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# THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE: ITS MEANING IN A FUNCTIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS  
AND LITERATURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO IN CANDI-  
DACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

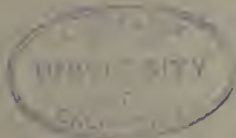
(DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY)

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BY

ELIZABETH KEMPER ADAMS

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PART I *Perception, Sensation, Feeling*  
THE PLACE OF THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

I. INTRODUCTION

Functional psychology as a method for the reformulation in terms of concrete experience of both psychologic and philosophic problems has hitherto been focused on those types of conscious experience the reconstructive character and bearings of which are most obvious. In the field of psychology proper it has dealt with the act of attention; in logic, with the judgment process; in ethics, with the winning of new ends for conduct; in metaphysics, with problems of epistemology rather than with problems of ontology. Although postulating the more immediate and direct forms of experience as marking the limits of every reconstructive process and furnishing the key to its explanation, and although pointing out the continual disintegration and reintegration of one type of experience into the other, it has nevertheless treated immediate, satisfactorily "working" experience only incidentally and with reference to the group of problems just mentioned; and has made, so far as I know, no detailed study of its various aspects and problems.

This emphasis is due, no doubt, partly to the inherent difficulty of analyzing immediate experience, since it functions as a whole and therefore without revealing its constituent elements; partly to the influences under which functional psychology began to take shape as a system; and partly to the newness of the whole method, which is, in fact, only just becoming aware of its full implications, and has not yet had time to state, much less to solve, all its problems. But now, on the one hand, its own achievements are pushing it on to further inquiry into its assumptions, and, on the other hand, certain familiar and frequently discussed kinds of experience are crying for investigation and restatement.

Conspicuous among these last is (the aesthetic experience, a mental attitude as distinct and luminous in actual life as it is baffling and opaque for theory. At first sight it offers some paradoxes peculiarly difficult of resolution from the functional point of view.<sup>1</sup> It accordingly challenges attention as a sort of test case, and invites study for the sake of the functional position in general, no less than because of its intrinsic interest. While I shall not attempt, in this discussion, to solve any of the vexing problems of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. H. Bradley, "On Truth and Practice," *Mind*, N. S., Vol. XIII, pp. 320, 334, 335.

aesthetics, yet I venture to hope that a somewhat fresh mode of approach and an endeavor to deal with them in connection with other problems may set them in a new light, if only by doing away with their isolation.

I shall devote the first part of my study to a preliminary survey of the functional position and to an account of the commonly recognized characteristics of the aesthetic experience, bringing the two into some sort of provisional relation through the pointing-out of an essentially aesthetic moment or stage in the activity of reflective thinking, the process most fully analyzed by functional psychology and revealing most satisfactorily the complex make-up of concrete experience. Upon this placing of the aesthetic I shall base my working hypothesis of the aesthetic as a sign and "function" of full and successful mental operation. In Part II I shall seek to corroborate this view by turning from individual to race experience and presenting briefly the social situation in some of the most striking "aesthetic periods" of history, together with a review of the probable social origins of the aesthetic experience. This survey will lead directly to the statement and development of the thesis that the aesthetic finds its fullest meaning and explanation as a category of social psychology, and to a discussion from this point of view of some of the disputed points in aesthetic doctrine and of some of the current aesthetic theories. In Part III I shall endeavor to test my hypothesis still further, and to justify my conclusions by inquiring how far the conventional aesthetic categories and types lend themselves to such interpretation. In Part IV I shall point out briefly some philosophic implications of this position.

## II. THE FUNCTIONAL POSITION

"Functional psychology" is a current name for a method of looking at the facts of conscious experience that is not yet ripe for exhaustive definition. Its aim may be roughly stated as an attempt to define mental phenomena in terms of the control of experience. It strives to revivify psychological abstractions by restoring them to their original bed in concrete human action. It elevates to a postulate of scientific thinking a truth that has always been taken for granted in everyday life—that nobody ever thinks or feels or acts at large, but always with reference to a particular end, growing out of a particular set of conditions and realized in a particular kind of behavior. It insists upon the continuity of experience, but lays stress upon the fact that this experience is not to be thought of "in the lump," as something fixed in quantity and quality, but as in process of continual reconstitution, consolidation, and enlargement through the setting-up and carrying-out of new ends. It points out that all forms of consciousness



are to a greater or less degree purposive, anticipatory in reference, looking forward to new modes of action; that reconstructions and recapitulations of past experiences always occur in connection with this management of the future; that the real test and standard of any conscious experience reside, not within itself, but in the conduct to which it leads. It holds that valid psychological generalization does not consist in classifying mental activities entirely apart from the situations in which they arise and terminate, but rather in accordance with the typical features in various groups of situations. To put it briefly, functional psychology is a psychology of the entire act, and not merely of that phase of the act that is commonly identified as mental.<sup>1</sup>

Such a conception of the scope and character of psychology obviously breaks down the hard and fast distinction generally made between psychology proper—the science describing and analyzing mental processes as such, without regard to the value of their outcome—and the so-called normative or valuational disciplines of logic, ethics, and aesthetics, dealing respectively, it is said, with value in knowledge, value in conduct, and value in appreciation or feeling—that is, with the worth of mental operations rather than with the operations themselves. While, in the interests of a practical division of labor, it is undeniably useful and even necessary to keep these fields distinct from psychology, and while in each field the investigator approaches his problems at a different angle and with different stress, yet from the point of view here sketched it is out of the question to consider psychological processes apart from their source and their issue in conduct, their place in the experiential series. A psychology that does not take into account this backward and forward reference to conduct is doomed to remain at the level of a merely descriptive science.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, conscious processes have no significance, no reason for being, aside from the work they do, the use they serve in the upbuilding of our world of concrete values. All forms of consciousness whatever are possessed of meaning, of reference to something beyond, and the "normative disciplines" represent only formulations of the most conspicuous instances of such values. In the workings of habit, in the countless small determinations and adjustments of daily life, even in vague organic feelings of comfort and discomfort, there is always some purposive coloring, some

<sup>1</sup> A fundamental statement of this view is given in Professor John Dewey's "Reflex Are Concept in Psychology," *Psychological Review*, Vol. III.

<sup>2</sup> For an admirable discussion of the relations of psychology and the normative disciplines see Professor J. R. Angell's paper, "The Relations of Structural and Functional Psychology to Philosophy," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. XII, No. 3.

attitude or adaptation of the organism with respect to the situation in which it finds itself, and thus directly or indirectly with respect to its own conduct in the immediate future. This does not mean that the value always presents itself to the mind as an end. It is frequently inherent in the activity as a whole, and detaches itself only for the observer, the psychologist, not for the person involved in the experience. To state it in terms of a distinction often made nowadays: consciousness is always valuational *psychologically*; it is valuational *psychically* only under appropriate conditions, which I shall discuss later.

With this limitation we may describe consciousness as awareness of values, or, perhaps more cautiously, as registration of values. This description implies two characteristics of consciousness that are often emphasized—its efficiency as an agency of control and as an agency of selection; in other words, its backward and its forward reference. In our new eagerness to point out that consciousness functions as an instrument for controlling further behavior, we are in danger of underestimating the aspect that used to be considered of primary importance—its dealings with our past experiences. In its extreme form the older view held that “ideas” were mere copies of events. The truth is that neither aspect can be considered intelligibly without the other. As valuational, conscious experience faces both ways. In every situation there is use of just so much of past experience as is needed for the efficient control of the matter in hand. At every step there is elimination, reshaping, synthesis, but always under guidance of the emerging end. The past is drawn upon for means; it represents the means available. But in the interaction of means and ends, each is modified. The bare end as first before the mind is very different from what may be called the efficient end, ready to discharge into overt action. It has become both enriched and defined through the intermediate survey and selection of past experiences. It is easily seen that the selective character of consciousness is most conspicuous in those cases in which a new end is to be attained.

Bound up with this evaluating, selective, controlling character of consciousness is its aspect of objective reference, which is, indeed, only another way of stating its essential nature. Consciousness, as I have already said, always points beyond itself. It is never mere consciousness in general, a sort of abiding entity back of particular experiences, but always a consciousness of *something*, whether it be of a tree, a movement, an emotion, or a mathematical formula.<sup>1</sup> On one side it indicates the individual's direction of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. William James, “Does ‘Consciousness’ Exist?” *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Vol. I, No. 18.

interest at that particular time; on the other, it stands for something with regard to which he may act, with which he may do something. This "object" to which consciousness refers, which forms its core, as it were, need not, of course, be situated in the external world of space. It may be thought of as within the organism, or as "only in the mind." But, whatever the direction of the reference, the object does not merely happen to be there; it is there because it is the center of a cluster of specific activities. It is, indeed, a construction of those activities, never a mere external "given." It marks a certain point in their interrelation and reorganization.<sup>1</sup>

In general, then, we may say that functional psychology conceives of human experience as a continuous series of attempted or achieved modes of control of behavior. Through all the bewildering richness and complexity of actual living, with its countless instances of doing and thinking, succeeding and failing, hating and loving, suffering and enjoying, it traces the waves of an unceasing but intricate and varied rhythm, one pulse of consciousness emerging from another and passing over into a third, different from either, but affected by both. It finds its problems in determining the conditions and characteristics of these several types, their relations to one another, their own internal make-up. It does not neglect the structural aspects of mind that bulk so large in the traditional psychology—a charge brought against it chiefly on the strength of its name; but it seeks to place them within a specific process, as limiting terms or stages of that process. It reads off the accepted psychological categories—sensation, perception, memory, imagination, association, habit, attention, volition, and the like—in terms of kinds and degrees of control. This insistence upon the fundamental significance of the concept of control does not mean, however, that functional psychology considers only those types of experience that are most obviously utilitarian and "objective" in the popular sense of the word. It aims to account for the operations of the most abstract reflective thought, for the subtlest *nuances* of feeling and mood, for the pleasures of contemplation and day-dreaming as well as for more immediately practical and strenuous forms of mental life.

A moment's glance at the course of everyday experience is sufficient to show us that this process of gaining control, of maturing our plans for action, is not uniform in its operation. Experience in the loose popular sense as well as experience psychologically considered has its "substantive" and its "transitive" phases, to use James's well-known and admirable descriptive terms. It is made up of an "alternation of flights and perchings."

<sup>1</sup> J. Dewey, *Studies in Logical Theory*, X, "Valuation as a Logical Process" (H. W. Stuart), pp. 250-53.



That is to say, there are times when our mental activity flows smoothly over into outward acts—or, rather, when we do not become aware of any separation between the two sorts of activity. The mere suggestion of a familiar end, the mere identification of a stimulus, brings about at once the appropriate response. In recent psychology much has been made of the importance of habit, “the fly-wheel of society.” But even yet we recognize imperfectly the extent to which it governs whole reaches of our lives. Dressing and undressing, eating at certain times and in certain ways, keeping routine engagements, carrying on skilled operations, associating with family and friends, speaking, walking, gesticulating, and a thousand other minor adjustments, are regulated by habits of every degree of complexity and certainty. We do these things as a matter of course, without “stopping to think about them,” as we say; and our “consciousness” of them is nothing more than a diffused feeling of satisfactory performance.

But there are other times when it is not so easy to carry on some of our pursuits. A difficulty, an obstacle of some sort, turns up, and interferes with our accustomed ways of doing things. This interference may issue from ourselves, from people about us, from “things” in the physical world. But in every case its effect is to arrest our course of action at the time, to throw us back temporarily upon ourselves, to reveal a cleft between what we think and what we can do. We have to attend to the disturbance, to “think it over,” and to adjust both ourselves and our surroundings before we can proceed on our way—rejoicing or not, as the case may be. Such interruption, of course, may range from the slightest momentary pause and feeling of tension to a cataclysm that paralyzes effort and even destroys life. Between these limits the checking of overt action may be stated in psychological terms as a clash and conflict between habits or groups of habits. Instead of functioning independently or reinforcing one another, they inhibit; and none is able to reach its normal outlet in conduct. If such collision be violent, our first feeling is that of shock, bare “sensation;” passing quickly into an unpleasantly emotional condition of bewilderment, confusion, dismay. But, unless the situation is so overpowering that we are crushed by it or forced to abandon it altogether, this emotional reaction resolves itself into an attempted investigation of the situation, a scrutinizing and marshaling of its lacks and its resources, in order to discover how it may be modified and once more rendered available for conduct. This focusing of attention upon the various elements of the situation, this “reflecting upon it,” which is, indeed, literally a bending or turning back upon it, brings to light with increasing definiteness both means and end or ends, until at last they coalesce sufficiently for the resumption of action. It



is essential to notice, moreover, that such an operation of thought not only heals a temporary breach in our world of experience, but actually makes over a portion of that world, and so affects the whole. The line of action that we carry out after the resolution of our difficulty is never exactly what we should have done had not the break intervened.

Such an account, brief as it is, reveals the essentially reconstructive, reorganizing, instrumental character of reflective thought. It arises in a disturbed situation within which control has become for the time impossible; it transforms that situation so that it may be again controlled—that is to say, acted upon. In one sense, to be sure, it is in itself activity of the most intense kind; but it is activity temporarily detached from the world of outward conduct and concerned with the upbuilding of a new conscious content which is to serve as a plan of action. As such, it may fairly be set over against the action that follows upon the construction of this content.<sup>1</sup>

We find, then, two broad types of conscious experience—immediate or constitutive experience, and mediate or reflective experience. Both are equally immediate in the sense of occurring at a particular present time; but reflective thought obviously bears a relation to conduct different from the relation sustained to it by constitutive thought. Immediate experience may be most broadly characterized as habitual; mediate, as attentive. Neither type exists at large or apart from the other. Stated in general terms, they represent limits of one process, and any particular experience stands merely for a special emphasis on one aspect or the other. But for purposes of reflective analysis it is important to distinguish them. Reflection arises as a method of dealing with some hitch in practice; its results survive and become embodied in practice, to be again challenged and revised by thought on the appearance of a new emergency. Every psychological habit has thus been originated under the pressure of attention.<sup>2</sup>

To the reflective or judging process we shall return briefly later. Here we need to examine immediate experience more fully. In all its myriad forms and gradations we recognize certain common characteristics. In the first place, the situation does not polarize itself. With the reaction following hard upon the heels of the suggestion or stimulus, we are aware of the act as a whole. Our interest, our sense of activity, is diffused over the entire situation. Either there is no recognition of the end or purpose as apart from the actual accomplishment, or, if it be present, it serves merely as a momentary cue, lapsing from consciousness after it has set in motion

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, *Studies in Logical Theory*, XI, "Some Logical Aspects of Purpose" (A. W. Moore), pp. 350-52.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, "Thought and Its Subject-Matter" (Dewey), pp. 42, 43.

the appropriate habitual responses. There is no defining of the end or searching for the means to that end, and consequently no opposition of means to ends. Neither do we set the self over against the object. Consciousness is not self-consciousness. There is no antagonism between the subjective self and a recalcitrant objective world.

In the second place, and as a consequence of this lack of division within the situation, immediate experience is unaccompanied by the feelings of compulsion or of effort. In one sense, it may be objected, it touches the high-water mark of compulsion. We cannot help having the experience. We do the thing before we know it. We are compelled to do it. It is imposed upon us. This is all very true. But the compulsion resides within the general setting of the experience; it is a product of many past experiences. It is not, to the person involved, a conscious accompaniment of the immediate experience, although he may notice it in later reflection upon the event. As it occurs, its inevitableness is for him the happiest spontaneity. Only for the psychologist is it to be read in terms of compulsion. Just here we see the confusion of psychological points of view that lies at the root of the free-will controversy. It is an instance of that insidious foe, the psychologist's fallacy.

The feeling of effort, too, the straining to achieve an end, to discover fitting means, or the struggle between competing ends, is of necessity excluded from immediate experience. Accepting the view of the consciousness of effort as marking an intermediate and incomplete stage in the reconstructive process<sup>1</sup>—a view that seems to me irrefutable from the functional standpoint—I find no place for effort in the foregoing account of immediate experience. As unitary the experience cannot be described in terms derived from another type of situation. Both compulsion and effort characterize the problematic, disturbed situation, not the satisfactory situation. This by no means implies, however, that a feeling of activity is wanting to immediate experience. Such a feeling or successful functioning is not to be confused with effort, which is the consciousness of unsuccessful or incomplete functioning.

This mention of the feeling of activity, which may frequently be described as interest and even as pleasantness, leads us to ask concerning the conditions of its appearance. It is not present, at least to any observable degree, in many cases of immediate experience. The indifference of routine activities is notorious; they too often dip to the pole of unpleasantness; monotony leads to boredom, ennui. In other cases they soon reach

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, "The Psychology of Effort," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. VI.

the automatic level, and we carry them on while giving our attention to other things. In fact, under normal conditions we must do so.

But in more complicated forms of activity, in which integrated groups of habits are employed and function smoothly and simultaneously, we have often a highly pleasurable sense of the putting-forth of energy. There is a real glow of satisfaction in accomplishing a piece of work varied enough to hold attention, and yet with all its details thoroughly mastered. It is this type of consciousness that we call the feeling of activity, as distinguished from the feeling of effort experienced in setting up a new co-ordination. In such cases it is evident that our experience is of the immediate type only because it has become so thoroughly mediated. It is woven of the results of past reflective processes, past acts of attention; it is shot through with previously attained values. The sense of activity, therefore, attaches to habitual activities of a relatively complex type, drawing adequately upon the motor resources of the organism, and not forcing those that are unexercised into perverted and abortive functioning. In other words, it is a product of a cluster of *simultaneous* and tolerably well co-ordinated reactions, while it is lacking in reactions that are markedly *serial*, each serving merely as a stimulus and then lapsing from consciousness. Such reactions are indifferent or positively unpleasant.

Into the physiological aspects of these types of immediate experience I do not intend to enter, save in the most cursory way. But in the functional conception of the establishment of new co-ordinations the physiological and the psychological are most intimately conjoined. Each, indeed, is an abstraction without the other; and purposive consciousness takes its place in the organic evolutionary series as a superior means developed through natural selection for resolving tensions, and thus for setting up new co-ordinations.<sup>1</sup> From this point of view there can be no such thing as an entirely static or passive conscious experience, even when consciousness is at its lowest ebb; and mind manifests itself at its highest degree of activity when it focuses upon tensional situations and acts as an agency of reconstruction and control. Physiology and psychology meet on common ground in the modern doctrine of impulse, though at the present stage of our knowledge any account is bound to be chiefly in physiological terms, and to be at best only a coarse description. Tendency to movement is taken as the fundamental characteristic of living matter; and an organism so high in the biologic scale as is the human being is found to possess, in addition to established co-ordinations mediating physiological processes and a limited number of definite instincts, a large equipment of open or loose impulses

<sup>1</sup> Angell, *Psychology*, p. 7.



or tendencies to action, discharging indiscriminately upon the presentation of any stimulus, and often apparently at random, through the presence of some intra-organic stimulating condition. At this stage we find adjustment and control at their lowest terms and in their most rudimentary form. We may rather say that in unco-ordinated impulse we have the raw material for co-ordination and control. But given these unstable and vague impulses and a highly plastic nervous tissue modified by every discharge of activity, changes are bound to occur. Impulses come into conflict with one another through simultaneous responses to different or to ambiguous stimuli. Their pathways of discharge intercept, and the impulses are mutually checked or inhibited. Gathering momentum from this damming-up, they struggle to break through a new channel into which they may both escape. If they succeed in doing this, each is modified in the process; a new line of egress has been made; and they eventually reinforce instead of inhibiting one another. In other words, a co-ordination has been set up; the impulses function together in one system, instead of independently and often antagonistically. Roughly, this is the history of all sensori-motor co-ordinations. The systems become more and more intricate, gathering to themselves various lesser systems, but at the same time simplifying and unifying. As the organization becomes elaborate, consciousness becomes more and more dominant. Immediate experience is, on the physiological side, established co-ordination.

For the most part modern psychology has ignored the transformations in the other aspect of the situation—the stimulus. But the process on the side of the organism is meaningless taken apart from the occasion which gives it direction. From a bare opportunity for the discharge of an urgent impulse, a mere point of irritation, one may almost say, the stimulus at last becomes the object, a center for any number of responses and manipulations. How does this come about?

The most satisfactory attempt at explanation seems to me to lie along the lines of certain recent theories regarding the nature of the psychological image, although the problems involved have not yet been worked out to entire satisfaction. Since the days of Galton's "breakfast-table" questionnaire the psychology of imagery has been greatly to the fore. The various kinds of images—visual, auditory, motor, etc.—have been studied with painstaking detail. But the accounts given have been almost wholly descriptive, structural. The image of whatever type has been dealt with in isolation, as a mental product, an event, to be analyzed and classified. Taken thus, it has been thought of chiefly as a memory-image, a "copy," of past experience, though worn down and altered in one way and another.

Its representative character has been emphasized to the exclusion of other aspects, and it has been pictured as floating around somehow in the mind, and as bobbing up sometimes opportunely and sometimes in most unlikely and unexpected places. Such a treatment of the image gives no satisfactory answer to the questions of its origin or of its part in the mental economy. It makes its behavior fortuitous, which is only saying that it is unexplained. Functional psychology, however, has sought to place the image within the act, to determine its part in the securing of control over a situation. It holds that the image normally emerges in response to some exigency of the present, some demand for controlling the future, and functions as a plan of action, a map of conduct.<sup>1</sup> This plan has necessarily to pass through various stages and transformations in the course of its construction. It is revamped, telescoped together, expanded here, pruned there, until the situation is mastered. Definite memory images arise as there is need of recourse to past experience, to be thrown aside or worked into the final result. It is still to be recognized by the majority that memory is a means of dealing with present and future, and by no means belongs exclusively to a bald "past." The resultant image is thus assuredly not a mere copy of past experience, although it has drawn abundantly upon the past for materials. Just here comes in the whole field of association. Moreover, the equipment of the image for its work does not depend upon any particular sensory make-up. It used to be the psychological fashion to restrict the term "image" to the visual and auditory types. But we know now that all images are more or less motor; and that images derived from the so-called "lower-senses," or chiefly kinaesthetic, representing obscure stresses and strains within the organism, may mediate and direct conduct no less effectually than those derived from sight and hearing. Mental imagery is not a mere succession of kinematograph or gramophone performances. The sensory character of an image is indifferent. People tend, some to one type, some to another, or vary as occasion requires. The image has value as a symbol, as a shorthand statement of certain reactions, not as a picture or echo.

We see, then, that a shifting play of imagery accompanies the process of reconstructing a situation; perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it is the method by which such reconstruction is accomplished. The account that I have given, therefore, of the formation of the image is a repetition in other terms of my account of the process of reflective thought. Imagery marks tension, revision, reorganization, delayed response to a stimulus,

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, *Studies in Logical Theory*, VIII, "Image and Idea in Logic" (W. C. Gore), pp. 193-99; W. C. Gore, "Image or Sensation," *Jour. Philos., Psych. and Sci. Meth.*, Vol. I, pp. 434-41; Vol. II, pp. 97-100.

because that stimulus is for some reason ambiguous or ill-defined, and needs to be built up into an object that we can handle with certitude and consequent efficiency. The final image, therefore, coalesces with the object, *is* the object from the mental side.

Professor George H. Mead, of the University of Chicago, has put forth in some unpublished lectures a suggestive theory in terms of impulse and reaction of the growth of the bare stimulus into the object and, on the other side, of the growth of the bare sensation into the image or idea. Taking the ground that the primary datum is the impulse, the tendency to response, rather than the stimulus or object as in any sense ready-made or "given," Professor Mead holds that the definite object arises through a translation of immediate contact reactions—such as are found in lower organisms—into distance reactions. That is to say, we recognize a distant object, and can control and direct our behavior toward it only because it stands for a number of suppressed contact reactions. Any object—a tree or a chair, for instance—is a cluster of all the possible modes of touching and manipulating it that we do not carry out. It has external existence, bulk, and solidity for us only as all these incipient activities are aroused and at the same time inhibited from discharge into gross external movements. Every image or developed object of consciousness presupposes a series of direct contacts and a working-over of these into distance equivalents.<sup>1</sup> The special sense-organs, notably the eye, are organs of such translation. The lowest unicellular organisms expand and contract as a whole only upon contact with extraneous material; later we find pseudopodia, cilia, tentacles, etc.—all contact mechanisms. With the evolution of higher forms appear the distance senses of smell, sight, and hearing, and the human hand is admittedly an unsurpassed instrument of exploration and delicate contact discriminations. The image or object, therefore, as built up in human experience, represents an intricate system of translations, substitutions, inhibitions. It means on the physiological side a complicated sensori-motor co-ordination, the welding into a single activity of various minor reactions once carried on vaguely and independently. Such a view jibes with the modern dictum that "all consciousness is motor," and with the more recent and more specific doctrine that consciousness appears and continues sharpest at points of greatest tension.<sup>2</sup> Put in this way, the physiological and the psychological statements of the matter cannot be kept rigidly distinct. The attempt to do so, indeed, at the present stage of our

<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. F. Washburn, "A Factor in Mental Development," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. XIII, pp. 622-26.

<sup>2</sup> Angell, *Psychology*, pp. 7, 50-58.



knowledge of the mechanism of instinct and impulse, is likely to result in artificial abstraction. At best our accounts of the details of neuro-muscular process are doomed to be only crudely figurative.

In accordance with this general conception of the function of the image within the total co-ordination or act, various aspects of its operation have been recognized and differentiated. Imagery of the fullest and most vivid type obviously belongs to the reorganizing and reconstructive moments of experience. But at the first demand for reconstruction, the first awareness of hindrance, the stimulus is reacted to immediately rather than interpreted, and we have an experience that corresponds roughly to the direct contact reaction of lower forms. Consciousness is of the nature of shock, "pure sensation," so far as that may exist in higher organisms, except as a mere artefact of the psychologist. It is rawly affectional and sensational; there is not yet sufficient organization for the appearance of the image. But with the dawning of a plan of action, with the search for appropriate means, the raw sensational material is transmuted into imagery, shifting with opalescent rapidity. Here enters in the possibility of different types, depending on the character of the specific situation to be controlled. At times the end in view is relatively clear; the problem is the practical one of discovering ways and means. This leads to a canvassing of one's past experience; the dominant images are of the memory type. It is clear that the more easily the things symbolized by these images may be obtained, the less necessity exists for a rich elaboration of the attendant imagery. Only so much develops as is needed to serve as a cue to conduct. In the same way the image of the end, at first distinct, lapses to a mere push-button of control, touching off and guiding the search for materials. Under other circumstances, however, the end may be the object sought for, and may be at first extremely shadowy, gaining body and precision only through selection from an abundant drift of imagery, little of it of the definitely localized memory type. In any case the resulting image ripe for conduct is different from the first tentative image of the end. It has developed through constant interaction with the attendant images, each modifying and reshaping the other. Moreover, the content of this resulting or "working" image may differ widely in different cases. One type of problem may be solved serially, each stage in its accomplishment being attained and dropped behind without contributing materially to the total consciousness of the end. This type of solution is exemplified in the taking of a journey, the performance of a household duty, or of any long but routine mechanical task. Everyone must have within his experience the remembrance of hours and miles checked off on a time-table, of meals eaten and nights passed on a sleeping-

car. As each of these steps in the journey is made, it is canceled from the image of the whole, it drops out and is forgotten as is the paper or the orange skin one tosses from the car window. The original image of the journey was a definite core of arrival surrounded by a penumbra made up of vague images of the drag of time, of heat, motion, and weariness. The actual happenings strip these off one by one, and they contribute nothing beyond a faint coloring of relief to the final image and the experience following upon it.

But take the building and furnishing of a house, the swinging of a big industrial or military manoeuvre—the making of a dress even—to choose for the present only instances that are not commonly recognized as aesthetic. Here, too, of course, there is much eliminated, dropped out of the final consciousness, the “working image.” But far more fully than in the cases just cited, the working image has taken up and absorbed into itself the significance of the various stages of the process. They have reinforced, enriched one another and the whole. They are all there, contributing unobtrusively but pervasively to the general effect. Their order is not serial, but simultaneous, co-ordinating, and reinforcing. The perfected image differs from the “sketch-image,” as it may be called in the way that the completed house, subtly satisfying in every detail of line and color, differs from the architect’s plans and the decorator’s patterns and designs. This type of image we may call anticipatorily the “aesthetic image” (the term I take from Professor Mead, though I do not know how fully he would agree with my interpretation of it). We shall return to it later, and inquire its significance for our discussion.

As I said a few paragraphs back, the more readily an image subserves its purpose of recalling an object or of touching off conduct, the less content it is obliged to have and the fewer subsidiary images it calls up. In ordinary immediate experience of the routine habitual type, the image is commonly shorn to a mere cue or signal, and loses most of its fulness and sensory character. It becomes a “working image” reduced to its lowest terms, and verges again upon the immediate stimulus.

We may therefore say of the image from the functional point of view, that it appears as a mechanism of reconstruction within a disturbed situation and represents a cluster of mediating and mediated activities. Imagery emerges after the first shock of sensation; and in the course of revising the situation assumes broadly one of two types—the serial or the simultaneous or co-ordinating. The resulting image functioning as a stimulus to overt action may be of the practical or working type, the result of the serial form of construction, or of the aesthetic type, the result of the simultaneous form.



With repeated or habitual use, this resultant image tends to wear down more and more again to a bare stimulus.

In this provisional survey of the stand taken by functional psychology I have tried to bring out its emphasis upon the constructive character of experience as a process of winning control over specific situations and of consciousness as the instrument of such reorganization; I have distinguished two main types or phases of experience—the immediate or habitual, and the mediate or reflective; and I have indicated the part played by imagery in such a psychological conception. I shall now give a general and untechnical survey of the aesthetic experience as it manifests itself to the average person, and as it has been explained and analyzed by certain philosophers and psychologists.

### III. THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

The most psychologically unsophisticated person, if he have any aesthetic interests, will not hesitate, I think, to range his moments of unmistakable aesthetic enjoyment—whether of creation or of appreciation—on the side of immediate rather than of reflective experience. In such moments at their purest we all have a sense of exemption and release from the pressure and the precariousness of life. We cease temporarily to “look before and after, and pine for what is not.” We are lapped about by the present experience, steeped in it, although we do not think of it as present in the sense of contrasting it with a harassing or insistent past or future. It is simply experience, full, exhaustive, brimming over with satisfaction. But this does not mean that it is a passive experience, or a mere state of trance or ecstasy, although rarely it may approach these limits when we are “rapt” in aesthetic contemplation. Such a characterization of the aesthetic attitude is drawn too exclusively from our appreciations of painting and sculpture; it is only seemingly true even there, as we shall see later. On the contrary, aesthetic absorption in a drama, a symphony—even in so slight a thing, in one sense, as a sonnet—may give us a feeling of intense activity. We are swept along on waves of alternate suspense and relief to a culminating moment in which every fiber seems to vibrate. Such a state of high stimulation sometimes borders upon the painful, but it is kept from becoming excessive or exhausting through the rhythmical character of its tensions and relations, the “pattern” that it assumes. We do not feel overstrained; we are conscious simply of activity unimpeded and yet regulated, of an enlargement and quickening of our whole natures, a heightening of vitality. We breathe deeper; our hearts beat faster; our cheeks glow. It seems as if we were doing easily and spontaneously things that we have hitherto



been able to accomplish only with pain and effort. This sense of facilitation, ease, and spontaneity is manifest to some degree in every aesthetic experience. Although we are usually quiescent so far as outward movements are concerned, we experience in a sort of glorified form the exhilaration that comes ordinarily with certain kinds of successful active exercise. We have a sense of rich and harmonious employment of many bodily organs, functioning as it were vicariously. We feel that there exists a peculiar intimacy between us and the aesthetic object. We enter into it and possess it; it enters into and possesses us. More truly, perhaps, we and the object are fused, blended in a single pulse of experience. Such a state of mind is obviously strongly emotional; it is suffused with an affective coloring. These characteristics, however, are implicit and latent in the consciousness of the subject of the aesthetic thrill. They can be marshaled and described only by the sympathetic observer, or, by the participator after the experience has passed; and the experience is fleeting and notoriously difficult to confine in words. It has been the theme of poets, the subject of an array of eloquent descriptions. But it still eludes.

Moreover, it is extremely difficult to phrase a general account that will fit even coarsely the several types of aesthetic experience. Music, poetry, the plastic and graphic arts, are independent and to a large extent unique. I have set forth the common characteristics of the more elaborate and conspicuous instances of the experience. But these characteristics may be traced even in the simplest observable forms. And they are to be found in the experience of both the artist, the producer, and the spectator, the appreciator. In the first they lead to and accompany the technique of actual production; in the second, to enlargement of view and to renewed vigor in ordinary occupations. The difference seems to me one of degree, not one of kind; and I cannot sympathize with the position taken by such men as Groos<sup>1</sup> and Marshall<sup>2</sup> that it is necessary to make a rigid distinction between the two attitudes. It is undoubtedly necessary to recognize the two forms, but each man has in his degree the sense of expansion, enhancement, and "wholeness" of life that is the essence of the aesthetic experience, and that has made it the despair of the scientist and the inspiration of the poet.

Turning to philosophy and psychology, we find that their accounts of the aesthetic experience do not go much beyond a systematized statement of certain aspects patent to the untrained observer. Under some differences

<sup>1</sup> *Der aesthetische Genuss*, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Relation of Aesthetics to Psychology and Philosophy," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. XIV, pp. 2, 3.

in terminology, moreover, there is striking unanimity in the descriptions given by widely differing schools. Over aesthetics, idealists and empiricists appear to join hands, although probably quite inadvertently. The emphasis upon specific aspects, however, differs with almost every writer.

In general, the accounts given assign the aesthetic experience to what I have called immediate experience, although the term in this sense is of recent application, and although Fechner was the first, I believe, to include "immediacy" among aesthetic criteria.<sup>1</sup> All alike make much of its relative isolation, its detachment from the practical business of life, and its disinterestedness or lack of specific conscious end. Insistence upon this negative aspect has led to the setting-up of the non-utilitarian character of the aesthetic experience as its principal criterion, and to its affiliation with play as a kind of excess discharge, due merely to the presence of a superabundance of vital energy. Of late a more scientific and evolutionary view of play has greatly modified this theory both for play and for aesthetics. On the positive side writers on aesthetics have accounted for the independence, the "inclosedness," of the experience on the score of its fulness of content, its high conscious value; it floods and captures consciousness. Here again they have compared it to play with respect to its freedom, spontaneity, and ease.<sup>2</sup> Aesthetic pleasure has, indeed, been said to be passive as opposed to the pleasures of play, which are active.<sup>3</sup> But recent psychology points out that no type of conscious experience is truly passive. The distinction is at most a distinction between gross outward movements and delicate organic reactions, and accordingly furnishes no real criterion. The tendency at present, on the contrary, is to bring into prominence the activity side of the aesthetic experience. Its extraordinary life-enhancing qualities are dwelt upon, its power of arousing a feeling of full but harmonious interplay of both organic and mental processes.

A long-accepted and favorite category of aesthetic theory is that of *objectivity*. It is not easy always to determine just what is meant by the term as used in aesthetics. Undoubtedly usage differs, and it means different things to different writers. Here it is enough to say that in general it appears to be used to indicate the fact that the aesthetic object and the feeling aroused by it are not held apart in the mind of the person having the aesthetic experience. The self is in a sense identified with the object; the "feeling-tone" of the observer is "spread upon" the object. We say that

<sup>1</sup> *Vorschule der Aesthetik*, Vol. I, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> George Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty*, pp. 25-30.

<sup>3</sup> Grant Allen, *Physiological Aesthetics*, p. 34.



the object itself is beautiful<sup>1</sup> not that we have a *feeling of* beauty, of aesthetic satisfaction with regard to the object. The objectivity of the aesthetic is contrasted with the subjectivity of the merely pleasant. It is in this sense that Santayana makes objectivity the distinguishing aesthetic criterion. He defines beauty as "pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing."<sup>2</sup> But in varying degrees such objectivity is characteristic of all forms of immediate experience. More truly, we do not explicitly refer our experience either to the subjective or to the objective worlds. Both "subjective" and "objective" are terms borrowed from mediate or reconstructive experience, and are therefore misleading in a discussion of the aesthetic.

Closely allied with this category of objectivity are Bain's category of "shareableness"<sup>3</sup> and Kant's famous category of "universality."<sup>4</sup> Both imply that the peculiar aesthetic tone or quality is thought of as transferred to the object, inhering in it, and therefore, as a corollary, common to all. As Professor Tufts points out, "universality" did not mean for Kant that there must be a uniform judgment with regard to the aesthetic character of an object, but only that aesthetic value is thought of as objectified.<sup>5</sup> This shareableness or universality of the aesthetic is sometimes stated negatively as disinterestedness or an absence of desire for appropriation on the part of the observer. But a sounder statement would be that in the aesthetic experience the rapport between the object and the "subject" is so close that he already feels himself in possession of it, if the question of possession can be said to enter in any degree into the experience.

Of recent years aesthetic theory, in reaction from the predominantly intellectualistic attitude of the older aesthetics, has laid great stress upon the strongly affective and emotional aspects of the aesthetic experience, as distinguished from the painful, the fleetingly pleasurable, or the affectively indifferent quality of other varieties of immediate experience. Henry Rutgers Marshall defines the aesthetic as "the permanently pleasurable in revival." This heightened and widely diffused feeling-tone is also made to account for the social significance of the aesthetic, the transmission of the experience to others through sympathy, suggestion, contagion, and the like. At this point it is enough to mention these developments of aesthetic theory. We shall later recur to them.

<sup>1</sup> Bernhard Berenson, *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*, pp. 7-13, 50-54, 70-73.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *The Emotions and the Will*, chap. xiv, "The Aesthetic Emotions," pp. 225, 226.

<sup>4</sup> *Critique of Judgment* (translated by Bernard), pp. 55-63.

<sup>5</sup> "On the Genesis of the Aesthetic Categories," *University of Chicago Decennial Publications*, First Series, Vol. III, Part II.

To sum up, we find that the naïve person and the theorist are tolerably well agreed in a purely descriptive account of the aesthetic experience. Among the marks of this experience are said to be its immediacy, its detachment from ulterior ends—that is to say, its non-utilitarian character; its vitalizing power, its spontaneity, its objectivity, sharableness, or universality — different terms for practically the same thing — its strong affective coloring.

Such an account makes no pretense at a real explanation and grounding of the categories employed. Explanations have been given, of course, from both the philosophical and the psychological sides. But this is not the place in which to consider them. I am merely getting before our minds in the roughest way some of the best-known descriptions of the aesthetic, and attempting to recall the tang of our own individual aesthetic experiences.

But even mere description reveals (some of the paradoxes already referred to. If consciousness be anticipatory, purposive, an instrument for securing control over conduct in specific situations, how does it come about that an experience said to be devoid of utilitarian or practical significance should possess a peculiarly high degree of conscious value, should at times entirely capture consciousness? If such a pleurably excited condition of consciousness be the concomitant of a large number of activities co-operating with and reinforcing one another, how does it come that the aesthetic experience is not the outcome of a previous state of agitation and disturbance, but appears to arise without effort on our part? How should it produce in us at once a sense of exhilaration, enlargement of capacity, and at the same time a sense of serenity, of disentanglement from the business of life, of escape from the "Red Mist of Doing"? These and similar questions crowd our minds, and demand resolution of their contradictions.

From the experience of functional psychology in dealing with other problems we may reasonably conclude that some at least of the enigmas of aesthetics are due to the treating of the aesthetic experience too much in isolation, to a generalization of its dominant aspects, and a severing of them from their points of origin and issue in concrete living—that is, from the situation in which they arise. This failure to mark the initial and terminal points of attachment is particularly likely to occur in the case of the aesthetic, which is, as we have seen, a peculiarly self-inclosed experience, seeming to arise without precedent effort or volition on our part, and to point to no recognized end. It is no wonder that it was long thought to be the work of a special inborn sense of faculty of beauty, or even a direct manifestation of deity itself. Today we are long past the stage of thinking that finds it necessary to set up special "faculties" to account for mental phenomena;

but even we may be pardoned for finding the aesthetic at first sight a somewhat obdurate exception in a purposive and evolutionary world.

Our main problem is to find a place for the aesthetic in the experiential series as read by functional psychology. ) But before so doing we shall find it advantageous to run over some of the work that has already been done in the aesthetic field.

#### IV. PREVIOUS WORK IN AESTHETICS

In spite of substantial descriptive agreement, at the outset one is bewildered and baffled by the chaotic condition of the literature of the subject. Imposing in bulk, it is yet written from such differing and often contradictory points of view that it lends color to the contention that aesthetics has no right to consider itself a true philosophical or normative discipline.<sup>1</sup>

The reasons for this incoherence are not far to seek. I have already spoken of the intrinsic difficulties of the aesthetic problem. Besides this, the province of aesthetics lies upon the marches of philosophy; and is frequently invaded—and plausibly claimed—by adventurers from other domains. The artist and the art-critic, in whatever medium they work, are prone to make inquiries into the psychology of their art and even into its philosophical implications.<sup>2</sup> The scientist is occasionally drawn into the study of the growth of some type of art product and its psychological bases. And of late the anthropologist and the sociologist wax busy over the aesthetic consciousness as a social phenomenon. All these inquirers handle the subject according to the bias of their dominant interests, sometimes with a cheerful disregard of psychology, more often with a blythe confidence in outworn and discredited psychological doctrines. Even where this is so, however, they compensate for their naïveté by the freshness of their point of attack and the richness of the new concrete material which they bring within the scope of aesthetic investigation.

The more professional and academic investigators, too, have approached the subject from every point of the compass. In the heyday of German idealism, the new discipline, not long christened, was enlisted in the service of metaphysics, and rounded out the systems of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel. With the growth of modern science and the persistence, in English thought in least, of the sturdy empiricism of the eighteenth century, German idealism fell somewhat into disrepute, and German aesthetic theory in particular became discredited because of its vague and some-

<sup>1</sup> Santayana, "What Is Aesthetics?" *Philosophical Review*, Vol. XIII, pp. 320-27.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. B. Berenson, Vernon Lee, etc.



what sentimental metaphysical affiliations. The English mind, moreover, has never taken kindly to aesthetic questions, and the Utilitarians and the Associationists generally were engrossed by legal, economic, and ethical questions. Divorced from metaphysics, aesthetics languished for a while, and when it revived, it had passed over for the most part into the camp of empirical psychology and evolutionary biology. There it has tarried, following the fortunes of current psychological and biological thinking. Herbert Spencer, both in his *Synthetic Philosophy* and more especially in his scattered essays on aesthetic topics;<sup>1</sup> Grant Allen, in his *Physiological Aesthetics*;<sup>2</sup> and Bain<sup>3</sup> and Sully,<sup>4</sup> in their clear-cut treatments of the subject, stand for the best that has been done by the English Associationist school, and laid the foundations for a science of aesthetics. In Germany, Zeising,<sup>5</sup> Fechner,<sup>6</sup> and Lotze<sup>7</sup> led this scientific movement. With the development of experimental psychology has come the investigation of certain simple and specific aesthetic problems, such as those of space-form, rhythm, and simple judgments of preference. The pioneer work of this kind was done by Fechner in his determination of the "golden section" as the most pleasing division of a line. A long series of similar researches has since been carried on with increasing mastery of technique, but without greatly widening the area of the problems studied or reaching important new conclusions. Recent attention to genetic psychology and interest in the evolution of mind in the race as well as in the individual have given a new importance and a strong sociological and anthropological coloring to aesthetic investigations and formulations. Study of peoples low in the social scale reveals traces of the aesthetic experience, and such data have been used to throw light on the more highly developed forms of aesthetic consciousness and to indicate its function in the life of the individual and of society. Such books as Grosse's *Beginnings of Art* (1893), Groos's *Play of Animals* (1896) and *Play of Man* (1898), Bücher's *Arbeit und Rhythmus* (1896; second, revised edition, 1902), Hirn's *Origins of Art* (1900), and Gummere's *Beginnings of Poetry* (1901) have essayed to place the aesthetic with reference to the whole stream of man's social, occupational, intellectual development; and have brought to bear upon the subject a mass of biologic,

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Psychology* (1872); *Essays* (1852).

<sup>2</sup> 1877.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* (1859); *Mental and Moral Science*, chap. xiii (1868).

<sup>4</sup> Especially, *Sensation and Intuition* (1874).

<sup>5</sup> *Aesthetische Forschungen* (1855).

<sup>6</sup> *Vorschule der Aesthetik* (1876).

<sup>7</sup> *Grundzüge der Aesthetik* (1884); *Microcosmos* (1856-64).

psychologic, and anthropologic material, highly suggestive, if still somewhat unorganized. Outgrowths of these various movements of modern thought are to be found in certain prevalent aesthetic theories: Spencer's "play theory," given a striking new biological adaptation and reinforcement by Groos; the "inner imitation," *Einjühlung* theories—all broadly alike—of Groos, Theodore Lipps, and Vernon Lee; Lange's "conscious self-illusion" theory; and Baldwin's "self-exhibition" theory.

Such a survey makes evident that for the last fifty years the dominant tendency has been to treat aesthetics as a branch of psychology rather than of philosophy, to consider detached empirical phenomena, but to steer clear of the attempt to give them a philosophical grounding. Of late, however, there is a decided movement in the direction of referring the aesthetic to a place in the course of concrete race-experience, thus giving it a definitely social character. This movement, though as yet only tentative, suggests the possibility of giving some sort of coherence under the guidance of an explicit method to a mass of rich but scattered material. Systematization of this sort runs the danger, it is true, of substituting a cheap and easy agreement for honest irreconcilabilities; but to apply such a method to such material must result in some testing and winnowing of both. Moreover, the conclusions of functional psychology lead with coercive logic to a definite philosophic position—call it "dynamic idealism," "pragmatism," "humanism," what you will; it is not yet ripe for a definitive name—and so suggests a philosophic basis for the aesthetic.

#### V. PRELIMINARY DEFINITIONS

Hitherto I have not ventured upon definitions. A satisfactory definition, indeed, is one of the most difficult achievements of thought. It marks properly the final stage of an inquiry, the final deposit of full and exhaustive thinking. At this point, however, some rough, provisional limitation of terms may guard against later error and may aid in the setting-up of my working hypothesis. The two words in my title requiring some sort of explanation are *aesthetic* and *experience*. I shall speak first of experience, since it is a new, albeit a fashionable, word in current philosophical writing, and its use perhaps needs justification. I employ it in no peculiarly technical sense, and yet with a shade more of precision than in its use in popular speech, which talks much of experience in bulk as well as of various experiences. The chief merit of the term to my mind, and the reason why I prefer it to "consciousness," is just the fact that it seems to link our discussion of the aesthetic to concrete, everyday living, to point out its intimate relations to other types of experience. An "experience" must be some-



thing warm and human; it cannot be a mere pale abstraction without organic connection with other aspects of living. Furthermore, "experience is without the subjective connotation rightly or wrongly knit up with the word 'consciousness.'" It implies a total concrete situation, not invidious psychological distinctions of subject and object, words regarding which we sometimes feel a touch of Carlyle's impatience when he described Coleridge as continually droning about "sum-m-mject" and "om-m-mject." Experience, again, ranges the aesthetic on the side of immediate awareness of value, which is one of the aspects of the aesthetic that I wish to emphasize, in distinction from the subsequent critical judgments that are made upon the aesthetic moment. I do not wish to be understood, however, to be drawing any hard and fast line of demarkation between the judgmental and the immediate aspects of conscious life. All consciousness is valuational as I have already stated, and in so far judgmental. What I have said about the distinction between mediate and immediate experience indicates the broad difference between the two types. Thus far, I have been merely making explicit the meanings latent in the term as used in daily life. Beyond that, I wish to warn against the popular tendency to speak of "experience" in the lump as of something passive and finished. My use of the word involves the notion of something continually going on, developing; an activity, not a state nor an entity, as "consciousness" is sometimes taken to do.

*Aesthetic* is a term about which clusters a host of vague and overlapping meanings. In its derivation signifying merely sense-perception, and so used by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it was first applied by Baumgarten in the latter part of the eighteenth century to the philosophy of the beautiful. It is commonly used today as a rather pretentious synonym for "artistic," and is applied to objects and to personal standards of taste and criticism. In philosophy and psychology it appears in such terms as "the aesthetic judgment," "the aesthetic object," "the aesthetic attitude," "aesthetic feeling and emotion." As I am using it, the term characterizes a certain type of concrete conscious experience, having a high sense of immediate and specialized value inhering in a more or less definite object, and possessing a strong and pleasantly colored "feeling-tone"—if this can be justly distinguished from the awareness of value already spoken of. It refers to a special type of consciousness, not to subsequent reflection upon it, and to the aesthetic object only as the core of this consciousness, not as studied independently. It is, therefore, both wider and narrower in its range than is the term "artistic." It applies to experiences far vaguer than those generally recognized as involving artistic creation and appreciation, though

they can be identified by the expert as of the same nature. On the other hand, it does not apply, as I use it, to the study of the artistic object apart from its immediate apprehension in the aesthetic experience, or to any technical or merely literary formulation of the principles of artistic procedure or criticism.) I shall essay to show the source of such formulations, but not to discuss them. It leaves "artistic" to cover the object of art as such and the whole field of practical activities connected with it and critical judgments made upon it, so far as these are not based upon inquiry into the nature of the experience itself. These things may be considered in a general study of aesthetic theory, not in a study of the "aesthetic experience" proper.

With the ground thus cleared by some narrowing of the terms used, let us see what point we have reached in our endeavor to place the aesthetic experience. I have given a sketch of the position taken by functional psychology as I conceive it, indicating what I mean by mediate and by immediate experience, and ranging the aesthetic, provisionally at least, under the immediate type. I have summarized the striking characteristics of the aesthetic experience as familiar to common observation and as agreed upon by widely differing schools. I have noted the chaotic state of the literature of aesthetics, and have tried to put my own use of terms in an unambiguous light. It now remains to discover how far we can bring our own introspective analysis and the ordinary theoretical accounts of the aesthetic experience into agreement with the account of the nature and movement of experience furnished by functional psychology.

#### VI. THE "AESTHETIC MOMENT" IN THE REFLECTIVE PROCESS

For a clue in our inquiry we may turn to the type of mental experience commonly held to lie at the opposite pole from the aesthetic, namely, the operation of reflective thought, to what has been called mediate, reconstructive, as opposed to immediate or constitutive, experience. There are two reasons for this appeal. First, the reflective or judgment-process proper has been more thoroughly analyzed by functional psychology than has any other type of experience; and, second and more important, it functions as the prime agency in the reorganization of experience, and in so doing falls apart into various stages and aspects, as immediate, organized experience cannot do, thus revealing the structural elements of which immediate experience is composed. As I sought to make clear in my first section, all experience, as we know it—that is, all forms of meaning, control, knowledge—has been won through the establishment of higher and higher types of co-ordination; and reflective thought represents only a

complex kind of co-ordinating process, incorporating into itself innumerable minor co-ordinations. Somewhere, then, in the career, the life-history, of the reflective process we may hope to find a stage that will throw light on the aesthetic experience, that we may even call "aesthetic," though it be not commonly recognized as such. If we can identify such a stage in the falling-apart and rebuilding of experience involved in reflection, it will help us to solve the problem of how it has come to detach itself, and to stand out as an independent and unique type of consciousness, as well as the corollary problem of the effect that it itself has on subsequent experience.

It is not necessary to do more than to repeat the statement that reflective thought arises only when immediate or smoothly working activity has been hindered or brought to a standstill through some difficulty in the carrying-out of an end. The range of this stoppage of action is, of course, enormously wide, extending from a momentary hesitation in making a trifling local response to a widespread disturbance that involves the whole organism and produces prolonged cessation of direct outer control. From the slightest to the most profound case, however, the disturbance is registered in consciousness as emotional seizure, although, when the arrest is insignificant, the emotion may be barely at the conscious level. The more important and more widely connected are the organic activities involved, the keener is the awareness of emotional agitation. In fact, the two are but different ways of stating the same experience, as Professor James has shown. Unpleasantly toned emotion is but the conscious aspect of pent-up organic activities, thwarting instead of reinforcing one another. This leads to the diffusion of feeling-states, so often pointed out. Emotion is always a sign of partial inhibition, of some sort of arrest of activities that normally complete themselves in intelligent behavior.

After the first clash of impulses, and the resultant sense of uneasiness and distress, comes the demand for reconstruction and renewed control, leading at once, if the obstacle be not prohibitive, to the attempt to take stock of the disturbed situation, to sort out the warring elements, and to work them over into some kind of agreement. If this process proceed with any degree of success, the attention fastens upon first one aspect of the situation, then another, and reshapes or eliminates them in the effort to meet the new demand. As this critical revision continues, the area of emotional disturbance narrows and its acuteness diminishes, while with the advance toward mastery emerges a feeling of satisfaction that increases as the area of adjustment widens, and culminates at the moment when things are working together again, and the situation is once more ready to complete and transcend itself in action. The dawning of this sense of satisfac-



tion is accordingly a signal that reconstruction is approaching the stage when it becomes again possible to act. Its intensity is commensurate with the degree and extent of the initial disturbance, and with the difficulty or ease of the intermediate stages of reorganization.

Here, then, within the history of the reflective process, we find a stage that has points in common with our preliminary description of the aesthetic. It appears toward the close of intellectual reconstruction, is a sign that the reconstruction is complete, or at least sufficiently advanced for service as a guide to outward action, and is of a pleasant emotional tone. Without this testimony on the part of consciousness, it is difficult to see what would be the determining point for the cessation of reflection. It is certainly always a "feeling-tone" of some sort that marks off one type of experience from another, that gives each its individuality and value. This "aesthetic moment" at the close of every specific operation of reflective thought characterizes the moment when, as Professor Royce puts it, "we pause satisfied." This "pause of satisfaction"<sup>2</sup> means that for the moment we exhaust the situation, feel its full significance; it tells us also that our means and our ends, hitherto at odds, have become once more consolidated; that the breach in experience is healed; and that conduct may go on, modified and enriched through the intervention of thought.

It is aside from my purpose to dwell upon the various stages and forms in the thought-process. To trace them is the business of the student of logic and of the psychology of reflective thinking. But it is important to repeat that the pause of satisfaction does not arise altogether suddenly. Throughout the course of reconstruction minor reconciliations are continually effected, as the inventory and manipulation of the content of consciousness proceed; and these herald the final moment of co-operation and restoration among all the forces involved. It is essential to recognize that the reconstruction throughout is organic, not mechanical; that the elements are in vital relation to one another and to the whole. Change in one involves change in all and in the determination of the result or end. But so long as the process is incomplete, the minor satisfactions are local and more or less modified by the still existing restriction and confusion; the general satisfaction is vague and uncertain. There are alternations or waves of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. It is not unfair to say that the process is rhythmical, made up at first of a number of minor and conflicting rhythms, which become gradually incorporated into a larger major rhythm. The

<sup>1</sup> *World and Individual*, Vol. I, p. 330.

<sup>2</sup> Dewey, *Studies in Logical Theory*, XI, "Some Logical Aspects of Purpose" (A. W. Moore), pp. 361-63.

experimental studies of rhythm point out the way in which a larger rhythm arises out of simpler rhythms, taking them up into itself and binding them together into a unitary whole, to the rich individuality of which the components make subsidiary but distinctive contribution. The first appearance of this larger rhythm foreshadows the ultimate pause of satisfaction. Developing itself, it guides and shapes the varying activities within its grasp, so that these irregular movements take on more and more the character of alternations of expectancy and fulfilment, becoming gradually harmonized in the fully satisfactory experience. Robert MacDougall, in his exhaustive study of the rhythmic experience, shows that a rhythm thus develops instead of merely maintaining itself. It is not a bare reiteration, but a growth, in which each phase anticipates the next and is modified by those preceding. "Conclusive evidence of the integration of simple rhythm forms in higher structures is presented by the process of increasing definition which every rhythmical sequence manifests between its inception and its close." There is "progressive co-ordination."<sup>1</sup> R. H. Stetson,<sup>2</sup> in a study of more elaborate rhythm forms, says that

the essential character of musical rhythm, as contrasted with the rhythm both of simple sounds and of verse, is just this co-ordination of a number of rhythms which move side by side. . . . It is evident in cases of expressional variations of tempo that a single broad rhythm is dominating and serving as a cue for the other more elaborate rhythmic processes, instead of being regulated by them.

In the world of objective art-forms the modern symphony most adequately illustrates this process of progressive organization of complex material. It carries us forward on waves of musical tension and resolution that are kept from being painful only by our sense that each contributes to the unfolding of a definite whole, which dominates every phase of development, however novel it may seem in itself. Each intermediary resolution embraces what has gone before and prophesies the final and complete fulfilment, through its own partial inadequacy, so that this fulfilment comes, not as surprise, but rather as culmination and reconciliation. Although we cannot find objective parallels for every aesthetic process, as we can do in the case of modern music, it seems to me that the phenomena of rhythm and the facts of musical construction in general furnish the most fruitful modes of conceiving all forms of aesthetic experience. Functional psychology recognizes that the various types of experience represent complex processes, and that each

<sup>1</sup> "The Structure of Simple Rhythm Forms," *Psychological Review*, Monograph Supplements, Vol. IV (Whole No. 17), p. 389.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 465, 466.

type has its distinctive "pattern." The pattern of integrated rhythm-forms seems most applicable to the aesthetic experience.

To say that the aesthetic assumes the "rhythmic pattern" is only to assert that it represents the simultaneous rather than the serial type of organization; that it carries abreast a number of activities, becoming progressively integrated and resulting in an equilibrium of tensions. The "pause of satisfaction," accordingly, is but the formulation in terms of emotion, of value, of what I have already called, in terms of structure or content, "the aesthetic image." This co-ordination and interaction of coexisting activities accounts both for its emotional character and for the fact that it is a "pause," a unique experience, recognized as such and not discharging at once into outward action. It is a reservoir of attained values, a "saturation" of all its different constituents. It is too rich in manifold possibilities of further movement to overflow at once into any one channel. It may be compared to the feeling one has in looking from a mountain-top over a wide prospect, with hill and valley, lakes, streams, roads, and paths spread out before one. There are so many ways to descend that one luxuriates in the fulness of opportunity. And it is this very exhilaration, this broadening and heightening of one's sense of capacity, that incites to the perilous scramble down the rocks rather than to retracing one's steps by the well-blazed trail. In other words, the pause of satisfaction is not altogether without forward reference, not wholly inclosed. If it were, it would be difficult to find its point of attachment to the rest of the experiential series. But it is only indirectly, as the tide of satisfaction surges back over the organism and acts itself as a new stimulus, that it reinforces some one or other of the co-operating habits or groups of habits to the point where it breaks free from the temporary aesthetic co-ordination, and proceeds to function independently, thus bringing about a resumption of ordinary action. The significance of the aesthetic experience as stimulus is often overlooked in the effort to explain what it is in itself. But it cannot be ignored in any attempt to relate the aesthetic to the problems of the growth and control of experience.

It must, furthermore, be kept in mind that the distinction between the serial and the simultaneous types of organization is not rigid. Every process involving a succession of stages is of necessity serial; on the other hand, all forms of reconstruction involve the interplay and co-ordination of activities. The difference between the two types—the practical, in the large sense of the solution of problems, whether purely intellectual, ethical, economic, or material—and the aesthetic is rather a matter of different relations of means and ends. In the one case they are brought together



only with difficulty, by means of search, selection, and rejection. Much is eliminated after serving its immediate purpose as means; there is a sense of irksomeness and difficulty up to the last step in the process, and the final solution is likely to be marked more by a sense of relief at its termination than by any positive satisfaction. The image is what we have described as a working image, and serves promptly as a cue to action. Such a process is obviously serial, and the aesthetic moment at its conclusion is at its minimum, though necessarily present, and is commonly unrecognized as such. In the other case means and end develop together, and the end attains full value and significance through its absorption and incorporation of a rich and varied supply of means. From the beginning there is an anticipatory survey of available resources that must be carried forward together in delicate balance. There is movement here, too, modification and revision; but the values won at different stages are embodied in the result, are become necessary constituents and ingredients of the whole, maintaining themselves in active equilibrium. The attainment of this consolidation and harmonization is attended by a widely diffused feeling of satisfaction. The image at the end of the process is what has been called the "aesthetic image," and the general movement has been of the simultaneous order. Whether such an experience is definitely characterized as aesthetic depends on the range of activities involved, the depth and width of the "pause of satisfaction." If it suffuses consciousness and absorbs attention, it has every right to be called aesthetic in the accepted sense of the term, and to be looked upon as a distinctive experience, set off from the processes leading to it.

From this survey of the process of reflective thought, we find, then, that a phase which may be called aesthetic in character arises as the culminating stage of such an operation, and is a mark of successful reconstruction. In other words, it shows that the habits or activities whose interference led to the necessity of readjustment have been so reorganized that they now support instead of checking one another. Moreover, the intensity and duration of this phase are seen to depend upon the number of co-operating activities involved and the intimacy of their co-operation.

This view has few claims to originality, and entirely fails to answer certain questions raised earlier in the discussion. But it is not inconsistent with many of the recent accounts of the aesthetic experience. It may be of value at this point to compare it with some of the better-known modern formulations of the aesthetic. (Grant Allen, following Spencer, defines the aesthetically beautiful as "that which affords the Maximum of Stimulation with the Minimum of Fatigue or Waste, in processes not directly

connected with vital function."<sup>1</sup> Passing by the limitation in the last phrase, which indicates a failure to discriminate between the physiological and the psychological, we may most naturally interpret the definition as equivalent to my statement in terms of a large number of simultaneously co-operating activities. It says nothing, however, regarding the conditions under which such stimulation arises. Guyau declares that the aesthetic is a "simple matter of degree," and that aesthetic enjoyment is found wherever we have in consciousness a pleasure with the maximum of extension compatible with the maximum of intention.<sup>2</sup> This is quite in the quantitative manner of Grant Allen, although Guyau substitutes pleasure for stimulation, and thus emphasizes the emotional rather than the activity side of the experience. ("Aesthetic emotion," he goes on to say, "seems thus to consist essentially in an enlargement, a sort of resonance of sensation throughout our whole being, especially through our intelligence and our will. It is an accord, a harmony, among our sensations, our thoughts and our sentiments."<sup>3</sup> These statements are on the descriptive and not on the explanatory level, but they reiterate in a striking fashion the characteristics that we have pointed out in the "pause of satisfaction." Guyau lays special stress on the fact that the aesthetic experience is a unification of many factors, a "harmony" of our natures.

Other writers dwell on the emotional heightening in the aesthetic experience. Theodore Lipps calls it the *psychische Gesamterregung, die allgemein-"Stimmung" der Affekt*;<sup>4</sup> and Hirn points out that a heightened sense of vitality, a marked degree of emotional excitation, is one of the primary characteristics of the aesthetic consciousness.<sup>5</sup> (Professor Kate Gordon in a recent thesis defines beauty as "that which unexpectedly offers a secondary or auxiliary stimulus to any act;") and says further:

I should say that the facility of the adjustment would be the criterion of an aesthetic situation; if the old habit were soon found—i. e., struck into by a short-cut and followed down without resistance—the experience would be aesthetic; but if there were a long delay, and the two opposing lines of excitation were obliged to worry out a new path, then the experience would be merely practical. The aesthetic consciousness in the former case would depend on the number and the depth of such by-paths.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Les problèmes de l'esthétique contemporaine*, pp. 72, 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> "Von der Form der ästhetischen Apperception," *Philosophische Abhandlungen* (Halle, 1902), p. 387.

<sup>5</sup> *The Origins of Art*, pp. 70, 71, 82-85.

<sup>6</sup> *The Psychology of Meaning*, p. 10.



Although Dr. Gordon's statement is couched in terms of physiology rather than of psychology, her distinction between the aesthetic and the practical—the degree of ease in making the adjustment—would seem to correspond to my distinction between the serial and simultaneous types of operation; and she also makes the intensity of the experience depend on the number and pattern of its constituents. Her analysis is in the interest of a general study of meaning or value, and her characterization of beauty as that which unexpectedly offers a secondary stimulus evidently has reference to the indirect, resurgent effect of the aesthetic experience, acting as stimulus to further conduct of a different type. Dr. Ethel Puffer, whose study of the *Psychology of Beauty* has appeared since this essay was first written, gives an account of the aesthetic that in many ways parallels mine, although with considerable diversity of purpose and emphasis. She defines the aesthetic feeling as a combination of favorable stimulation and repose:

The only aesthetic repose is that in which stimulation resulting in impulse to movement or action is checked or compensated for by its antagonistic impulse; inhibition of action, or action returning upon itself, combined with heightening of tone. But this is *tension, equilibrium, or balance of forces*, which is thus seen to be a *general condition of all aesthetic experience*.<sup>1</sup>

Santayana says in his last volume, *Reason in Art*:

An aesthetic sanction sweetens all successful living . . . . An aesthetic glow may pervade experience, but that circumstance is seldom remarked; it figures only as an influence working subterraneously on thoughts and judgments which in themselves take a cognitive or practical direction. Only when the aesthetic ingredient becomes predominant do we exclaim, "How beautiful!"<sup>2</sup>

In these statements I find support for my contention that the aesthetic means successful functioning, and marks the completion of every activity, though in ordinary non-aesthetic experience it is not recognized as such, and reveals itself only to deliberate analysis.

My account of the aesthetic experience is then, for the present at least, that it always involves a cluster of activities, functioning together with mutual reinforcement, an "equilibrium of tensions."<sup>3</sup> This is, however, hardly more than a descriptive statement. We have still to inquire more fully how the independent experience arises, maintains itself, and disappears. Moreover, the placing of the aesthetic moment at the end of the reflective process seems to make it the outcome of anterior conflict and inhibitions. In the most conspicuous instances of our individual aesthetic experiences this precedent disturbance is apparently strikingly absent. How are we to

<sup>1</sup> P. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 188, 193, 194.

reconcile the two views? Following the lead of current thinking on other types of experience, we may throw light on these questions, and others that we have asked, by seeking to place the aesthetic in the life-history of the race and with regard to certain general considerations of social psychology.

## PART II

### THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

#### I. TYPICAL AESTHETIC PERIODS IN THE HISTORY OF THE RACE

In the historic series, so far as it has been reconstructed for us with any degree of fulness, there are two periods of pre-eminent interest for the student of the aesthetic experience. These are the period of the fifth and fourth centuries B. C. in Greece, and the Renaissance period of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries in Europe, particularly in Italy. Lesser periods are those of the florescence of early Christian art, of French classicism, and of the Romantic movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Special movements worthy of note are the rise and development of the modern novel and of modern music. An art that we are just beginning to know, and that throws valuable light on the whole aesthetic problem through its very detachment from our standards and associations, is the art of the Japanese.

The flowering time of Greece and the Renaissance are periods often compared. They possess, indeed, striking points of likeness, different as were their temper and their artistic products. Both are late chapters in the long, obscure story of man's social career and relatively late in the specific phases of development to which they belong. Both are preceded by ages of limitation, of material and intellectual poverty, and, more immediately, by times of disorder and confusion. The parallel between Europe and Greece is thus drawn in a recent history of modern Europe:

The history of modern Europe presents, in fact, as much unity as that of Greece in early times. Composed of a cluster of independent states, of which one, now Athens, now Sparta, now Thebes, aspired to the hegemony, her only rallying cry was against the barbarians, as that of Christendom was against the infidels, whilst her chief bond of union was also a religious one, manifested in the Amphictyonic Council and the games at Olympia and elsewhere, which bear some analogy to the General Councils and the festivals of the Roman Church.<sup>1</sup>

Turning to the history of Greece, we find that its details are obscure before the age of the Tyrants in the late seventh and the sixth centuries. The shiftings of population, first in the so-called Dorian migrations and later in the colonization movement, is the aspect that stands out most conspicuously. But the Homeric poems and other early literatures bring before us with remarkable fulness the social and political standards and ideals of the

<sup>1</sup> Dyer and Hassall, *History of Modern Europe*, p. 3.

Greeks of the pre-migration and migration periods. Moreover, the researches of archaeology and of comparative anthropology are constantly pushing back the boundary lines of the historic, and affording us glimpses down long vistas of the prehistoric past. Such glimpses of Greece show us small, hardy village-communities, involved more or less continually in local raids and quarrels, and wringing a scanty livelihood from the soil or from the hazards of a half-piratical sea-faring life. Their social life was still a matter of group-maintenance, controlled by custom, specific and traditional; their religion was still a bundle of savage primitive survivals, pointing to times of yet ruder organization.<sup>1</sup> But the diversities of Greek topography, both seaboard and inland, had brought about diversity of occupations; and these varied occupations were sufficiently precarious to develop a vigor and keen-wittedness able and eager to cope with larger problems. Long before the dawn of authentic history the Greeks had lifted themselves above the level of struggle for mere subsistence; but the margin won was too shifting to be secure without skilful manipulation of man and of nature. Hence a constant sharpening of intelligence, a disposition to rely on men rather than on things, a widening of the range of problems grappled with and of control secured. This widening of range is shown by the accounts of the wars and leagues of early post-Homeric days; by the expansion of commerce and the extensive planting of colonies in both the eastern and the western Mediterranean; by the development of the "village-community" into the "city-state," and the accompanying political struggles and reforms. Such a bewildering accumulation of new occupations and interests, such a reaching-out toward varied ends as yet imperfectly understood and controlled, led inevitably to widespread conflict of issues and to resultant confusion. Thus in Athens the growth of trade brought about collisions between the newly rich merchant class and the old landholders; intensified the economic distress of the peasants, and drove them to make common cause with the commercial and industrial classes.<sup>2</sup> Clever political leaders, seizing some advantage of birth or wealth, played off one class against another, and established tyrannies that gave temporary stability. But the forces working throughout the state were too powerful to remain long in any sort of externally imposed and premature union. The tyrants in many cases, it is true, contributed to the accumulation of both material and intellectual resources; they stored up means and supplies. But that was only constructing a new center of conflict around which the other forces swirled and eddied. A general stirring and heightening of emotional and intellec-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Lang, *Myth Ritual and Religion*, Vol. I, chap. 9; Vol. II, chap. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. W. Cunningham, *Western Civilization in Its Economic Aspects*, Vol. I, pp. 99-102.



tual life accompanied the rapid changes in economic, social, and political affairs. The body-politic was small enough for all citizens to meet for discussion in the market-place; everyone shouldered some civic responsibility; sailors and merchants told of adventurous voyages to every coast of the Mediterranean, and of the "manners, climates, councils, governments" there encountered; returned colonists from Ionia or Magna Graecia boasted, no doubt, of the superior opportunities of their new homes, and thus led the stay-at-homes to marshal their own advantages. It was a world whose dominant mental attitude is reflected in Herodotus—curious, restless, shrewd, yet credulous. The air was charged with new and varied interests and expectations, but men were still dazzled and a little amazed by the many prospects opening before them. They felt a sense of youthful exhilaration rather than of achievement or secure possession, of power rather than of control. They had not yet actually put themselves to the test.

In certain important fields, however, they had already won solid results. The problem of government, involving the transformation of the village-community, dependent on common food-supply, blood-kinship, and local worship, into the city-state, had been practically worked out. Democratic government had arisen to hold the fluctuating elements within the city-state in some sort of working equilibrium; the scattered religious cults, though not superseded, had been embraced within the general worship of the pan-Hellenic Olympian deities, and were being purged of their worst crudities; race-consciousness had been deepened by common festivals and by intercourse with the "barbarians." What was needed was the welding together, the generalization and synthesizing, of all these elements in Greek life.

This was effected through the supreme test of the Persian wars. The whole of Greek life and civilization was at stake. It was a tremendous emotional crisis, in which the exultation of victory followed hard upon the realization of peril. Such a transition from the darkest apprehension to the fulness of success is hardly to be found elsewhere in history save at the time of the Spanish Armada. That it did not plunge the Greeks, and particularly the Athenians, into mere vainglorious boasting is chiefly due to the conditions under which they had already made their gains in civilization. Shut, although not imprisoned, within their little states; unused to great wealth or bitter poverty; made fertile in expedient, yet steadfast in the face of danger through the vicissitudes of a seafaring life; trained to self-reliance and watchfulness through their form of government as well as through their occupations, they had reached a degree of poise that enabled them to meet with surprising equanimity both the suspense and the triumph of the Persian wars. Much has been written to account for the origin of the

Greek conception of law as moderation—the principle of nothing in excess. The growth of the notion may be traced in many fields, but in general it is enough to indicate that it is the formulation of what the Greeks met at every turn in their practical active experience. It was this same poise, these same habits of moderation in thought and action, that shielded them from the effects of contact with Asiatic despotism and luxury. Though these things may have kindled imagination and added to wealth, they were so indissolubly associated with the “barbarians,” so alien to the traditions and ideals of Hellas, that they were looked upon with contempt. It was not by store of things, nor by power based on the treating of men as things, that the Greeks had conquered. It was the contrast in all respects between the Greeks and the Persians—in numbers, in wealth, in political organization, in physical prowess, in intelligence—that gave such exquisite point to Athenian pride, that led the Athenians to discriminate the qualities in Greek civilization at the same time that it heightened their sense of its value.

And this glow of pride, this sense of great achievement based, not on material strength, but on human character, which filled the soul of every free-born citizen of Athens, was felt most intensely by the great artists of the time, and found most complete embodiment in the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, in the sculptures of the Parthenon. These, in their turn, defined and reinforced the feeling in the minds of the beholders. Such works of art both heighten and relieve emotion—heighten by focusing on a particular object, and relieve by giving order and coherence to what otherwise remains vague and diffused. Greek art is fundamentally “Art the Reliever.”<sup>1</sup> Nowhere do we feel so much the force of Aristotle’s aesthetic principle of “katharsis.” It clarifies and steadies emotion by centering it upon objects that possess pre-eminently the rhythmic poise and balance of the Greek mind. Such an art uplifts rather than excites. It ennobles and assuages.

In the highest development of Greek art, then, of Greek aesthetic experience—to put it into terms of the situation in which the work of art has its birth and its effect—we find the coalescence, or at least the intimate co-operation, of a large number of activities and interests that had been developed through a long period of precedent effort, had been worked out as separate ends and used as means in various pursuits. These interests, dispositions, customs, attitudes, call them what you will, instead of existing in isolation, or in partial and often antagonistic combination, have become mutually supporting, interwoven, and so changed in the process that they are lost sight of as independent elements and persist only as contrib-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Hirn, op. cit.*, pp. 70, 71.

tory forces, giving to the whole its unique power of stimulation and tranquilization. To say this is to say that they are in emotional solution, and yet brought together around that concrete core that we call the imaged or actualized aesthetic object.

European life before and during the Renaissance goes through much the same stages that Athenian life went through, though on a larger scale and with a far greater array of jostling forces. It is peculiarly difficult to summarize a period in one sense so transitional, in another so full and so unique in character. One is in danger of being either dogmatic or vague, and is likely to end by being both.

The Middle Ages have been redeemed from the sweeping charges of sterility and limitation that used to be brought against them. Our deepened sense of the continuity of experience has taught us that we cannot ban any age at wholesale. Whatever its total of accomplishment, it has within it all the essential manifestations of human experience and intelligence. But, looked at in the large, the downfall of the Roman Empire at the hands of a rude but vigorous people at a far lower level of culture brought about a time of turbulence and confusion in which the Roman ideas of system, law, and authority, surviving the wreckage of the actual machinery of government, contended with the Germanic idea of local group-independence and blood-loyalty. Kuno Franke says of the era of migration:

The first appearance of Germanic tribes in the foreground of European history, the influx of the northern barbarians into the decaying civilization of the Roman Empire, is marked by a dissolution of all social bonds. Severed from their native soil, thrust into a world in which their ancestral faith, customs, institutions have no authority, the Teutons of the era of the migrations experience for the first time on a grand scale the conflict between universal law and individual passion.<sup>1</sup>

But, as he points out, this conflict was not altogether destructive. Out of it emerged the two great institutions of the Middle Ages—feudalism, culminating in the mediaeval empire, and the mediaeval church. These two furnished an all-embracing, if highly formal, scheme of organization, and held in check the centrifugal forces of the times. But necessary as we see them to have been as initial movements in the ultimate efficient co-operation of these forces they imposed an artificial and schematic unity that failed to allow for many aspects of life. As movement from place to place was for the bulk of the people impossible under feudalism, so was intellectual activity circumscribed by the system which fostered it. Possible only in detachment from the stress of practical life, it flourished in the shelter of

<sup>1</sup> *Social Forces in German Literature*, p. 3.



the church; and there, cut off from vital human problems, tended to become rigid and formalized, spending itself on the effort to rationalize dogmas that had been inherited, often in perverted form, from another civilization. If it sought to deal at first hand with life, it came into collision with the system that supported it. It was only the exceptional man that threw off even partially the yoke of fixed universals, rigid preconceptions that governed in different forms the life of scholarship, of war, and of trade. Yet in all these departments of life tools were forging and sharpening, force was disciplining and growing eager to try its metal. Actual life was bursting the bonds of formula. And with the growth of the quarrel between the papacy and the empire, tending to the discrediting of both artificial systems; with the vitalizing influence of the Crusades in their weakening of feudalism and their tremendous impetus both to commerce and to learning; with the organization of the industrial class, and the emergence of the modern languages and the modern national governments, came a loosening of bonds, an upsetting of old ideas, an awakening to new interests and to new and individual standards unparalleled in the history of the race. All these elements, seething together in a sort of ferment, must have produced in the minds of men a wonderful sense of liberation, coupled with bewilderment and uncertainty regarding the use of this newly won freedom. Such a state of mind was of necessity surcharged with emotion. Either without definite outlet, or discharging itself in hasty, ill-considered, and abortive conduct, this emotional consciousness was often painful in character, and created new complications and new emotional crises.

Even to read over the general accounts of the Renaissance, such as those of Symonds and Burckhardt, or the more sober pages of the Cambridge Modern History volume on the period, is to be impressed by the intricacy and confusion, but also by the richness, of its interests—its multitudinous stimulations to new and daring modes of feeling, thought, and conduct. It was a whirling world, many aspects of which were still wavering and fantastic, and others in paradoxical contrast. (It requires a stretch of the modern imagination to picture the highly keyed and highly colored life in an Italian city of the Renaissance. On its dynastic side, it is a life of intrigue and counter-intrigue, of unexpected and horrible forms of violence. Symonds paints us a lurid portrait of the successful despot, “a gladiator of tried capacity and iron nerve, superior to religious and moral scruples, dead to natural affection, perfected in perfidy, scientific in the use of cruelty and terror, employing first-rate faculties of brain and bodily powers in the service of transcendent egotism.”<sup>1</sup> It is a life punctuated by fierce sieges,

<sup>1</sup> *Age of the Despots* (ed. 1888), p. 118.



by famines, plagues, wholesale or secret murders. But it is also a life of great industrial and commercial activity, of successful war and diplomacy, of civic enrichment and adornment. Campaigns, splendid festivals, high enthusiasms over newly discovered treasures of classic art and literature, over "the things of the mind" now first deemed worthy for their own sake, exquisite skill in fashioning objects of daily use and enjoyment—all these things are an integral part of existence in cities like Florence and Venice in the climax of their career. Life within them was buoyant and animated, full and many-colored, with a touch of youthful recklessness in its pulsating vigor, and at times a strain of wistfulness, as of too much to experience and to enjoy.

And at the time of the Renaissance, as in Greece during her brief days of greatness, the kaleidoscopic content of experience was caught and given coherence and emphasis through a supreme art, in which heterogeneous and incongruous elements were blended and harmonized into an emotional unity that is poignant in its intensity. What influence this art had upon the men who were its contemporaries we can judge only imperfectly from its effect upon ourselves. But that it revealed them to themselves in some fashion we cannot doubt, intensifying their consciousness of the life they were leading, making them feel, as nothing except art can do directly, the life-communicating and life-enhancing power of the events and objects of their experience. Browning gets at this effect of art in his well-known lines:

We're made so that we love  
 First when we see them painted, things we have passed  
 Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see.

Renaissance art is more stimulating and less reposeful than Greek art. It is Art the Enhancer rather than Art the Reliever. But it too relieves, in so far as it eliminates disturbing and distracting elements and concentrates attention.

We find, accordingly, in both Greece and Italy, at the dawn of their periods of greatest artistic productiveness, a throng of activities and interests more or less at variance, but not actually excluding one another, and operating on a basis of general economic, social and political organization. The margin thus gained has led to a multiplication of minor conflicts and interferences, but the problems are no longer those of bare maintenance, of struggle to avoid elimination through the harshness of physical nature or at the hands of domestic factions or of external foes. The problems are rather those resulting from an embarrassment of riches, from more

stimulations to action, more new fields to open up than can be clearly grasped or adequately managed. Hence the pressing necessity of some unifying and interpretative statement, and the appearance of this statement in the aesthetic consciousness and in the work of art.

Of the other periods that I have instanced space forbids me to say more than a few words. If studied with care, they all reveal the fact that they involve to a greater or less degree an immediate emotional consciousness of the interrelation of a variety of activities.

The rise of early Christian art follows the impact and interaction of two views of life—the Graeco-Roman, and the Hebraic with its strong oriental coloring. Christian art is an imperfect attempt to harmonize these two views, both so rich in values and in many respects so unlike. Whether the chief stimulus to this art came through Rome, as has been the classic view, or directly through the Hellenized Orient, as is maintained today, does not alter our recognition of the complex nature of the constituent elements.<sup>1</sup>

The French classicism of the seventeenth century stands for the inclosing of the fantastic aspirations of the Middle Ages and the youthful exuberance of the Renaissance within the strait-jacket of a spurious classicism and a political despotism. It is a movement within narrow limits and guided by artificial formulas, but it possessed an emotional significance for its participants that it does not possess for us, and we are likely to overlook the range of its contributory influences.<sup>2</sup>

The romantic movement, on the other hand, from whichever of its many sides we approach it, shows in all its products traces of the multiple activities that went to its compounding. Within it play many of the forces that we call distinctively modern. The sharp setting-over of the individual against society, and the glorification of his rights, passions, and aspirations; the emergence of a deep emotional and even sentimental enthusiasm for external nature as sharing and reflecting the moods of "natural man;" the dreams of a regenerated social order appear alike in the profound political, social, and moral upheavals and readjustments of the times and in the great philosophical systems and great literary masterpieces which it produced. The series of historic events and the series of artistic and intellectual constructions are not merely parallel; it is their vital correlation that we see in such men as Goethe and Kant, Wordsworth and Shelley, with their absorption in man's largest social welfare as well as in his artistic, intellectual, and moral freedom. The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Josef Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Arvède Barine, *La Grande Mademoiselle*.

period of the Romantic movement is the most intense of the periods we have surveyed. Its interests and activities are perhaps not so wide in range as those of the Renaissance, but they cut deeper, and so admit of less complete resolution and absorption in the aesthetic consciousness. The Romantic work of art heightens emotion and the sense of active life to a high degree. It stimulates and liberates; it never fully harmonizes and tranquilizes. It is partly on this account that it takes the forms of literature and music rather than of painting or sculpture. It is dynamic, full of the stress and strain, the alternations of suspense and relief, that characterize human passion and action. And, because of its vehemence, it falls just short of the most perfect art, since it overstimulates, and thus produces fatigue and a restless sense of lurking discord and division.

As special manifestations of the aesthetic consciousness in modern times we cannot afford to overlook entirely the development of the modern novel and of modern music. The novel shows the modern individual, restless, many-sided, inquiring, interested in himself and in his own experiences, whether outer or inner; eager to frame his own generalizations, not to accept them from any sort of authority. A lively curiosity regarding the details of personal life and experience animates books like Pepys' *Diary* and Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, as well as the *Taller* and the *Spectator* and the novels of Richardson, Fielding, and Jane Austen. The Romantic movement proper changed the current of fiction for Scott, but we still have the wide range, the loose organization, the irregular shift and play of incident and character, that demand the novel rather than the drama as their vehicle. With later nineteenth-century fiction broader social and humanitarian interests enter in on the one side, and a more acute and dynamic psychology on the other; but they both serve as means of throwing into relief the essentials of individual human character and conduct in all their manifold variations.

Of modern music limitations of knowledge even more than of space forbid my speaking. But its late appearance shows in what a complex situation it takes its rise. Its rich variety, its depth and scope of emotional appeal, its intricacies of harmony and rhythm, all fit it to be, as it is often called, the characteristic art of modern life. At all events it is today the most vigorous of the arts. And the way in which modern music is constantly pressing into its service tonal combinations that were not so long ago felt to be distinctly unmusical is the most conspicuous example before us of the way in which a non-aesthetic element may be worked over and ultimately become contributory to a new and richer type of aesthetic experience. As the symphonies of Beethoven and Schumann interpreted



with majestic sweep and breadth the yearnings of a divided Germany reaching out toward national life, so the splendid and turbulent music-dramas of Wagner, and even the audacious "tone-poems" of Richard Strauss, are helping us to interpret the bewildering complexities of the life we are trying to live.

In all the periods mentioned, different as they were in content and sketchily as I have characterized them, there is the same essential situation—a wide basis of social organization and achievement, and an array of less stable interests and activities, overlapping and colliding to a considerable extent, but sufficiently in hand to admit of further correlation and unification. The immediate realization of this possible unification is represented objectively by the work of art, psychologically by the emotional creative experience of the artist which, embodied in his work, completes and synthesizes the like emotional experience in the minds of his public. In the world of objective social values as in the world of mental construction—though each is an abstraction without the other—the aesthetic marks the culminating moment in a process of elaborate reorganization.

To what, we must furthermore ask of history, led the great periods of artistic production that we have been canvassing? Since experience is never static, what modifications in national life were brought about by such times of artistic triumph? At first sight, history returns a disheartening reply. The Peloponnesian wars and the disintegration of Greek life followed close upon its time of greatest artistic vigor. In Italy the splendors of Renaissance art died quickly away before the exploitation of the country by France and Spain, and the rigors of the Counter-Reformation. It is easy to be misled by this surface view. The aesthetic experience in the race or the individual does not lead necessarily to specified types of conduct. Furthermore, the work of art is only one influence in any period. (To say that a period is one of high aesthetic feeling and artistic production is to say that it cannot last. It represents the summing-up and binding-together of many forces; it is a time of survey and fulfilment. And the awareness of such fulfilment itself brings the experience to an end. The heightened feeling-tone, the sense of enlarged vitality, flow back over the experience as a whole, and affect in different degrees the elements entering into it; thus their delicate equilibrium is overthrown. Just what aspects of the whole are forced anew into prominence, and thus into interference with others, depends entirely upon the make-up of the situation and upon outside forces pressing in. The aesthetic experience has served its purpose if it has placed the state or the individual in a condition to face new problems with increased vigor. It supplies a new level of approach; it



lifts clear of old entanglements. Without these times of replenishment of vigor, of emotional apprehension of the significance of its life, we cannot tell in what futile struggles and disorders the energy of a people might be squandered. We all know the exhausting and depressing effects of unremitting effort. It is in moments of apparent lull, but of real invigoration, that nations and individuals win new strength and new outlook.

## II. AESTHETIC ORIGINS IN THE RACE

The present section aims to develop a position implied in the preceding section. If the aesthetic experience, recognized as such, is most unequivocal in social situations of a relatively high degree of complexity and organization, we should expect to find it revealing itself less and less clearly as we go back along the line of social development, until it reaches the stage where it is only implicit in the most rudimentary social and occupational activities. Beginning at the other end of the social series, I shall try to show that the aesthetic emerges and develops together with certain favorable types of social organization. In using the term "origin," I do not wish to be understood as pointing out absolute beginnings for the aesthetic. Just as the "aesthetic moment" is an essential, though often overlooked, phase of every thinking process in the individual, so it is present in embryo in every stage of social evolution. The problem is rather: Given the most obscure and least differentiated form of the aesthetic, what conditions control its emergence into an unmistakable and unambiguous type of experience? That is the only formulation of any problem of origin that can hope to escape shipwreck in hopeless paradox.

A useful distinction to keep in mind at this point is the distinction made by Baldwin between the stages of evolution in the biologic or animal series, culminating in the appearance of mind, and the stages of evolution in the social or cultural series that the human race has gone through since the appearance of mind.<sup>1</sup> In showing the intimate relations of the two, he points out that biologic evolution in the case of man represents a practically completed series, and is correspondingly stable, serving as a basis for the operations of mind in the social series, and modified or suppressed by it only within pretty definite limits. My object in calling attention to the distinction is to remind us that, although the aesthetic experience is psychological, and its origins are accordingly to be traced in the social series, yet it presupposes and makes use of the infinitely longer biologic series. Our physical organism in its essential aspects is an inheritance from remote prehuman ancestors and represents the accumulations and adjustments of so vast a history that

<sup>1</sup> *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, pp. 189-95.

even modern evolutionary biology can tell us of its stages in the most schematic and imperfect way. Our whole bodily mechanism, accordingly, has the cohesion and persistence that come from long and satisfactory adaptations. It is a bundle of peculiarly settled and ingrained physiological habits, co-ordinated ways of doing things that may normally be counted on to look out for themselves. The extent of their mutual reinforcement and interdependence is shown by the fact that they all manifest periodicity or rhythm, the only type of action in which stimulus and response are reciprocal. It is on the basis and with the help of these co-ordinated physiological rhythms—of breathing, circulation, or the more minute anabolic and katabolic processes in cell-substance—that all our distinctively mental activities are built. No matter how elaborate or how “lofty” the pursuit in which we are engaged, it involves throughout accommodations of the organism.) If it make too heavy a demand upon organic processes, or thwart their normal functioning, strain and exhaustion follow. In the rare cases in which higher and lower activities are in full accord, in which mental processes or the bodily processes mediating them fall in with and supplement the organic rhythms, we have a wonderful sense of ease, expansion of capacity. And let any of the organic processes become seriously disturbed, and all our conscious operations are thrown out of gear. The bitter compulsions of hunger, lassitude, disease, and death force us to a realization of the importance of the organic series. Such a statement in terms of series suggests a false parallelism, and in general lays stress on an interaction that is the most obvious commonplace of daily life. But in discussing a specific type of conscious experience we are, I think, in danger of ignoring the participation of directly life-serving organic processes.

Keeping in mind, then, the biologic basis and implication of all conscious experience, let us turn to the social series. What man was under really primitive conditions we have no direct means of knowing, and all our reconstructions of him must be unverifiable hypotheses, based on insufficient data. So-called “primitive society,” conceived largely on analogies drawn from modern savages, is very far from being truly primitive. But, by piecing together the indirect evidence from biology and geology and the meager traces of his pursuits; we can form some dim picture of the life of early man.

The “kitchen-middens” along various sea-coasts and river-courses, the rubbish in certain caves, point to a time when he subsisted on shell-fish and roots, not daring to venture back into the forests for fear of wild beasts. Such an existence antedates the invention of the rudest rough-stone weapon, the simplest snare. Consciousness under such conditions must have

been chiefly auxiliary to food-getting; and since the collection of mussels, snails, berries, seeds, and roots are processes involving slight need of ingenuity or skill, the type of consciousness sufficient for these employments must have been vague, diffused, specialized only to the extent of a few simple habits on a direct instinctive basis. It undoubtedly showed variations, but on the whole it displayed a minimum of focalization, a maximum of "sleepy" or dispersed attention. People restricted to this sort of food-supply and approximating this mental apathy have been encountered in barren parts of Australia.<sup>1</sup> James describes this "scattered condition of mind" as common to us all at times, and as probably usual with animals. It is experienced in partial anaesthesia, in somnolence, in various hypnotic states.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore not inconceivable that it was once the prevailing and not the exceptional type of mental life. Moreover, in such a life, where the definite reactions were limited to a few serial processes, connected with food-getting, there was little opportunity for reconstruction of a situation. Sudden emergencies, such as attack or failure of food-supply, were more likely to result in elimination of the individual than in his meeting them resourcefully, in his making a change in habitat or in the nature of his food. Indifference, inattention, a shrinking from stimuli, were his greatest safeguards. In physical strength and agility man was inferior to many contemporary animals. He was powerless in the face of many forces of the natural world. If he escaped them, it was by virtue of hiding or running away, not by challenging or attacking. Our temporary helplessness in the face of sudden and imperfectly grasped danger, the weakening and loosening of muscular tensions that accompany even the tendency to flight, are indisputable signs of the primordial character of negative response to a stimulus which the organism has no means of defining and using positively. Such a mode of response, of course, goes far back of man in the biologic series, and never exists in isolation from more positive forms of reaction, but it was reinforced by the conditions of early human life. There is perhaps danger of exaggerating the bewildered helplessness of primitive man. He had the animal equipment of instinct. Yet it has been pointed out that in one sense dawning mind must have acted immediately as a disadvantage by checking the hair-trigger operation of instinct, though the appearance of mind means that instincts had become antagonistic or ambiguous; and consciousness very probably emerged as a compensation for what man had lost physically in assuming the erect posture.

<sup>1</sup> W. Howitt, *History of Discovery in Australia* (quoting account of Dampier, 1688), Vol. I, pp. 67, 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, pp. 404, 405.



Just how long, and with what variations this rudimentary group-life and rudimentary consciousness persisted is both futile and irrelevant to ask. Some such low form of social and mental organization must be postulated as preceding the hunting and warlike types of society and patterns of mind. Sociologists are emphasizing today more than they did a few years ago the assumption of a long, non-predatory, sub-militant, relatively pacific and sedentary period, in which human association took definite form, and which prepared for later oppositions and more highly organized social types. What I wish to point out is that in this protoplasmic kind of social life, limited to performing a few simple serial acts hardly differentiated into occupations, the aesthetic moment is barely discernible to analysis, and certainly not a part of conscious experience beyond giving a faint toning to processes chiefly biological. Mental life was too fluid and shifting an accompaniment to detach itself from the total experience; and the total experience was meager in discriminations, and directed toward a relatively fixed end. In other words, these activities were mostly narrow habits, functioning in practical independence of one another and verging more or less toward the automatic. Failure in their operation, of course, aroused emotional disturbance, as does all checking of activities immediately furthering biologic processes; but the outcome was more likely to be prostration than stimulation to more efficient control. Attention was not sufficiently focused to direct any such cluster of activities as would have given rise to aesthetic satisfaction and to even the rudest "work of art."

In thinking of the struggle for existence and the working of the law of survival of the fittest in the social series, we too readily think of their operation as uniform, at least in the earlier stages of social development. But the geologists and the biologists have made it clear that there are times of violent change and times of comparative stability in the course of organic evolution, and the sociologists and the anthropologists tell us that the same thing holds true in the evolution of society. We find what may conveniently be called static and dynamic periods, so long as we keep in mind that the terms indicate merely different degrees of variation and development. Moreover, it is necessary to remember also that all division of social progress into types or stages is schematic and methodological, not descriptive. In reality, there have been all sorts of overlappings and survivals. We see this clearly in society today, and now as in every period the coexistence of different levels of culture produces, as it has produced, new dislocations and demands for readjustment.

With these qualifications, we may say that the truly primitive period in human society was a static period. Its gains were slow; its achievements



more in the line of conserving and maintaining the existing level than in lifting to a higher level.

But with changing conditions, either sudden or through slow accumulations, came variations important enough to be perpetuated. Imagination can divine the transition from the sluggish and inchoate primitive stage to the active hunting stage. How man overcame his fear of wild beasts, forests, and darkness we cannot know. But even avoiding the larger and more dangerous beasts must have made him familiar with their habits, and the capture of small, defenseless beasts have led, through a series of accidents and tentative advances, to the use of natural missiles and to the invention by some prehistoric Watts or Edison of the first rude club or spear or trap. Armed with these and with that other great invention, a mode of producing fire artificially, man began his long warfare with other forms of life and with the material world, in the course of which he has molded them no less than they have developed him.

With the emergence of the hunting period man's attitude toward his stimuli was no longer predominantly habitual and negative. It became increasingly active, positive, constructive. His food-supply grew more plentiful and at the same time more uncertain, since game cannot be counted on as can plant life and lower animal forms, such as mollusks, snails, grubs. But its pursuit drew upon and developed a far wider range of aptitudes, and necessitated a very different mental pattern. He became wary, alert, resourceful, so far as concerned the killing of animals for food. He was, moreover, farther removed from the pinch of actual starvation; for, if game failed, he could fall back on his old vegetable diet, which, indeed, there is no reason to suppose he ever entirely gave up. But interest and attention shifted to the new food-supply. In the hunt attention was keen, every sense was temporarily on the alert. And since food-getting was a group affair, and many men were needed in the tracking and surrounding of the larger and fiercer animals, social co-operation became a much more specific and mentally intense thing than ever before. The forms of co-operation in hunting vary enormously from sporadic efforts on the part of some Australian groups to the closely knit hunting-pattern society of the Iroquois. But the almost universal distribution of the totemic system, the greater number of animal totems, with the wide ramifications of their influence upon social structure, show to what an extent the occupation of hunting affected the life of "natural peoples."

Out of this closer and more distinctive social organization, and the increase in mental and bodily vigor due to more abundant food and to the mobile hunter life, arose new occasions for conflict. Groups of men came

into collision over hunting areas, the spoils of the chase, and so on. And out of feuds between groups grew the necessity for the chief and other differentiations in group control, leading to the definitely militant type of society.

On the industrial side, the hunting period introduced the first marked division of labor, that running along the line of sex. The primitive pre-eminence, or at least equality, of woman as a provider of food—a task for which she was well equipped so long as food-getting meant collecting nuts and seeds, scraping rocks, and digging for roots—gave way before the superior equipment of man for long and arduous hunting expeditions. But, although shut out from the excitements of the new pursuit, she still carried on the routine activities involved in the preparation of the new food, as well as retaining her old task of collecting vegetable food. From this delegation to woman of serial and routine processes, she became practically the primitive manufacturer, tanning the skins of animals for garments, making baskets, grinding seeds, and, later, weaving and making pottery. To her, too, are credited the beginnings of agriculture and the domestication of animals. It may be said that she carried on the intermediary processes, while man reserved to himself those involving high stimulations and satisfactions. It is also true that, through her control of the making of complex objects, woman was probably, to a large extent, the primitive artist. Here, too, it is necessary to guard against thinking that the specialization was in any sense rigid.

Man, for his part, under the brisk stimulations of hunting life, won some of the most notable gains in human history. He devised the snare, the spear, the knife, the bow and arrow. His attitude toward his weapons is significant of his heightened sense of personality, or, to put it more accurately, of himself as an agency. These weapons, the trophies of the chase, such as claws, skins, horns, which he displays on his body, even the carcass of the slain animal, are to his mind not things, not mere instruments or products, but extensions of himself, united to him by a very real bond. In all stages of the hunting era, and among modern peoples at this level, we find this same feeling. Weapons, trophies, ornaments, clothes, any thing intimately connected with the individual at times of emotional excitation, are thought of, not as property, but as direct participants in the situation of which their owner is the center.

The hunting type of social situation, then, whenever and wherever it appears, is a period of active performance, and involves a far greater degree of social movement and control than is found in the rudimentary social situation out of which it arises. On the other hand, the hunting

type of society and the hunting pattern of mind operate within narrow limits and are marked by extreme alternations of control and lack of control, of effort and relaxation, of concentration and dispersion of attention. After the strain and excitement of stalking the quarry, the cunning restraint necessary to insure its capture, the jubilation of success, comes the reaction due to excessive fatigue and indulgence. The process as a whole involves extravagant waste of energy and exhaustion, leading frequently to stupor.

Forethought, acute for the immediate, problematic situation, does not extend beyond it, has not been generalized so as to apply to other situations. The reason for this lies largely in the nature of the difficulties met and mastered in the hunting stage. They are irregularly recurrent, but the outcome is in each case uncertain, and the means of achieving the end are precarious. Conditions can be only roughly determined in advance; control is only partial and spasmodic. Men cannot deal with one crisis, and win from it a broad basis of advantage for dealing with the next. Each presents itself in as acute a form as the one before it. Such experience stamps in the anticipatory, restlessly active, explosive type of consciousness. It is essentially the gambling, speculating, dare-devil temper of mind. As an attitude, it is a part of our racial inheritance. If our first impulse is to shrink from a threatening object, our second is to grapple with it, to overcome its recalcitrancy to our purposes. But such a mental attitude lacks steadiness; it dissipates energy and squanders its emotional accumulations, which are, moreover, violent, fluctuating, and accordingly exciting rather than pleasurable. Fatigue and prostration follow overstimulation.

To the savage stalking his prey or ambushing his enemy suspense and strain last to the moment of achievement, and then discharge in violent manifestations of satisfaction. Hunter or warrior drags home his spoils and his victims, animal or human; he shouts and capers as do the rest of the group. To the savage mind there is probably no clear distinction between victors, prey, and shouting throng. They are all part of one intensely active and highly emotional situation. Modern psychology, whether of the crowd or of the individual, tells us that emotion stands for an undifferentiated continuum; thought, for discrimination.<sup>1</sup> The savage has not reached the stage where he can abstract a mental state from the total activity. Pain and pleasure alike, and the complexer forms of affective experience that we call emotions, still inhere in the concrete experience.

It is not without reason, then, that inquirers into the racial origins of art find its beginnings in the "festal throng," the group in the sway of high excitement. Such situations are typical of the predatory phase of social

<sup>1</sup> Gordon, *Psychology of Meaning*, pp. 62, 63.



development, and contain the germs of the dance, song, and drama, which are found to be the rudimentary art-forms of hunting peoples. Gummere cites a mass of survival material pointing to this in the folk-literature and customs of European peasants; and he and others have collected still more abundant evidence from modern savages. He says:

The earliest form of the drama consists mainly of action and gesture in the dance, so as to repeat a contemporary event of communal interest—war and the chase, or, with farming folk, and more in reminiscence, the doings of seed-time and harvest; it is clear that the rude songs and shouts that went with step and gesture and mimicry must have been improvised.<sup>1</sup>

Hirn says:

If we use the word in its widest sense, so as to include every representation by action, drama can be spoken of as the very earliest of all the imitative arts . . . . As an outward sign of thought action is more immediate than words. Dramatic communication does not even presuppose any conscious intention nor any common consent.<sup>2</sup>

Any attempt to revive the original emotional experience with its triumphant culmination must be called a work of art, whatever be the motive that led to it. This motive is not aesthetic in our sense until late in the history of social development. It is practical in a vague, unformulated way—to serve as stimulus to new achievements in hunting or warfare, to act as “sympathetic magic” in procuring a fresh supply of game or fresh conquest of foes, to convey the experience to younger members of the group who did not participate in it; later it may become purely ritualistic and stereotyped. But its object is always the reinstatement of a situation involving successful control, and complicated and diversified enough to be suffused with emotion. In the course of reinstatement, the situation inevitably becomes abbreviated, more or less symbolic, accompanied by less waste and fatigue. The original wild and random leaping and shouting grow more rhythmical, and take on the form of rude dance and song; the movements and gestures of stalking, capturing, etc., gather around certain episodes, and become dramatic pantomime. But wherever we find such representations—and they are universal among hunting peoples—we find that they deal with the dominant, life-maintaining activities of the group; are essentially social or communal in character, heightening the sense of group homogeneity through reviving and communicating the emotions of satisfaction and control of a specific situation. We can conjecture, moreover, that at a time when mental constructions were still wavering, and memory of the past was only just emerging as

<sup>1</sup> *Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Origins of Art*, p. 150.



a means of controlling the future, it may have been necessary to stir up the whole emotional and activity matrix of an idea in order to get any sort of grip on it as a tool for further use. This is what James calls "total recall." So that both socially and psychologically such revivals or reconstructions of a situation would be of direct survival value for the people practicing them, and would in themselves lead indirectly to new forms of control.

The elaborate and complicated group ceremonies that we find among modern hunting peoples, such as the Australians and the North American Indian tribes, have undoubtedly hardened into their present form through immemorial use, and are to a considerable extent purely ceremonial and ritualistic. But they reveal the characteristics that I have mentioned. The interminable and detailed initiation ceremonies of the central Australian tribes, described with such scientific accuracy by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen, have for their obvious purpose the incorporation of the young men into the group, and the stamping upon them of its traditions and modes of action; but this is accomplished by means of dramatic representations of incidents involving the various totem animals of the group and the group ancestors, themselves akin to the totems, and by group dancing and singing. Conventional as many of these performances are, they nevertheless tend to stir up in the minds of the youths, and to some degree in the minds of the whole group, the tensions and relaxations, excitements and satisfactions, that accompanied the original occurrence.

A curious fact among the central Australians, which has, so far as I know, not been satisfactorily explained, is that, though their sense of private property is very imperfectly developed and extends otherwise only to articles of clothing and of personal use, which are thought of as immediate extensions of the individual himself, partaking of his own nature, yet there is private and even inherited ownership of songs and dramatic ceremonies. Those relating to each totem group belong to certain men of that group, who have the right of choosing who shall perform them, and even of giving them away as a mark of special favor.<sup>1</sup> I know of no other kind of property among them regarding which the rights of individuals are clearly recognized. It would be worth while inquiring whether this fact has been taken into account in any of the theories of the origin of property. From our point of view it is suggestive as showing how the work of art has contributed to the heightening of the sense of individuality and personality, as well as reinforcing the feeling of social integrity.

It used to be commented on as paradoxical and inexplicable that the

<sup>1</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 311, 312, chaps. iii-ix, *passim*.

graphic or representative art of the prehistoric European peoples of the hunting period, the men of the "rough-stone age," should be so much more realistic and spirited, show so much more artistic skill, than the same class of works of art among peoples in the pastoral and agricultural stages, farther advanced along the paths of civilization. The difficulty lies in part in a failure to discriminate between art as representation and art as decoration or design. The famous etchings of animals on the bits of mammoth tusk and reindeer horn found in the caverns of Dordogne, above all, the famous dagger from the same source with the carved handle representing a springing reindeer, are undoubtedly vastly superior as naturalistic representations to the stiff and uncouth figures dating from the "smooth-stone" or the early metal periods. But the apparent retrogression is easily explained on a basis of occupational attention. The animals portrayed with such fidelity and vigor on the fragments in the rubbish heaps of the cave-men represent the dominant and absorbing occupation of men during the hunting period in Europe. These animals were the focus point of the struggle for existence; they stood for the most violent and effectual reactions of the men who pursued and killed them. In other words, certain dangerous animals were the cave-men's most fully and solidly constructed objects, and were known with an intimacy belonging only to objects that thus sum up and exhaust the life-maintaining activities of an entire precarious situation. Etchings or carvings of them summed up and revived the whole bundle of reactions involved, symbolized a complicated process of control.<sup>1</sup> What purpose was in the minds of their makers we cannot say. As I have already suggested, different motives were probably at work at different times, or dimly recognized at the same time—of magic, communication, recall, incentive. Reinstatement, symbolization, of the experience chiefly for the sake of the emotional satisfactions involved, would be of necessity a secondary motive, and to my mind one of slow growth. It means a far higher degree of abstraction from the active situation than the hunting type of mind has reached. And the suggestion that primitive works of art derive from "primeval man's weariness of inactivity in the periods when food was plentiful and life luxurious,"<sup>2</sup> that they are a sort of substitutional exercise of habits built up in the hunt, bases the aesthetic, to my mind, on a subordinate, if not negligible, motive. It is practically Spencer's theory of play and art as due to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Baldwin Brown, *The Fine Arts* (revised English edition, 1902), pp. 27-30; E. Grosse, *Beginnings of Art*, pp. 163-65, 198, 199.

<sup>2</sup> A. E. Tanner, "Association of Ideas," *University of Chicago Contributions to Philosophy*, Vol. II, No. 3, pp. 59, 60.

useless discharge of surplus energy. And on the social side it makes art a product of mere leisure. The positive element in this view, and at the same time its inadequacy, I shall touch upon later.

With the growth of the pastoral and agricultural forms of life matters changed. This does not mean that the predatory attitudes and aptitudes disappeared altogether, or that the later occupational stages are to be assigned to clearly marked periods or to a uniform order of appearance among all peoples. Environmental conditions and resources bring about vast differences in the careers of different peoples. The Australians on their treeless and arid plains were doomed to arrest, just as the peoples of temperate, well-watered, and well-wooded Europe were spurred to progress. But with domestic animals and planted crops experience became broader and more stable. Crises directly threatening life were far less frequent. A situation once under control was not likely to recur in an acutely problematic form, but served as a basis for further activities of an intermediate instead of a directly life-maintaining character. Food-getting operations were no longer irregular and violent, requiring exhausting expenditure of emotional and physical energy and leaving no margin for the building-up of other useful types of conduct. Life gained in breadth and in security at the expense of emotional intensity; it utilized and husbanded bodily activities that had hitherto been wasted and exhausted in a narrow circle of pursuits. While both the tending of herds and the cultivation of plants involved uncertainties and difficulties, they were uncertainties and difficulties that were to a considerable extent regularly recurrent, and could therefore be planned for and discounted in advance. With the development of these occupations forethought and memory were strengthened; regular habits were set up along numerous lines; group custom became a stronger social bond. The pastoral life, more or less nomadic in form, undoubtedly retained more precarious situations than did the agricultural. Occupations having to do with animal life are fuller of problems and crises than those having to do with plants. But animals under domestication are animals under control. They secure, and at the same time alter the nature of the animal food-supply. Pastoral peoples rarely kill their herd-animals for food, except in connection with tribal ceremonies, developing into sacrifice; but they depend on them largely for milk and cheese. This gives rise to a set of industries of the manufacturing or mediate type. Animals also furnish materials for tents and for clothing, and so become the center of the weaving industry, with its varied interrelated processes. Domestic animals likewise give a powerful impetus to intercourse with other social groups. This intercourse is partly hostile, partly peaceful. While (pastoral life) leads



to disputes about grazing grounds, to raiding and driving off the flocks of adjacent groups, it at the same time strengthens the sense of property, perhaps first developing the notion of ownership of land; and it offers the first real opportunity for the beginnings of trade. Cattle, as most languages reveal, were the first important medium of exchange.

With the development of agriculture men had chiefly to reckon with the vicissitudes and difficulties of climate, weather, and soil. The cycle of the seasons determined their main activities. Even more than in pastoral life, the events on which their interests and attention were centered were recurrent, rhythmical. The controlling influence of the seasonal or "cosmological" rhythms is seen wherever agriculture is the principal occupation of a people. The customs, beliefs, and folk-lore of agricultural peoples all over the world, conspicuously among Europeans, who have been most closely studied, cluster about planting, cultivating, harvesting, storing grain, the olive, the vine. The whole festival and ceremonial life centers at these points. Furthermore, in agriculture the number of intermediate steps between planting and the final utilization of the product as food is very great. These stages succeed one another slowly, and each demands bodily labor of a simple and serial nature. Any such movements as those involved in sowing, cutting, binding, threshing, with repetition rapidly become habitual—that is to say, rhythmical—in character. All regular manual work sets up characteristic bodily rhythms, differing according to the special form of labor, but all relatively simple. In addition to this, agriculture demands the co-operation of numbers of people in carrying out successfully some of its operations. And wherever a group of people work together at a rhythmical bodily task, they tend to fall into the same rhythm. Working in this common rhythm greatly facilitates the movements made. It increases speed; it lessens fatigue. And so the rhythm is accentuated, is stressed by beats, is accompanied by song. The effect of rhythmical group-labor closely approximates the effect of group festival-dance and song. In agricultural life, in fact, the two coalesce; for the agricultural festival and religious ceremony is made up largely of dramatic representation of the typical agricultural processes, of communal dance in the labor-rhythms and songs on agricultural matters; and, on the other hand, these festal performances, with their emotional accompaniments, react into the actual group-work, and give it a festal and emotional character. Recent students of social and aesthetic origins have emphasized now one of these aspects, now the other. Bücher's important study, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*,<sup>1</sup> traces the origin of poetry and music to concerted and rhythmic labor and to the

<sup>1</sup> Especially chaps. ii, iii, vii.

labor-songs that arose in connection with it. Gummere dwells on the strong communal spirit of work in the fields and its festal representation. "An agricultural community," he says, "whether in its rudest stage, a horde that lives in fertile river bottoms as distinguished from the nomadic, predatory bands of the plains, or in the civilization of feudal Europe, always tends to homogeneous conditions, and always fosters communal song."<sup>1</sup> Mannhardt in his *Wald und Feldkulte*, Frazer in his *Golden Bough*, and others give abundant examples of group drama, song, and dance arising out of the agricultural pursuits of early Europe. The Eleusinian Mysteries, for example, and the cult of Dionysus, out of which grew the Greek drama, are traced to local rites attendant upon the cultivation of grain and the vine respectively, by some even to grain and grape totems.<sup>2</sup> Peasant customs all over Europe, the "Beltane fires" in May to favor the growing crops, the sheaves of grain set apart for ceremonial observances at harvest and known as "kern-babies" or "maidens," all testify to the prevalence of agricultural festivities and rituals. The lovely myth of Demeter and Persephone, so closely associated with the cult at Eleusis, has obviously an origin of this kind.

We see, accordingly, that the festival and life-maintaining pursuits play as great a part among agricultural as among hunting peoples, but that the direction and objects of attention are different. Agriculture necessitates far more stable, rhythmical, and mutually supplementary modes of action. The basis of achievement is broader; there is less waste of effort, fewer violent alternations of excitement and prostration accompanying a narrow range of activities. Emotion is more diffused, less concentrated. Yet the processes and interests of agriculture are too varied and too closely interwoven to permit of their becoming routine, relieving them from the need of attention. Ends have to be kept in mind and pursued with patience and sagacity; it is only the intermediary and constituent processes that take care of themselves and by assuming the rhythmic form contribute to the ease and pleasant toning of the whole.

We trace this rhythmic character in the whole group of industrial activities not directly connected with pastoral or agricultural pursuits, but flourishing on the basis of physical well-being which they assure. Weaving, making of pottery, of weapons and tools, of permanent dwellings, all reveal a feeling for ordered repetition. Conventional pattern, ornament, whether of dots, crosses, lines, spirals, or their more elaborate combinations, show the same rhythmic interval that we find in choral dance and song at

<sup>1</sup> *Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 279; also whole passage, pp. 279-308.

<sup>2</sup> F. B. Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, Essays XXIII, XXIV.

this stage of development. It is not accidental that conventional design coexists with agriculture, nor that such design appears upon objects of common use. As the toilers in the fields found their labor lightened by singing in time to rhythmic movements, so the workers in clay, the women weaving baskets or stuffs, gained ease and pleasure in their work by means of reiterated spots of color or alternating threads of contrasting dyes. Such work, though it seems to us the result of individual effort, was no doubt carried on by groups of women together, probably to the accompaniment of appropriate song and swaying of the body. Gummere cites group-songs connected with spinning and knitting and with grinding at the hand-mill.<sup>1</sup> It is not forcing an arbitrary contrast, I think, to say that, while the arts of hunting and war are chiefly realistic and representational, the arts of peaceful rural occupations and of industry are chiefly conventional, the arts of rhythm, pattern, and design. The two forms of life never exist altogether in isolation. With the establishment of fairly coherent and stable agricultural communities came further division of labor, growing wealth, and with them class distinctions and trade and other rivalries, both within each community and among communities, leading to warfare on a larger and better organized scale. As a result of successful warfare, fundamental industrial processes are commonly handed over to subject populations or to slaves taken in war, and there arises that social prejudice against productive labor that is, according to Professor Veblen, a conspicuous mark of the leisure class evolved in accordance with barbarian or predatory standards of culture.<sup>2</sup> Wherever we find industry carried on only by a class and under social stigma, the artistic element that we recognize in the earlier products lessens or disappears—a sign that the work is no longer done in the old collective, rhythmic way, with a sense of pleasant mastery of materials and of co-operation with the group. With the loss of the “folk-spirit” articles of common use lose their artistic character.

In summing up this brief attempt at a reconstruction of primitive life and primitive social psychology, we find that in the rudest conceivable human society there was not sufficient organization and control, not enough focalizing of attention, to produce a recognizable aesthetic experience or work of art, even of the most rudimentary type. Instincts and a few narrow and serial habits kept consciousness well down toward the automatic type of response; and beyond this mental life was probably of the character of what we call today the “fringe”—vague, diffused, affective rather than cognitive or volitional. In the hunting stage, experience,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 269-72.

<sup>2</sup> *Theory of the Leisure Class*, pp. 19-21, 35-43, and *passim*.



although still narrow, became well organized in the one line of pursuing and capturing animals. Within the limits of this particular cluster of acts, tension was extreme and prolonged, and resolution occurred suddenly at the moment of climax in the killing of the prey. Here we find some of the conditions for the emergence of the aesthetic, a complex of activities and a high degree of satisfaction at the moment of successful issue. But the experience is painfully toned, and the satisfaction is divided and marred by the fatigue and prostration of suspense and over-violent action. So the aesthetic at this stage is narrow and partial. The work of art produced in dramatic dance and song or graphic representation has spirit and vigor, and undoubtedly helps to develop a sense of the aesthetic in its producers; but it lacks restraint; the motives for its construction are practical, and the result is sometimes attributed to an external agency. In the less predatory and more peaceful pastoral and agricultural stages, social life becomes more stable and more diversified. Attention plays over a broader range of objects. Social consolidation takes place through a cycle of recurrent and regular activities. The food-supply becomes relatively secure, and a margin is won for the development of various intermediary occupations. The tilling of the soil and the working-up of the various products into food, the making of baskets, pottery, tools, and weapons, the weaving of cloth, the working of metals, bring together a host of activities hitherto exercised more or less in isolation, and arouse and confirm a sense of successful attainment. In such work the values of the different stages for the most part survive and become incorporated into the effect of the whole. So that, wherever we find considerable elaboration in the ordinary occupations of a people, there we find distinct art products, stirring the sense of completeness and control that we have called aesthetic, and helping to foster this sense and to reveal it to reflection.

This does not imply as yet, however, a distinct class of men recognized as artists or the work of art produced for its own sake, apart from the practical demand that it meets, the practical part that it plays. The distinction between the useful and the beautiful, in any rigid sense, is, indeed, a modern distinction, and does not go back of the eighteenth century.

It is often said nowadays, as I have already suggested, that art is the product of a pretty wide economic margin, with its accompanying leisure; and, so far as this goes—which is not very far—it is perfectly true. Where the struggle for mere subsistence is pressing, or the menace of hostile forces is always dominant, there is no chance for that co-operation among activities which is an essential requirement for the dawning of the aesthetic experience. Crises are frequent, narrow in range, but acute. Problems are

solved serially. There is slight accumulation of stable and successful adjustments. Professor William I. Thomas, in a criticism of Spencer's derivation of the artist class—as of all other professional classes—from the medicine-man and the priest, whom Spencer practically identifies, although there is serious objection to such a view, points out, with justice, that the best recent evidence indicates that the artist class is not the outgrowth of any particular occupation—is, accordingly, not primarily and exclusively religious and ceremonial in its origin, but arises wherever there is security and leisure, and therefore chiefly under the shadow of court patronage, or at least under the protection of some powerful and affluent person.<sup>1</sup> It is well to recognize this fact as an important condition, and one that has been commonly overlooked; but, taken by itself, it is too much like making the artist a mere “hanger-on” of society, a member of the equivocal or exploiting classes, and therefore akin to the criminal. Such a view is, of course, popular in certain quarters. The grounding of art upon leisure is sometimes stretched to the point of making it a product altogether of superfluity and idleness, and leads to exaggerated insistence upon its non-utilitarian and non-life-conserving character, to the “play theory” in its extreme form. (The truth regarding the relation of leisure to art and to the aesthetic experience seems to be that leisure is at best only a preliminary and largely negative condition. Mere leisure, mere freedom from want and danger, do not of themselves give rise to the aesthetic experience, which stands for a positive constructive process, a positive combination and co-operation of activities under the guidance of some organizing end and interest. This, leisure of itself does not supply, although it furnishes opportunity for the gathering together of materials susceptible of shaping into an aesthetic whole.

Hitherto I have not attempted to deal with the paradox of the high feeling value of the aesthetic experience and its apparent lack of precedent conflict and strain, through the resolution of which its characteristic tone of satisfaction, ease, facilitation, might be accounted for. The explanation, so far as it goes, is to be sought in the realm of racial origins, of which we have been speaking, although it strikes its roots far back into the biologic series, and although we are still in the dark as to the mechanism employed. But evolutionary biology and psychology, particularly the modern psychology of the emotions, have called attention to the survival in the individual, in syncopated and abbreviated form as attitudes, tendencies, dispositions within the organism, of types of response formerly completing themselves in outward movements, acts of high utility and purposiveness in dealing

<sup>1</sup> “The Relation of the Medicine-Man to the Origin of the Professional Occupations,” *University of Chicago Decennial Publications*, Vol. IV.

with particular sorts of stimulations. The tendencies to retreat and to attack are conspicuous instances of such attitudes. James would include them among instincts, and enumerates many others—curiosity, secretiveness, acquisitiveness, constructiveness, sociability, and the like. Whether we are entitled to call reactions of so general a nature, and called forth by stimuli so varied, instincts, is a debatable question; but these tendencies, at any rate, represent definite acts, once fully accomplished and of tremendous survival value in the early history of the race. They are certainly to be distinguished from mere unorganized and unselected impulses. Biology has familiarized us with the notion of rudimentary or atrophied organs once actively functioning under appropriate conditions now superseded, and even with the notion of certain organs, such as the flippers of a whale, which have been gradually pressed into the service of functions quite different from those in whose service they developed. Structure alters more slowly than does function, after specialization has set in, and serves as resource in various ways—a sort of reserve fund that can be drawn upon in emergencies. (This persistence in reduced and altered form of structures once actively functional is not confined wholly to our physiological make-up. It is equally true psychologically, although we need to guard against thinking of psychological structure and function in set physical terms. They stand rather as limiting terms with reference to a total process of control. Moreover, in dealing with the earlier manifestations of intelligence we cannot make any hard and fast distinctions between the physiological and the psychical. Mind comes in as a means of reorganizing conflicting and ambiguous bodily reactions. With more highly differentiated organization, certain simple and immediate types of action, such as the “tropisms” of lower forms, have been entirely superseded. Others, no longer functioning independently, still play a necessary part in the human economy. No longer needed in themselves, they have served as a basis for further development, and have become incorporated into the more elaborate mechanism. Darwin, as is well known, explained the typical bodily expressions of emotion as vestiges of formerly useful movements. James, in his organic theory of emotion as the immediate consciousness of reflex changes within the body, admits that some of the most striking of these motor changes are reduced forms of past serviceable actions.<sup>1</sup> And Dewey in his two papers on “The Theory of Emotion” explicitly says:

It is then in the reduction of activities once performed for their own sake, to attitudes now useful simply as supplying a contributory, a reinforcing, or a checking factor, in some more comprehensive activity, that we have all the conditions

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, pp. 478-80.



for high emotional disturbance. The tendency to large diffusive waves of discharge is present, and the inhibition of this outgoing activity through some perception or idea is also present. The attitude stands for a recapitulation of thousands of acts formerly done, ends formerly reached. It represents the most thoroughly established habits and co-ordinations of the past.<sup>1</sup>)

According to this view the emotion is aroused when these inherited attitudes are involved conspicuously in a new activity. As Dewey points out, they may check or reinforce this activity. If they fall in with it at once, or with some phase of it, there is no noticeable tension or inhibition, and therefore no emotion. If, on the other hand, they pull strongly in a contrary direction, there results a sense of strain and difficulty, the extent and depth of which depend upon the number and the range of the subordinate activities affected as well as upon the violence of the interference. Control is furthered only by suppression of some of the warring elements. Again, if none of these elements is suppressed, but all collaborate in the production of an act made up of actively co-operating processes, all modifying and reinforcing one another, there arises the consciousness of the attainment of control, a satisfaction that is pleasurable emotional and that at its highest is obviously aesthetic, while even at its slightest it differs from the recognized aesthetic only in degree. It is when a considerable cluster of these attitudes and predispositions to certain movements are called out incipiently by the immediate situation, and simultaneously coalesce with our response to it, that we have the genuine aesthetic experience, with its feeling of sudden power and vigor, its heightened sense of life, always indicating an unusual degree of control. But it is only under comparatively rare conditions that a present situation is in such complete alliance with these old racial attitudes and survivals. Our biologic, organic past is immeasurably longer than our mental past, and is consequently far more stable. It is not too much to say that intelligence is never entirely in harmony with purely bodily, physiologic processes. It is constantly subjecting them to strain, overexertion, fatigue. The mutual adjustment of the older and the newer types of adaptation is for the most part a working and tentative adjustment, not a complete one. But there are times when the organism functioning as intelligence and the organism functioning as plant or animal work together with comparative adequacy. The mechanisms of sense-organ and muscle, of breathing, circulation, and equilibrium, all operate at their best in the one conscious experience. And that experience is the aesthetic. This participation of bodily processes not under the control of consciousness has been dwelt upon in much recent literature. Vernon Lee makes it the essential element in her

<sup>1</sup> *Psychological Review*, Vol. II, p. 29.

analysis of the aesthetics of form. "These adjustments of breathing and balance are the actual physical mechanism of the perception of Form, the sense of relation having for its counterpart a sense of bodily tensions."<sup>1</sup> The aesthetic perception of form is that in which these adjustments are most fully and easily achieved and most in accordance with our established bodily structure. She quotes from Sergi a statement to the effect that "aesthetic pleasure, like every other, is a phenomenon, not of the cerebral, but of the organic life of the big viscera—mainly the heart and lungs."<sup>2</sup> And she shows that such participation of organic processes means on the mental side the facilitated and enriched attention that is always involved in the aesthetic experience.<sup>3</sup>

While the dependence of the aesthetic experience upon fundamental bodily activities by no means exhausts the possibilities of description and explanation, it does help to account for its lack of strain or effort, and at the same time its possession of high emotional character. The attitudes on which it so largely draws are racial survivals, and as such have had their distinctive emotional aspects shorn away through repetition and subordination, except as they enter into and individualize present experiences. In these new relations they give an immediate and distinctive emotional tone to the consciousness of the moment.

Herbert Spencer was the first to apply the doctrine of the conservation of racial experience to the problems of modern psychology and philosophy. He based it on the doubtful biologic principle of the inheritance of acquired characters, and used it in support of an associationist psychology and a hedonistic ethics, making ends attained the result of calculation on the part of our remote ancestors, if not of ourselves. Nowadays we have put the conception on another basis by recognizing the instinctive and impulsive character of much past and present experience, and the constant passing back and forth of the mediate and immediate types of response. But we are still far from a satisfactory understanding of the procedure involved, and fall back on the general position only when a problem balks our solution in other terms.

### III. THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

It is sometimes argued that the aesthetic experience, instead of marking a culmination, being a "saturation," as it were, of values, is experience of a

<sup>1</sup> "Beauty and Ugliness," *Contemporary Review*, Vol. LXXII, pp. 550, 551.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 552.

<sup>3</sup> "Art and Usefulness," *ibid.*, Vol. LXXX, pp. 516, 517; cf. Professor M. W. Calkins, *Introduction to Psychology*, pp. 279-81.

relatively undeveloped and undifferentiated kind. Instead of representing the highest stage of co-ordination among a group of closely interlaced processes, enriched through many past adaptations, it is said to furnish mere stuff, raw material, for reflection, and to pass into it as to a more advanced stage of evolution. In the history of the race, too, it is still sometimes maintained that artistic creation necessarily precedes scientific investigation and analysis. Though so crude a generalization as Macaulay's regarding the inverse growth of civilization and poetry has been laughed to scorn, the notion yet lurks in more insidious form. In the individual the capacity for aesthetic enjoyment is alleged to shrivel before the establishment of habits of intellectual inquiry. Darwin's regretful testimony as to his loss of interest in certain art products and activities is taken at its face value, and has furnished the text for many a diatribe upon the blighting effects of scientific pursuits. Tyndall's essay on the scientific imagination should be enough to convince that withdrawal of attention from conventionally recognized aesthetic interests does not necessarily mean an inability to take the aesthetic attitude, to have a genuine aesthetic experience. Such strictures are based either upon a confusion between certain accepted aesthetic materials and the aesthetic experience as a distinctive conscious attitude, or upon a confusion between reflection at large and particular acts of reflection. The first type of error calls for no further comment. An experience is not of necessity non-aesthetic psychologically because it fails to center itself on poetry, painting, music, or other conventional aesthetic media. With regard to the second error, it is enough to recall what has been said of the rhythmic nature of experience, one type passing over into another, as occasion demands, immediate experience breaking down and leading to experience of the reconstructive type. While the aesthetic always stands for a resolution of conflicting tensions, the establishing of mutual interplay and reinforcement among activities, and therefore indicates control of a particular situation, it also serves as the point of departure for a new form of mental operation. If it did not, it would be an inexplicable anomaly in experience, and would effectually blockade consciousness as a selective and adaptive agency. One reason, to my mind, for the obscurity of much discussion of the aesthetic experience is just this failure to take into account its stimulative and origina- tive aspects. The discharge, if we may so term it, of the aesthetic experience is, of course, not uniform. At one time it may lead to direct outward action of one sort or another; in the artist, for instance, to the technique of production. Again, and frequently, it leads to an act of reflective thought, set off by some of its constituent elements; sometimes it may provoke critical analysis of its own character and make-up. But this does not mean



that many previous judgment processes have not gone to the making of the aesthetic.

Moreover, we need to remind ourselves that the distinctions emerging in the subsequent critical judgment upon the aesthetic experience are not present in any such form within the experience itself. They first come to clear consciousness within the grasp of reflection, although they are held in solution, as it were, within the aesthetic moment. In this they are like qualities or elements of "pure sensation," which are also merely implicit in the immediate situation, and are isolated and abstracted only through deliberate intellectual analysis. Both are in a sense abstractions, "artefacts," methodological instruments as truly as are atoms and ether waves, not given in the immediate perceptual or aesthetic experience, and not possessing an independent existential character.

The fact that detailed analysis of the aesthetic experience is possible only through subsequent judgments of introspection does not mean that many and many a previous judgment has not gone into the making of the aesthetic experience. Its richness of content implies that. Neither does it mean that as immediate experience it is wholly devoid of judgmental character. As feeling, as immediate sense of value, it is inherently judgmental, as all consciousness of meaning must be. But it is of the nature of an "intuitive" or individual, rather than an instrumental or reflective judgment.<sup>1</sup> It is a storehouse of past meanings, of which each has lapsed as an independent end. In this sense the aesthetic experience is "post-judgmental."<sup>2</sup> But that does not mean that it is a mere "dead judgment." It is, as we all know, a peculiarly alive sort of experience, charged emotionally with the blended meanings of past judgments and adjustments of all kinds. And this emotional charging means that the experience is rich in materials for further judgments. If it be a storehouse, it is also a magazine of meanings. But the judgments that it touches off are not the judgments that went into its making.

Accordingly, although the critical reflection upon the aesthetic experience must be carefully distinguished from the experience itself, and represents a kind of inquiry of late development in the race and in the individual, its conclusions shed a flood of light upon the inner constitution of that experience, and are of inestimable value, so long as we avoid confusing the observer's with the experiencer's attitude, and assuming that the experience itself is a mere mosaic of the elements analyzed out of it; in other words, avoid any of the forms of the psychologist's fallacy. to

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, *Studies in Logical Theory*, VI, pp. 134-42 (S. F. McLennan).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, X, pp. 339, 340 (H. W. Stuart).

which we are fatally prone in attempting to handle any kind of immediate experience.

Of the distinctions thus brought to light, many have been elevated to the position of independent "aesthetic categories," and a number lend themselves to clearest interpretation in terms of social psychology, thus connecting closely with the present stage of our discussion. Among these are the commonly accepted aesthetic criteria, which I have already touched upon in Part I—such categories as wholeness, detachedness, objectivity, universality. About the meaning of the objective and the subjective in aesthetics philosophic controversy has gathered in all schools. Some of the difficulties, here and elsewhere, arise from the tendency to treat problems too much in isolation, and from the failure to observe the distinction between immediate aesthetic experience and subsequent aesthetic criticism, or from the illegitimate carrying-over of the results of the one into the description of the other. Modern aesthetic theory has centered around the problems of the place and function of the aesthetic in the relations of the individual and society; the meaning of "aesthetic sympathy;" the aesthetic bearings of imitation, suggestion, contagion, and the like; the relation of the "aesthetic object" to the "social object" and the "physical object." Such topics as these last obviously fall within the field of social psychology—a branch of inquiry the importance of which for the solution of many vexing problems is just coming to be recognized, and the materials and methods of which are becoming defined with considerable exactness. An approach through these distinctively social categories may serve to present the classic categories of objectivity, subjectivity, etc., in a somewhat new light, and thus further our inquiry more effectually than if we approached them directly.

In current psychology and social theory the old hard and fast opposition between the individual and society has been broken down. The two are no longer thought of as fixed units in some sort of external and arbitrary relation, but as two poles, or, better, two *foci* of experience, two reciprocal and correlative phases of the social process.<sup>1</sup> In the history of the race the organization of society and the organization of the individual consciousness have advanced together, acting and reacting on each other. Reflective distinctions represent to a great extent the internalizing of distinctions originally external and social—Plato's procedure in the *Republic* is a conspicuous instance of this, although its importance is not commonly recog-

<sup>1</sup> For recent statements of this view, (cf. C. H. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order*, especially chaps. i, iii, v, vi;) and A. H. Lloyd, "The Organic Theory of Society," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. VI, and "The Social Will," *ibid.*, Vol. VIII.

nized; and, on the other hand, the thinking individual reacts upon and profoundly modifies social structure. Customs and institutions stand for the established resources, the funded investments, of a society—in other words, for its habits; the individual stands for its forward movement, its ventures, its “growing-point”—in other words, for its focus of attention. In early racial history, as we have seen, social structure and conscious experiences alike were rudimentary and inchoate. In the processes of gaining control over the immediate food-environment, group-coherence and group-action were all important for preservation; individual initiative was dangerous for the existence both of the group and of the individual; and so was rigidly repressed—or rather, failed to develop, since conditions were inimical to such variation. In the predatory stage, however, a few objects, chiefly animals and weapons, emerged for consciousness with considerable distinctness, became pretty sharply individualized. They were still thought of, however, as part of a man’s total activity in a very close and real sense. They had not yet split off into wholly independent and indifferent objects, mere “things,” tools for further operations, or in still more abbreviated form, mere cues to definite and familiar action. As has been abundantly shown in recent treatments of the problem, primitive man did not personify inanimate objects in the sense of injecting human attributes into them; he did not anthropomorphize in our sense of the term. He had not yet clearly separated out either himself or his physical world from a sort of activity continuum.<sup>1</sup> Many of the things that are for us obvious physical, inanimate objects were for him practically not objects at all, but only imperfectly defined stimulations to instinctive and impulsive action. The few that he had built up into objects were still so fully the central points of his struggle for existence that they were a part of his own personality, suffused with an activity coloring.

On the side of the modern individual such an exposition as that of Baldwin reveals how fundamentally the individual self is the *socius*, the focus point of interactions between his meager organic equipment and his social world. This interaction, this constant play of stimulus and response, each term of the equation serving now as one, now as the other, and in a sense always functioning as both, continues as long as life lasts. It is Baldwin’s “dialectic” of the growth of the social self. But the stages are most obvious in infancy and early childhood. Baldwin distinguishes the projective, the subjective, and the ejective or fully social stage. In the first, certain of the child’s vague organic and impulsive reactions meet with definite response,

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, “Interpretation of Savage Mind,” *Psychological Review*, Vol. IX, pp. 222, 223.



chiefly through the movements of persons ministering to its needs. Thus arises a vague sense of the distinction between persons and things—or, rather, a rudimentary direction of the attention to persons as moving objects, satisfying organic cravings. Further, there dawns a sense of the irregularity of personal responses. Sometimes people give the child what he wants; sometimes they do not. This is the germ of the sense of agency, and is followed by a growing awareness of difference among agents. In the second or subjective stage, the child begins to control his own reactions with reference to these personal agents, and thus comes to recognition of himself as agent, through an appropriation to himself of his sense of other persons. In the third or ejective stage, he enlarges his notion of others by reflecting back upon them his own experiences of activity, effort, and control. This analysis does away with the older view that the individual's notion of others is an inference, an indirect construction on the basis of his direct awareness of himself. It establishes beyond a doubt that the consciousness of individuality, of self, is built up primarily through reaction to one's human environment, and so is social from the first; that one knows others vaguely as persons before one knows oneself as a person. Along with the growth of the child's notions of persons grows his notions of things, as stimuli toward which he can react with more unflinching regularity, upon which he can depend. But this realization is of slower growth and for a long time subsidiary to his interest in persons. Through this distinction between persons as agents and things as tools arises gradually the recognition of the distinction between body and mind, noticed first in others and then reflected back into himself.<sup>1</sup>

Baldwin makes imitation in his sense of the term the method of this entire growth, but a more satisfactory statement from our point of view is in terms of the inhibition and working-over into wider co-ordinations of impulses, through successful and unsuccessful responses to a stimulus, and, on the external side, the gradual building-up of the stimulus into an organized object. It thus results that the social self and its world are constructed at the same time. One is, in fact, unthinkable without the other. It is important to remember to how large a degree this early world is a world of persons. Things that to adults are wholly uniform in operation present all manner of perversities to the child. The complexities of buttons, hooks, and strings is a case in point. He slaps the door that pinches his finger, and says, "Naughty door!" he punishes his toys that will not work. Just so the savage finds all natural objects which he notices at all either hostile or

<sup>1</sup> *Mental Development in the Child and the Race: Methods and Processes*, pp. 17-20, 122-30, 334-48.

friendly to his group; even the Greeks within historic times had a court for trying inanimate objects that had caused the death of anyone, and old English law declared such objects forfeited and to be sold for the poor.<sup>1</sup>

While the processes of constructing the social self and the social and physical world are infinitely more spontaneous, interrelated, and informal than Baldwin's account suggests, yet it is sufficiently obvious that for both the race and the individual experience is at first vaguely social or personal; then more definitely in terms of a cluster of active agencies. Through clashes and shortcomings among these agencies, necessitating a more differentiated control, arises the more or less clear distinction between the physical or material and the social, and a consciousness of the self as an agency over against a world that it manipulates.

The physical object is thus in a sense an abstraction from the social object. It is an object constructed originally for consciousness through human effort and human interest. It is a plexus of personal attitudes and relations. But its behavior is so regular, it can be counted on with such certainty and reacted to with so little need of readjustment, that many of its aspects drop away, particularly its agency aspect and its emotional nimbus, both of which indicate relative uncertainty as to modes of dealing with it. With repeated use, it wears down in immediate experience to a symbol, a signal for action. It becomes again a stimulus rather than an object, although now a stimulus to a definite and co-ordinated response. When it is seized upon as a means, an available tool, in effecting some further reconstruction, grappling with some new problem, it regains again its objective character. In the moment of scrutinizing it, of deciding whether it is suitable for the purpose in hand, attention once more fastens upon it, and it becomes for the flash once more a fully evolved physical object.<sup>2</sup> If rejected or if used at once, its objectivity vanishes or reduces to a pin-point in the total activity. Even more fully does it clothe itself afresh with objectivity when it becomes itself the subject, the focus of attention. But this happens only when it is looked upon as a problem, when it has become ambiguous as a cue to action; and in the course of reflection it is reconstructed, becomes practically a new object.

This statement suggests a view that we are likely to overlook and that is not brought out in Baldwin's account of the construction of the social self—the view, namely, that the various constructive stages are not merely successive in the first organization of experience, but are recurrent in every process of reconstruction. When for any reason a portion of our world in

<sup>1</sup> E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I, pp. 286, 287.

<sup>2</sup> Dewey, *Studies in Logical Theory*, X, pp. 247-57 (Stuart).

regard to which we have acted with assurance ceases to offer an unequivocal guide to conduct, it may be said that it practically disappears temporarily, leaving us in a state of mental groping, unpleasantly tinged emotionally, out of which dawn the two positive centers of the self as managing the disturbed situation and the end or object with reference to which one may ultimately act freely. These two are at first held apart, but are gradually brought together through a survey and employment of the various objects, data, or means examined and found available. The moment of reconciliation, of coalescence, is saturated with a consciousness of the renewed agreement of the self and the situation. It marks the attainment of a new and more complete reality. In such a reconstructive experience we have for the first stage what approaches a state of pure subjectivity, the temporary disappearance of all definite objective reference with regard to the specific interest on hand. In the second stage we have the active "empirical self" over against the "objects or data that it is handling; and in the third stage we have the identification of the self with the new object, and the blending of both self and object in the total reality. Here we have an approximation to the original undifferentiated continuum, and to the original subjective and ejective stages. This last stage is what we have already called the "aesthetic moment." It is now seen to be also the most entirely socialized moment in consciousness, for it represents a harmony between the individual and his world; and both are pre-eminently social. With the actual resumption of outward action, and with repetition of such action, this moment is shorn of much of its richness for consciousness. It sloughs off its peculiar social and aesthetic character; the object tends to become either a mere signal for action, or again a mere means or physical object.<sup>1</sup>

So far, then, as I am able to state the matter to myself, the aesthetic object from this point of view is the social object at its first moment of completed construction, of richest significance. It represents the healing of the breach between the self and the object, the culmination of the mediating processes, an experience saturated with the feeling of satisfaction. It is therefore reality in the fullest sense of the term. (This aesthetic determination of reality is social, and the converse may also be assumed to be true, that a genuinely social determination of reality has always in it something of the aesthetic.

In this connection, of course, I am using social with reference to the make-up of consciousness at a particular moment, and not with reference to the outward constitution and activities of society. To illustrate by a

<sup>1</sup> G. H. Mead, unpublished lectures, and "The Definition of the Psychical," *University of Chicago Decennial Publications*, Vol. III, especially pp. 100-11.



simple example the different types of objects of which I have been speaking: If, on a country walk, the sight of a tree leads me simply to deflect my course in order to avoid it, it is a mere stimulus or cue to immediate habitual action, not bulking in consciousness as an object in the true sense at all; if I climb it to escape danger, or to obtain a wider outlook, or to gather nuts, it becomes a physical object or means to an end; if I dwell with pleasure upon the contemplation of it, it exists for me as an aesthetic object, the core of an aesthetic experience. And it is social, though I be alone and do not give a thought to another human being, because it stirs up in me simultaneously a complex of incipient reactions toward it, tendencies toward manifold possible ways of dealing with it. All of these are now inhibited from discharge, limited to the organism, and in rhythmical relations to one another. But as originally carried out they meant specific acts centering about the tree, ways in which it was made to minister to human needs, operations which involved joint human action. Bücher has pointed out the immense significance of co-operative manual labor in the development of poetry and music; and the other arts are nearly as much in its debt. But there are undoubtedly other occasions for co-operative movements; the roots of such movements strike deeper into biologic history, and are more delicately and finely interlaced than that. Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* presents a mass of data along this line. All that we can say with confidence of such an experience as that of the aesthetic appreciation of the tree is that it lifts consciousness to an emotional vividness otherwise attained only through intercourse with persons. Our perception of the tree approximates the warmth and intimacy of association with our kind under the most favorable circumstances. There is a similar sense of enlargement of capacity, of participating in the life and activities of another, of breaking down the barriers that ordinarily hedge us in. All this, of course, is implicit and unformulated at the time, but (it is this aspect of the aesthetic experience, however fancifully one is obliged to describe it, that lies at the base of the assertion that aesthetic interest is always an interest in personality, in that which is human or quasi-human.<sup>1</sup>) Aesthetic interest in mere things is always unconsciously but inevitably guilty of the "pathetic fallacy." The same idea is set forth in the often reiterated assertion that (the aesthetic is that which directly enhances the sense of life, since our fullest and most characteristically human life is social. Berenson states it explicitly for painting when he says that the human body is the most intensely and directly life-communicating object, and so admits of the most entirely aesthetic treatment.<sup>2</sup> But the range of application of this view is far

<sup>1</sup> Henry Sturt, *Personal Idealism*, Essay VI, "Art and Personality."

<sup>2</sup> *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*, pp. 84-88.

broader than that of any mere choice of subject. The aesthetic is social in the fullest psychological sense of the term.

To say that the aesthetic experience is social is equivalent to saying that a state of high pleasurable feeling is social, and this may be a hard saying to those who hold that feeling and emotion are essentially subjective and individual. Such a position ignores the social elements in solution, at least, in all consciousness, and furthermore overlooks the undoubted fact that emotion, particularly pleasurable emotion, presses toward expression—  
 or, better, toward communication. It has been commonly said that joy, satisfaction, are social emotions. And it is matter of daily experience that a state of gratification or elation does not come to fruition until we have communicated it to somebody else. Painful emotion, too, seeks relief in one of two ways: either by the direct, and one may call it the cheap and easy, mode of communication to others, or by the indirect mode of repression and consequent translation into thought. It may be argued that even in this case there is a division of selves that may be interpreted as social and involving communication. Professor Scott, of the University of Michigan, has recently maintained the thesis that prose is expression for communication's sake, poetry is communication for expression's sake.<sup>1</sup> Without giving or examining his argument, which has many points of interest, I should like to paraphrase his statement thus: The non-aesthetic is communication for cognition's sake; the aesthetic is communication for emotion's sake. Both thinking and feeling involve communication, lead to action. We have long accepted James's dictum that all consciousness is motor; we perhaps do not recognize so clearly that the most important phases of that action have reference to our fellow-men, so that we can truly say also that all consciousness is social. It is true that thought reaches communication and a social result by a less direct path than does emotion. In its essence it is analytic, mediatory, individual, but its goal is nevertheless a social goal. Its purpose is to make possible a better, more efficient type of social action. Emotion gains its social goal by a straighter path. As emotion, it is evanescent; it pushes toward something else. In the case of the artist the urge toward communication inherent in a large volume of pleasurable emotion is intense enough and specific enough to lead to actual creative construction, both completing and controlling itself thereby. In the aesthetic experience of less intensity, as in the case of the spectator, the appreciator, the impulse to communication is less concentrated, tends more to diffused discharge; it may exhaust itself in a vague sense of emotional unison with the artist, with the immediate social world, with

<sup>1</sup> *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, Vol. XIX, No. X.

humanity at large. It perhaps rarely comes to a head in a definite type of social action, though it undoubtedly serves as a directive agency in the various affairs of everyday life. If cherished for its own sake, such an emotional attitude runs into sentimentalism. It is against such emotional self-indulgence that James humorously warns us when he says: "The remedy would be, never to suffer oneself to have an emotion . . . without expressing it afterward in some active way. Let the expression be the least thing in the world—speaking genially to one's aunt, or giving up one's seat in a horse-car, if nothing more heroic offers—but let it not fail to take place."

With all their differences both the reflective and the aesthetic experiences stand for the dwelling upon a situation made up of various elements. Neither is merely a point of transition to a new attitude. But whereas the situation calling for reflection has fallen into disarray, contains jostling elements, necessitating selective, indicative attention, oscillating between aspects in the effort to reconcile them in the light of some recognized end, the aesthetic situation presents the various elements within it functioning in harmony, and holds attention absorbed by their rich interplay. This dwelling of the attention upon the situation, this realization of the object to the full with the least fatigue and distraction, has been pointed out as the psychological essence of the aesthetic experience. Vernon Lee puts it thus in her rhapsodical fashion: "Beauty is born of attention, as happiness is born of life, because attention is rendered difficult and painful by lack of harmony, even as life is clogged, diminished, or destroyed by pain. . . . Beauty of no kind whatever, nor in any art, can really exist for the inattentive, for the overworked, or for the idle."<sup>1</sup> And Groos says: "The difference between appearance in general and aesthetic appearance is in effect an intensive difference. The first serves; the second governs; one is fugitive; the other holds us captive."<sup>2</sup> In any such statement, however, of the aesthetic experience as a case of absorbed or spontaneous attention, it is essential to remember that attention is not to be thought of as a special outside agency or activity brought to bear upon the situation. The co-operation of many activities in rhythmic equilibrium *is* that conscious state that we call absorbed attention, just as the gradual readjustment of disturbed activities in the reflective situation *is* voluntary, indicative attention.

Looking at the aesthetic experience as a bundle of incipient social reactions, we find some light on the phenomena that have been discussed

<sup>1</sup> "Art and Usefulness," II, *Contemporary Review*, Vol. LXXX.

<sup>2</sup> *Einleitung in die Aesthetik*, p. 443.



under the terms "aesthetic sympathy," "suggestion," "contagion" or "infection," and the like. I have set forth earlier in this paper the theory that (the object stands for the partial inhibition and interrelation of the various responses once made directly to it as a stimulus, and that the aesthetic experience stands for the fullest possible simultaneous excitation of these old tendencies to response. This is literally a "feeling-with" the object, an actual present experience, in diminished form, of sundry tensions, stresses, and strains of the body which contributed to its original construction and definition. In space perception, markedly in the space-arts, it becomes Berenson's "sense of tactile values,"<sup>1</sup> a stirring of the innumerable tactual-motor sensations that have gone into the building of our perceptions of solidity, of three-dimensional space. This "inner movement" was pointed out long ago by Adam Smith, and made the basis of his general theory of sympathy.<sup>2</sup> It has been refined upon by modern psychologists, and described as an "inner imitation" of the form and "pattern" of a work of art, sometimes directly through actually aroused organic movements, sometimes indirectly through the excitation of the appropriate motor images. Without going into the question whether motor imagery does not always mean actual incipient movement or into the other question as to how far the motor element enters in the case of those whose imagery is dominantly visual or auditory, we may admit beyond a doubt that a large part of the aesthetic experience consists in the stirring of a motor complex, made up probably both of actual bodily strains and tensions, a general organic resonance, and of motor associations. In all these views the object is taken for granted as already there, a "given;" and these motor reactions are considered as occurring subsequent to the immediate apprehension, and not as involved in the construction of the aesthetic object, a constituent part of the total aesthetic experience. Such aesthetic sympathy, accomplished through "inner imitation" or otherwise, may be described either as an entering of the object into the organic life of the individual, or as a passing-over of the individual's organic life into the object. The phrasing is indifferent. What is meant in both cases is that the two are blended in a peculiarly intimate way.

These theories deal chiefly or exclusively with the direct relation between the artist or the appreciator and the work of art in the immediate aesthetic experience; but they lend themselves to social interpretation, in the objective sense of the term as distinguished from the sense in which I have used it with reference to the social character of the individual conscious-

<sup>1</sup> *Florentine Painters*, pp. 3-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Theory of the Moral Sentiments*, Sec. 1, chap. i.

ness. From this point of view the work of art is the carrier, the go-between, in the communication of the experience of the artist to his public. As standing for a large number of reactions, bound together in an emotional whole, it is a center of social radiations, of suggestions, and as such touches off a variety of responses. This high social potentiality has also a sort of resurgent effect upon the artist, heightening the emotional tone of the original experience. It is because the work of art binds together in itself so many tendencies ripe for discharge and held together by mutual reinforcement that its suggestiveness is so intense and stirs a mass of similar tendencies in others, putting them into the social attitude. Tolstoi thus describes what he calls the "infectiousness" of art.

The receiver of a true artistic impression is so united to the artist that he feels as if the work were his own and not someone else's—as if what it expresses were just what he had long been wishing to express. A real work of art destroys in the consciousness of the receiver the separation between himself and the artist; nor that alone, but also between himself and all whose minds receive this work of art. In this freeing of our personality from its separation and isolation, in this uniting it with others, lies the chief characteristic and the great attractive force of art.<sup>1</sup>

Far as such a statement is from being an adequate account of the aesthetic or from explaining the mechanism of this process of "infection," it calls attention eloquently to the significant part played by the aesthetic, especially in its developed form as a work of art, in enlarging and deepening the social consciousness. The function of art in society is only just now coming to be investigated, although it has been heralded by such prophets as Ruskin, Wagner, Morris, and Tolstoi. Whatever is potent in socializing consciousness is certainly worthy of regard from all those who hope for a better and a richer life for both society and the individual.

We are now at a point where we can return with profit to the aesthetic categories of detachedness or non-utility, subjectivity, objectivity, and universality. We have seen that the aesthetic experience is one of large comprehensiveness and high value for consciousness. It represents the incorporation into an organized unity of many previously achieved coordinations or ends. This totality, this unity, make it pre-eminently of the type of immediate experience. It does not fall apart for him who is living it into a consideration of means and ends, subject or self, and object to be attained. In it consciousness is not self-consciousness. The questions, then, of its utilitarian or non-utilitarian character, its subjectivity or objectivity, long and ardently as they have been discussed, are hardly

<sup>1</sup> *What Is Art?* (Crowell ed.), p. 153.

valid in a discussion of the aesthetic as immediate and distinctive experience. Within the genuinely aesthetic situation consciousness does not become bipolar. It is active, but integral. There is no awareness of purpose, because there is no holding of one end apart as something not yet attained and to be sought. There is a disposition rather toward fulfilling many ends that have been drawn within the radius of the one situation, have become constituents of the single experience. These many ends, since they cannot all be carried out simultaneously, hold one another in the mutual checking that characterizes emotion. But since they do not collide or eliminate one another, they contribute a high sense of activity and of pleasantness to the total. The outside observer and student of the experience can see that the experience is of the utmost importance in the recurrent processes of winning control over new situations. It is highly purposive from the point of view of both stimulation and unification. But recognition of this is not a part of the conscious experience of the person in the aesthetic attitude. The same thing is true of the distinction between subject and object. It remains for the observer, but is swallowed up for the experiencer, if I may use the word. His attention is engrossed by the aesthetic object; nothing for the moment leads him to put himself in any way over against it; the scope and degree of the bodily and mental processes involved are registered in the suffused sense of vital enhancement, satisfaction, interest. To say that the aesthetic is partly subjective because of its strong coloring of pleasurable activity is to say that all especially full and satisfying experiences are subjective. And that is not commonly admitted. It is, indeed, an illegitimate transfer to carry over terms originating in a purely intellectualistic analysis of the aesthetic to the description of a situation made up of predominantly active and emotional elements.

The fact, to which Professor Tufts calls attention, that aesthetic pleasure especially when one is dealing with a relatively unfamiliar art field or art product, "is not always objectified, but . . . wavers between the subjective and the objective," finds explanation, to my mind, not so much in the passing from a private or individual to a social standard of value, as in the rapid oscillation between an aesthetic and a non-aesthetic or critical attitude. "I like it," instead of "This is fine," seems to indicate a tentative and partial identification with the situation rather than absorption in it, a hesitating comparison of personal standards with others, in other words, an attitude of mind that approximates the reflective rather than the genuinely or completely aesthetic attitude.<sup>1</sup>

The objectivity—or, since that word is correlative with subjectivity,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 7, 8.



and both apply to the disturbed situation, more properly speaking, the reality—of the aesthetic, is, as I have maintained, essentially social in its implications and effects. It is in connection with this social character of the aesthetic that the category of universality gets more than a merely formal significance. With reference to the immediate aesthetic situation or experience, the term may be used to cover all the social possibilities and opportunities latent in the aesthetic, the sense of communion and communicability that it carries with it. But in the experience itself the “judgment of universality” is emotional, not reflective. In any formulated intellectual statement, this judgment is, of course, the product of subsequent aesthetic criticism, looking at the results of the immediate experience. And even in this case it does not involve a belief that the aesthetic experience will be participated in necessarily by all who come within the range of “infection.”

A brief statement and criticism may conveniently be made at this point of the various modern theories of the aesthetic experience already mentioned in this discussion. The standpoint of them all is implicitly or avowedly social, as I have used the term, although some of them seem to confuse the results of the experience with the experience itself—the fallacy referred to at the beginning of this section. They are all, furthermore, distinctively psychological as opposed to philosophical or “metaphysical;” and uphold with greater or less vigor the “activity” position, though they derive it, so far as I can make out, from biological considerations rather than from any consistently functional view of psychology in general. That is, they do not bring out the essentially reconstructive character of experience, and are inclined to look upon the aesthetic object as a bare “given.” They are divided into two groups, according to whether they make the expression of emotion or certain types of activity predominant in their explanation of the aesthetic experience. This is, however, a difference of stress rather than an absolute difference in theory. Another type of theory affiliating with both these views is that represented by the characterization of the aesthetic as “conscious self-illusion” or “as self-exhibition.”

The “expression of emotion” theories, as put forth by Bosanquet, Marshall, and Hirn, alike mean by “expression” far more than mere discharge, mere draining off of a mass of indeterminate reactions. They assume an organization, an objectification of the emotion. We attach it to an object with which we become temporarily identified. Bosanquet thus describes the aesthetic experience.

In proportion as through continued attention we are seized by the special delight or emotion which the perception in question has power to produce, . . .

we depart from the attitude of the mere spectator, and assume that of the mind which is impelled to expression and utterance, the mind of the "maker." That is to say, we no longer feel ourselves in face of the presentation as something given *ab extra*, but rather enter into it as something which embodies for us the emotion that craves utterance. This emotion, of course, the presentation has itself in the commonest instances occasioned. But none the less, when we enjoy it fully, we seem to have made the presentation transparent and organic through and through.<sup>1</sup>

Here we have a strong suggestion of the aesthetic as an active, constructive experience. Bosanquet says nothing directly of the origin of the aesthetic nor of its social nature, but he may be said to hint at its social side, in one sense at least, when he says:

Much of the foregoing argument . . . could be summed up by saying that aesthetic emotion is "impersonal." But the word is a dangerous one . . . I should prefer to borrow the expression of a recent writer on a different subject, and call it "super-personal." In becoming aesthetic, emotion does not become something less, but something more; it does not forfeit the depth of personality, but only throws off its narrowness, and modifies it by an enlargement which is also a reinforcement.<sup>2</sup>

This objectification of an emotion Bosanquet calls "expression for expression's sake"—a phrase which strikes me as misleading in two ways; first, as not differentiating aesthetic emotion from other types, and, second, as hinting at a conscious purpose inhering in the experience. But this may be reading into it difficulties that are not there.

Both Marshall and Hirn ground the aesthetic experience upon a so-called "aesthetic instinct" or "impulse." Marshall calls it the impulse to attract through the pleasing of others.<sup>3</sup> Hirn says:

The art impulse in its broadest sense must be taken as an outcome of the natural tendency of every feeling-state to manifest itself externally, the effect of such a manifestation being to heighten the pleasure and to relieve the pain. We found in this fact the primary source of art as an individual impulse. But art is essentially social . . . The secondary effect of the exteriorization of a feeling-state is to awaken similar feelings in other human beings who perceive the manifestation and their sympathetic feeling acts upon the author of the original manifestation, heightening in him the feeling-state which gave rise to it.<sup>4</sup>

In both these statements we find a social reference, more explicit in Hirn. Just what Marshall means by a "blind impulse" to attract by

<sup>1</sup> "On the Nature of Aesthetic Emotion," *Mind*, N. S., Vol. III, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> *Pain, Pleasure, and Aesthetics*, pp. 100, 102-4.

<sup>4</sup> *The Origins of Art*, p. 302.

pleasing—for he is careful to insist that there is no forecast of the end—it is impossible for me to make out. The phrasing seems to necessitate the presence of some dim idea of the end. Without it the tendency in question reduces itself to a general impulse toward sociality, toward human intercourse, and the statement apparently means that such impulses are agreeable. I cannot acquit Marshall of a confusion here between the immediate experience and subsequent analysis of that experience. And if his statement has at all the meaning that I have read into it, the impulse to attract by pleasing lies at the root of all social organization and production, and cannot therefore be said to be peculiarly aesthetic. Marshall sets up a criterion in his definition of the aesthetic as “the relatively permanently pleasurable in revival.”<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, a distinction legitimately made from the observer’s standpoint. It may perhaps be taken as equivalent to the criterion of objectivity as understood by Santayana, or translated into our formula of the establishment of a complex co-ordination, the attainment of an extraordinary depth and width of control. But this imports into it assumptions that Marshall does not consider.

Hirn’s “art impulse” may also be criticized as too broad to serve as the origin of one particular type of experience. The tendency of feeling-states to seek an outlet is fundamental in all organisms of any degree of complexity, and an account of the various ways in which such discharge is deflected and mediated is an account of all the forms of mental activity. Hirn himself recognizes this, but maintains that art best serves and satisfies this impulse, which seems to me another question.<sup>2</sup> From the position that I am seeking to maintain, any such derivation of the aesthetic experience from a special primordial “aesthetic impulse” is unnecessary and even misleading. The aesthetic represents a certain degree and kind of co-operation among various activities; it does not derive from any one type; and it represents an advanced and not a primitive kind of reaction.

Hirn, furthermore, tends to think of pleasure and pain as directly causal rather than as accompaniments of certain forms of activity, and fails to assign them to a distinct place and function within the total act.<sup>3</sup> In describing the communication of the externalized feeling-state to others, and its reflection from them back into the consciousness of the individual first experiencing the emotion, he makes use of the theories of “inner imitation” as the mechanism for the spread of the feeling and its resurgence upon its originator, thus borrowing from the upholders of the activity

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. iii.



theories.<sup>1</sup> I do not find that Hirn states anywhere that the social reaction upon the original feeling may come to be an essential part associatively and imaginatively in the further aesthetic experiences of the artist, and not remain only an actual secondary effect. But he makes the social response and enhancement essential to the genuine aesthetic experience; and dwells upon the "cathartic" and controlling effect of such objectification.<sup>2</sup> Hirn's treatment of the problem of the aesthetic experience is, on the whole, the most fresh and suggestive of recent years; and makes illuminating use of anthropologic and genetic material.

The activity theories are represented by the Germans Karl Groos and Theodor Lipps and their followers, who advance respectively the theories of inner imitation, *innere Nachahmung*, and *Einfühlung*, for which no satisfactory English equivalent has been found, but which means literally a "feeling-into" a thing. The general position of both was anticipated incidentally by many of the older writers on aesthetics, but lacked psychological and experimental confirmation. Of recent years it has been taken independently by two art critics, Vernon Lee and Bernhard Berenson in their case applied only to the space arts. The main contention of these theories I have already set forth. Both lay chief stress on the activities excited in the appreciation of an aesthetic object. Groos emphasizes the actual reproduction in the spectator of the movements entering into the construction or the manipulation of the object. These movements take place, for the most part, in reduced form within the body, as "organic movements," although frequently externalized, as in keeping time to music, involuntarily assuming the postures taken by an actor or a statue. He recognizes that tendencies to movement may be excited through images of similar movements of our own in the past; but he holds that associations alone are not sufficient to account for our lively sense of co-operation with the object in the aesthetic experience, amounting in many cases to complete temporary identification with it. He calls this actual internal sympathetic movement imitation, although he admits that it is not literal, but only abbreviated and symbolic representation.<sup>3</sup>

Lipps's theory of *Einfühlung*, or aesthetic sympathy, differs from Groos's theory of "inner imitation" more in the way of emphasis than through any actual unlikeness of position, at least so far as the unenlightened reader can tell. The two men have, however, asserted their points

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, chap. vi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, chaps., iv, viii.

<sup>3</sup> *The Play of Man* (translated by E. L. Baldwin), pp. 322-31; *Der aesthetische Genuss*, chap. v.

of difference with true German copiousness and minuteness. Lipps insists upon the immediate identification of the beholder with the thing beheld, the aesthetic object, an entering into its life and activity with a vividness and actuality comparable to what would be felt if the center of interest were in one's person. He admits fully that the ability to enter into such sympathetic relations with the aesthetic object is dependent on our own experiences of similar activities; but makes the essence of the matter the immediate and unreflective objectification and transfer of the sense of activity. There is absolutely no recognition, he says, of the activity as *mine*, as located in *my* body; it cannot, therefore, justly be called inner imitation. It is the momentary living of the life of the thing with which I am in aesthetic relations. He further maintains that the "stuff" of this transferred experience is primarily neither sensations nor images of organic movements, but rather the activity of the will, *Willenshandlung*, the consciousness of "inner experience" or *Tun*. "Das 'Tun,'" he says, "ist überall an sich ein rein inneres Erlebnis. Und es ist überall dasselbe innere Erlebnis." To take up the view of the will here imported into the discussion is, of course, entirely outside of our purpose. Lipps agrees with Berenson that the human form is the most directly stimulating to our sense of life, the occasion of the most complete *Einfühlung*, and therefore of the fullest aesthetic experience. "Man is not beautiful," he says, "because of his form. The human form is beautiful because it is to us the carrier of human life."<sup>1</sup>

While neither of these theories makes much of the emotional or the social aspects of the aesthetic experience, they both imply them. Lipps, particularly, with his insistence upon the engrossment of the experiencer in the aesthetic object, the unity of the aesthetic experience vividly described what we have called the "pause of satisfaction," and reveals, perhaps unintentionally, its social character and potentialities.

Baldwin's "self-exhibition" theory is given cursory treatment in his *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, and disclaims adequacy.<sup>2</sup> He brings the aesthetic experience under his general doctrine of imitation, in which, as is well known, he includes the phenomena of growth, accommodation, as well as of habit. The urgent tendency of a new accommodation, he says, is to complete itself in an act. This is the self-exhibition impulse, the constructive or creative tendency on the part of the individual. Such exhibition, however, does not become the work of art, according to Baldwin, until it has received social confirmation, acceptance, and approbation

<sup>1</sup> *Grundlegung der Aesthetik*, p. 105; cf. whole discussion of *Einfühlung*, pp. 96-223.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 147-53.

by others.) He does not tell us the character of this social confirmation or judgment, nor how it is reflected back into the original activity. There seems here the ambiguity that lurks in the position of Hirn. (The social element is made subsequent, not integral. Moreover, the self-exhibiting impulse is for Baldwin a part of all accommodations and inventions; and the social judgment is the test of their success or failure.) His theory accordingly, so far as developed, offers apparently no criterion for the discrimination of the aesthetic from other types of invention. He does, indeed, say that "aesthetic inventions are new dispositions of thought viewed as a arousing emotion and sentiment," thus indicating the emotional aspects of the question. But he does not enlarge upon this. His theory serves merely to call attention to the activity and social sides of the aesthetic experience.

Lange's "conscious self-illusion" theory may be dismissed with a few words. He asserts that in the aesthetic experience there are simultaneously present in consciousness two different contents or ideas—one of the actuality of the aesthetic appearance, or *Schein*, the other that it is, after all, only illusion, *Täuschung*, a human construction. If the illusion of actuality were complete, he says, we should be in positive error; but since we recognize that the presentation is *Schein*, the experience has the character of playful rather than of serious illusion. He points out the element of illusion in non-aesthetic experiences, and makes the awareness of it while having the experience the criterion of the aesthetic. Lange's characterization of consciousness as dual in the aesthetic moment is hard to reconcile with the position taken by modern psychology as to the unity and immediacy of the aesthetic consciousness. What he probably means to indicate is that we do not confuse our aesthetic identification with an object, with actual external putting ourselves into its place, participating in its activities. To use Lipps's illustration, when we enter aesthetically into the experiences of the trapeze performer or of the dancer, we do not actually believe that we are swinging on the trapeze or dancing. To point out this fact is merely to assert that the aesthetic is an independent experience, having its own "coefficient of recognition." Otherwise we could not discuss it any more than we could discuss memories and images if we could not distinguish them from the perceptual experiences out of which they arose. In any other sense than this the discrimination of two ideas in the aesthetic experience involves the psychologist's fallacy of reading back into the immediate situation the distinctions reflectively analyzed out of it. It is undoubtedly true that a prevailing character of the aesthetic is its instability, the rapidity with which one shifts from the aesthetic into the



reflective attitude, and becomes aware of the "illusion." But such moments of criticism do not belong in any true sense to the aesthetic experience itself, which is an absorption in the total situation without characterizing it as either real or not real. Lange's recognition of the presence of *Schein* in non-aesthetic experiences seems to show that he looks upon all presentations as constructions rather than as mere "givens." He practically makes it equivalent to the apperceptive or ideational aspect of all perception. But how far he would subscribe to this I do not know.<sup>1</sup>

His characterization of the *bewusste Selbsttäuschung* in the aesthetic as playful aligns Lange with (Groos in his famous "play theory" of the aesthetic. First suggested in an aesthetic connection by Schiller,) as is well known, and given a scientific basis by Spencer, the theory of play in general has received great reinforcement and confirmation through Groos's view that play is not a result merely of surplus energy, a sort of evolutionary by-product, as Spencer held, but a valuable life-function, preserved through natural selection to afford preliminary exercise and development of responses useful in later life. Valuable as this change of basis is for the explanation of play in general, it is difficult to see how the aesthetic can be brought under such a generalization, if, indeed, it wholly accounts for adult play. Groos, however, stretches his definition of play. "When an act is performed solely because of the pleasure it affords, there is play."<sup>2</sup> But this seems to set up pleasure as an outside end, and involves us in the traditional hedonistic ambiguities as well as detracting from the spontaneous character of play as an inherited impulse. It is in their common spontaneity, freedom from compulsion, engrossment in the present situation, that Groos finds his reasons for identifying play and the aesthetic experience. Both involve *Schein*, illusion; but in many kinds of play and in the fullest aesthetic experience the temporary participation in the experience is entire and genuine. Groos also points out the social nature and value of play as fostering the impulses toward association and communication, and as supplying a basis for serious social co-operation in later life. He also touches upon the social significance of art, although he asserts that it is through its social aims that art diverges from play. Here, of course he brings in his inner imitation as a mechanism. He appears to find the social element in the aesthetic in the conscious aim of attracting others, and subscribes to Baldwin's self-exhibition theory.

<sup>1</sup> *Die bewusste Selbsttäuschung als Kern des künstlerischen Genusses* (1895); *Das Wesen der Kunst* (1901), especially chap. viii.

<sup>2</sup> *The Play of Man*, pp. 394, 395.

One remark thrown out by Groos strikes me as particularly sane and particularly pertinent to our discussion of the aesthetic. He says that in considering the origins of play it is not necessary to assume a special play instinct. There are, rather, a large number of instincts, impulses to act in a particular way toward specific stimulations, all of which may be exercised playfully.<sup>1</sup> We may borrow from this support for our view that the presumption is in favor of there being no one primordial "aesthetic instinct," such as Hirn and Marshall assume. The truth seems rather to be that our whole equipment of instincts, impulses, and organized responses may under appropriate conditions contribute to the aesthetic experience. To my mind, play and the aesthetic are alike chiefly because both are modes of immediate experience. I find it, however, truer to fact to say that play may become aesthetic than to say that the aesthetic is a kind of play. The aesthetic marks a certain stage and kind of organization in any experience. It cannot therefore be identified with any one particular type of experience. In successful play there are undoubtedly aesthetic aspects and moments; but it does not ordinarily rise to a high aesthetic level. The activities involved are too few, the co-ordinations too incomplete, the responses too much of the serial character.

<sup>1</sup> *The Play of Man*, pp. 377, 378.

## PART III

### SPECIFIC AESTHETIC CATEGORIES AND TYPES OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

#### I. THE SPECIFIC AESTHETIC CATEGORIES

In this part I do not undertake to suggest solutions of the many specific problems falling under the general rubric of aesthetics. My purpose is rather to point out the locus of these specific problems in the account already given. Even the broadest survey of the field of aesthetics cannot afford to ignore entirely the time-honored categories of unity in variety, symmetry, proportion, harmony, rhythm, economy, the characteristic, and the rest of the train; nor such distinctive aspects of the aesthetic as the beautiful, the ugly, the sublime, the tragic, and the comic. Quail as one may before their portentous backing of controversial literature, one is compelled to fit a pebble into the sling and have at them. If by so doing I reinforce my general position, I shall be entirely satisfied. I shall not attempt to discuss, except in the most incidental way, the peculiar aesthetic quality of the various concrete arts—music, painting, sculpture, architecture, etc.—although each sets its own problems, and offers an alluring field of investigation.

The most cursory examination of the aesthetic categories reveals the fact that they have accumulated in a haphazard fashion, and represent widely different lines of approach. The so-called "formal categories" are obviously derived from a study of the work of art rather than of the aesthetic experience. They are logical, not psychological, having to do with the product apart from the process. Some are drawn from one art form, some from another. Thus, symmetry, balance, and proportion suggest most directly the "space arts;" rhythm and harmony, the "time arts." Another set of terms, more recent in the literature of the aesthetic, shows the attempt to analyze the immediate aesthetic situation. Here belong economy, restraint, novelty in familiarity, "the characteristic," "the significant," some referring to the total effect with emphasis upon the content side, some to the modes of producing it. Modern psychology is seeking to subject the phenomena underlying both sets of terms to investigation and to experimental verification. But the complexity and the notorious elusiveness of the aesthetic experience render such procedure slow and difficult. In the use of these terms there is considerable overlapping. Some are but different names for the same phenomena.



The two terms most widely and continuously used in discussions of the aesthetic have been "unity" and "variety." The aesthetic object, it is said, always involves unity in variety. The aesthetic experience is awareness of such unity in variety. Without further limitation, such statement means nothing even as description of the aesthetic, for it applies equally well to any sort of organized and objectified experience. Moreover, we have come to recognize that in any connection either term by itself stands for an unthinkable situation. Mere empty unity is as impossible as mere brute variety. To be aware of unity is to be aware of the unity of something; to be aware of variety is to be aware of it as embodied in a concrete something, and thus within the grasp of unity. In terms of control, unity emphasizes the achievement of control, something that we can deal with as a total; variety emphasizes the various materials used and stages gone through in the process of achieving that control. Control means co-ordination, organization. It necessarily connotes things brought together. Unity represents the end; variety the means available for bringing about that end. Both notions emerge as objects of thought only in a disturbed situation. They are categories of reflective, not of immediate, experience. It is entirely true, however, that reflective analysis of particular unity-in-variety situations will bring to light different component parts and different arrangements of the content in which we read off these terms. The content and pattern of one unity-in-variety situation may be meager, of another rich. There are all degrees and kinds of unity in variety. Just what they are is the problem of the distinctive types of concrete experience.

One kind of unity in variety we undoubtedly find in the aesthetic experience when we subject it to analysis. Beyond such analysis much aesthetic theory has not gone; and it gives us the various aesthetic categories read off in terms of unity in variety. If we keep in mind that neither group is really understandable without the other, we may safely say that the formal categories fall into two groups, according as they lay chief stress on the concept of unity or on the concept of variety. Ancient thought was more impressed with the unity of the work of art. Modern thought, finding a richer content in its art products and taking more interest in processes, in activity, has dwelt on the concept of variety. Into the first group fall such categories as symmetry, proportion, balance, harmony, simplicity; into the second, such categories as order, rhythm, contrast, reconciliation of opposites. One group calls attention to the total effect, the wholeness, completeness, *togetherness*, of the aesthetic object as apprehended in the aesthetic experience; the other calls attention to its richness, fulness, intricacy of subordinate arrangement. We may go so far as to say that atten-

tion to one aspect will give us a predominating sense of relief, repose—the “cathartic” effect of the aesthetic; the other will give us a predominating sense of enhancement of life, of stimulation.

But we no sooner get the two sets of categories apart for the sake of descriptive convenience than we have to bring them together again in discussing any one of them. All the terms that we have ranged under unity obviously mean nothing more than a certain disposition within the whole, of the constituent elements revealed to analysis. Symmetry, for instance, means a certain mutual interrelation of parts giving a specific character to the whole. The same thing holds true of the other categories of unity. They must be interpreted in terms of the categories of variety. On the side of variety, the specific categories are even more dependent upon the concept of unity, allying themselves with one or another of its categories. Thus order becomes a term of aesthetic significance, not merely when thought of as order of parts with reference to a whole—it has no meaning whatever apart from that—but as order of a particular kind, arrangement according to a pattern, involving symmetry, harmony, proportion, etc. Contrast, too, is always within a whole. There is no possibility of it for consciousness between two things that are not in some sort of relation. But in itself it does not make an experience aesthetic. There are all sorts of non-aesthetic contrasts. Again there must be co-operating and defining factors of balance, symmetry, etc. Rhythm is the most definitely aesthetic of the single categories I have named as falling under the concept of variety, and plays an increasingly important part in the literature of aesthetic theory. It, too, of course, has meaning only with reference to a whole; and even it names an experience that, unless it conforms to certain conditions, is likely to become monotonous and positively displeasing aesthetically. All this merely goes to show that to treat these categories in isolation, and aside from further investigation of specific aesthetic situations, is a profitless shuffling of counters, leading to no real explanation and likely to entangle in barren discussion of the relation of the One to the Many. The aesthetic experience, at its best, is highly concrete and distinctive, with a solid core in the aesthetic object; and the categories find their point of attachment and their chance for elucidation within it and not in abstraction from it.

This concrete aesthetic experience I have described as the embrace within one comprehensive co-ordination of a large group of synchronous minor activities. Under such conditions the unity attained and felt is active, functional, not passive, static. Within the area of organization there is a constant shift and play of activity, and a corresponding sense

of interest, fulness, life. The large co-ordination is exceedingly delicate, and is able to maintain itself only through constant tensions and resolutions, changes and compensations, among the various motor elements involved. The more elaborate such a system of balanced forces, the more delicate the equilibrium and the greater the necessity for continual redistribution of strains. It is impossible to avoid using physical terms here, though in dealing with psychical matters they are employed figuratively rather than literally. The aesthetic situation as a whole may persist for a considerable length of time; but it does so, not as a static whole, but by virtue of a series, or many interwoven series, of compensations and substitutions.

It is in terms of these combinations and redistributions, these various tensions and relaxations, that the categories of unity and variety must be interpreted, if they are to have any genuine value for aesthetic theory.

With regard to the character of the activities thus contributing to the experience as a whole, we can, at the present state of our knowledge say no more than that they comprise, with little doubt, the established organic rhythms of breathing, heart-beat, fatigue and recuperation, making up normally the remoter fringe of any consciousness, the more obscure physiological rhythms of innervation, anabolis and katabolis, etc., not entering into consciousness at all, and the psychological rhythm of attention and its attendant operations. When all these fall into certain relations, and reinforce one another, we have, not their mere fusion or summation, but a new thing, the aesthetic experience.

This experience, unitary as it is for consciousness, not only represents an incessant flicker of change among its complex constituents, but also admits of diversity in the character of those constituents themselves.) It is matter of common observation that experiences which *feel* alike may show upon examination quite different elements. It is the width and pattern of the resultant whole rather than the nature of the particular minor activities bound up in it that produce the aesthetic situation. And yet it is the differences in the elements that at least partly account for the individual character of different types of aesthetic experience. Each specific experience of the same object, in fact, has its own *tang*, the something about it that makes it *this* experience and not the one before it. This is, of course, only saying that no two experiences can be identical. Otherwise, we should not be able to distinguish them. The new experience, has woven into it associatively the activities of the past experience, and possesses besides the fringe of present sensational processes. This does not mean that they exist unmodified side by side. We have a new experi-



ence, a concrete new situation, only when there is active reorganization, when, within limits, every element is actively "made over." By "within limits" I mean nothing more than that the experience does not break down as a whole, become bipolar, and demand entire reorganization. I am speaking now of immediate experiences, of which the aesthetic is a type, in which the unitary character is not lost. The situation remains for consciousness an unbroken whole with a certain emotional coloring, due to the minor readjustments going on within it.

Each type of aesthetic experience, such as listening to music, looking at a picture, following a drama, or reading poetry, has its peculiar *timbre*, due to the special activities involved, the special emotional reverberation. But what makes them all aesthetic is their *jeel*, and that is due to the way in which the constituent elements are combined far more than to their character in themselves. Two experiences, made up largely of different elements, may have approximately the same *jeel*. This is roughly illustrated by the ease with which we translate one sort of experience into the values of another. In its simplest form it is shown in "colored hearing" and other forms of synaesthesia. Aesthetically a sunset may give us the sense of hearing a piece of music or reading a poem. The emotion, the mood, aroused is similar. One often comes across popular generalizations of this sort that indicate more than mere intellectual comparison. Berenson says that Michael Angelo is the Milton, Titian the Shakespeare, of Italian painting.<sup>1</sup> To me, Beethoven suggests both Angelo and Milton; Chopin suggests Shelley; Wagner, Browning. The artists and the critics justly reprobate such comparisons as superficial and as tending to blur the essential differences among the arts. But from the side of the analysis of immediate aesthetic experiences, they call attention to the common basis by reason of which we call them all aesthetic.

It is, then, the possibility of a large number of substitutions that gives the aesthetic its distinctive character, its richness and potency. These substitutions may be said to be of two sorts—the substitution of one activity for another in successive experiences, and the mutual substitutibility of activities within any one manifold. Both, of course, enter into the total effect of any concrete aesthetic experience. The first sort I have just noted in the common emotional tone of different activity complexes; the second is only another way of putting the fact that the constituents of any aesthetic complex support instead of interfere with one another. It is important to keep in mind, moreover, that by substitutibility is never meant identity in a structural sense. We never substitute one thing for

<sup>1</sup> *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, First Series, p. 45.

another if the two are exactly alike. It is only when they are in some respects different, but do the same work, meet the same requirements. It is this aspect of the aesthetic that prevents our tying it to any fixed content or technique. The shores of the history of criticism are strewn with the wrecks of such attempts. The permanency of great works of art depends upon substitution no less than does the creation of new forms. Our aesthetic reaction to Greek sculpture or to Italian painting is undoubtedly different from that of their contemporaries. It is a fabric woven of different colors and lusters, shot with different images. But because it also is wrought of divers threads, embroidered with divers blended figures, it too is true aesthetic stuff of the loom. Our sense of strangeness and trouble in looking at a picture of Manet's or at a Japanese print, in listening to a tone-poem of Richard Strauss's, means that as yet the substitutions among the activities aroused are only partial. Trains of associated images, even certain bodily processes, are as yet recalcitrant. Our aesthetic co-ordination is still in the making. Furthermore, the substitutional capabilities of the aesthetic account for its social value and also for the well-known fact that an experience of the same object may be to us at one time aesthetic, at another time, not.

It is not to be forgotten at this point that substitutions occur in all types of mental operation. They are the gist of the selective, symbolizing work of attention, of judgment, the essence of the concept. Baldwin uses the principle of substitution to account for change in both the phylogenetic and the ontogenetic series; it offers him his only real escape from the stereotyped repetitions of his circular or imitative reactions.<sup>1</sup> I do not advance the notion of substitution as affording a new type of explanation of the aesthetic experience. It is really implied in all that has been said hitherto regarding the aesthetic as a particular form of mental organization. It serves merely to bring out at a fresh angle the richness and fulness of its constitution.

Experimental psychology in these days is devoting considerable attention to the investigation of certain of the formal aesthetic categories. It has dealt chiefly with symmetry and rhythm, both as being primary phenomena from which the other categories may be derived and as lending themselves most successfully to experimental procedure. The work of Fechner<sup>2</sup> on the "golden section" is classic; and in his footsteps have

<sup>1</sup> *Mental Development*, pp. 257-59; cf. pp. 22-25.

<sup>2</sup> *Vorschule der Aesthetik*, Vol. I, chap. xiv.

followed Witmer,<sup>1</sup> Pierce,<sup>2</sup> Jonas Cohn,<sup>3</sup> Dr. Puffer,<sup>4</sup> and others. Bolton,<sup>5</sup> Meumann,<sup>6</sup> and Robert MacDougall<sup>7</sup> have made notable investigations of rhythm.

It is interesting to note that two recent studies in the aesthetics of visual form, Dr. Puffer's *Studies in Symmetry* and Mr. Angier's *The Aesthetics of Unequal Division*, both reduce asymmetrical forms having aesthetic value to cases of substitutional symmetry. In fact, they imply that it is only as symmetry becomes to some extent substitutional that it becomes in itself aesthetic. Dr. Puffer, dealing chiefly with material of high content value, reproductions of European masterpieces of painting, but comparing them with specimens of primitive art and examining them as examples of space composition, finds that "only in the course of artistic development do we find the rigid, yet often unbalanced, symmetry relaxing into a free substitutional symmetry."<sup>8</sup> By balance she means a symmetry attained through equivalents or substitutes instead of through mere reduplication of parts. Angier, going back to Fechner's problem of the most pleasing division of a line, finds that the seeming preference for unsymmetrical division is really a preference for a "subtle symmetry," since the motor innervation demanded in following the longer line is balanced by the combination of innervation and inhibition, or, more correctly, by the innervation of antagonistic muscles, in following the shorter line. This gives consciousness of an equal expenditure of energy. He calls this "a symmetry of a higher order, because objectively the disposition of its elements is not graphically obvious, and psychophysically the quantitative unity is attained through a greater variety of processes."<sup>9</sup>

These results are in line with the position taken by modern painters and art critics that the essence of the aesthetic value of a picture lies in "composition," in pattern or arrangement of parts, not in subject-matter or associative elements in general. While these may reinforce the primary aesthetic or "formal" elements in a picture, they can never in them-

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophische Studien*, Vol. IX.

<sup>2</sup> *Psychological Review*, Vol. I.

<sup>3</sup> *Allgemeine Aesthetik* (1901).

<sup>4</sup> *Psychological Review*, Monograph Supplements, Vol. IV.

<sup>5</sup> *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. VI.

<sup>6</sup> *Philosophische Studien*, Vol. X.

<sup>7</sup> *Psychological Review*, Monograph Supplements, Vol. IV.

<sup>8</sup> *Harvard Psychological Studies; Psychological Review*, Monograph Supplements, Vol. IV, p. 539.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 561.



selves make it aesthetic, when the other requirements are lacking. The aesthetic is essentially structural, not representational.<sup>1</sup> This psychological and artistic view is borne out by a genetic survey of art forms. The arts of primitive and natural peoples begin for the most part in rude design, symbol, pattern, and only gradually take on a representational character.<sup>2</sup>

The studies in rhythm are so complicated and so detailed that citation from them would hardly serve our purpose. In general, they show that rhythms having distinct aesthetic value give marked evidence of subjective substitutions and of progressive integration of parts into larger wholes. Rhythm invariably means control, and that control which involves the highest degree of subordination and integration of elements is that which is most fully reported in consciousness. Such control of many factors is on the psychical side the aesthetic experience. Rhythms having aesthetic value are found on examination to be far from being as simple as they are for consciousness. R. H. Stetson, in his paper on "Rhythm and Rhyme," says in a passage already quoted in part (p. 31):

The free reading of verse easily passes over into singing or chanting. When this happens, the thing most noticeable in the new form is its regulated, automatic, and somewhat rigid character. . . . Along with this precision of all the movements comes a tendency to beat a new rhythm. This accompanying rhythm is simpler and broader in character; it is a kind of long swell on which the speech movements ripple, . . . a third rhythm may appear to mark the main stresses of the two processes . . . . The essential character of musical rhythm, as contrasted with the rhythm of both simple sounds and of verse, is just this co-ordination of a number of rhythms which move side by side. This is the reason for the immense complexity and variety of musical rhythms. The processes check each other, and furnish a basis for a precision and elaborateness of rhythmical movements in the individual parts which is quite impossible in a simple rhythm.<sup>3</sup>

Rhythm is, of course, only one factor in the total aesthetic effect of modern music; but it furnishes the fundamental framework which carries the subtler tonal factors. Rhythm, psychologically considered, means the satisfaction of recurrent expectation. After the first few repetitions of the objective interval or period—one repetition is held sufficient to initiate the rhythm experience—the mind looks forward, is on the stretch for the recurrence of the stimulus. Where such satisfaction of expectation is long delayed or irregular, consciousness is unpleasantly toned, and seeks

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Dow, *Composition*; H. R. Poore, *Pictorial Composition*; etc.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ernest Fenolosa, "The Fine Arts," *Elementary School Teacher*, Vol. V.

<sup>3</sup> *Harvard Psychological Studies, Psychological Review*, Monograph Supplements, Vol. IV, pp. 465, 466.

to readjust the situation, but where, as in rhythm, the alternations of expectation and satisfaction are regular, the situation maintains itself, and the tensions and relaxations mutually reinforce. If there was no growth, no construction, however, the experience would soon become monotonous; and this is, indeed, the case with the persistence of a simple rhythm. But literally the experience never is the repetition of a single, unchanging element. Each new beat of the rhythm is modified psychologically by all that has gone before, and modifies all that comes after, so that both the expectation and the fulfilment in each case is different from the one preceding it. That is, the rhythm experience is a whole, in which each part is shaped by its position within that whole. MacDougall says on this point:

There is properly no repetition of identical sequences in rhythm. . . . It . . . is, indeed, in strict terms, inconceivable; for by its very recurrence it (the sequence) is differentiated from the initial presentation, and combines organically with the latter to produce a more highly synthetic form. And however often this process is repeated, each representation of the original sequence will have become an element functionally unique and locally unalterable in the last and highest synthesis which the whole series presents.<sup>1</sup>

Whether the rhythmic whole be a measure or a symphony, each element is an increment. The unique power of rhythm is that it binds together a complex dynamic whole, so that the end is felt from the beginning, and yet is not revealed in all its richness until the final moment of attainment. Such a description is practically what we have given as the essence of the aesthetic experience; and we may safely say, I think, that at the heart of every aesthetic experience is rhythm.

All the recent experimental studies of specific aesthetic categories emphasize the motor or activity elements entering in, and the complex interrelations of these constituents. They therefore corroborate, so far as they go, the position I have taken that the aesthetic categories must find their place and explanation within the total aesthetic experience or situation.

Keeping this reference to the total experience in mind, we get the immediate bearings of such terms as the "significant," the "characteristic," and of such formulations of method as the principles of economy and restraint. These are obviously derived more directly from the immediate experience than are the formal categories. (They essay to give the total effect of such an experience or the means by which it is achieved. When one asks, "Significant, characteristic of what?" one is obliged to answer

<sup>1</sup> "The Structure of Simple Rhythm Forms," *Psychological Review*, Monograph Supplements, Vol. IV, pp. 318, 319.

at first sight, "Of the object." But it is the object as felt, as a part of the aesthetic consciousness, not as detached, as reflected upon afterward. The terms represent an effort to catch and to crystallize the entire aesthetic experience, to sum up its unitary and concrete nature, its high individuality. If we accept my description of the aesthetic as involving the incorporation into one co-ordination of a host of minor activities, the terms "significant" and "characteristic" give a fairly adequate account of the situation from the conscious side. It is, to use terms that I have already overworked, an immediate sense of the fulness, satisfactoriness, exhaustiveness of the situation—a feeling of enhanced vitality and power. In such a frame of mind one seems to penetrate into the heart of things, to realize emotionally all their possibilities. Nothing is lacking, yet nothing is superfluous. In becoming aesthetically identified with the object, all incongruities and excrescences cease to exist for consciousness. The experience may well be called significant, characteristic. It takes up into itself all the resources of the situation. It is familiar because we feel ourselves so thoroughly at home in it; it is novel because there is a sort of joyous wonder at having come so suddenly into possession. The moment is peculiarly intimate, peculiarly our own, at the same time that our personality is enlarged to its widest scope.

The term "economy,"<sup>1</sup> though applied by the outside observer, is relevant to the description of such an immediate experience because any awareness of waste or strain would at once indicate the presence of activities not thoroughly wrought into the co-ordination, and would reveal discordant, and therefore non-aesthetic and non-characteristic, elements in the situation. Restraint applies to the high degree of functional inhibition present in an experience where many activities persist in a state of counterpoise and equilibrium. But both terms may be used with regard to any form of co-ordination, and so are not of prime importance in aesthetics.

## II. THE TYPES OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Hitherto I have considered the aesthetic experience as if it were an immediate experience always broadly of one type, however much the objective media might differ. But the naïve person and the critic alike recognize certain distinctive types, having their own characteristics, although falling under the general category of the aesthetic. The tendency among critics has been, on the whole, to magnify the differences rather than the

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Spencer, *Essays Scientific, Political and Speculative*, Vol. II, essays on "The Philosophy of Style" and on "Gracefulness;" Bernard Bosanquet, *History of Aesthetic*, pp. 386, 387.



likenesses among them, and to set the sublime, the tragic, the comic, over against the beautiful proper, as in some sense contrasted and irreducible forms. The question of the place and significance of the ugly has also been a source of perplexity and dispute.

Here I can only show that these types of experience are not inconsistent with my statement of the aesthetic. As in any other form of conscious experience, the degree of organization attained in the aesthetic, the specific habits or groups of habits most intimately involved, and the relations of activities to one another within the co-ordination may vary widely within the limits marking off the aesthetic as a distinctive type of experience. These limits I have described as the attainment of control, not through a dropping-out of most of the elements of conflict, or through a successive, serial resolution of tensions, but through the incorporation of all the elements concerned into one comprehensive whole.

It should have been made clear by this stage of the argument, however, that the "pause of satisfaction" does not emerge merely at the culmination of this process of organization. Neither does it remain stable throughout the entire process. The incorporation of all the various activities is not literally, but only approximately, simultaneous. In some experiences these stages in the process reveal themselves directly to consciousness; in others they are so welded together that they reveal themselves only to artificial analysis. As in the life-history of all co-ordinations, the movement is undoubtedly from the larger, more comprehensive adjustments to the finer and more delicate. As this process proceeds, the aesthetic experience buds and then ripens. Moreover, since the whole, though unitary for consciousness, is not simple, but a congeries of lesser activities, there exist within it at any one moment a host of minor strains and resolutions, all tending more or less to fall into accord with what we may call the major rhythm, but succeeding or falling short according to the stage of the process and their own relation to it. In other words, we have present both the successive and simultaneous substitutions which we have described, the rhythmic advance, of which each phase is determined both by its place in the whole and by its own make-up. The "patterns" which this interplay of elements may assume are, at the present stage of our knowledge, innumerable. Language is too clumsy to convey an adequate notion of the intricacy and delicacy of mental operations. In such a situation it is quite possible to think of individual minor activities remaining relatively stubborn, bound up less integrally with the whole, and so interfering to a certain extent and tending to escape. Such an account has inevitably an associationist cast, as if one were thinking of the aesthetic experience as a

mere aggregation of mental units somehow brought into artificial connection and individually unmodified. But the whole drift of the discussion should forbid such interpretation.

As regards the specific activities taking part in any concrete aesthetic experience, we find normally in each a cluster of what are often called "fundamental habits," motor-visual, motor-auditory, motor-visual-auditory, and the like. In these the co-ordinations are so close and so long established that they give, on the psychological side, examples of complete fusion. When drawn within the aesthetic co-ordination they have much to do with determining its character, with setting its rhythms. They are themselves modified in being subjected to the control of the larger co-ordination, but they give it a dominant coloring. Into relation with these habit-complexes fall the various physiological rhythms, and the subtler activities of memory and imagination.

A concrete aesthetic situation, then, has its character determined by a number of specific conditions. It may involve this or that cluster of fundamental habits. It may go through certain recognizable stages of development from the partially to the completely aesthetic. It may retain or shake out, in the course of its progress, minor aspects that are not in themselves aesthetic, though caught transiently within the aesthetic whole. These elements must not, of course, be sufficiently in opposition to disintegrate the major co-ordination. It is important also to consider that these relatively non-aesthetic elements may have a positive aesthetic value in prolonging the experience as a whole. The more complete and perfect a co-ordination is, the less likely is it to persist. It has fulfilled its purpose and begins to fall apart through its own effect as a stimulus. In fact, any aesthetic experience, as I have said, maintains itself only through its play of tensions, its give-and-take of equivalents, its balance of stimulation and recuperation. The aesthetic character of the most absorbed enjoyment of a statue, a picture, a piece of music, is due to the balances achieved through "substitutional symmetry" or rhythm. There is a certain "struggle of activities" even here, though the total effect is one of assuagement and serenity. In other cases the struggle itself comes into consciousness, although never as confusion, but always bounded and controlled by a tranquilizing sense of the situation in its entirety.

Within the bounds of this general description there is room, I think, for all the modifications of the aesthetic. What we mean by pure beauty seems to me to be represented by the co-ordination that approximates most closely to the simultaneous blending of all the constituents, to a fusion, so that we have little consciousness of stages within the process, of the pat-

tern of construction as such, but a sudden and widely diffused sense of agreement among all our activities, an awareness of enhancement and enlargement of life, of freedom and harmony. And this is by no means incompatible with a sense of tranquillity and attainment; in fact, it necessitates it. What is often spoken of as the poignancy of beauty belongs, as I see it, to its dying fall, to the moment when the body of emotional satisfaction aroused rolls back over the entire organism, and the experience begins to fall asunder. Keats catches this aspect of beauty incomparably when he says of Melancholy:

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;  
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
Bidding adieu.

Such realization of the sadness of beauty comes, however, at the moment subsequent to that of total absorption in the experience. It is an emotion that is the first-fruits of reflection upon the situation. Literature runs over with laments at the fleeting nature of beauty; but such transitoriness is of its very essence as immediate experience, however much we may hold reflectively that "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever." It is a joy that we may experience over and over; it does not last long at any one time.

Modern aesthetics, in its reaction from the metaphysical interpretations of beauty, has fought shy of definitions, and has at times gone to the length of denying that beauty plays a necessary part in the aesthetic experience. But if we take beauty in some sense as our aesthetic standard, meaning that experience in its most conspicuous and concentrated form, there seems no valid reason for abandoning a term so deeply rooted in the vocabularies both of aesthetic theory and of daily life.

The sublime is more difficult to place with reference to the aesthetic. Its nature has long been a theme for controversy. Both Burke<sup>1</sup> and Kant,<sup>2</sup> as is well known, distinguished it from the beautiful, making it to some extent antagonistic to it and bringing it under only their most general statement of the aesthetic. Burke's treatment is in terms of physiology and of the nature of the object; Kant's is in terms of the philosophically subjective and objective—phraseology that I have sought to avoid—and can be understood and criticized only in the light of his discussion of the aesthetic judgment and its relations to the intellectual judgment. He makes the sublime more subjective, more emotional than the beautiful, not

<sup>1</sup> *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Part IV, sections 1-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Critique of Judgment* (translated by Bernard), Part I, Book II.



so dependent upon the form of the object. "No sensible form can contain the sublime properly so called."<sup>1</sup> "The beautiful," he says, "directly brings with it a feeling of the furtherance of life . . . but the Sublime is . . . produced by the feeling of a momentary checking of the vital powers and a consequent stronger outflow of them."<sup>2</sup>

Unfair as it may be to enlist Kant in the service of a discussion so alien to his own, this last statement is in line with my own rough formulation of the sublime, though my mode of approach is more like Burke's. In terms of the aesthetic situation, the sublime, as I conceive it, stands for a co-ordination so extraordinarily wide that all the activities bound up in it, particularly the groups of fundamental habits, are, so to speak, on the stretch to compass it, are in unstable equilibrium within it. This imparts to the experience as a whole a feeling of widely diffused, though not excessive, strain. It is a feeling similar to that which we have to a slight extent when we take an unusually long breath. Though every aesthetic experience involves inhibition and concomitant emotional consciousness, they are here extraordinarily widespread. If the experience is prolonged, it verges upon the unpleasant, and the co-ordination collapses. Such a situation leads to reflection upon the ordinary level of experience and this exalted level, and to a comparison of the self in the two experiences, or of the self and the object embodying grandeur or power. This comparison contributes to an enlarged view of the self, to a widening of the boundaries of one's personal experience. The effect of the sublime, then, seems to me to be reached through what we may call the large circumference of the co-ordination. I cannot agree with Santayana's statement that "unity by inclusion gives us the beautiful; unity by exclusion, opposition, and isolation gives us the sublime."<sup>3</sup> To me the sense of the sublime arises just because the felt unity includes so much. It is true, however, that the awareness is of the unity rather than of its various elements. In general, I accept his further description, though the word "passive" seems to me subject to misinterpretation. "Both are pleasures; but the pleasure of the one is warm, passive, and pervasive; that of the other cold, imperious, and keen. The one identifies us with the world; the other raises us above it."<sup>3</sup> One, I think, brings out all the implications and possibilities of our ordinary life; the other lifts us to a new level that affects us with a breath of the strange and the austere. We may say, perhaps, that one possesses and one lacks, at least in any marked degree, the "famili-

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of Judgment*, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *The Sense of Beauty*, pp. 235, 236.

arity feeling." And they dissolve into different types of reflection. But they are both aesthetic experiences.

In a brief statement of the relations of the tragic, the comic, etc., to my general view of the aesthetic experience, I shall not attempt to deal with the extensive literature centering about these terms, especially about the tragic. The classic discussions from Aristotle's down I must assume to be familiar. In the drama, whether tragedy or comedy, we have the unfolding of the aesthetic experience in its most complex and sustained, if not in its purest and most concentrated, form. The various stages in the development of the experience here come into consciousness as recognized elements in the total effect. We get on a scale large enough for observation the whole movement and design of the aesthetic. And we see that, while it is built on the "hunting-pattern" of active conflict, yet this conflict in all its manifestations is given unity of effect, maintains a moving equilibrium by means of an elaborate balance of parts, a highly organized series of substitutions and compensations of both the sequential and simultaneous types.

Freytag's<sup>1</sup> familiar analysis of dramatic construction illustrates the successive or rhythmic sort of substitutions. He schematizes the action of a play by means of a pyramid, or, more accurately, by a triangle, sometimes equilateral with the apex at the mechanical middle of the play, sometimes with one side longer, sometimes the other. One side represents the rising action; the other, the falling; the apex, their point of acutest conflict, the crisis. Acts and scenes, though in some respects conventional divisions, show also, in the hands of a master of dramatic form, a similar rise and fall. They are the smaller ripples of a larger rhythm, each determined by those that precede and follow, as well as by the whole of which it is a component.<sup>2</sup> Where there seem to be irregularities analysis reveals expenditure of equivalent amounts of energy as clearly as it may be seen in the case of the unequal division of a line or in the different compensatory values of bright and dark colors.<sup>3</sup>

Professor R. G. Moulton's study of *Macbeth*<sup>4</sup> brings out admirably the various ways in which the rhythmic balance of the play is preserved without the slightest sacrifice of variety and interest. The play as a whole deals with a crime and its punishment, a sin and its retribution, a flawed character and its disintegration. In the first half we have Macbeth's series of

<sup>1</sup> *The Technique of the Drama* (translated by E. J. McEwan).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. Woodbridge, *The Drama: Its Law and Its Technique*.

<sup>3</sup> E. Pierce, "The Aesthetics of Simple Forms," *Psychological Review*, Vol. I, p. 494.

<sup>4</sup> *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*, pp. 127-43.

successes; in the second half, his series of failures. Banquo in the first half is balanced by Macduff in the last half. The swift succession of events in the first part, the tense excitement and horror caused by the murder of Duncan, are balanced by the slower succession of lesser and somewhat confused events, with their frequent shiftings of scene, in the second part. The tremendous poise and self-control of Lady Macbeth at the time of the murder and after Macbeth's accession to the throne are balanced by the pitiable self-revelation of the sleep-walking scene. The reliance of Macbeth upon the outward things of life and upon outward supernatural agencies is balanced by his ironical betrayal by all these props. In general, the slower and less individually significant events of the second half of the play roll up, as no sharp, decisive action could do, the full weight of punishment for such crimes and weaknesses as Macbeth's. At the last, his death comes, not as a capping horror, but rather as affording relief and escape both for him and for the spectator. Death, Macbeth as a brave soldier had never feared. It is life rather under conditions of collapse and dishonor that would be a harrowing and useless prolongation of agony for him and for the witnesses of his career; and so would mar the unity of the whole.

At every stage in *Macbeth*, too, may be detected instances of intricate and subtle "substitutional symmetry," the playing-off of one contemporaneous element or group of elements against another. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Macbeth and Banquo, the mutual contrasts or heightenings of setting and action—most of all, the competing motives, doubts, and purposes within each soul—make essential contribution to the total effect.<sup>1</sup> In no case are these elements random and purposeless—they are governed by the general laws operative in all aesthetic structure and pattern.

Such an account gives only a skeleton of the multiple ways in which this play illustrates the forms of aesthetic balance. Its substitutions and compensations are so skilfully effected that there is no suggestion of artifice. Its moments of tragic horror are compensated for by periods of repose or by gradual diminution of strain. It shows the aesthetic as opposed to the non-aesthetic use of contrast. Its content value is so great as to render

<sup>1</sup> The above discussion was written before the appearance of Dr. Ethel D. Puffer's book, *The Psychology of Beauty*. It is obvious that what I have called "contemporaneous balance" she has worked out fully and made the essential dramatic element, "confrontation" or balanced tension. The extent to which I am indebted to her is indicated by my borrowing the alternative term that I have used, "substitutional symmetry," from her "Studies in Symmetry." Yet to my mind she hardly does justice to the forward and backward movement in the drama, the rhythmic or sequential balance.



difficult an analysis in terms of bare aesthetic construction. But, in spite of its violence and bloodshed, it "purges through pity and terror" as truly as did the noblest of Greek tragedies. It leads to thought of self in relation to large ethical and spiritual problems, thus bringing in the element of the sublime that is essential in all true tragedy.

I have used as illustration a particular art product. But the drama can never be considered intelligibly apart from the immediate experience of the spectator or creator, his aesthetic participation in the situation. I have, of course, made that experience the central point of my entire discussion, so that it is not necessary to do more than refer to it here.

Keeping in mind this aesthetic identification of the spectator with the structural development of the drama, I make bold to say that the more I study the drama, especially the tragic drama, the more fully it reveals itself as pre-eminently the type of all aesthetic experience. Its content is, of course, varied and distinctive; its tensions and relaxation, stimulation and repose, substitutions and compensations, are conspicuously above the level of conscious discrimination. But its "pattern" may be traced in all forms of art, all aesthetic situations. It is shown most clearly in music, but it underlies even the enjoyment of a picture or a landscape. We have got beyond the point where we characterize any manifestation of the aesthetic attitude as passive or static. All, in their degree, are active, constructive, rhythmic. This may seem an extreme position to take; and it obviously does not refer to the art product in itself or to the reflective estimate of the person after the aesthetic experience. But it is a view that cannot be alien to the type of thinker who regards all thought as in some sense an inward drama.

The peculiar aesthetic effect of comedy and the comic has long been a puzzle, and has perhaps been made a greater puzzle than need be. It has even been said to lie almost wholly beyond the borders of the aesthetic. But that is arbitrarily to shut out experiences that are rich in aesthetic satisfaction. There seems to be no doubt that the genuinely comic experience, whether only of the moment or prolonged throughout a drama, is immediate and self-inclosed, having its own pattern and unity, and demanding the intimate participation of the spectator. Like tragedy, it has its rhythm of stimulation and relief; like it, though by means of widely different emotional effects, it offers a basis for new levels of achievement, new envisagement of non-aesthetic situations.

The various theoretical discussions of the comic, whether they fall under the general heads of the "degradation theory," the "baffled expectation theory," or the incongruity theory, explicitly so called, all imply that incongruity of some sort, deviation from established standard, contrast, is an

essential element in the comic.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty with all these general statements is that so many cases of incongruity can be educed, in which there is no trace of the comic. This has led to the further specification in some of them that the thing compared with the norm shall be smaller, more trifling, not larger and more important. Such a view is illustrated by Herbert Spencer's phrase, "descending incongruity,"<sup>2</sup> by Lipps's little thing masquerading as great and suddenly revealed in its true character.<sup>3</sup> Here we have various modifications of the "degradation theory" baldly stated by Hobbes. They all involve, furthermore, some recognition of Kant's view of the part played by expectation and surprise—the irruption of the unexpected into the incomplete situation dominated by the expectant attitude.

In general, the comic is more difficult to handle apart from specified content than is the tragic. The most illuminating treatise that we have in English, George Meredith's *Essay on Comedy*, is rich in concrete illustrative matter. But Meredith's insistence upon a complex and polished society as essential to the flowering of the spirit of true comedy suggests a consideration that may be translated, at least partially, into the terms used in this discussion. His recognition of the social as playing an important part in comedy is borne out from the psychological and genetic points of view by one of the most recent books on the subject, Sully's *Essay on Laughter*, in which the writer says: "Much, at least, of our laughter . . . may undoubtedly be regarded as directed to something *which fails to comply with a social requirement*, yet so trifling that we do not feel called upon to judge the shortcoming severely." He sums up the social advantages of the comic as follows: "the maintenance of customs which from the point of view of the community, or of some class of the community, are to be regarded as good, the keeping-down of vices and follies, and the furtherance of social co-operation." Psychologically he shows that the social value of the comic resides in its immediate and high contagiousness. "Laughter is social in the sense that it is essentially choral and so uniting. A gathering of yokels at a fair laughing at a clown tends for the moment to become a coherent group; and the habit of laughing together will tend to consolidate the group."<sup>4</sup> This has to do, however, with the effect of the comic rather than with its intrinsic character.

In making a rough formulation of the comic in terms of the considerations used in this paper, I should say that in the first place the co-ordina-

<sup>1</sup> J. Sully, *Essay on Laughter*, chap v.

<sup>2</sup> *The Physiology of Laughter: Essays*, Vol. I.

<sup>3</sup> *Asthetik*, pp. 575-84.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 139, 255.

tion set up in the comic experience is less wide in its range than is that in the tragic experience, makes less arduous demands upon all parts of the organism. It never reaches the compass that gives rise to a sense of the sublime. Its strains and tensions are less keen; its texture, so to speak, is more loosely woven and flexible. There is a marginal supply of energy ready to spill over into laughter through the sluiceways of involuntary discharge. And the character of its substitutions is markedly different. In tragedy the element of expectation plays a controlling rôle; but that of surprise is lacking or subordinate. The alternations of tension and relief are borne on a mounting and then resurgent wave; they are bounded and controlled by a growing awareness of the whole. That is to say, the substitutions involved are those of the component parts, of details within the major rhythm or pattern. There is from the first a "forecast of the end." But in comedy the substitutions seem to be on a larger scale, to involve a sudden *volteface* of expectation, a putting into the place of what we have been looking for, of something equivalent so far as amount of activity is concerned, but of markedly different constitution. This quick exchange of one kind of total co-ordination for another brings in the element of surprise. It serves in itself as a further stimulus, raising the whole activity tone and setting free some of this new energy in laughter. Such an experience freshens and invigorates. It is brisk and tonic. Thus, while the effect of tragedy is more directly emotional and reflective, that of comedy, because of this sudden influx of novel stimulation, is at first reflex and external. In terms of content, the substitution is generally that of individual idiosyncrasy for social convention; in terms of mental pattern, that of a concentrated complex of newly integrated activities for a more extended group of well-established habits. The total amount of energy involved may be the same, or it may be less in the complex substituted. But in either case the distribution of tensions is widely different, and the substitution of one group for the other produces a pleasant shock of surprise. This shock of substitution does not correspond altogether to Kant's nullified or annihilated expectation. The expectation is *satisfied*, but in an unexpected way. This unexpected outcome, however, must not be such as to overthrow the experience altogether. In general, of course, there are unexpected substitutions that are in the highest degree serious and disagreeable. But they disrupt the experience as such. Professor Lillian J. Martin's recent and interesting "Experimental Prospecting in the Field of the Comic"<sup>1</sup> reports that her returns show that contrast, or incongruity, "disappointed"—or, as I should prefer to call it, reversed—expectation,

<sup>1</sup> *American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. XVI.



and novelty—what I have called surprise—are important and prevalent elements in the comic experience. Sully holds that “it seems probable that the part played by surprise in the enjoyment of the laughable has been exaggerated;” instancing our enjoyment of a perfectly familiar comic situation. But psychologically surprise is more subtle than we are wont to regard it; and I am inclined to think that no experience remains comic unless there is present some unexpected turn to present expectation or attitude. What we expect normally is conformity to some sort of social canon; what happens is individual deviation from this canon. This world of social standard and usage is commonly recognized as a world not concerned with life and death issues. It is essentially the world of everyday conduct, of that immediate experience which is too routine to rise to the aesthetic level, except when some aspect of it assumes this pattern of reversed expectation. It is worthy of remark that the more serious things of life appear comic only to two classes of people—those who take them at their face value without probing below the surface, and those who have searched them out so deeply that they have become for them familiar matters of everyday experience. As has been said, one must be very shallow or very profound to find life as a whole the human comedy. Tragedy may teach us to “see life steadily and see it whole;” but Comedy teaches us to find an element of aesthetic satisfaction even in incomplete and partial views.

There may be said to be two forms of ugliness—the ugliness of monotony and the ugliness of confusion. The awareness of either kind arises only as activity becomes in some way arrested, so that attention dwells upon the situation. If no new mode of procedure offers itself within a reasonable time, consciousness becomes suffused in the one case with a feeling of the niggardliness and meagerness of the situation; in the other, with a feeling of jangle and bewilderment. In the first case there is greater store of energy seeking outlet than there are outlets offered; in the other, there are more solicitations than there is equipment for response and co-ordination. But in both cases there is inhibition and consequent emotional disturbance. It is difficult to draw the line between the ugly and the unpleasant or painful. But in general it may be said that the more quickly some specific line of action presents itself, the less consciousness there is of the ugliness of the situation. It is only as we are obliged to contemplate an unsatisfactory situation as a whole, without being able to react toward it in any efficient way, that the iron of the ugly enters into our souls. That a thing be ugly as well as unpleasant or painful, it is necessary that there be a margin of energy over and above that needed to preserve life and to win its obvious

utilities. It is when we are competent to cope with a situation, but are externally prevented, that we know the full meaning of the ugly. If we are exhausted by a routine of narrow habits, if they make unremitting drains upon us, consciousness sinks to a dull level at which there is neither ugliness nor beauty. We live in a world of stimulations rather than of objects. Nothing that approaches aesthetic realization can exist under such fixed and circumscribed conditions. On the other hand, if the crowding and conflicting stimulations threaten disruption of our world or of ourselves, we must either succumb or respond to one stimulus and cease to be aware of the others. Here, too, we do not construct the object with anything like aesthetic fulness. Neither is there chance for the emergence of the ugly, which is temporary engrossment in the unsatisfactoriness of a situation. It is a realization of the essential character of the situation.

As stimulus, this experience of the ugly may function in two ways. It may lead negatively to any sort of action that will offer escape, drown out the recollection of the ugly situation. Or it may lead positively, in the case of the ugliness of poverty of stimulation, to an enrichment of the situation; in the case of the ugliness of confusion, to an endeavor to bring order out of disorder, to achieve harmonious control.

In this sense of positive stimulus the ugly has a place in any theory of aesthetics, at least as a limiting term, marking one sort of initiation of the aesthetic. When the ugly appears as an organic part of the aesthetic experience proper, it practically forfeits its right to the name. As the grotesque, the characteristic, etc., it becomes a contributory factor in the total effect; and has no lawful place therein, unless it is offset by some compensating element or is itself resolved in the culmination of the experience.

## PART IV

### SOME PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

According to the fundamental hypothesis of this analysis of the aesthetic, it marks the culminating stage of development in every reorganization of experience. It may not be recognized as aesthetic, but it constitutes the element of value or worth; and is therefore necessarily present in both the logical and the ethical, using these terms in their customary sense, as applying to typical and distinctive forms of experience. More truly, logic, as dealing with the judgment process, is basic. The aesthetic "pause of satisfaction" marks the attainment of new control; it is the signal for the resumption of action. But for the moment it looks upon the thing to be done as already done. The end and the means coalesce. It stands for a complete redintegration of experience.

This aesthetic aspect or moment in every judgment-process has been remarked. Groos says:

Zweitens darf ein psychologische Aesthetik auch die Lust an der gewonnenen Erkenntniss nicht übersehen, die von dem Verständniss-Urtheil aus in die ästhetische Anschauung eindringt. Meinong nennt in seinen "Untersuchungen zur Wert-Theorie" (1894, S. 36 f) diese Lust ein "Wissengefühl im Gegensatz zu den dem Inhalt entspringenden Wertgefühlen."<sup>1</sup>

Professor Ormond makes the statement more explicitly and holds such a conception essential to a true understanding of judgment.

In the last analysis, if a representation fits into the unity of our world, which, by hypothesis, is the highest conceivable to us in this stage of our experience, it is accepted as true, and becomes a part of our world-representation. . . . Are we not logically drawn to the conclusion, then, that judgment is distinctively an aesthetic function? In view of this question, I think it vitally important that the aesthetic character of judgment should be recognized. . . . The function of judgment is an affair of the aesthetic consciousness, inasmuch as the relation of true and false is constituted by the aesthetic category of unity. . . . But it is also important to be remembered that unity as above developed is epistemological and not distinctively a category of art.<sup>2</sup>

I am not concerned here with Professor Ormond's full theory of judgment. It is sufficient to point out that he considers the unity attained at the con-

<sup>1</sup> *Der ästhetische Genuss*, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> *Foundations of Knowledge*, p. 238.



clusion of the judgment-process essentially aesthetic. This is exactly my view of the "pause of satisfaction."

The aesthetic, then, marks one limit of the judgment, as the experience of "shock," interruption, "pure sensation," in the immediate, not the critical, sense marks the other.<sup>1</sup> The actual overt fulfilment of the judgment must be recognized as a new experience, though it is its goal and often leads to its revision.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, this aesthetic limit, this unification and consolidation of all the aspects of a previously disturbed situation so that we may go on to another situation, is what we ordinarily mean by the formation of a concept. If the emotion-content at the initiation of a logical or judgment process is a sensation, the emotion-content at its conclusion is a concept. Professor Kate Gordon has ably contended for the recognition of the concept as an emotional category:

A concept is an image which functions for more than one situation, or it is the principle of identity between two or more different things—it is generic. . . . Our apprehension by concept is an implicit apprehension; when we say "animal" we are not aware of every animal we ever saw, but we have a feeling of possibilities which could find adequate expression only in a long series of images. . . . What we immediately have is an emotional state—an appreciation without perfect discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

She says further: "Meaning depends upon the possibility of making one thing, an emotion, stand for other things, thoughts, i. e., on the possibility of using symbols." We have already seen the pause of satisfaction has this unitary emotional character, represents many undefined possibilities. So that I think we may fairly say that the concept is not only emotional, but also essentially aesthetic. Looked at in its retrospective aspect, we may call the pause of satisfaction aesthetic; looked at in its prospective aspect, we may call it the concept. But the two aspects are not to be conceived in isolation. They are correlative and interpret each other. This statement of the aesthetic in terms of the concept supplements and makes more adequate the psychological statement made earlier in the discussion regarding the distinction between the "aesthetic image" and the "working image (cf. pp. 17, 18, 32, 33).

The aesthetic moment thus has two uses. It indicates completed reconstruction, and it serves as the "emotional deposit" that is carried over and forms the basis of new experiences, mediate or immediate.

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, *Studies in Logical Theory*, VII, "The Nature of Hypothesis" (M. L. Ashley), pp. 153, 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, "Some Logical Aspects of Purpose" (A. W. Moore), pp. 350, 351.

<sup>3</sup> *The Psychology of Meaning*, pp. 62, 63.

It is the "psychical disposition" upon which both familiarity and growth depend.

In its commonly recognized form as a distinctive type of experience, the aesthetic may be set over against the logical and the ethical in the sense in which immediate experience may be set over against mediate. Both the logical and the ethical represent experience in the making or, rather, in the remaking, under active reconstruction. In them consciousness is divided, reflective; subject and object, means and ends, are still held apart. They stand for struggle and for resolution of difficulties in a more or less serial form. Each, as I have said, involves the aesthetic phase, but it does not ordinarily become conspicuous or detached for consciousness, although it is unmistakable in the glow of intellectual absorption and achievement, in the satisfaction of moral victory. These experiences are sometimes excluded from the aesthetic field, but only through an arbitrary limitation of the term to experience of sense objects.<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that the aesthetic does not attach itself to any one system or type of thought. It furnishes, rather, the basis and stimulus of many possible systems and types of thought. It is, as I have phrased it, a reservoir of experiences.

As a remembered experience the aesthetic has an important function in serving as an ideal of organization, a limit to be reached in every process.) This is implied in what I have said of value as essentially aesthetic. In this character it holds good only as a standard of attainment for each individual process; but, like other stages in particular and recurrent activities, it has been illegitimately generalized into the conception of a fixed goal to be reached or an absolute standard to be lived up to. Spencer's state of "absolute ethics,"<sup>2</sup> F. C. S. Schiller's recent lapse from his "Humanistic" position by the postulation of an aesthetic "Ultimate,"<sup>3</sup> place this fixed and universal ideal in the future; the "Absolute" of the modern idealists, the "Ideas" of Plato, refer it to the past or to a timeless existence. But the abstraction from the situation is alike in both cases.

A ghost of this sort of abstraction clings, as I read it, to Baldwin's statement of what he christens "aesthenomic idealism." He puts it thus:

Philosophy asks: How can we think reality in one thought? . . . The present writer holds that the category of final interpretation must be a *full one*, *not an empty one*, if it is to have concrete significance. . . . It is to be sought in the interpretation of the actual coefficients of the fullest reality of which we

<sup>1</sup> Calkins, *Introduction to Psychology*, p. 283.

<sup>2</sup> *Principles of Ethics*, Vol. I, Part I, "The Data of Ethics," chaps. xv, xvii.

<sup>3</sup> *Humanism*, Essay XI, "On Preserving Appearances."

have experience. . . . The fullest, not the emptiest, the concrete experience, not the logical universal, is the point of view of most adequate interpretation. . . . When we speak of final or absolute experience, what we mean, if we mean anything worth while, is an all-comprehensive and completely full experience.

Now—to state a point of view, not to expand or justify it—there is a type of mental organization which is in certain ways “fuller” than any other, which requires and feeds upon—or, to speak philosophically, “transcends”—the opposition between fact, with its formulations in the Equations of positive science on the one hand, and purposes, ends, values, and Progressions on the other hand; it is what is commonly known as the *Aesthetic* experience. In the essential union of the two points of view respectively of the “producer” and the “spectator” from which a work of art may be approached, we find in our experience the richer whole. In aesthetic contemplation there is the fulfilment at once of the demands for a system of relations essentially finished and formulated—something completely true—and also the satisfactions of a genetic idea of perfect outcome—something divinely fair.<sup>1</sup>

If this means to postulate a final “all-comprehensive and completely full experience,” the notion seems to me inherently contradictory. Such an experience would result either in monotony, lowering, and perhaps even extinction, of consciousness, or in a new experience that was fuller still. It is fairer to Baldwin, and more in keeping with his whole way of thinking, to interpret him as meaning that our fullest aesthetic realization at any one time of the unity of our world is for us at that time “the Absolute,” and that this conception broadens and deepens with the growth and enrichment of our experience.

This is the position that I have attempted to set forth in this treatment of the aesthetic experience. The aesthetic as a highly distinctive type of experience profoundly affects consciousness, and leads to new situations and new demands for reconstruction and wider control. A fixed and unchangeable aesthetic attitude is a contradiction in terms and an anomaly in experience. On the contrary, the richer and more comprehensive the control in any one situation, the greater is the incentive to “things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.”

<sup>1</sup> “Mind and Body from the Genetic Point of View,” *Psychological Review*, Vol. X, pp. 245, 246.





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