alive and passionate and vigorous: it keeps him out of sentimental aestheticism: it keeps to hand a suitable artistic problem."[1] And again, "The artist must have something to get in a passion about."[2] This last remark provides the clue to the basis of the distinction. No matter what the outside-art impulse which began the process, unless the artist at some point or other feels this passion, "distancing" will not take place, and what he produces will not be art. For this reason, the artist who is too much absorbed in a conscious <u>theory</u> of art is likely to feel only about the theory and not about the unique opportunity which this particular subject which absorbs him at this particular moment provides for the exploration and subjugation of this particular medium. It is this unique fascination which the artist must feel over and over again, and feel equally on <u>every</u> occasion to <u>be</u> thus "unique", if he is to produce genuine art. As Lascelles Abercrombie remarks, it is only the second-rate artist who is concerned with the problem of "creating beauty". The genuine artist is simply absorbed in particular problems of

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1. <u>Art</u>. p.146.
2. Ibid. p.150.

externalisation. This is, I think, the correct interpretation to be given to Keats's theory that if poetry does not come as naturally as the leaves to the tree it had better not come at all. Another statement of Keats is significant in this connection.[1]

"Man may, like the spider, spin from his own inwards his own airy citadel. The points of leaves and twigs on which the spider begins her work are few, and she fills the air with a beautiful circuiting. Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine web of his soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wanderings, of distinctness for his luxury."[2]

The ostensible meaning of this statement is that memory should not be called knowledge, but the passage very aptly describes the creative process of the artist and was almost certainly, I think, an expression of Keats's own experience as poet. Its significance as applied to the artist's Impulsive Experience and to his subsequent process of externalisation is

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1. I very much regret that I have not, in the present undertaking, been able to attempt a coherent and complete account of Keats's theory of aesthetics as it is found scattered throughout his letters, since it seems to me, within its limits, one of the most valuable I have met.

2. Letter to Reynolds. Feb.19, 1818. Letters. Buxton Forman Edition 1931. Vol.1. p.111.

that it seems to express that fact, which has been mentioned already in more than one connection, that the original experience is a "distanced" one and is severed at once from non-artistic reality. It must now be shown how this fact is reflected in the work of art. This raises the question of Representation, which must be discussed in any philosophical study of Aesthetics. The philosophical interest in the question of Representation lies in the problem it raises of the relation of artistic to non-artistic reality, i.e. is the work of art an object of the same kind as non-artistic objects? Two kindred questions are closely connected with that of Representation, namely those of Distortion and of Symbolism.

A good deal has been said on the subject of Representation from the point of view of the artist in the previous chapter, and need not be repeated here. The main conclusion there reached was that for the artist the question of Representation was irrelevant: no genuine artist sets out to "copy nature". This does not mean, of course, that the genuine work of art bears no resemblance whatever to things outside art. It is as true to say that no artist can construct his work of art by synthesising elements which bear <u>no</u> resemblance to things outside art as it is to say that no work of art, however "realistic" can ever more than 'approximate to the actualities which it tries to represent. There must

in one sense as inevitably be an element of representation as there is inevitably an element of distortion in all art. Maxwell Armfield expressed the former fact rather neatly in a Lecture,[1] when he remarked, "A sheep is no more natural than a square." A further discussion of this question as it relates to what is often called abstract or formal art will be more to the point later in the argument, when the reasons for and the value of the conscious distortions of art must be discussed, but something more may be said at this stage concerning the element of distortion which is inevitable to all art, however "representational" its intention.. Only a few examples of the sort of thing that is meant here can be given. It seems to me that no landscape, however "naturalistic" really looks as if it were constructed in three dimensions; never, that is, has the illusory appearance of depth as has a photographed landscape seen through a stereoscope. Leo Stein remarks, on this question of perspective in pictures, that, "a picture is something that one looks into but keeps out of"[2] and that the attitude of travelling through a landscape instead of looking at it is unaesthetic.[3] He also says that the high horizon and the tilting of the depth plane found in many modern

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1. Given to the Aesthetics Section of the British Psychological Society November 1933. See "The Lecture Recorder, Vol.111. No.6. p.135.
2. A.B.C. of Aesthetics, p.156.
3. Ibid. p.163.

pictures is the result of Japanese influence and serves just this purpose of preventing the recipient from walking into the picture.[1] But it seems to me that if pictures are in any sense looked at (instead of being used as mere "jumping off" places for irrelevant memory or imaginative experiences,) it is impossible to "travel through" them, because they do not look like three-dimensional landscapes or like scenes viewed in a mirror: the literal flatness of the canvas cannot be got over. The same sort of fact applies to sculpture, which, although it may be constructed "in the round" and thus literally in three dimensions, again does not seem to me to look "alive and divine and playful" (as Professor Alexander describes the Hermes), unless the recipient does not really look at it. The fact that it is constructed out of immobile material gives it an essential immobility and this seems so even when it presents "suspended movement", as in the figure of the youth on the Parthenon Frieze stooping to adjust his sandal, i.e. although sculpture, like all art, has a definite kinaesthetic quality and depends partly for its effect on kinaesthesis in the recipient, this does not mean that the sculptured form is itself meant to seem alive and capable of

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Ibid. p.165.

movement.[1] Where sculpture is in low or high relief and not in the round the element of distortion is much easier to see, of course, and need not be further discussed. Nor need much be said, concerning this point, about architecture and music. Architecture may and should be influenced by the character of its surroundings, as is shown in the way in which genuine Cotswold villages seem to merge into the landscape, reflecting the soft colours not only of wold and wood but even of the sheep. There is a pleasing if rather fanciful story of a Chinese sculptor, K'ing who, on being commissioned to carve a belfry first, "coiled up all his vital powers into himself" for seven days, until he had forgotten all thoughts of praise and payment, success and failure, and then went into the forest and contemplated "the natural growth of trees, the bearing of the most perfect of them." He is said to have described the result in this way:- "When I felt thoroughly penetrated with this inspiration, then, at last, I set my hand to the work. It was that which directed my labour. It was by the fusion into one of my nature with that of the trees that this belfrey acquired the quality which makes it so much

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1. This question of kinaesthesis and its relation to theories of Einfühlung will be discussed later in the present chapter.

admired." A more scientific account of this relation between landscape and architecture is given by Vernon Blake,[1] and the illustrations he provides are extremely convincing. This sort of fact does not mean, however, that the architect seeks to copy the natural forms with which his construction is to harmonise, since here, again, there must be translation into the architectural medium with its prescriptive conditions.

Music may be disposed of very briefly. It is universally admitted to be the least representational of arts, and it does not seem possible, within the limitations of the available range of tones and varieties of rhythm, really to "represent" bird songs, or waterfalls, the cuckoo's call or "Fate knocking at the door". The demands of the composition, however thorough-going an attempt is made to be 'realistic', effect some degree of distortion.

There remains literature. This is without doubt the most complex of the arts, and to give it adequate consideration in this particular context, as in all others, would occupy far more space than is justifiable, so that only a few outstanding facts concerning representation can be mentioned here. From one point of view, namely, that in which a painted landscape "looks like" the real landscape, poetry and prose are a further step away from the "real things", in that the word

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1. See Relation in Art. Chs. 12 and 13.

must always stand between the thing it refers to and the recipient, and can only put the latter in touch with the former through the further mediation of some image or concept. The nearest that literature can get to putting the actual thing before the reader is seen perhaps, in the introspective novel of the Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Wolfe type, where the attempt is made to portray the whole of a particular thought-life throughout a certain period. But it is obvious that the coherent, explicit word-constructions through which alone is communication possible are quite inadequate to portray accurately all the telescopings, abortions, irrelevancies, multi-sense imagings of an actual mind-process.[1] There are also devices of the kind used by Elmer Rice in The Adding Machine and Eugene O'Neill in Strange Interlude, where the audience is made aware of the unvoiced thoughts and desires of the characters in the play, as well as of those which they communicate to each other. But even attempts of this kind lead to the conclusion that literature, however 'realistic' in

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1. An amusing commentary on this is seen in the frequent accusation of perverse flouting of 'reality' which has been made against Gertrude Stein, who, it seems to me, in her later works is trying to achieve, as one at least of her aims, just this realistic portrayal of mental life. See her "Composition as Explanation", and her remark in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, that she is always hoping to achieve the complete expression of the Commonplace.

detail or vivid in suggested imagery can only indicate, never directly re-present. This is true, I think, even of the most skilful use of onomatopoeia, or of words (such as "sneer") which seem to have almost the visual appearance of the things they stand for. One may also instance words such as 'sob' and 'scream', where the natural pitch of the voice in speaking them aloud or framing them in one of the varieties of inner speech seems to reflect the movements one would have to make in producing the sounds to which they refer.

These last examples, of course, deal only with the contributary details of literature, but from them, I think, can be extracted the real import of the problem of representation for the philosophy of art. This may be shown by a further consideration of imagery as employed in literature. Keats's line, "Savour of brass and metal sick", for anyone who has had, say, the experience of sucking the metal end of a pencil, probably produces a gustatory image so vivid as to be almost an hallucinatory re-experience of the original taste. The same is true, probably, of Edith Sitwell's phrase, "Each dull, blunt, wooden stalactite of rain," although whether this would have its full effect for a reader who did not know her own explanation of the source of the image is open to

question.[1] This evoking of imagery of hallucinatory vividness is one of the ways in which literature gets nearest to representation. I do not wish to belittle the value of imagery of this kind, since its evocation may be strictly necessary for the artistic effect of the particular work in which it occurs, i.e. the images evoked may be part of the medium of the art in question. But the fact that the response called out from the recipient may be practically the same as that which would be occasioned by the sensing of the actual thing reveals the danger of representation. This danger is not so apparent as regards _images_ in literature but becomes more so if the power of words to arouse _emotions_ is considered.

This danger is not, of course, confined to literature but has its counterpart in all the arts, although the way in which it functions will be affected by the variations of medium. Put in general terms, the danger is this. Things in art can never be _really_ like things in life, because the inherent qualities of the medium make some element of distortion inevitable. This the genuine artist realises. He respects his medium and does not attempt to make it do something it is not capable of, in order to attain an illusion of non-artistic

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1. "In the early dawn, long raindrops are transformed by the light until they have the light's own quality of hardness; also they have the dull and blunt and tasteless quality of wood." See, _Poetry and Criticism_, p.20.

reality. For him, the value of representation is strictly neutral; in working out his Impulsive Experience some degree of naturalism may be the result, but its value will not be that it enables art to look like nature, but that it facilitates the apprehension of certain artistically relevant characters. For the artist, because of his knowledge of Impulsion and creation, the work of art is apprehended and apprehensible only in terms of its own particular medium. If "ideas" is to be used in this connection so as to be applicable to the apprehension of <u>all</u> the arts, the term must be given a qualifying adjective, of the kind employed by Vernon Blake in his concepts of "plastic idea" and "plastic thought". He expresses very clearly the way in which the artist thinks in terms of his medium.

"A person accustomed to think in 'plastic thought' really carries out mental operations in terms of form, just as a poet does in terms of words."[1]

"No line or shape of which the nature may be transmitted by means of verbal instructions can be artistically valid."[2]

"Artistic thought is only completely transmissible in its own medium."[3]

Roger Fry expresses the same sort of opinion about

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1. <u>Relation in Art</u>, p.83
2. Ibid. p.90.
3. Ibid. p.92.

painting.

"The full value of the representational element almost always depends on a reference to something outside the actual work of art, to what is brought in by the title and such knowledge as the title implies to the spectator, whereas plastic values inhere in the work itself."[1]

Clive Bell also remarks,

"To appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing but a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three-dimensional space."[2]

But this complete immersion in the medium of the art, easy and perhaps inevitable for the artist, because the work of art is for him the product of an experience itself conceived in terms of the medium, may be much more difficult for the lay recipient. As R. Nettleship remarked, speaking of the sculpture of Michaelangelo,

"The demands it makes on one's ordinary state of mind are as severe as those of the most seemingly paradoxical utterances of science or religion - Every curve, every line, was to him all-important - the only possible one. We are sure that it is so: but we have learnt the language of words so much better than that of marble, and there is no grammar or

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1. Transformations. p.24.

2. Art. p.27.

dictionary of the human form.... and so one can only hope occasionally to get glimpses of the great sculptor's mind, and to most of the world and in most of their moods he remains unmeaning and grotesque."[1]

For this reason, where there is a partial likeness between the things portrayed in art and things outside art, it may happen that the recipient gives to the former the response he would give to the things outside art which are <u>called by the same names</u>. This phrase is extremely significant, because it reveals the fact that the response is made, not to the qualities of the medium, but to a concept or <u>verbal</u> idea. To respond in this way is, as was suggested above, to use the work of art merely as a "jumping-off" place for a non-artistic experience.

It is probably the realisation of this danger which is behind what seem to be the <u>intentional</u> distortions of a good deal of contemporary art. In some cases these are so extreme that the artists seem to be attempting to create <u>solely</u> in terms of the theoretical analysis of the medium, purposely avoiding any suggestion of representation, lest this should arouse verbal ideas in the recipient. This suggests a very interesting problem, which I propose for the most part to leave <u>as</u> a problem; namely is the correct response to a work of art

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1. <u>Remains</u>. p.44.

<u>only</u> to what are often called the essentially aesthetic qualities of it, e.g. to the form and colour harmonies in a picture but not to the "story" if it has one, or to what Edith Sitwell calls the "abstract patterns" of prose and poetry, but not to the thoughts the words convey? Or is it to these aesthetic qualities <u>as</u> embodied in the others, i.e. to the work of art as a <u>whole</u>? Put in another way, supposing the strictly aesthetic qualities of art to be describable in some such terms as form, unity, texture; do these, if successfully created, enable the recipient to overcome and thus to disregard the representational element, or does the latter itself contribute to the emergence and right apprehension of the former? The answer which apparently would be given by a large number of contemporary artists and critics is the first of these alternatives. The remarks of Roger Fry and Clive Bell on this point have been quoted already. The following passage from C. Mauron is also to the point here.

"A current opinion of the day is that a picture is not the reproduction of nature but a deformation of nature, a kind of extract designed to bring into relief certain relations which would otherwise be lost among insignificant details. If a group of trees, it is said, owes its aesthetic value in an ensemble only to the sombre mass of its foliage, what is gained by a detailed description of the branches and bark? A few

indications will suffice. To keep only what is efficient, to put nothing on the canvas but the harmony which arrested the artist, would be, according to these theories, the means of attaining to that sober strength, that fullness of form which distinguishes good architecture and, in general, all classic works of art."[1]

The degree of distortion or abstraction suggested here may obviously be artistically valid. The question I should like to ask, however, is, can the artist go on abstracting indefinitely, or does there come a point when the degree of abstraction begins to detract from the value of the situation? There is no doubt that if the artist revolts too violently from naturalism and creates purely in abstract terms, the non-artistic recipient may not be able to follow him, but this would not in itself mean that the artist had failed to construct a valid artistic product, since it may, even if comprehended by no-one but the artist himself, have been the externalisation of a genuine artistic impulse. But I think it may be doubted whether the artist can genuinely conceive in these very abstract terms, i.e. art which attempts to create form to the exclusion of content may not be any more valid than that which

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1. The Nature of Beauty. p.12.

seeks only to attain verisimilitude, and may, equally with the latter, be a sign that the artist has not really understood the nature of his medium.

To take an example from literature. Edith Sitwell quotes with approval the following extract from Gertrude Stein's, Portrait of Constance Fletcher.

"Oh the bells that are the same are not stirring and the languid grace is not out of place and the older fur is disappearing. There is not such an end. If it had happened that the little flower was larger and the white colour was deeper and the silent light was darker and the passage was rougher, it would have been as it was and the triumph was in the place where the light was bright and the beauty was not losing having that possession. That was not what was tenderly. This was the piece of the health that was strange when there was the disappearance that had not any origin. The darkness was not the same. There was the writing and the preparation that was pleasing and succeeding and being enterprising. It was not subdued where there was discussion, it was done where there was the room that was not a dream."[1]

This passage has obvious merits. Treated as a mere patter of sound, its play of vowels and consonants and its

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1. See Edith Sitwell. Poetry and Criticism. p.23.
The later work of James Joyce is also of interest in this connection. See Anna Livia Plurabelle, Tales Told of Shem and Shawn, etc.

musical rhythms give a considerable degree of satisfaction. But I very much doubt whether it is literature, and judged in comparison with, say, Raleigh's passage beginning, "Oh, eloquent, just and mighty death", or with the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, its deficiencies become obvious.[1] The explanation of this seems to me to be that the medium of literature is not isolated words which can be strung together simply for their rhythmical and tonal qualities, but involves also the meaning of words as elements in rational and emotive thought-structures, expressed in connected phrases and sentences. Moreover this meaning element surely affects even the tonal and rhythmic value of the words?

I.A.Richards has some interesting remarks on this point. He quotes two phrases, "Deep into a gloomy grot," and, "Peep into a roomy cot," which, although they would have to receive the same metrical scansion, have very different characters as wholes.[2] But apart from this sort of effect, it seems to me that the necessary ambiguities of words[3] provide an aura of associated or even opposed meanings round the precise

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1. I very much regret that I have not been able to read the whole of this Portrait, so that I have not been able to see whether it can sustain even its satisfaction as abstract pattern throughout a longer period.
2. Practical Criticism, p.231.
3. See W. Empson's interesting study of this topic in Seven Types of Ambiguity.

significance of the word in its particular context, which gives part of its fullness and richness to literature.

In the same way, it seems to me that what Roger Fry calls the psychological elements in a picture or sculpture, provided they give rise to satisfying aesthetic relations, may definitely contribute something to the richness of the whole. The very fact that they have in a sense to be <u>overcome</u> (i.e. that the invitation to react in a "life" fashion is there) may have its value, since it constitutes one side of that ambivalence or antinomy of Distance, which was stated to be a characteristic common to all levels of aesthetic apprehension. This antinomy is clearly seen in music, which, while being in a sense the most abstract of all arts, since it deals only in the relations of pitch, harmony and rhythm, and can thus arouse an intellectual response of tremendous complexity, is also capable of arousing a most overwhelming <u>emotional</u> response of a completely non-artistic kind. It is necessary for all art to be in a sense "abstracted" from life, but I think that if too much of the abstracting is done for the recipient by the artist, the former may not be able to exercise sufficient of that "activity of mind" which seems to be an essential characteristic of the aesthetic response. Too much abstraction may defeat its own purpose and prevent the recipient from taking the purely aesthetic or distanced attitude.

I was personally very much aware of this difficulty at the recent exhibition of painting and sculpture held at the Mayor Galleries.[1] In some cases I failed to appreciate because the stimulus provided seemed to me too simple, in others because the system of relations constructed seemed too complex to be grasped with any sort of comfort or facility, while where the relations were "architectural" in character they seemed to prevent Distancing by suggesting something too big for the canvas, there being nothing, as there would be in more representational art, to give the "scale" of the whole.

This suggests the criterion. Representation, Distortion and Abstraction are only of importance in so far as they do or do not contribute to the right externalisation of the artist's Impulsive Experience. If the latter was genuine, its externalisation may equally probably necessitate a degree of verisimilitude or the reverse, and the resulting work of art will in either case equally be a self-sufficient, self-subsisting entity, having been evolved in accordance with its own self-contained laws and in terms of its own medium. A work which _must_ be compared to something outside itself for its evaluation, or which inevitably arouses this sort of comparison

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1. October 1933. The exhibition was held in connection with the publication of Herbert Read's _Art Now_. Reference may also be made to the reproductions given in that book.

in the recipient has failed as a work of art.[1]

In this connection, something should be said concerning symbolism. The argument up to this point leads to the rejection of the idea that the work of art symbolises something outside art in the sense of resemblance to or imitation of the non-artistic. It also leads to the rejection of the idea that the work of art symbolises some experience of the artist. This is a view which has, I think, often been held. It is involved, for instance, in all theories of art as communication, where it is stated that the purpose of the work of art is to enable the recipient to have an experience analogous to that of the artist, to feel as he felt, and so on. To view the work of art thus seems to me to degrade it to an "occasion". What we enjoy in art is surely the sensuously presented "somewhat", and this for its own sake. We need not make any reference to the artist at all. I am in agreement here with Roger Fry's remark that the artist least of anyone is a symbolist,[2] and am not in agreement with Maxwell Armfield, who considers that "the material used in a work of art is

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1. This criterion, whereby the work of art is judged only according to standards internal to itself, is found very early in the history of the philosophy of art, cf. Aristotle "In general a case of impossibility should be referred to poetic plausibility or poetic idealism; for a plausible impossibility is preferable poetically to an unconvincing possibility." Poetics. Margoliouth's translation, p.224.

2. See Chapter 1 of the present study. The reference is to The Artist and Psycho-analysis. p.15.

unimportant", its function being to enable the artist to reveal something quite different, namely the delight he has felt in the universe as he has experienced it and the praise he wishes to render to whatever he considers to be the Creator of that universe.[1] As has been stated before, art can only truthfully be said to convey ideas, if the term is used to cover such things as plastic ideas as well as verbal ones, and in this sense sculpture or music may be said to convey their ideas as directly as does literature so that the concept of symbolism is not needed.

There is one sense, of course, in which art does employ symbolism, namely when the symbolism is employed within the work of art itself, and where what the symbol points to is part of the medium of the work of art in question. This broaches a very wide topic and only a few examples can be given here. The state of the weather in a novel may, in this sense, symbolise the state of the hero's fortunes or reflect his emotional mood. Two images in a poem may be associated simply because they have the same unconscious emotional significance for the poet. Rhythm may also be said to have a symbolic value, since it must be in keeping with the

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1. See Art - A Symbolic Language. The Lecture Recorder. Vol.111. No.6. pp134-135.

character of the subject matter.[1] In this way, similarity of rhythm (intentionally or unintentionally brought about) may serve to unite parts of a novel emotionally of the same level. Lines and planes, in painting and sculpture, or cadences, rhythms and harmonies in music, may also be said to have symbolic value in this sense.

But the work of art as a whole is not a symbol. It is a unity depending only on itself for its comprehension and enjoyment. This, too, derives from the initial "distancing" of the Impulsive Experience. Whatever the artist "puts into" his creation is necessitated only by the demands of that experience and is conceived in terms of the medium. Two questions are of importance in this connection, the first affecting the character of the work of art, the second that of the individual recipient's response to it. Neither question can be dealt with adequately here.

The precise form which the resultant unity takes in the work of art must vary with the nature of the medium. A good deal of information is available on this topic, so that a few

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1. A good example of the lack of this harmony between sound and sense is seen in this extract from one of the Rev.C. Studdert Kennedy's verses.

   "But there's winter of war in the evening
   And lowering clouds overhead,
   There's wailing of wind in the chimney-nook
   And I vow that my life lies dead."

   I am indebted, for this example, to I.A.Richards's <u>Practical Criticism</u>.

brief references will be sufficient here to call to mind the kind of fact which is relevant, and to point out that this is the place where it is relevant. In painting, the unity will be in part achieved by uniformity of technique, shown in uniformity of texture and of the degree of distortion.[1] There will also be balance, or harmony, both of colour and of the disposal of volumes. Most artists probably have some sort of general plan of colouring, however much the details must vary from picture to picture. Van Gogh describes his in this way.

"When I paint direct from nature, I always try to seize what is essential by means of line. Then I fill up the defined spaces ... with simple flat tones as follows: all ground or soil will contain the same violet tone, practically the whole of the sky will be kept blue in tone, while foliage will be blue-green or yellow-green, (either the blue or the yellow may be deliberately intensified) in short, no photographic imitation, that is the chief thing!"[2]

As an illustration of the way in which the skilful disposal of volumes contributes to the unity of a picture may be quoted Roger Fry's analysis of "The Virgin between S.S. John

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1. Leo Stein has some interesting remarks on this topic of the uniformity of distortion. A.B.C. of Aesthetics. p.124

2. Letters of a Post-Impressionist. p.45.

and Stephen," by Fra Bartolommeo.

"The eye is perpetually intrigued and delighted by discovering with a happy surprise the exact compensation on one side for every unique form on the other. This may be considered as almost exactly corresponding in visual design to the effect of rhythm in poetry."[1]

The last sentence is of interest, for rhythm in poetry (and in prose, although the problem here is much more complex and is one which has received surprisingly little consideration) is obviously one of the factors contributing to unity. "Texture" is also a term which can be applied to literature,[2] where it is seen in the way the fabric of the work of art is, as it were, woven out of the pattern of the vowels and consonants.

Music, also, obviously has this unity of structure and technique. It seems to me personally most satisfyingly achieved in the compositions of Bach. The second Fugue in the Wohltemperiertes Klavier I provides a very good example of this at a fairly simple level. The way in which the theme emerges, at different levels, from the pattern of melody and harmony seems to me to give very much the same sort of delight

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1. Transformations. p.87.
2. See Contemporary Technique of Poetry. Robert Graves.

as that described by Roger Fry above, or as that given by Shakespeare's Sonnets.[1]

To turn now to the second of the two questions raised above, the effect of the distancing of the Impulsive Experience on the response of the individual recipient to the work of art has in its turn two chief aspects. The first of these is that the correct response to the work of art is itself a distanced response. In this it is of course like that appropriate to situations yielding only the aesthetic minimum, but the actual quality of the response is very different, being in all cases much richer, and in addition, varying very much from case to case. For the fact that the work of art is a self-contained unity does not mean that the recipient contributes nothing to the total situation. The very fact that his side of the situation is called a 'response' prohibits this conclusion. It would be as absurd to suppose that the response of every individual recipient to a particular work of art is identical in every detail as it would be to suppose that every individual sees the same sense-presented world. Differences of temperament, of physical endowment, of emotional sensitivity, of knowledge and "wisdom" must make genuine

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1. I do not wish to suggest, of course, that this is the sole source of delight in any of these cases.

differences to the way in which the individual apprehends the work of art. To whom, then, does the artist genuinely speak? To himself only? To an ideal spectator? From one point of view it is not necessary to think of him as 'speaking' at all, and this way of approach makes the facts easier to deal with, i.e. the artist's process of creation is impelled from behind rather than controlled from in front. He makes in accordance with what has happened to him rather than with what he hopes will happen to the recipient. This point of view has been suggested earlier in the present chapter, when it was stated that the work of art can only be understood in direct relation to the characters of the Impulsive Experience. The important question is not, "What do I, as recipient, get out of the work of art?" but, "What did the artist, as artist, put into it?" The utmost that I, as recipient, can do, is to take the aesthetic attitude, and, as far as I can, really look at the picture or statue, listen to the poem or music, and so on, trying to apprehend each only in terms of its particular medium. If I do this, I shall at least avoid the error of apprehending something quite other than the work of art before me,[1] even if I cannot hope to achieve that complete

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1. I.A.Richards shows very clearly how easily this may happen in the case of literature, where what is given to the poem is the "stock response" suggested by some word or phrase. See Practical Criticism, Part 111. Ch.5.

immersion in the medium characteristic of the artist. As recipient, I must get out of the work of art what I can, and this will not be the same as what every or perhaps any other recipient gets, nor shall I always get the same from any one work of art. Then does this reduce the question of beauty to subjectivism? It is certainly true that the apprehension of beauty implies some element of feeling. This gives one important difference between the apprehension of the "merely aesthetic" and the experience of beauty. We are moved by the beautiful, although we cannot, perhaps, say what it is in the object which arouses the feeling, nor will the feeling itself always be analysable, either into terms of the other so-called emotions or into constituents peculiar to itself. This element of feeling obviously involves a reference to the individual recipient, i.e. a thing is not beautiful for me unless I feel it to be so, am moved by it. Something is also demanded of the individual recipient in that certain important qualities of the work of art, e.g. its form and unity, are qualities which do not "emerge" unless they are, as it were, sought for by the apprehending mind. Extreme intellectual activity and alertness of mind are required on the part of the recipient, both in order to apprehend what the artist has set before him and to inhibit all irrelevancies of thought and feeling. Only if he is prepared to exert this, can he hope

to appreciate art as art.

But I do not think this means that where, in any particular instance, he fails to be moved, he thereby denies to the work of art some character which it ought to have, or that he fails to bring the aesthetic object into being.[1] What he does is to fail to apprehend what is really before him, and the fact that he can do so and yet still apprehend, apparently, the physical object, leads to the conclusion that, as G.E.Moore expresses it,[2] beauty is not an intrinsic property in the sense that yellow is. If this conclusion is accepted, it obviates the need for finding a specific property or properties in the work of art constituting its beauty. This is in line with the view, expressed earlier in this study, that the meaning of the predicate of the aesthetic judgment is not important. The important thing is the nature of the 'This' to which the recipient responds, and it has been the attempt of the present chapter to give some account of this.

The main conclusion concerning the problem of subjective and objective to which the above remarks lead is that in the only sense in which it is useful to talk of beauty at all, beauty is objective. Any one recipient may fail to experience

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1. This <u>would</u> be what he does, I think, if Mr. Leon's theory that the aesthetic object is primarily imagined sound or colour or shape, were true.

2. See <u>Philosophical Studies</u>, pp.260. ff.

beauty (and so far as he is concerned it may be said that beauty on this occasion does not "exist") but his failure does not alter the intrinsic nature of the occasion of his experience, i.e. the work of art. The work of art is objective in precisely the same sense as a stone or a tree is so, and is not in any way "made" by even the ideal spectator. That it is made by the artist constitutes of course its essential difference from the stone or tree, and it is here, if anywhere, that the concept "mental" is important. It is not true, I think, that the work of art is a fusion or blending of the mental and material, but its medium, whatever its nature, has obviously been shaped in accordance with the purpose of a mind and needs another mind for its apprehension. The concept of objectivity seems to be involved here in a further dual sense. The work of art, being the externalisation of a distanced experience is 'objective' to the artist in that he has to keep his non-artistic self out of it and fashion the material only in accordance with the demands of the original experience. From this it results that the correct way for the recipient to apprehend the work of art is also objectively i.e. as distanced from his 'life' self. The fact of the artist's original distancing makes this easier for the recipient, and certain qualities of the medium help towards this end. Thus it has been said that it is less dangerous

for the painter than the sculptor to be 'realistic' because of the flatness of the canvas, whereby the third dimension has to be supplied imaginatively.[1] The 'distancing' effect of metre in poetry has also often been remarked on. Coleridge held that it disciplined the passions, and Thomas Hardy thought that its absence in prose was one of the reasons why readers reacted so violently to the "ideas" supposedly expressed by the author. "Perhaps I can express more fully in verse ideas and emotions which run counter to the inert crystallized opinion - hard as a rock - which the vast body of men have vested interests in supporting. To cry out in a passionate poem that (for instance) the supreme Mover or Movers, the Prime Force or Forces, must be either limited in power, unknowing or cruel - which is obvious enough, and has been for centuries - will cause them merely a shake of the head; but to put it in argumentative prose will make them sneer or foam and set all the literary contortionists jumping upon me, a harmless agnostic, as if I were a clamorous atheist, ------- If Galileo had said in verse that the world moved, the Inquisition might have let him alone."[2]

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1. See H.S.Langfeld. The Aesthetic Attitude, p.89.
2. The Later Years of Thomas Hardy. By Florence E.Hardy. p.51.

If it is true, that the recipient must regard the work of art objectively, and ought not to project himself into the work of art, it follows, I think that theories of Einfühlung or Empathy cannot be a complete explanation of the fact of artistic appreciation. I do not propose giving a detailed account of these theories[1] but wish only to point out that this is the place where such theories are relevant, and to try to show what seems to me the correct interpretation of the facts on which they are based. The main principles of theories of Empathy seem to be two. First, that the essence of aesthetic apprehension is the "feeling-into" the work of art of the individual recipient's own experience. This seems to be Lipps's theory, i.e. that the essence of art is sympathy, and that the object of sympathy is the objectified ego. In this sympathy the distinction between ego and object does not exist. The object is myself, and the satisfaction I feel in myself, (i.e. my heightened pleasure in myself as "strong, light, sure, resilient, proud and the like,") is experienced

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1. A fairly complete account of them is to be found in Lord Listowel's Critical History of Modern Aesthetics. Pt.1 Ch.7. and pp 169 ff. This may be supplemented by reference to the two books of Vernon Lee. Beauty and Ugliness (With C.Anstruther Thomson) and The Beautiful; and to Sir W.Mitchell's Structure and Growth of the Mind.

as characterising something objective.[1] Empathic feelings are those I have in the object, not those I have about it. Lotze's theory also has much in common with this. Through our interpretive feelings we transform "the dead weights and supports of buildings into so many limbs of a living body whose inner tensions pass over into ourselves."[2]

The other main principle of the theory is that of "inner imitation". This is found most explicitly and completely in the aesthetic writings of Vernon Lee. The general character of the theory is neatly expressed by Sir William Mitchell. Commenting on Vernon Lee's introspective analysis of the appreciation of a pottery jar,[3] he remarks,

"If this does not mean that we have to make a jar of ourselves in order to be absorbed in the jar before us, it means that we take the nearest substitute."[4]

The example given by Vernon Lee of which this is the criticism does certainly suggest something rather like this, since the appreciator of the jar has to press with his feet,

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1. This account, with the quotation, is taken from E.F.Carritt's translation of extracts from Lipps. See Philosophies of Beauty, pp.252.ff.
2. Microcosmos.. Vol.1. p.585. Quoted by Lord Listowel. Opus Cit. p.51.
3. See the Contemporary Review. Vol.LXXII. pp.554. 681.
4. Structure and Growth of the Mind, p.503.

Madonna and Child.

Mural Painting.

Bishop's Palace. Chichester.

To face page 226.

expand his shoulders, breathe rhythmically and deeply, thrust up his head, and so on, according to the particular part of the jar he is apprehending at the moment.

The general trend of the argument in the present study is against the accepting of these theories in their entirety. The theories seem to me to be the result party of undue concentration on the visual arts, particularly of sculpture and architecture and partly of mistaking what is undeniably at some times a contributary factor in the appreciation of art for the essential and sole sufficing one. If one considers the "feeling-into" theory it does seem to represent this much of the truth; namely, that in some cases the 'life' experiences of the recipient are relevant to the full appreciation of the work of art. To take a definite example. It seems to me that in order to appreciate the wall-painting of the Madonna and Child of which a reproduction is given here one <u>must</u> bring more from life than "a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three-dimensional space", because what the artist felt strongly about was surely not just these factors in the abstract, as it were, but the opportunity which this particular "subject" afforded of working with them. It is surely necessary to <u>know</u> the facts of the Incarnation in order to appreciate the painting adequately. This leads to the further question, is it necessary also to <u>believe</u> the facts? From one point of view I think that if one does believe them one's experience is

richer and fuller since it will include an emotional element which would probably be lacking in the experience of a recipient who did not believe them.[1] The theory of value which I wish to uphold is that while all situations coming within the scope of Aesthetics have some degree of value, this degree will be at its lowest in situations of the "merely aesthetic" type and at its highest in the appreciation of art.[2] The latter type of situation is more valuable because its content is richer, and within this type, the more that the individual can gather up into his experience and "hold together", as it were, the more valuable will be his experience. There is, however, one very important condition to this fullness of experience. Whatever of beliefs or feelings or knowledge the recipient brings to the appreciation of the work of art must, in the first place, be aroused <u>by</u> the work of art and be really relevant to its appreciation, and secondly must be experienced <u>through</u> it, and in a "distanced" not "life" way. Otherwise the recipient merely uses the work of art as a

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1. But I am prepared to admit that if one could "believe" them artistically, without necessarily acting on them in one's ordinary experience, this would be equally valuable. I think this sort of purely artistic belief is possible for both the artist and the recipient. It is possible also, of course, that a 'life' belief may <u>prevent</u> artistic appreciation.

2. The question of natural beauty will receive consideration in the following chapter.

jumping-off place for irrelevancies of thought or feeling. The initiative, if one may put it thus, must in all cases come from the work of art. Thus theories of Empathy seem to reverse the order of the facts. It may be necessary to have felt in certain ways in order to appreciate a certain work of art, but I do not think appreciation involves putting these feelings _into_ the work of art. In appreciating a novel, for example, although the characters are in a sense "alive", they are surely only _artistically_ alive? i.e. their thoughts and feelings have only formal or artistic value? The characters are elements in a pattern. Support for this view comes from the attitude of artists themselves. Thomas Hardy, speaking of a review of _Jude the Obscure_ said, "It required an artist to see that the plot is almost geometrically constructed,"[1] and again, "The involutions of four lives must necessarily be a sort of quadrille."[2] A novelist friend also remarked to me that although the characters in her book were in a way extremely lively and even rebellious, suddenly exhibiting traits which she had no idea they possessed, they were alive in a sense peculiar to fiction, in that they literally did not _have_ any experiences except those relevant to the novel. What the reader of the novel has to do, therefore, is not to see the

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1. _Later years of Thomas Hardy_, p.40.
2. Ibid, p.43

characters as 'alive' but to see them as the artist meant him to. This seems true, mutatis mutandis, of all the arts.

The theory of "inner mimicry" seems also to be an exaggeration of a true fact. One must do Vernon Lee the justice of believing that when she reports that she experiences all these minutiae of muscular responses when apprehending a work of art she really does so, but two remarks are relevant here, I think. One, that a chance awareness of these responses on one occasion is very likely to lead to their actual exaggeration in consciousness on later occasions,[1] and the other, that these muscular innervations, while relevant to aesthetic appreciation, may be a contributary factor only, and may vary very much in importance with the individual recipient and the individual work of art.

The theory of Empathy does not seem to me true as a whole, nor does what is true in it seem sufficient to account for all the facts, but it does draw attention to what is probably one important feature of the aesthetic situation. This has been referred to, more than once, as the kinaesthetic factor. Kinaesthesis seems to me important both for the artist and for the recipient. It has been suggested already

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1. As happens when one has once become aware of the black specks, floating in one's field of vision, resulting from imperfections of the retina.

that what effects the original distancing of the artist's Impulsive Experience is probably that he feels kinaesthetically about his subject. Kinaesthesis must of course be translated into the terms of each particular medium, but it seems the basis of what is common to all and to be involved in the fact that the artist does "see the world through his medium". It has close connections, obviously, with the factor of rhythm, however individually rhythm may function in the different arts. It is also involved in the conception of all the arts as necessitating the "hacking" of something out of a resisting medium. The degree of consciousness of this element of kinaesthesis may vary from artist to artist, but the contention that it _is_ one of the really important elements is supported, I think, by the fact that whenever a revolt is made away from barren representation to what the artists conceive to be the proper business of art, the artists concerned seem to be very conscious of the kinaesthetic factor, and, moreover, seem to employ conscious distortion in order to reveal the kinaesthetic aspect of things. Seurat, for example, defined painting as "the art of hollowing out a canvas", while Van Gogh described the painting of one of his landscapes in these terms.

"I was surprised to see how solid the slim trunks were in the background. I began them with the brush, but as the

ground was already covered with heavy colour, the strokes simply disappeared, so I squeezed the trees and roots straight out of the tubes and then modelled them a little with my brush. Now my little trees stand quite solidly in the earth and their roots support them."[1]

Van Gogh's pictures, generally, have a character of solidity which reminds one of sculpture. Jules Meier-Graafe remarks on this. "He reminds us of the early Gothic stone-masons: the technique of his drawings is that of the old wood-carvers; some of his faces look as if they had been cut with a blunt knife in hard wood."[2]

It often seems, too, as if the technique of both paintings and sculptures during such periods of revolt, especially during their initial stages, is designed through its roughness and lack of finish (whereby one can see how the paint was laid on the canvas or the surface of the sculpture originally built up by a series of flakes of clay) to indicate the actual manipulative process of the artist.

This sort of distortion has its counterpart in the unconscious distortions of early art, which also seem to me to be distortions in terms of kinaesthesis. What is meant by

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1. <u>Vincent Van Gogh</u>, by J. Meier Graafe. p.53.
2. <u>Modern Art</u>, by J. Meier Graafe. Vol.1. p.209.

this is best indicated by examples of works where it functions successfully. The statues at Chartres Cathedral (notably the St. John the Baptist) the stone Angel and Madonna of the Annunciation at Westminster Abbey, the Chichester Madonna reproduced here (and indeed mediaeval wall-painting generally), the paintings of Giotto, and almost all the art of primitive man, seem to me to have this quality. Its relevance for artistic appreciation was also revealed to me in an interesting way at a lecture on English Alabasters, given in connection with the recent exhibition at Burlington House. I was very much surprised to find that in all cases the reproductions of the carvings as thrown on to the screen seemed much more aesthetically satisfying than the originals. In part, I think this was because the size was so much increased, so that details were more easily seen, but much more because the effect of the strong light behind the slides was to throw the whole into greater relief, so that the figures seemed more sculptured or moulded than did the originals.

It is unnecessary, I think, to do more than indicate how this factor of kinaesthesis functions in the other arts. From the side of the artist it seems to me, to take one example, to constitute the basis of the distinction between prose as a form of art and prose as an instrument for the construction of argument or the expression of thought. Its importance for

the <u>appreciation</u> of both prose and poetry is obvious also. The sweep of Elizabethan prose, the cut and thrust of heroic couplets at their best, the thunder of Shakespeare's blank verse, all depend in part for their effect on kinaesthetic imagery in the recipient; and similarly with music.[1] In some cases this may even amount to what could truthfully be called "inner mimicry", but in <u>no</u> case does it seem to me to constitute the sole relevant factor, i.e. in no case would it be true to say that the judgment "This is beautiful" means "This is an object into which I can project myself and my memories of movement" or, "This is an object which arouses kinaesthetic imagery or incipient muscular responses in me" or even "This is an object exhibiting qualities of form and rhythm."[2] It is true that the 'This' <u>has</u> form and that distortion in terms of kinaesthesis reveals the formal qualities of the object, but these are not <u>all</u> that are revealed, nor can beauty be equated with this or with any other single character. The predicate of the judgment

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1. I should like also just to make the suggestion that the fact that, according to some theories, "organic or kinaesthetic content is essential to emotional memory" (See June Downey, <u>Creative Imagination</u>, p.131) may have something to do with the supposed appeal of art to the "Collective Unconscious", as is maintained in Jung's theory of art.

2. This seems to me to furnish another argument against Clive Bell's theory of Significant Form, since he does not seem to allow for the appeal of say, pure colour in painting, or pure sound in music.

does not indicate any one character of an object, but is the sign that an object of a certain kind has been apprehended in the right way by an individual recipient. What the nature of that object is it has been the purpose of this chapter to indicate. Put in general terms[1] it is an object which has come into being as the result of a specific activity on the part of the artist and which can be correctly understood only in relation to that activity. It is this which is the "aesthetic object" and although, as has been indicated, it needs activity of mind on the part of the recipient for its full apprehension, it is not made by him, is _not_ "primarily imagined", nor is it a fusion of mental and material. It is not simply an 'occasion' through which the recipient shares in some experience of the artist, but is something which must be experienced and valued in and for itself, directly.

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1. The actual characters of each work of art will of course be specific in each case, so that the resulting object and the judgment passed on it may be said to be unique.

CHAPTER 7

NATURAL BEAUTY

One of the chief difficulties which presents itself at the outset of the present chapter is the defining of the precise limits of the subject-matter. In a sense I may be said to have done this already by the choice of title, but the matter needs further discussion. It was stated earlier in the argument[1] that there were four main types of situation relevant to the philosophy of aesthetics. It was argued that in all these situations there was some common factor which could be described as an "aesthetic minimum" and that in some situations this seemed to be all that was aesthetically relevant, although of course many other characters might and some at least must be present also. The two types of situations next considered were those belonging to the sphere of art. This led to a discussion of the Impulsive Experience of the artist, his creative process, the nature of the resultant

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1. See Chapter 4.

work of art, and of the individual recipient's response to it. There remains the question of what constitutes a situation of the fourth type. From one point of view, "nature" is everything that is not art, and if this is so, the situations yielding only an appreciation of the "merely aesthetic", or at least some of them, are themselves a part of "nature". It was suggested at the conclusion of the discussion of the aesthetic minimum that this was "mind-given" in that anything at all could be viewed in such a way as to constitute a "merely-aesthetic" object. This leads to the central problem of natural beauty. To unreflecting opinion nature seems at times to be really beautiful, i.e. to have characters which appeal directly and which exhibit their charm independently of the mind of the observer, but is this really so? Can nature, that is, be divided into beautiful nature, and nature which is either definitely ugly or aesthetically indifferent, or does it all depend on the attitude of the recipient? A feeling for logical neatness would incline one to the latter conclusion. Arguing from the fact that the merely aesthetic is mind-produced, and that the work of art is also a product of mental activity, one might logically expect to find that the so-called beauty of nature is made rather than discovered. This is a view which has often been held. E.F.Carritt remarks, "The man we call an artist and the ordinary admirer of nature differ in degree.

Both perceive or create for themselves beauty: the "artist" owing mainly to a more vivid and absorbing perception, has the desire and the power to communicate what he has perceived, a power which reacts by way of stimulus upon his perception."[1]

This view perhaps leaves open the possibility that both artist and layman discover the beauty of nature, but the equating of the two observers seems to put the emphasis on creation. In other theories this emphasis is beyond question. Professor S. Alexander, for example, says, "In general, the natural object is, when its beauty is appreciated, perceived incorrectly ..... Like the artist in painting a landscape, we select from or add to nature in feeling its beauty."[2]

This is the view of Croce also.

"Nature is only beautiful for the man who sees it with the eyes of an artist....... Without the aid of imagination nothing in nature is beautiful, and with its aid, according to our disposition, the same thing is now expressive, now unmeaning, now expressive in one way, now in another..... Man, faced with natural beauty, is exactly the mythical Narcissus at the pool."[3]

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1. The Theory of Beauty, p.39.
2. Space, Time and Deity, Vol.11. p.288.
3. Aesthetic. p.99.

"Nature is stupid compared with art, and .... mute if man does not make her speak."[1]

From the examples which Croce gives of what he means by natural beauty it is evident that for him the term is inclusive of everything which is not art. For one man, he says, a rag-and-bone shop may be as beautiful as is a "smiling landscape" for another; seen with the artist's eye both are equally expressive or beautiful, and it is only when thus viewed that nature <u>can</u> be beautiful. This brings out clearly the point of the present discussion; namely, is there a way of viewing nature which is not the artist's way and which, while necessitating the characteristic way of apprehension which has been called here "taking the aesthetic attitude", results in a type of situation clearly distinguishable from that type yielding only the aesthetic minimum? Does the individual who is not an artist, that is, in the one case <u>make</u> his aesthetic object and in the other, through taking the correct attitude, become aware of an aesthetic object which exists independently of himself and which is beautiful apart from his apprehension?

There seems to be a curious reluctance, among philosophers, to assent to the conclusion that nature is beautiful

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1. <u>Essence of Aesthetic</u>, p.47. Trans. Douglas Ainslie.

"in her own right". This reluctance can be traced, I think, to a prejudice in favour of the view that beauty must mean the same thing in nature as in art. This shows itself in two ways. It leads on the one hand to the sort of view which has been illustrated above: the artist makes his beautiful object, therefore the layman in the presence of nature makes his also. And it can also be seen, I think, behind the sort of view which either *posits* a divine Creator whose works of art the beauties of nature are, or which rejects the possibility that nature can be beautiful independently of human apprehension because if it were one would *have* to posit a divine artist.

It does not seem to me necessary to posit any of these things because I see no reason why one should assume that beauty must "mean the same thing" in both art and nature. It has been one of the main contentions of this thesis that one need not primarily concern oneself with the *meaning* of beauty and this contention suggests, I think, the most fruitful method of dealing with the problem of natural beauty, namely that method which begins with an examination of the facts as they present themselves independently of philosophical speculation. What is of relevance at the outset is not any possible meaning of beauty or any possible parallel between nature and art, but the sort of situation which arises when

the individual is in the presence of nature.

Taking 'nature' in the first place as inclusive of everything that is not art, the first thing that strikes one is, I think, that all men do not look at nature with the artist's eye, in Croce's sense. It may be perfectly natural for Croce's artist to find his inspiration in the rag-and-bone shop - although I should personally contend that he did not find it beautiful in the sense that the picture he made as the result of his apprehension of it might be beautiful - or for Roger Fry to prefer a Soho slum to Hampton Court, but this is not the attitude of the ordinary man. For the artist, the rag-and-bone shop and the Soho slum may either be the occasion of an Impulsive Experience, or, because of his intimate experience of art, may be viewed in a "distanced" way as natural pictures, but this is not so for the layman. Indeed, it may be said that for almost all men and for almost all the time, the concept of the aesthetic minimum does not function as a minimum. Although it is essential for the emergence of the other types of situation, the ordinary man does not take the aesthetic attitude unless he is forced to do so by the vivid appeal of what is conveyed by and through the aesthetic minimum. Once he has learnt the trick of seeing pictures in the things around him he is able to go on making pictures endlessly and may find an increasing pleasure in

doing so, but it is not necessary for him to have learnt the trick in order to "enjoy nature" or to think it beautiful. Moreover even when he has learnt the trick, he would, I think, make a clear distinction between the sort of thing in nature which he merely "sees as a picture" and that which he would call beautiful, although he would no doubt on some occasions describe what he thinks beautiful as being "like a picture".

It is this concept of the "beautiful" in nature which must receive analysis in the present chapter, and an attempt must be made to determine its relevance for the philosophy of aesthetics and its relation to both the aesthetic minimum and to the phenomena of art.

In beginning this discussion I wish to accept for the time being the term "beautiful" as descriptive of what the plain man means by "beautiful" when that term is applied to nature, without any presuppositions as to whether it has the same meaning as when applied to art or not, or whether, in the sense in which it is used by the plain man, it indicates anything that is relevant to the philosophy of aesthetics at all. If the term is taken in this sense I see no reason for not accepting the plain man's conviction that the adjective enables one to mark out one of two clearly distinguishable classes of objects, the other being the "ugly". I do not wish here to embark on a detailed discussion of the ugly. The

chief thing which seems relevant to the present topic is that as far as nature is concerned, both the beautiful and the ugly can be viewed aesthetically[1] but that they nevertheless remain the beautiful and the ugly, as those terms are being used here. To take a personal example, the ugliest thing in nature that I can think of at the moment is a certain street of shabby houses where a street-market is held. If one passes through it, as I sometimes do, early on Sunday morning, one finds it littered with straw, dirty paper and the other refuse of a market. My normal attitude is one of aversion: I wish to hold myself away from the scene in order not to be sickened by its repulsiveness. But I sometimes find that if I do so, the scene suddenly gets jerked away from <u>me</u> and on to the aesthetic plane, so that I can survey it quite impersonally. When this happens, it does seem to me that what I am apprehending looks different; it has a form and coherence which it lacked before, and details are more clearly seen. But I do not find that I <u>like</u> it any better, although I am certainly not repulsed as I was before. It does not seem to me to have ceased to be ugly and to have become beautiful. I can see the ugly aesthetically but I cannot see it as beautiful. The same

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1. i.e. as "distanced", or through the medium of the aesthetic minimum.

sort of facts apply also, I think, to the beautiful in nature. Just as I can react both aesthetically and non-aesthetically to the naturally ugly, so I can react aesthetically or non-aesthetically to the naturally beautiful. And here, as in the case of the ugly, to view aesthetically and to enjoy are not co-extensive terms. For, just as I can view the ugly aesthetically and still not like it, so, when I am enjoying the beautiful in nature I need not be viewing it aesthetically, although in this case, when I do view it aesthetically I do also enjoy it. This is a conclusion which would not be accepted by all thinkers on aesthetics. Lascelles Abercrombie, for example, would apparently not accept it. For him, the central fact of aesthetics is just this immediate enjoyment. As far as "nature"[1] is concerned, the only question that is relevant is, "Is this a thrilling affair or not? Does it afford an experience which does not look outside itself for its value?"[2] It is undeniable that this sort of experience does occur, and is perhaps at its keenest when occasioned by "beautiful nature", but I think it can be shown that in some cases when the individual is thus "immersed" in nature he is not doing anything that is directly relevant

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1. "Nature" here again, is inclusive of everything that is not art.
2. See Towards a Theory of Art, p.19 ff.

to the philosophy of aesthetics, although the data it provides may be of considerable indirect interest; i.e. sometimes when the individual is enjoying beautiful nature he is reacting in as unaesthetic a way as when he recoils from the ugly.

It is often in such circumstances that natural beauty makes its strongest appeal, but it does not seem to me to be a purely aesthetic appeal, if that term is used, as it should be, with a strictly philosophical connotation. For nature, when the object of this keen and often emotional delight, does not seem to be "distanced". The fact that one can literally walk into and through the landscape makes the 'distanced' attitude more difficult of attainment, and it is, indeed, something which seems to be the very reverse of 'distance' which often constitutes the chief charm of nature. This is what may perhaps be described as the intoxicating sense of being right in and among and in direct contact with a sensuous reality. I was keenly aware of this recently when walking along the towing path by the Thames. The delight which I felt in the warmth and brilliance of the sunshine, in the ecstatic singing of a blackbird, in the rich rank scents of young buds and grass and nettles and in the massed colours of flowers and shoots by the water, did not seem to me in any

sense a "distanced" delight.[1] One may, indeed, say that the experience I had was one which "did not look outside itself for its value", but this is a fact which is, I think, true for the majority of experiences; perhaps for all except those in which the object which must be attended to is so distasteful or boring in itself that one has consciously to seek elsewhere for the motive to continue attending. If one defines the subject-matter of aesthetics by this quality of experience, I think that one will never get a satisfactory basis for analysing the facts. One might say with equal truth that one's experiences in constructing an argument or making a dress, while these processes absorb the attention, are of the kind that does not look outside itself for its value,[2] but experiences of this kind would not generally, I think, be considered of relevance to aesthetics. This seems to me to

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1. I was interested to find that Mr. L.A.Reid supports the view put forward here. "Nature in stirring our senses stirs them often more urgently than do works of art. And she makes her assaults not merely through this or that sense, but through many at once, thus building up a consciousness, almost, of being rooted and embedded in the tissue of nature as plants and trees are rooted and embedded in the earth." See <u>A Study in Aesthetics</u>, p.398.

2. The fact that the argument and dress may have an existence or use beyond the span of the experience of constructing them does not seem to me relevant to this particular point.

furnish an additional argument in favour of the view expressed in an earlier chapter that one must analyse not experiences, but situations.

I do not wish, however, to suggest that the direct appeal which colour, sound, scent or the tactual qualities of things make to normal sensibility is of no importance for aesthetics. These things obviously have the great importance of constituting the raw material, as it were, out of which, when apprehended in the right way, a genuine aesthetic situation of a particular type is generated.[1] It is true also, that if it were not a "brute fact" of human experience that colour and sound, when of a certain quality, please directly, the arts of painting and music would not exist. But the delight which these things give when apprehended in the way which has just been described is not the same as the delight they give when "distanced" or when used by the artist to externalise his Impulsive Experience. In one respect one may say that the "natural" delight in colour or sound is much keener than can ever be experienced in the sphere of art. Nature seems in one way to have the advantage over art in that it can make its appeal more freshly and can overwhelm the eye or ear with an unexpected loveliness. It may be easier to

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1. The detailed account of this particular type of situation may best be deferred until later in the chapter.

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take the aesthetic attitude to art because the "distancing" has been effected in the first place by the artist and because one comes to art with this attitude ready to function, but this very fact may on occasions prevent appreciation,[1] and even when this does not happen, the delight which one gets from art is never the same delight as one gets from nature. The mere delight of colour, for example, in a painting can never really equal that of colour in nature. What painting could hope to reproduce the exquisite light of the sun on a flowering cherry tree,[2] or the fierce green of young lime or chestnut leaves against the sooty blackness of the stems and trunk? In such circumstances as these, it is art that looks dull and stupid and flat and heavy, not nature, as Croce

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1. One is aware of this sometimes at a picture gallery, when the feeling that "This is what I have come here for", or "This is the one chance I have of seeing these pictures," completely destroys one's spontaneity.

2. Van Gogh's impression of the little white-blossomed tree, for example, of which this actual cherry tree put me in mind, although it has, of course, an artistic loveliness of its own, does not seem to me in any way to reproduce a natural loveliness.

said,[1] and I think it is significant, with regard to the view that such delight in nature is not directly aesthetic, that it is in circumstances such as these, if at all, that nature seems to "speak", and to speak of a divine creator. I do not wish to enter into a discussion as to whether this inference to a divine artist is correct or not, but only to consider its philosophical significance. The most important thing about it seems to me to be that already referred to, namely that it is an inference based on an attitude to nature which is not the aesthetic attitude. If nature is viewed aesthetically, I do not see any need for the inference, since what is then apprehended becomes as self-contained as art, although the situation which is then brought into being is not of the same kind as the situation arising from art. What the purely aesthetic attitude to nature is may best be illustrated from a personal experience. I was made very clearly aware of

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1. I was very much interested to find a hint of this sort of attitude in the writings of G.E.Moore. "We do think that the emotional contemplation of a natural scene, supposing its qualities equally beautiful, is in some way a better state of things than that of a painted landscape; we think that the world would be improved if we could substitute for the best works of representative art, _real_ objects equally beautiful." _Principia Ethica_, p.195. I do not wish to endorse the theory of the relation of art and nature which seems to be suggested here.

it during the walk by the Thames already referred to. From being immersed in the sensuous enjoyment of light and colour and sound I turned to look across the river and was aware of something quite different; of something which seemed "over-against" me as art is and yet which did <u>not</u> seem a self-made "work of art". The old stone house which had arrested my attention, with the grouping of trees about it, dark cedar and vivid beech, the grey-green meadows, and the solitary heron poised by the water made a coherent, harmonious unity, in which the elements did not assail the senses separately as did the things near at hand. The whole was a distanced whole. This was the result partly, I think, of the actual spatial distance brought about by the river flowing between and partly of the unifying light thrown over the whole by the sudden passage of a cloud across the sun. The total complex thus generated by my apprehension of the scene beyond the river seemed to me clearly to constitute a situation of the type which still remains to be discussed, namely, the aesthetic appreciation of nature. What I was aware of was not something yielding only the aesthetic minimum, although the aesthetic minimum was operative in that the scene was put "over-against" me and apprehended as a unified whole. In this respect, the scene <u>was</u> viewed "imaginatively", since the taking of the aesthetic attitude depends on the individual observer, and I

need not have viewed the scene as I did. But I do not think that this fact justifies the conclusion, that the individual observer <u>makes</u> the beauty of nature, any more than he makes the beauty of art. This reveals the aesthetic relevance of the other way of viewing nature. When one is directly enjoying the sensuous qualities of nature one is aware of something that is really there, and one is not apprehending imaginatively in any more important sense than that which is true of ordinary perception. That one can so enjoy nature directly is, as has been indicated already, important for one's appreciation of art. It is also important for situations of this fourth type, in that this "independent" content of nature, when viewed aesthetically, provides the richness and variety which constitutes the difference between the "merely aesthetic" and the aesthetically apprehended "beauty" of nature. One does not make nature beautiful as the artist makes the work of art beautiful, but one may view the actual qualities of nature aesthetically or unaesthetically.

Something further should perhaps be said concerning the unaesthetic appreciation of nature. When nature is apprehended in this way, the experiences occasioned seem to be of more importance than the objects occasioning them. It may be the sensuous aspects of the experience which are most prominent in consciousness, or attention may be concentrated on the

emotional elements of the whole. This emotional attitude towards nature is of great interest. It may take the form either of intense joy, of a sense of well-being, of increase of life and energy; or it may consist of a feeling of defeat and bafflement, of being overwhelmed by something which one cannot adequately either comprehend or express. The first type of emotional response may be dismissed without further comment. Whatever is happening is happening successfully, but is not of aesthetic interest. The second type is, I think, rather different. When nature produces this kind of emotional response, <u>what</u> is apprehended seems almost to be lost sight of: at any rate it is not clearly apprehended or seen as "formed". For this reason the feeling aroused must be distinguished from that feeling of awe, amounting almost to terror on some occasions, which may possess one in the presence of nature. These latter feelings are caused by aspects of nature which are "formed", and are feelings which may with equal probability be aroused by the beauty of art. The feeling of bafflement, on the contrary, seems to be peculiar to the apprehension of nature. My own theory of it, at the moment, although I am prepared to find that further consideration may lead me to revise it, is that such experiences in the presence of nature are in some measure akin to the Impulsive Experiences of the artist. Although only the artist, probably, sees nature

"through a medium", yet there may be times when the man who is not an artist experiences something of the artist's sensibility, while lacking his capacity to externalise his impression. When the artist "engulfs" nature, he may feel overwhelmed and even shattered; but not baulked or baffled, because with him the engulfing is merely the first stage of a normal process, and the balance will be restored by the subsequent process of externalisation. But for the man who is not an artist, this emotional "engulfing" of nature is not aesthetically normal. What he ought to do is, through the functioning of the aesthetic minimum, to view the loveliness of nature objectively and as distanced. When he does this, the balance between objective and subjective is rightly maintained, and the experience he has is one of satisfaction and completeness, not of unrest.

He is helped towards this objective apprehension, I think, by his previous enjoyment of art, although he can, of course, achieve it quite independently. The fact that the artist has his characteristic way of viewing nature, and externalises his vision in works of art, necessarily affects the way in which the non-artist appreciator views nature, inclining him, as has been suggested above, to see nature "like pictures". This influence of art on nature has been discussed at some length in Chapter two, so that not much more need be

said here. Something of the kind was at work in my enjoyment of the view across the river. Susan Miles, in the article referred to previously, describes a similar occurrence.

"It is possible, as I know from experience, to visit a picture-gallery and to exclaim when looking at a painting by John Nash, "The sky couldn't look like that!" only to be confronted, immediately on passing into the street, by a sky that did "look like that". But for John Nash's picture, however, I should not have seen it so."[1]

Even the artist is not independent of this influence of art on nature. He may, indeed, be more open to it. A good example of it is to be found in one of Van Gogh's letters.

"Odd, but one evening lately at Mont Majour I saw a red sunset, its rays falling on the trunks and foliage of pines growing among a tumble of rocks, colouring the trunks and foliage with orange fire, while the other pines in the distance stood out in Prussian blue against a sky of tender blue green, cerulean. It was just the effect of that Claude Monet: it was superb."[2]

Seeing the evening sky as a John Nash sky, or a

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1. Intuition and Beauty. The Monist. July 1925. p.430.

2. Letters to his Brother. Vol.111. p.71.

grouping of rocks and pines as a picture by Monet are, of course, examples of one aspect only of a much wider question. Enjoyment of works of art may dispose the observer to see nature like the paintings of particular artists, but its effect is of greater range than this, since it works unconsciously as well as consciously, making it easier for the individual recipient to take the aesthetic attitude and to become aware of and enjoy the "forms" of nature. This raises once more the question of whether nature is beautiful apart from human apprehension, and this question should now, finally, be related to the central theme of the present research, namely, the analysis of the aesthetic judgment.

In dealing with the question from this point of view it is first of all necessary to define precisely the limits of applicability of the judgment. The difficulty of determining the nature of the type of situation now under consideration was indicated at the beginning of the chapter, but the subsequent course of the argument should have made the limits of the problem clearer. If judgment is involved at all in the immediate, sensuous enjoyment of nature it is so only in the sense in which it may be said to be implicit in all perceptual experience, and is not of an aesthetic type. The aesthetic judgment is explicitly passed or implicitly involved, only when the individual is taking the aesthetic attitude to nature,

and even here the judgment is not always a judgment of beauty, since only the aesthetic minimum may be operative. This seems true of one's enjoyment of a good many of the simple "forms" of nature. There is an obvious and immediate appeal in such simple structures as the raying of an opening birch leaf or the shape of a pimpernel flower, but it does not seem correct to call them beautiful. Nevertheless, the analysis of such situations throws light on the analysis of the more complex type, where beauty _is_ predicable of nature.

Most of the facts concerning this fourth type have already been dealt with in the present chapter. It only remains to draw them together and to show their philosophical significance. The two things of importance here, as in the analysis of the other types, are the nature of the referend of the logical subject of the judgment, and the interpretation to be given to the predicate. In this case also it does not seem necessary to give the predicate a _meaning_, in the sense of isolating some quality, in the referend of the logical subject, constituting its beauty, but since there are important differences between this type of complex and the work of art it would be satisfactory if some device of language could be found to represent it. Susan Miles, in the article referred to, suggests, "beautiful, aesthetically", and "beautiful, artistically" or simply "beautiful" (for nature) and

"artistically sound" (for art), but she herself admits that the phrases are clumsy[1]; and provided the complexes of which beauty is predicated are adequately analysed so as to reveal the differences between them, the similarity of predicate may have its use in indicating that something is common to them all.

The differences between the type of complex yielding only the aesthetic minimum, and that leading to the appreciation of natural beauty have been sufficiently discussed already. Since the referend of both types of judgment is a natural object, the difference is one only of complexity in what is apprehended. In both cases as, indeed, in the case of art also, the taking of the aesthetic attitude depends on the individual recipient, but in no case does this mean that he apprehends a "this" whose aesthetic value has been entirely created by himself. The beauty of nature, like its simpler satisfying "forms", is there independently of the observer, although he need not become aware of either, and although what he apprehends will never be <u>identical</u> with what is apprehended by anyone else. He does not, that is, "impute" beauty to nature. He can, of course, impute characters to natural objects. He can see daffodils as dancing with glee, or trees

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1. See Monist. July 1925. p.439.

as straining in agony against the wind, but this imputing of images and emotions does not seem to me strictly aesthetic, and what is imputed is not an essential constituent of the referend of the aesthetic judgment.

This question of the relevance of emotions and images to the predication of beauty to nature should perhaps receive some further consideration. One can never say, as one can sometimes in art, that there are certain images and emotions which are aesthetically relevant and essential to the adequate apprehension of the presented complex. One's response to natural beauty may on some occasions be quite clearly emotional, and perhaps there is always an element of feeling, but these feelings seem to me to be accompaniments rather than constituents of the complex, and do not form part of what is judged to be beautiful. The position of images, however, seems rather different. There may be accessory images which again are not part of what is judged, although one cannot ~~therefore~~ conclude, in this case, that they are therefore aesthetically irrelevant, since one does not apprehend, in the appreciation of natural beauty, a complex whole whose characters have been determined by a prior activity of mind, as have the characters of the work of art. In certain cases, however, as when one sees nature "like art", images may actually affect the way in which the presented scene is perceived.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Not much need be said in conclusion. It only remains to draw the argument together, and to refer to certain topics which it may be thought should have been given consideration.

The main interest of the research has been a philosophical one, and its purpose, as has been stressed throughout, has been to outline a method and to furnish a ground plan for further research, rather than to undertake a detailed study of any one particular problem. Such a purpose has its disadvantages. One of these is that no topic can receive exhaustive treatment: subjects are introduced and are dismissed with what is only too likely to seem an irritating rapidity. The stress on method, also, means that on the whole the facts dealt with are not new facts, since the major part of the argument must be occupied with the criticism of existing theories and the discussion of the relevance for philosophy of facts whose nature is already familiar. The philosophical intention of the study entails, further, that certain topics,

in themselves of interest, must be omitted as not strictly relevant.

One of these topics should, I think, receive a certain amount of consideration, since its omission is to some extent an omission to illustrate an application of method, and for that reason may be thought a serious one. This is the question of the relevance to the philosophy of aesthetics of the methods of experimental psychology. The usefulness of these experimental methods seems to me rather limited, and to be restricted to the analysis of the simplest type of the four situations which have been dealt with in this study. The phenomena of beauty, whether of art or nature, seem to me too complex to be studied by experimental methods. Moreover the latter seem essentially destructive of that spontaneity of feeling which should characterize the recipient's response. But in the study of that type of situation yielding only the aesthetic minimum, the methods of experimental psychology might be of considerable assistance, and if it is true that this minimum functions in all types of situation, its better understanding would in this way contribute something to the correct analysis of the more complex types. I think it is this comprehension of the nature of the simplest type of situation <u>as a whole</u> which should be the aim of experimental psychology as applied to aesthetics, rather than the study of

the individual's response to such things as single colours or tones. The fact that any one recipient responds to single colours in a particular way does not necessarily mean that his response to colours as embodied in works of art will be of the same type. It is probable, too, that an undifferentiated patch of colour is too simple a stimulus for the production of a genuinely aesthetic response. One of the problems with which the experimental study of the aesthetic minimum should be concerned is just this determination of the lower limit, beyond which an aesthetic response is not possible. Some interesting work might be done in the way of the further study of such simple aesthetic objects as the square discussed in chapter four.

But apart from situations of this very simple type, experimental studies have not much relevance to the philosophy of aesthetics. In the more complex cases the data supplied by psychology must be derived from introspection and spontaneous testimony. The value for philosophy of the data thus supplied by psychology seems to me two-fold. In the first place the spontaneous response of the recipient, although not always an infallible guide, is yet in a sense part of the ultimate data of the topic, since it is the subjective sign that a situation relevant for aesthetics, has

arisen.[1] Secondly, the analysis of aesthetic experience, although not in itself the concern of philosophy, is essential to the correct interpretation of the relevant facts in their entirety.

After this digression, a return must be made to the central theme of the present chapter.

The chief point which the present study is concerned to emphasise is the need for acknowledging the essential complexity of the problems of aesthetics. This perhaps demands further discussion, for it may seem to be in contradiction to the statement, made early in the first chapter, that the intention of the investigation was to envisage aesthetics as one problem. The significance of the unity which the use of "one" in this connection implies is not so much that there is only one problem to be attacked, for there are obviously many, nor that there is only one thing of essential importance in the solution of any of those problems, but rather that what is needed is an attempt to survey the

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1. A passage from one of Emily Dickenson's letters is interesting in this connection. "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?" The Life and Letters of Emily Dickenson. M.D.Bianchi. p.276

subject-matter of aesthetics as a whole. The unity is, that is to say, only methodological.

The tenor of the whole investigation has been against the attitude which seeks the solution of the problems of aesthetics in the discovery of some one factor. It was for this reason that theories such as those of Professor Alexander, W. McDougall or Clive Bell could not be accepted as supplying a complete solution. Part of the appeal which art makes may be to the constructive impulse, and it is obvious that the passion which absorbs the artist is in one respect a constructive passion. Sex, too, is not wholly irrelevant to the facts of aesthetics, since there is an essential element of creativity in art. Form also, as has been indicated more than once in the course of the argument, is one of the relevant features of the object of aesthetic apprehension, and the forms which are thus apprehended are in a sense "significant", since they are at any rate not meaningless. But neither construction, sex, nor Significant Form is, in itself, a sufficient explanation of the aesthetic fact. Nor can this explanation be found in the phenomena connoted by the term Empathy. These may be allowed to be relevant in some respects and on some occasions, but not to furnish the aesthetic sine qua non. In attempting to analyse those facts which constitute the data of aesthetics, one must acknowledge and allow for an essential complexity.

The main contention of the present research is that these facts are constituted not simply by a set of objects nor by a range of experiences, but by a subject-object relation in which both objects and experiences are concerned. Through this relation a set of situations of varying degrees of complexity are generated, the common characteristic of all being that certain objective complexes are recognized to be of a peculiar type through the immediate response which they evoke. This recognition is equivalent to the passing of an aesthetic judgment, and although it is not essential that the judgment should be explicitly formulated whenever aesthetic appreciation takes place, its analysis, as formulated, constitutes the most satisfactory method for arriving at the correct interpretation of the facts.

In the course of this analysis most of the generally recognized problems of aesthetics receive consideration, and it is from their relation to this central fact of judgment that they derive their relevance for philosophy. The mere analysis of experience, for example, is of only psychological interest. The direct concern of philosophy is not with the nature of the so-called "elements" of experience, but with its general character as reflective of a certain fact. Is it, in any one case, a valid response to the object occasioning it? On the other hand, just as the analysis of aesthetic experience

is found in this way to involve a consideration of something objective to itself, so the analysis of literal objects is found to involve a reference to something subjective; namely, to experience. Where the object is a work of art, this reference to experience is two-fold. It is involved in the first place because the work of art is itself the product of experience, and in the second because its existence as an <u>aesthetic</u> object is only potential until it is apprehended in the relevant manner. Such purely objective topics as the nature of the particular arts and the characteristics of their specific media are of philosophic interest only in this connection: namely as they affect the externalisation of the Impulsive Experience of the artist or contribute to the correct response of the recipient. A like account must be given of the objective constituents in the other types of relevant situations. In the discussion of the aesthetic minimum it was stated that anything at all could be apprehended aesthetically provided that it could be adequately distanced from its non-aesthetic associations and that it was sufficiently complex to allow of a degree of activity of mind on the part of the observer. This latter fact is a significant one, for since the aesthetic minimum is operative in all situations of aesthetic relevance, it leads to the conclusion that in every case the aesthetic object is in part constituted by mind.

But this does not also involve the conclusion that the apprehending mind imputes to the object characters which it does not "really" possess, nor that the aesthetic object is primarily imagined. This point comes out clearly in the analysis of the phenomena of natural beauty, where the aesthetic minimum is found to be essential for the emergence of this particular type of aesthetic complex, but not to be in itself creative of the beauty of nature. In all cases there is an essentially objective element in the total situation.

The exact account which should be given of this objective element is perhaps one of the main problems of the philosophy of aesthetics. This is, in effect, the problem of the nature of what, following Mr. Leon's usage,[1] I have called the aesthetic object. I am conscious that the present investigation has not contributed much to the solution of this problem, but if it has drawn attention to the fact that it is a problem of central importance, and has shown in some measure how its solution, if attempted in accordance with the method advocated here, would help towards the correct interpretation of the facts of aesthetics, it will, I think, have served its purpose.

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1. In the article in _Mind_ already referred to, I do not know if Mr. Leon's use of the phrase in this connection was original. L.A.Reid also makes use of it. See _A Study in Aesthetics_. p.52.

The problem of the analysis of the aesthetic object is very intimately connected with that of the analysis of the aesthetic judgment, since the reference of the logical subject of the judgment is precisely to this aesthetic object and since it is here that the genuine significance of the "objective" as aesthetics is concerned with it, is to be found. As the reference of the logical subject is to whatever is before the mind when the aesthetic judgment is passed, and thus not necessarily to a literal object in the external world, the full analysis must include a consideration of the more specifically subjective factor of experience in order to determine how far, if at all, elements in the experience constituting the response of the recipient who frames the judgment are genuine constituents of what is judged; as well as a consideration of the characters of literal objects.

This understanding of the nature of the complex which constitutes the aesthetic object and which is the referend of the aesthetic judgment seems to me to be the genuine task of the philosophy of aesthetics rather than the attempt to determine the nature of beauty. This view has received support in the course of the investigation from the fact that in the consideration of all the relevant types of situation, the analysis of the referend of the logical subject of the judgment proved of much more importance than the determination

of the meaning to be given to the predicate. That the problem of the nature of beauty is not the essential one for aesthetics is also suggested by the fact that in certain cases (i.e. where the aesthetic minimum operates merely <u>as</u> a minimum) the judgment involved is not one of beauty. Indeed one might almost say that the concept of beauty is only relevant to aesthetics in a precise context. It is not correct, I think, to say that in aesthetic experience one is aware of beauty, or that as the result of his Impulsive Experience the artist sets out to create it, unless it is understood that the term is only a convenient symbol by means of which certain complex facts can be referred to. What one is aware of in aesthetic experience is not a bare beauty, but certain objective complexes which one recognizes to be of a certain kind through the quality of one's response to them.

If this is so, what becomes of the metaphysical problem which was introduced in the first chapter and dismissed as not relevant to the initial stages of the argument? Something further should perhaps be said concerning this topic. Put in general terms, the metaphysical question is, I suppose, that of the relation of beauty to reality. Where the concept of reality is introduced in the discussion of the problems of aesthetics, it is usually in the form that the experience of beauty gives awareness of a particular <u>kind</u> of reality, which

is somehow "higher" or "better" than the reality communicated through ordinary non-aesthetic experience. The term "ultimate" is often applied to reality in this connection. If the notion of a hierarchy is not introduced, it is sometimes said that aesthetic experience gives an especially direct and clear knowledge of the one kind of reality there is. My own opinion with regard to this problem is that the concept of reality is not of much importance in the present connection, and that its introduction is liable to prove a positive hindrance to the progress of the argument, by diverting the attention from the genuine problems of aesthetics. In the main, the recourse to reality seems to me only emotive in its significance, and to be an indication either that the problem has become too difficult for the thinker or that his feelings have overwhelmed him. But I do not think that all cases where the apprehension of beauty seems to bring about a peculiarly direct contact with reality can be dismissed on these grounds. The fact that a genuine work of art, for example, is the product of a personality of outstanding sensitiveness and intelligence must mean that its adequate apprehension by the recipient makes severe demands, in their turn, on his own thought and feeling. Where his capacities and energies are, in any one case, adequate to these demands, he experiences not only the extreme satisfaction resulting from the apprehension of an object of great value,

but also that resulting from the highest possible exercise of his own powers. This awareness of a high level of value is very apt to seem to the recipient awareness of a high level of reality. It is difficult to know what conclusions should be drawn from statements of this kind. It does not seem to me that the introduction of the concept of reality contributes anything to the understanding of the situation. If the reality which seems to be cognized is contained within the limits of the object of apprehension and the qualities of the experience which it occasions, nothing seems to be gained by calling either "real", and both can be analysed without reference to the concept. If, on the other hand, the reality which is thought to be cognized is a reality not contained within these limits, a reality of a different order, which is mediated through the apprehension of beauty, it seems to me that the awareness of it must be of a mystical variety, so that the problem falls outside the province of the philosophy of aesthetics. One must, I think, leave the validity or non-validity of this apprehension of reality as an open question. For just as there are no facts other than the fact of the assertion itself by means of which its validity could be established, so there are no facts on which the denial of its validity could be based. This is in itself an additional argument in favour of the view that the question is not a

relevant one for the philosophy of aesthetics, since the latter is essentially concerned with analysis and with the establishment of validity. The facts with which the philosophy of aesthetics is concerned do not anywhere, I think, necessitate a reference to reality in this sense, and would not be rendered any more intelligible even supposing the cognition in question were genuine.

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