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Essential considerations In designing a new system of art education for South African schools and universities

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..'self love, vainglory, impatience, pride, pertinancy; these may be the bane of our peace'. He may be a public benefactor or he may be a public nuisance, but his bent is always active. He is the intellectual romantic, sensitive to the romance of history, whether in its broad outlines or in the details of social life, to the charm of distance whether in time or space.... If the slow extravert is by nature a writer of biography, the quick introvert is the born autobiographer....The mind of the quick introvert is apt to have a polymathic quality, the antithesis of the limited and exact scholarship of the slow extravert. He enjoys the stimulus of travel in known lands in which the beauty is enhanced by the works of man and the romance heightened by memories of history. His natural bent in poetry is to the intellectualized lyric, whether ode or sonnet. He is not burdened, but stimulated by the actual world; he finds it, as William Morris did, 'beautiful and strange and dreadful and worshipful' and does not, like the extravert, seek escape from it in the search for an Absolute or in the pursuit of a mystic religion. His intellectual bent is toward the study of the immediate cause and effect. For this reason he is not truly philosophical, since ultimate causes interest him little. His is rather the naturalism of the medieval school of Chartres, that found in the material world the image of the eternal ideas; or the humanism of Goethe, of a man who 'feels himself one with nature, and consequently looks upon the outside world not as something strange, but as something which he recognises as answering to his own feelings.' His religion is nearly always a cause to be preached and practised for human betterment; he may be a crusader or a revivalist, or he may be a humanitarian agnostic.

If the quick introvert's activity pass into aggression, or if it be frustrated and repressed overmuch, he may become the manic inmate of an asylum.

"The man of the fourth type is as personal in his bent, more simplifying and more discrete (as opposed to concrete) in his thinking and more deliberate in his pace. The slow introvert is less impelled to get things done, but more driven to understand their ultimate philosophical causes. His fellow-men are his natural preoccupation; he does not wish to dominate them, to impress them, or to influence their actions, but to understand them. Unlike the quick introvert, he does not found his thoughts upon an empirical (and sometimes opportunist) basis; his is the self-contemplating reason of the true philosopher....Plato is the predestined master of such thinkers. If the slow introvert's work lies with material things, he will love and respect the inherent qualities of his material; and if among humans, he will have the same respect of their natural qualities. His typical failing is that défaitisme which the Medieval Church called accidie. The slow introvert has a natural bent towards true Christianity, but his religion is ill-defined and pervasive; there is more of Faith and Charity in it than Hope, and nothing of the organised Church. It is, indeed, not a religion in the dogmatic sense, but a philosophy to guide the individual on his pilgrimage through life.

The written word that he can ponder at leisure means much to the slow introvert; he may even be tempted to define all art in its terms, and to say, with Professor Collingwood, that 'Art must be language'. Unless he approach them as a practising artist, the 'appearances' of the world of visible art often inspire him with a certain distrust. Institution and committees are anathema to him as means to action, and only interesting since they show human minds in a complex relation. His ideal world is

á deux, with all his interest focussed on his companion. If the existing world prove too much for him, he falls into melancholia."[19]

With this general, if somewhat divergent, agreement on the classification of psychological types into four categories, separated or linked according to the speed of their reactions, we complete the third stage of our approach to assessing the social significance of the aesthetic activity. It is, of course, not an easy matter to place personalities into these categories, for civilized individuals do not, as a rule, reveal their inmost characteristics - unless they can be placed under the stress of some emotional or physical condition that will expose their real temperaments.

The expression of the personality of the artist in his work, and the genuine response of the spectator is, however, one of the means of arriving at such classifications, and this fact is of major importance in this study.

It must also be noted that an individual of strong character, if he becomes aware of the defects in his temperament may consciously overcome them. This is, in fact, part of the process of human development, and the part which art can play in this process is another of the considerations with which we shall be concerned later.

Out of this mass of information then, we arrive at an understanding of the variations of human personality and we begin to appreciate why it is that what is pleasing in art to one person is displeasing to another, and we also become

19 [illegible] Evans: Taste and Temperament (London 1939) pp. [illegible]

aware of the vast potentialities of this knowledge in solving the problems underlying the practice and appreciation of art. The next step is to investigate the extent to which these psychological types influence the forms of art expression and their appreciation.

4 TEMPERAMENT, AESTHETIC EXPRESSION AND TASTE

Artistic form, as we have seen, "is never merely an end in itself. It is a means of expression. Expression, in turn, must be the expression of something....something which a sensitive and well-trained observer will be able to discover in the work of art itself."[1]

Human beings, through the media of their faculties of sight, touch, taste, smell and hearing, become aware of the universe of which they are part, through the manifestations of nature which can be perceived and interpreted according to individual development and personality. A complete awareness is never revealed at any given instant, but presents itself by degrees to persons endowed with powers of thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition.

"Strictly speaking, then, nature is at each instant of immediate sensuous or introspective awareness a congeries of particular appearances which manifest universality and more complex individuality only to beings endowed with the appropriate cognitive capacities. These capacities are requisite not only to scientific inquiry but to ordinary sense-perception, i.e., to the perception of similarities and differences and to the apprehension of perceptual objects and events as complex individual entities and processes. We perceive, moreover, only what we have learned to perceive; both the individuality of natural objects and their universal traits manifest themselves to us only in the forms in which, and to the extent to which, we have learned to apprehend them. The same factors, mutatis mutandis, condition our awareness of ourselves and of other selves as highly complex individuals, as well as our apprehension

1 Theodore Greene: The Arts and The Arts of Criticism (Princeton 1940) p. 33

of the universal characteristics of man's inner experiences. In both 'worlds', the 'inner' as well as the 'outer', universals are actually present as the pervasive traits of real individuals, but in neither world can either universals or more complex individuals be apprehended as such save in and through selective observation and disciplined reconstruction.

"Expression differs from mere manifestation in being a product of man's conscious, normative experience. It is only because man is capable of interpreting his environment that he has anything to express, and he resorts to expression partly to clarify his own thinking, partly to share with other human beings his interpretative apprehensions. Expression is in essence consciously and purposively motivated.

"Man may express himself spontaneously without explicit awareness of what he is doing and without any explicit motive or intention. But his behaviour is expressive only if it reflects, however indirectly, his conscious and normative processes. When human behaviour fails to reflect these processes, as in the case of purely reflex action, we do not call it expressive; it is merely the agent's physical response to his physical environment. Human expressiveness is most clearly exemplified, on the other hand, in man's deliberate attempt to express his own ideas, emotions, feelings, and volitions in some appropriate medium.

"Again, communication need not be the explicit motive of expression. We can and do express ourselves without reference to an actual or even a potential audience. But normally the motive of human expression is communication. It is imperative for us, as human beings, to communicate our experiences to others, and to share in their experiences, and such inter-personal

communication is, in its very essence, consciously and purposively expressive. Even when we express ourselves in solitude, we assume, for the moment, the double rôle of expositor and recipient. We attempt to realise to ourselves by expressing our own thoughts, feelings, emotions or desires for our own benefit. And only a reflective and purposive being can indulge in such solitary self-revelation. Expression, then, whether directed to social communication or not, is essentially a human activity."[2]

(Because the artist today is denied the recognition given to the other professions, he is forced to accept an esoteric role in the social structure, and there is a tendency amongst the more extremely "modern" artists to assert that they do not care whether their art is a communication or not. But this assertion arises out of a resentment against the attitude of the public - a despairing gesture that should be humoured rather than condemned. "Artists depend to a great extent upon the approval of others. Appreciation from those who understand their works is sweet music to their ears, music leading to further inspiration and endeavour.")[3]

Greene then divides expression into three types, scientific, artistic and moral, which he differentiates as follows :

Scientific expression "is chiefly characterised by its abstractness, its precision, and its lack of emotive, affective, and conative overtones. It is essentially conceptual, for it is only by means of concepts that universals can be abstracted from their empirical context and so apprehended. And it aims at maximum

2 Theodore Greene: Op. cit. pp.258, 259

3 Helen Rees: A Psychology of Artistic Creation (New York 1942) p. 154

precision, both in the description of what is scientifically observed and in the theoretical reconstruction of nature's basic structure and dynamic processes.

"This desire for scientific precision motivates the scientist's continual resort to measurement and dictates his use of words and mathematical formulae. When he uses terms which are current in ordinary discourse he tries to employ them in a non-emotive and non-conative manner. But wherever possible, technical terms are invented which are free from emotive or conative associations and which, as scientifically defined, connote exactly what the scientist wishes them to connote. For still greater conceptual precision the scientist employs mathematical equations. He also makes use of illustrations to facilitate conceptual apprehension, but these are always made as schematic and diagrammatic as possible, and even so they are regarded as inferior in scientifically expressive power to precise verbal description, and greatly inferior to mathematical formulae.[4] They are merely concrete visual aids to abstract conceptual apprehension. They are seldom scientifically expressive in their own right: they resemble allegories in requiring translation into abstract conceptual terms.

The more advanced a science, the more inadequate are such images and diagrams, and the more does the scientest insist that his ideas can be expressed accurately only in the language of scientific prose and mathematical formulae." (It is obvious that Greene overlooked the scientific use of 'images and diagrams' in the science of engineering, where such a statement would be quite invalid. Mechanical design, for example, could not be carried out in a

4 Op. cit. pp. 259, 260

practical manner with the use of verbal description and mathematical formulae alone. But his definition of scientific expression, as it stands, does serve to distinguish it from artistic and moral expression.)

Artistic expression: "Where rigorous scientific expression is cold and impersonal, artistic expression is warm and personal; where the former is abstract and conceptual, the latter is concrete and imagistic; where the former eschews emotive and conative overtones, the latter exploits these overtones to the full; where the one is innocent of an individual style, the other is essentially stylistic.

"Not only does the artist seldom conceive of universals abstractly; he never expresses his interpretation of them in a purely abstract way, but always concretely, i.e. in an individualistic setting. Every work of art exhibits individuality in three distinct ways.[5] I have discussed its 'specific' form, which I have defined as the unique organization of the work's specific primary and secondary artistic media. This formal uniqueness conditions the uniqueness of the expressed content of every work of art, since what is expressed by a work of art is expressed only in and through its specific form. A work of art is highly individual, then, both in artistic form and in artistic content. But it is individual in still another way. However concerned the artist may be with the generic or universal aspects of his subject matter, the specific subject matter with which he deals in any work of art is introduced as having an individuality of its own. This is true even in the abstract arts and in literature, but most

5 (Theocentric, Anthropocentric and Egocentric)
Op. cit. p. 690 (Chart)

immediately evident in the case of the representational arts of sculpture and painting.

"All sculpture and paintings (except pure abstractions) not only have a representational subject-matter, but treat this subject-matter in a highly individualized manner. The painter, for example, does not discourse abstractly about trees or mountains or about their generic perceptual qualities. He depicts an individual mountain or tree in such a way as to emphasize certain of its generic characteristics. He does not discuss human characteristics as types in symbolic abstraction. He creates individual men and women on canvas and portrays them in such a way as to emphasize not only their individuality but also those generic human traits which interest him. Whether the representational objects which he employs for this purpose are more or less faithful portraits of actually existing individuals, or whether they have been only indirectly suggested by nature and are in large measure products of the artist's creative imagination, is here irrelevant. What is relevant is that their individuality in his art, and the use he makes of them are vehicles for the interpretative expression of universals.....

"The artist, then, is as consistent as the scientist in his treatment of individuality. Though he also apprehends the universal traits of objects and events, he does so not primarily by means of conceptual abstraction but rather by noting their natural manifestations in individual contexts. And he expresses his normative interpretations of these universals not in abstract unstylistic prose, but, whatever his artistic medium, in stylized works of art whose individuality is directly a function of the specific artistic form and, indirectly, of the specific subject matter, whether this subject

matter be a mood, a representational object, a social function,[6] or a literary image, character or plot.

Moral expression: "The scientist wills to know and deliberately acts in such a way as to promote scientific knowledge; the artist wills to know in his own normative way, and deliberately expresses his insights in his art; the practical man acts voluntarily to achieve his utilitarian ends. On the other hand, the moral consciousness is not indifferent to cognition, for moral insight is an absolute prerequisite to genuine moral action. Yet the moral attitude, like the practical, differs generically from the artistic and the scientific in its preoccupation with the will, and it differs from the practical in its prime concern for ultimate values and objectives....For the artistic consciousness, insight and appropriate expression of such insight are ends in themselves. Moral conduct, in contrast, involves being the kind of person we should be and acting towards others as we should act.....The artist portrays men as they are, with all their virtues and vices, and as they ought to be; the moralist is actively concerned to eradicate vice and to foster human virtue. The artist as artist is content to understand human nature with all its potentialities and limitations and to reveal his insight through his art.

Man as a moral being feels under obligation to translate his moral ideals into the phenomenal actuality of inner attitude and overt behaviour."[7]

6 As Architecture gives expression to the social function of a building.

7 Op. cit. pp.259-266

How closely these three modes of expression are associated as human behaviour, I will attempt to show in a later chapter. For the moment we will concern ourselves with the second one only, that is, with artistic expression.

"Just as we recognize four types of personality corresponding to the four modes of mental activity, and having four distinct modes of perception, so it is possible to recognize four distinct modes of aesthetic activity expressed in works of art. This result may also be reached by an empirical classification of the historical styles of art, and the unsystematic phraseology of the history of art does in fact include four distinct styles or types. There is the style known variously as realism or naturalism, which consists in making as exact an imitation as possible of the objective facts present in an act of perception; there is a style known variously as idealism, romanticism, fantastic or imaginative art which, while making use of images of visual origin, constructs from these an independent reality. Thirdly there is a style which we call expressionistic, and which is determined by the artist's desire to find a plastic correspondence for his immediate sensations, his temperamental reactions to a perception or experience. Finally, there is a style which avoids all imitative elements and invites an aesthetic response to the purely formal relationships of space, mass, colour, sound, etc. This style is sometimes called abstract, but 'constructive', 'absolute' or 'intuitional' would be more exact terms."[8]

8 Herbert Read: Education through Art (London 1943) pp. 26, 27

The correspondences between temperament and style suggest themselves as follows:

"Realism or naturalism obviously corresponds to the mental activity we call thinking - the observations, analysis and exact recording of the material given in the act of perception.

"The aesthetic correlates of sensation, which is the awareness of the sensible quality of things - heaviness, sharpness, warmth or coldness, etc., are expressed metaphorically, that is to say, by the exaggeration of representative detail at the expense of exactness, as in caricature. If we read the letters of a great expressionist painter like Van Gogh, we see that in painting a picture it is always for him a question of translating his subject into sensible qualities which have no imitative function but which arouse in the spectator a corresponding sensation - not a corresponding image."[9] (Van Gogh describes one of his paintings "Le Cafe de Nuit" in the following words "I have tried to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green... The room is blood red and dark yellow with a green billiard table in the middle; there are four lemon-yellow lamps with a glow of orange and green. Everywhere there is the clash and contrast of opposing reds and greens, in the little figures of the sleeping bums, in the empty dreary room.....I have tried to express, as it were, the powers of darkness in a low drink shop.... in an atmosphere like a devil's furnace, of pale sulphur".)[10]

"Feelings, and the emotions which are the content of feeling, are too various to be

9 Op. cit. p.27

10 Augusto Centeno: The Intent of the Artist (Princeton 1941) p.6

correlated with a particular style or art. But it is quite possible to set on one side types of art which aim, not to express sensations, or to record objective phenomena, but to represent feelings of anger, of fear, love, hate, joy, grief, shame, pride and all the infinitely subtler grades of moral and intellectual emotion. We must avoid a discussion of the relation of feeling to sensation, which belongs to academic psychology: what is pertinent to our present discussion is the fact that in the degree that emotions become more subtle and refined, and therefore more difficult to relate to the sensational processes with which they are accompanied, so the representation of these emotions becomes more a function of the imagination, that is to say, of the ability to construct a myth, allegory, personification, etc., capable of embodying and thereby expressing the emotion.

"As for the mental activity called intuition, by which we do not mean any super-sensational faculty of the mind, by the apprehension of abstract quantities and relations (size, shape, distance, volume, surface-areas, etc.) it is the basis of a fourth type of art which, though it is most nearly related to the formal qualities pertaining to all types of art, is not commonly distinguished as a type. This is because theories of art are too exclusively based on pictorial art; and though there has arisen in modern times an abstract pictorial art, this type of art is more frequently represented by music and architecture. This type of art consists in the effective juxtaposition of surfaces, solid forms, colours and tones, and the appreciation of such art springs from the direct awareness of the relationships which exist between such surfaces, solid forms, colours and tones."||

|| Herbert Read: Op. cit. pp. 27, 28

This theoretical classification of art into four main types corresponding to the four main types of personality should not be used as an infallible measure for evaluating forms of expression. "Realism may be tinged with idealism, idealism with expressionism, and all three types with constructivism. Extreme modes of representation, no less than extreme modes of apprehension, are rare, and though we should resist the temptation to construct a hierarchy of types, in art as in men, nevertheless it may be doubted whether those works of art which humanity has for centuries accepted as universal in their appeal are ever of a pure type. Great works of art are complex and various in their appeal."

"It is the considerable achievement of modern psychology and of modern art to have made the world conscious of these facts, and tolerant (intellectually, if not politically) of variety. Modern art has broken through the artificial boundaries and limitations which we owe to a biassed view of the human personality. Modern psychology has correspondingly shown that the mind of man is complex; that it is a balance of forces - of various impulses or unconscious 'drives' and that the various psychological types into which human beings can be divided are determined by the predominance of one particular impulse or group of impulses. What I am saying, therefore, is simple enough, and should always have been admitted: namely, that there is not one type of art to which all types of men should conform, but as many types of art as there are types of men; and that the categories into which we divide art should naturally correspond to the categories into which we divide men..... From a scientific point of view, each type of art is the legitimate

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