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### AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE AND MORAL EXPERIENCE

#### I

**E**XPERIENCE is "aesthetic" when it is enjoyed as complete in itself and "moral" when it is felt as incomplete and as needing something more to complete it. Hence "aesthetic" and "moral" are conceived as opposites. The term "moral" as used here has a much broader than usual denotation. (If the reader is unhappy about this usage, he may wish to suggest a more suitable term.) Both "aesthetic" and "moral" are value terms and valueless experience is not considered a possibility in the perspective from which this paper is written. Every experience has a value aspect. If the term "value" also is too broadly conceived to suit the preferences of the reader, he may be reminded that the distinction between value and facts, or between value-facts and non-value facts, is a highly sophisticated, highly artificial, and highly specialized one, not to be found ordinarily in primitive, children's, or everyday experiences. It is my purpose not to belabor this point but merely to indicate that non-value aspects of experience are irrelevant to the present discussion. The focal issue revolves about the distinction between experience enjoyed without desire, or any other feeling of incompleteness, and experience enjoying desire, or any other feeling of incompleteness. It should not be said that the "aesthetic" consists in satisfaction of desire, for both satisfaction and frustration retain implicit in them the desire which they satisfy or frustrate. A feeling of satisfaction is "moral" to the extent that it is felt as incomplete without the preceding and now-partly-non-existent desire.

This distinction between "aesthetic" and "moral" may be stated also in terms of intrinsic and instrumental values. Disregarding for present purposes those values, intrinsic or instrumental, which may exist independently of experience, we may define the "aesthetic" and the "moral" in terms of experiences as intrinsic and instrumental values. An experience is itself an intrinsic value to the extent that it is experienced as complete in itself. Such an experience is "aesthetic." An experience is itself an instrumental

value to the extent that it experiences itself as a means to something more. Such an experience is "moral." This paper is limited to a consideration of problems involved in the "aesthetic" and the "moral" so conceived.

## II

If the "aesthetic" consists in what is experienced as complete in itself, are there any limits to the kinds of aesthetic experience? Except for those which are essentially and clearly moral, No. Even experiences which are moral may, as we shall see later, be aesthetic also. We shall not take time to review the history of ideals of those who restrict the aesthetic to only one kind of object, or at most to a few kinds of objects. But we may illustrate the range of variety by citing some examples. Sensations may be experienced aesthetically, and debate will continue as to whether only the visual, or also the auditory, or also the olfactory and gustatory, or also all of the some sixteen kinds of sensation, may be so experienced. (The term "aesthetic" itself originally denoted sensory experience.) Lines, shapes, forms, patterns, arrangements may be aesthetic, whether sensed or imagined. Ideas, ideals, essences may be aesthetically contemplated, as advocated by Plato, Aristotle, and Santayana. Feelings, emotions, impulses, sentiments may be enjoyed as aesthetic, as pointed out by romanticists. And nirvanic peace, whether enjoyed as fullness, or void, or indifference, has been claimed to be the pinnacle of aesthetic experience by Hindu thinkers.

Debates continue also as to whether aesthetic experiences are primarily simple or complex, concrete or abstract, of particulars or universals, sensuous or imaginative, intellectual or emotional, contemplative or impulsive, pacifying or inspiring. Occidental aestheticians are so completely preoccupied with problems regarding aesthetic objects that they commonly overlook a major controversy as to whether the object or the subject is the ultimate constituent in aesthetic experience. Advaitins, for example, consider objects illusory, including aesthetic objects, and distractive from the profounder enjoyment of Atman, the universal soul, whose real nature can be grasped only in aesthetic enjoyment. The writer wishes to note, and advocate, that the term "aesthetic" can and should be used, on occasion, in each of these senses. What makes each of these kinds, and others to be mentioned later, "aesthetic" is not that they are simple or complex, concrete or abstract, sensuous or imaginative, etc., but that they are experienced as complete in themselves. The various specific criteria of aestheticness, such as harmony, novelty, arrestingness, psychical distance, significant form,

etc., are all inadequate representatives of this ultimate characteristic of the aesthetic.

### III

If the "moral" consists in what is experienced as incomplete in itself, are there any limits to the kinds of moral experience? Except for those which are essentially and clearly aesthetic, No. Most, if not all, experiences are moral, for even most of those which are aesthetic are moral also. As illustrative of some varieties of experienceable incompleteness, we may cite several examples.

These may be treated under the headings: volition, expectation, implication, and obligation. Volition is exemplified in desire which, as yet unsatisfied, projects a not-given satisfaction, or in purpose which, as unrealized, entails an unreached goal, or in inspiration or enthusiasm which, as a stirring toward action, prompts some acting which is obviously unfinished. Expectation is anticipation of future experience; this may take many forms, ranging from uncertainty as to what to expect to faith that unrepeated portions of a remembered habitual pattern of behavior will recur as expected. Implication provokes inference from something given to something not given. Obligation is a feeling that something not yet done ought to be done and, like all ethical categories such as duty, justice, responsibility, and conscience, requires that one be forward-looking.

Whenever one experiences doubt, uncertainty, or error; fear, hate, or mistrust; anxiety, restlessness, or worry; ambition, greed, or grasping; pride, jealousy, or regret; curiosity, choice, decision; his experience is moral. Furthermore, those more complex interests, which are called science, philosophy, religion, engineering, business, government, love, marriage, and parenthood, are all highly moral. One's *Weltanschauung*, which may also have aesthetic aspects, is primarily moral.

### IV

It should be clear by now that the writer contends that the aesthetic and the moral are both aspects of experience, or of almost every experience. Granted that some experiences are predominantly moral and others predominantly aesthetic, nevertheless, with few exceptions, all moral experiences have an aesthetic aspect and all aesthetic experiences have a moral aspect.

Moral experiences are implicitly aesthetic in at least two ways. First, the goal is implicit in the aim; completion is felt implied by the incomplete; that which is to be enjoyed as an end-in-itself is the purpose for which what is felt as incomplete is felt as means.

The goal, completion, the end-in-itself, is provisioned as aesthetic. The aesthetic is the goal of the moral. Secondly, almost every present moral experience is accepted, in part, for what it is. If one desires, longs, aims, intends dialectically he presupposes that it is worth desiring, longing, aiming, intending. Even one who fears must, dialectically, consider it worth his while to fear. Except for those caught in the grip of excruciating pain, terror, a tantrum, or utter hopelessness, any element of realism, i.e., of willingness to face things as they are, contributes an aesthetic aspect. Even those experiencing pain, terror, tantrum, or hopelessness, have implicit in such experience an opposite as an ideal which would be enjoyable. If one is not overwhelmed by the unendurable, must one not be accepting, in some small degree at least, what he experiences as it is; and is not this experiencing it, to this extent, as an end-in-itself? That is, incompleteness, or what is experienced as incomplete, is also experienced as complete-in-itself, not in the same sense in which it is incomplete, but in the sense that it is a "complete incompleteness" which does not really demand some other incompleteness to complete its incompleteness. So, in at least a second way, moral experiences are implicitly aesthetic.

On the other hand, aesthetic experiences are implicitly moral, also in at least two ways. First, the aim is implicit in the goal; that which is good-in-itself is the axiological source of whatever is good for it; the end not only justifies, but requires, the means. The good-in-itself, the goal, is that at which all desire aims. But the good-in-itself remains incompletely realized, except as an ideal, in moments of ecstasy or, more rarely, in the lives of saints, yogins, sages, or bodhisattvas. Experience is dynamic, changing, flowing; and that which is experienced as complete is, normally, so experienced only temporarily. To live is to adjust, and to enjoy life is to attain and reattain satisfaction. Ideally, it would seem better if intrinsic value could stand by itself, or if experience could be eternally complete in itself. One function of God in human experience is to exemplify that ideal. But actually temporary experiences of intrinsic value are inseparable from the instruments upon which they depend. Hence the aesthetic actually continues to depend upon the moral.

Oughtness, may I suggest, consists in the power which a greater good has over a lesser good in compelling our choices. Now intrinsic value existing is better than intrinsic value not existing. Hence intrinsic value ought to exist. Or, the aesthetic ought to exist. The aesthetic implies moral obligation to support it. And this obligation is an ever-present, implicit, and at least subconscious, factor in human nature.

The second way in which the aesthetic involves the moral may be seen by distinguishing between two kinds of satisfaction, namely, that in which satisfaction is so complete that the desire is extinguished and that in which satisfaction is so enjoyable that it arouses desire for more of the same. Now which kind of satisfaction is better, that which extinguishes desire or that which stimulates it? Satisfaction is aesthetic, but not purely aesthetic, for the preceding desire remains implicit in the satisfaction, whereas purely aesthetic experience would be so complete in itself that no evidence of such preceding desire would remain. Now satisfaction which extinguishes desire is more aesthetic, in the sense that no tendency toward further desire is present, than satisfaction which stimulates desire. But, further desire is desire for further satisfaction, for further enjoyment of an end-in-itself, it entails a greater, or at least some more, aesthetic enjoyment than that which merely terminates. Now this stimulation of further desire is moral. Hence, an aesthetic experience which leads to more aesthetic experiences is better than one which does not. Or, inherent in the nature of that which is aesthetic are reasons why the moral ought to exist.

## V

Paradox is present in the interrelations between the aesthetic and the moral. No matter how we examine them, paradox appears. When each is taken in isolation from the other, each is self-destructive. When taken together, each is involved in dialectical tail-chasing.

The moral, by itself, has no purpose, no goal, no place to go, no reason for being. The moral, as incompleteness, as instrumentality, aims at completeness, at intrinsicness. Without its aesthetic goal, morality could not be moral. On the other hand, the aesthetic by itself is a goal which can neither aim nor be aimed at, can neither seek nor be sought, can neither serve nor be served. It can only be, which is the same as being dead. If anyone is to experience it alone, he must be, if not completely, then either almost or momentarily, dead. Taken in isolation, the moral would be an aim which aimed at nothing and the aesthetic would be a goal at which nothing aimed.

Taken together, each is dialectically involved in the other. The moral, by aiming at and ending in the aesthetic, requires that which it is not in order to complete itself. But the aesthetic, as completeness, would also put a complete end to the moral were it not for the fact that that which is aesthetic is not a mere terminus or is not dead. The aesthetic, if it is to continue and to continue to be that in which the moral terminates, must be involved in some-

thing which continues it, something which is not complete in itself, something which is alive.

It is life itself which rescues us from the fate of extinction to which mere thought would assign us. Life is inherently both moral and aesthetic at the same time, even if in varying degrees at different times. Life itself, as well as its moral and aesthetic aspects, is dialectical. And it is in dialectic that the basic clues to achievement of happiness are to be found. Art and society are involved in this same paradox and can be freed, so to speak, only dialectically.

## VI

It is time to indicate an additional double thesis of this paper, namely, that: that which is both aesthetic and moral may be more completely aesthetic than that which is aesthetic merely; and that which is both aesthetic and moral may be more completely moral than that which is moral merely.

Support for this contention requires awareness that the goal of life is to be found not outside of life, but within life itself. He who recognizes that life as actually lived is all the life that he can live thereby accepts life as complete in itself. He has an aesthetic attitude toward life. Now, since being moral, in all of the various ways of being moral, is part of life as actually lived, one who accepts, and experiences, such moral life as complete in itself thereby experiences it as aesthetic. He who would try to eliminate morality which cannot be eliminated thereby becomes more moral and less aesthetic in his enjoyment of life.

On the other hand, since the goal of life is aesthetic, the extreme moralist, who would eliminate the aesthetic from life and put it beyond life, would thereby extinguish all enjoyment of life. Rather, as moral, we should want to experience the actual as the ideal, for thereby we find the goal of life in life and not elsewhere. Does this mean elimination of ideals? Oh no. For having ideals is itself a part of human nature, and part of what has to be accepted by anyone who accepts life as complete in itself.

Thus, as moral, we should want that which is both moral and aesthetic, and as aesthetic, we should enjoy what is inclusive of both moral and aesthetic.

## VII

Let us turn now to some consequences of these theses for art and society. First, consider art. Is art aesthetic or moral or both? It is both, but much more moral than aesthetic.

Art involves three distinguishable factors: the artist, creator, or producer; the art instrument or object created; and the appreciator, enjoyer, or consumer. The producer and consumer may, of course, be the same person. Each of these three factors will be dealt with briefly.

Is artistic creativity aesthetic? While creating, the artist must, of course, have some goal in mind, a job to do, one which is not yet done, and which, hence, is experienced as incomplete. Unless he is unusually sure of himself, he is uncertain as to just how his work will turn out. If, further, he is creating for an audience, he must be concerned about how it will be received. Only to the extent that he is doing just what he wants to do is his experience of creativity aesthetic. The aesthetic quality of his creativity is more likely to reflect the character of his life than of the particular scene or shape ("object" or "non-object") which he is trying to depict. One who is more completely and spontaneously devoted to enjoyment of the aesthetic is more likely to be able to abstract an enjoyable portion of life and crystalize it for others to apprehend. But his creativity is experienced both as aesthetic and as moral, for the more highly aesthetic he feels, the more he believes, morally, that the product will be worth while. The artist, more often than not, does what he feels he ought to do; and the more strongly he feels that he ought to produce the aesthetic, the more moral he is.

The art object is an instrument for producing further aesthetic enjoyment. The various principles which aid in aesthetic expression will not be discussed here, except to repeat that they must all somehow contribute to a sense of completeness. However, there is a difference between a feeling of completeness and boredom, for an inspiring work of art may produce a feeling of completeness more successfully than a boring one, one which inspires a desire to get away from it. Great art is highly aesthetic, but not merely aesthetic. Great art is also highly moral, but never merely moral.

The more an art object attracts and holds attention to the aesthetic experience intended, the more aesthetic it is as an object. But the more such an object suggests a fitness into the total life scheme of the appreciator, the more it contributes to an aesthetic life. Life itself may be aesthetic, as well as objects. If an art object, in order to be appreciated, isolates man from the rest of his life, it is aesthetic only so long as it holds his attention from the rest of life. But if an art object, such as a beautiful dress or automobile, contributes harmoniously to making life as a whole felt more satisfying, as more complete in itself, it is really more wholesomely aesthetic. One further remark about the moral character of art objects is worth adding. When an object created does in fact com-

monly produce aesthetic experiences, then it ought to be treated as a precious instrument. Art objects are moral objects—objects of moral concern. They ought to be created; they ought to be preserved; they ought to be appreciated. And, anticipating some of what will be said about society, society ought to promote conditions of creation, preservation, and appreciation, including wide-spread distribution of art objects.

The consumer or appreciator, if he be other than the creator, also enjoys both moral and aesthetic experience, again usually more moral than aesthetic. If he compares what he sees with other works, of the same or different artists, inquires concerning its meaning and purpose, thinks how it would look in his own home, wonders how much it would cost, imagines how proud he would be as its owner, his experience is largely moral. When his experience is genuinely complete in itself, he will have little inclination to talk about it, for to talk about it is to un-complete it, to relate it to something else, to moralize about it. Of course, among artists and aestheticians, acceptance of the moral aspects of artistic experiences may be so complete that analysis and criticism may occur without distracting from, but rather contributing to, an aesthetic whole.

### VIII

Not only art, but also society, or social experience, may be both moral and aesthetic. That social experience is moral, no one doubts. But that it is aesthetic remains far from clear. The writer contends that society has the aesthetic as its ultimate goal. Does this mean that we should, as a matter of public policy, rush about and produce more artists and distribute more art objects? Not necessarily. These are means which may or may not be wisely used to achieve the ends. Ours is an age of artistic specialization. Often discovery of the locus of what in the object is intended as of primary aesthetic importance requires specialized instruction regarding specialized appreciation. So long as such instruction is lacking, distribution of some art objects may result only in disgust or dismay.

The goal of aesthetic living may be described variously as confidence, assurance, security, acceptance, faith, belief, conviction. Let us recall that as moral man is anxious, concerned, worried, nervous, restless, but as aesthetic he is calm, quiescent, peaceful, contented. Those who live with confidence that what they are doing is right live more aesthetically than those troubled by doubt. One cannot live aesthetically until he has mastered fear. Fear is moral. Those who say "We have nothing to fear but fear itself" are wishing for the aesthetic life. Social security, whether politi-



cal, economic, legal or medical, is conducive to, but no guarantee of, an aesthetic life. Firm convictions, especially if they be unchallenged, may contribute; for dogmatists often speak with aesthetic authority. Being esteemed, admired, or loved contributes to confidence. Love is aesthetic when one enjoys the beloved for what he is and moral when he desires to retain, continue, or repeat the aesthetic. Religion aims at restoring confidence (peace that passeth all understanding), assurance of achievement of intrinsic value, even though one may be undeserving. Religion has a double-direction: the one is external to the self, even cosmic: to assure confidence that "all's right with the world." The other is internal: to assure confidence that all is right deep down in the self. A third function has to do with providing confidence that these two are in harmony with each other.

Oriental philosophies (especially Taoism, Buddhism, and several varieties of Hindu philosophy) come closer to stating the aesthetic goal of life than Western philosophies and religions which, by and large, give much more emphasis to the moral. The willingness to accept things as they come—i.e., as sufficiently complete in themselves—is essential to aesthetic living. To establish this willingness is part of society's moral goal. This does not mean stagnation, however, for, dialectically, the job ahead, with all its trouble and anxiety, is part of things as they come. There are levels of confidence and levels of anxiety; and one lives more aesthetically when more of his levels, especially the deeper levels, are quiescent. One whose life is deeply aesthetic can endure amazing amounts of surface turmoil. To reattain a feeling of depth security is a major function of prayer in orthodox Christianity. But Christianity suffers imbalance: God is primarily aesthetic; man is primarily moral; or God alone is perfect, complete in himself, man is imperfect, incomplete, hence essentially unaesthetic. To attain confidence that the soul is indestructible was the message of the god, Krishna, in the *Gita*, to Arjuna who needed confidence that war was right. Kamikazi pilots crashed to death with confidence; the U.S. Army is weak regarding the aesthetics of war.

One can see a kind of hierarchy of aesthetic levels in human experience. First, one may experience an art object as aesthetic. Secondly, his whole experience at one time, including the art object, may be aesthetic. Thirdly, his whole life, including the just-mentioned whole experience, may be aesthetic. Fourthly, he may live in a community in which many lives lived aesthetically heighten the aesthetic quality of each particular life. Finally, he may live in a world with many communities and cultures intermingling and aesthetically influencing each other. There may be, of course, still

other levels, but the point here is that one who can enjoy many aesthetic levels, from art object to world-society, may have a richer aesthetic experience than he whose aesthetic range is more limited.

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## *Comparative Aesthetics*

AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE consists in intuition of intrinsic value. This conclusion has been forced upon me as a result of studying Oriental philosophies after teaching (Western) aesthetics for twelve years. The purpose of the present article is to compare Hindu, Chinese, and Western conceptions of the nature of the aesthetic, to indicate some metaphysical sources of differences in aesthetic theory, and to make clear how all may be interpreted as implying the above conclusion.

Any attempt to compare the ideals of the three major civilizations, each with its long, complex, and variegated history, exposes itself to justified criticism. Exceptions to general patterns, even when these have been correctly discerned, may be found within each of the three. Hence, the views presented about them here are intended as hypotheses about persisting emphases rather than as final conclusions about universal generalizations. Each of the three should be viewed as an evolving history of cultural ideals rather than as a clearly distinguishable monolithic scheme. Abstractions and sketchy summaries entail fiction. Yet discernment of pervasive patterns of presupposition, and summary exposition of their key ideas, may serve to provide hypothetical guides for further exploration.

### DIFFERING CONCEPTIONS OF THE AESTHETIC

Western thought, prompted by vigorous and persistent struggle to understand the aesthetic, has blossomed with many varieties of conclusion. These range from enjoy-

ment of sensuous pleasures to numbers symbolizing measured ratios of distinguishable portions of complex shapes, from joyous impulses to eternally subsisting forms or beings, from creative processes to appreciative attitudes, and from the work of uniquely individualistic genius to movements collectively manifesting underlying and pervasive motifs dominating a cultural milieu. Generalization about such variety may be unwarranted. Yet, for purposes of comparison, I venture to suggest that Western interest in aesthetics historically preoccupied itself first with real things functioning as works of art, usually associated with religious, political, and other practical pursuits. Even today, I suspect, a majority of both philosophers and artists regard aesthetics as concerned primarily with philosophy of art. Varieties of art forms, disagreements about taste, and conflicting conclusions proposed by theorists all have induced many to believe that beauty exists "in the eye of the beholder." But despite a shift of interest from philosophy of art to philosophy of beauty, there remained preoccupation with how the qualities of real things produce experiences of beauty and with how experiences of beautiful objects, whether imagined (created) or real, can be projected upon real things by the appreciator (through empathy) or the artist ("extrinsicator"). Some Romanticists excepted, few Western aestheticians have located the aesthetic in subjective factors exclusively.

Hindu philosophy, typically conceiving ultimate reality and value in terms of *sat*

(pure being), *chit* (pure awareness) and *ananda* (pure bliss), idealizes the aesthetic as intuition of such ultimacy. Believing that perfect quiescence, with all desires stilled, all distinctions vanquished, and all movement ceased, alone is perfectly enjoyed, Vedantists depict demerger into imperfect (illusory) being through successive levels of consciousness, self-consciousness, mind (with imagination), sensations, the sense organs, objects sensed, and real things (as well as hallucinations and erroneously inferred real things). Art objects, as real things, belong to almost the lowest order of illusory beings. They appeal to the senses, and so long as attention fastens upon the sensuous arts, it is distracted and disunited from the truly aesthetic. Consequently, orthodox theorists experienced some difficulty in reconciling the arts, especially music, as in any way contributory to attaining the ultimate aesthetic goal. However, Hindu thought eventually added a "fifth Veda" (including theory of drama, *Natyaveda*, of music, *Sangitaveda*, and of architecture, *Vasurveda*) revealing how mastery of these arts may be used to advance one toward the ultimate goal. Dramatic enactment of sacred stories symbolizing divine processes may draw the observer from daily cares to holier ideas and moods. An actor may lose self-consciousness by identifying himself with the cosmic deity he portrays. Temple architecture preserves these stories in stone, and songs preserve them in memories. But even merely instrumental music, which demands extreme concentration by the musician and entices the listener away from more mundane affairs, may serve as a kind of yoga. Although Hindu philosophers, reluctant to admit still another competitor to their Way of Knowledge (*Gnana Yoga*), may regard this "fifth Veda" as a "soft way" suited to the lesser capacities of the masses, a rationale can be established which justifies the artist as a proponent of ultimacy. Only when the general is wedded to the specific, as in art, can the general be comprehended by ordinary men. Hence, art in some form or other is necessary for religious instruction.

Risking presumptuous familiarity in an aside, I illustrate the foregoing by recalling thoughts entertained while enjoying a performance by Sitarist Ravi Shankar in Albuquerque on December 5, 1964. Part of the significance of Hindu sacred music can be found in its inducement to silence, within which transcendental ecstasy may be experienced. The significance of silence is seldom understood by Western audiences (though Hindu artists performing in the United States often cater to Western preferences for vivacity and virtuosity instead of quiescent sanctity). For example, deceleration of rhythm and decreasing loudness of sounds at the end of a performance may not merely fade into silence but be projected as if into a profounder silence by continued plucking motions for visual appearance after actual plucking has ceased. Western anxiety cannot restrain itself from breaking (rudely) into applause; but the longer the pause before applause, the greater the quiescent effect, the achievement of the artist, and the appreciation by the audience. Another significant part of Hindu music is the drone, accomplished variously by the *Tampura*, *Tabla* and *Harmonium*, for example. Establishment of an underlying, invariant rhythm conditions the spirit to remain unmoved by distractions while following the *Sitar* music or song. The more stable and prolonged the mood, the more it resembles or embodies the stability and eternity idealized as ultimate reality.

As I continue my aside even more presumptuously, allow me to wonder why Hindu musicians do not still further exploit musical potentialities for inducing silence. Deliberate deceleration of rhythm, a technique commonly employed by *Hatha Yogins*, using breathing practices to induce evacuations of consciousness, may be repeated continuously. Just as a yogin may prolong each successive breath cycle by the length of an additional heartbeat, so a musician may both decelerate his rhythm more slowly and extend the period of silence a moment longer in each of a successive series of movements toward quiescence until the listener's spirit tends toward expecting per-

fect quiescence. The Nirvanic effect of such silence, it appears to me, would be much greater than is usually achieved, at least in popular performances. But, without some comprehension of Hindu ideals about the utterly quiescent nature of ultimate aesthetic value, the significance of such silence is lost on Western audiences. But use of such techniques in India, if not already common, would doubtless persuade more yogins who prefer non-musical approaches to Nirvana of the efficacy of music for approaching the ultimate goal.

Although Hindu philosophy tends to idealize location of the aesthetic in subjective quiescence perfectible normally only after death, many other theories about its nature and location have occurred. The enlightening insight of Gotama, the Buddha, consisted in finding "comfort" (enjoyment of the aesthetic) "wherever you go, stand, sit, or lie down" here and now, not by cessation of motion or extinction of desire but through a middle way between desiring more than you are going to get and desiring more stopping of such desiring than you are able to stop.<sup>1</sup> This kind of yea-saying, so impalpable to his fellow Hindus that they perforce proceeded to interpret him as reaffirming extinction of desire, smoothed the way for his acceptance in China. The aesthetic may be experienced here and now if we will but assent to the present as just what we want. When one devotes full time to the art of fine (i.e., enjoying intrinsic value) living, interest in the arts may constitute irrelevancy. But Gotama too was typically Hindu in locating aesthetic value as something primarily subjective.

Chinese philosophy, even less familiar to Western thinkers, also recognizes art objects as artificial and prefers to seek the aesthetic in ordinary experiences. But the distinction between subjective and objective aspects of experience is itself something artificial and unnecessarily divisive. Generally speaking, Chinese civilization has idealized being natural and the interpretation of such naturalness in a relatively naive way. Myriads of thinkers have depicted the aesthetic in unique ways. Yet, whether mistaken or not, I detect a perva-

sive attitude appreciative of the simple, ordinary, everyday experiences. Interest in distant objects and in subjective depths is equally missing or secondary. Aesthetic value is to be found in the present as it appears; if it appears as if in some real thing, such as bubbling tea, or as if in some inner feeling, as when one's sagging spirits are buoyed by tea, so be it. The aesthetic should be enjoyed however it presently appears, not explained away in terms of external forms or of subjective quiescence.

Even something so artificially formal as the Tea Ceremony is intended to remind us, and to reembody within us, something of the natural. "Teaism is a cult founded on the adoration of the beautiful among the sordid facts of everyday existence. . . . It is essentially a worship of the Imperfect, as it is a tender attempt to accomplish something possible in this impossible thing we know as life."<sup>2</sup> The rural Taoism of Lao Tzu, the familial Taoism of Confucius, and the urbanized Taoism of Zen Buddhism all reject the artificial and, perhaps excepting Confucian patronage of the arts including music, all locate the aesthetic in perfection of yea-saying to life as it presents itself. This is indeed an attitudinal perfection; but it is not an idealized perfect state, whether of formal harmony or of calmed desires. Life is imperfect so long as we want more than we will get; and no matter how smartly we scheme to construct some ideally perfect world in which to live, we only make ourselves miserable to the extent that we fail to appreciate actual appearances as they come. The aesthetic is to be located not in intuition of some supposed perfect quietude nor in emotional response to some supposed really beautiful thing but in an intuition of the actual present as being, self-evidently, the best that actually is.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF METAPHYSICAL DIFFERENCES

Aesthetic theories imply, and are implied by, metaphysical theories. By cohering, aesthetic and metaphysical theories support

each other. Let us examine and compare general metaphysical tendencies in each of the three major civilizations in which their respective aesthetic theories are grounded. Ideally, comparisons should be made in such a way that other cultures will be compared with the ideals of each culture, taken in turn, as standard. Each, then, may well be judged superior by its own standards and inferior by other standards. I choose to compare Hindu and Chinese views in terms of two metaphysical traits which have dominated Western culture, though I discovered that they so dominated only after studying Hindu and Chinese cultures and finding these traits deemphasized and despised.

## I

These two traits, Will and Reason, stem respectively from the two main taproots of Western civilization, the Hebraic and the Greek. Will has status in ultimate reality as the will of God, whereby God creates and governs the world. God's will is good, and so is man's, except when man sins by willing to go against the will of God. Greek philosophers, idealizing reason, regarded will as irrational and distrusted it as evil. Reason, as the principle of order, regularity, stability, and eternity in both man and universe, provides the basis for the nature of things and for deductive certainty about them. Faith in the discernibility of the forms of things begot ideals of perfect definability, whether as Platonic Ideas, Aristotle's Forms, or the laws of nature or of logic. Will acts rightly only when assenting to reason. In Christian theology, as depicted in the Augustinian synthesis, reason and will are identical in God, who is perfect, but never quite so in man, who is imperfect. Two significant facts need to be noted: Both will and reason are idealized as ingredient in ultimate reality. Persisting opposition between will and reason resulted in recurrent outbreaks of intellectual indigestion in Western thought, not only in theology but also in conflicting aesthetic theories.

Our Greek heritage, idealizing perfection

of form, eulogizes forms as not only ultimate reals but also as ultimate goods. When forms are regarded as goods, the aesthetic is to be located in intuitive apprehension of them, whether in Plato's pre-existence or in Aristotle's contemplative reason. Attempts at analysis of forms lead to ideals of harmonious forms and of harmony between forms, with subcategories such as symmetry, balance, and equilibrium. After idealized reason was incorporated into the Christian God, such reason constituted a part of the glorious perfection of God, who not only embodies good will but also the only perfect intrinsic value. For Thomas Aquinas, God becomes not only his own end-in-itself but also "man's last end." The ultimate in the way of aesthetic experience is coming "face to face" with God. "God alone," says Jonathan Edwards, "is truly beautiful." Western philosophy, when pursuing the ideals of its Greek ancestors, locates the aesthetic in intuiting reason as intrinsic value, even though its conceptions of the nature and pervasiveness of reason vary.

Our Hebraic heritage, first idealizing will as the source of both power and satisfaction, locates good in feelings of satisfaction, and eulogizes "peace on earth" as freedom from conflict among wills. The Greeks taught harmony of forms; the Hebrews harmony of wills. The aesthetic, consequently, is to be located in feeling securely at home in a happy family. Christian theology absorbed not only God's will but also located the aesthetic, for both God and man, in experiencing the doing of what is pleasing to God. Intrinsic value consists in the satisfaction of desire. In fact, "desire is the only basis of value; value itself does not exist until desire is being satisfied."<sup>3</sup> The aesthetic consists in intuiting such satisfaction. The aesthete, the artist, and the aesthetician must look for those elements, or wholes, or organic unities in experiences, including the objects experienced, which tend to produce such satisfaction. Art objects may be described as beautiful when they produce a satisfying experience, e.g., as when they are "restful."

But Western idealizations of will shifted emphasis from satisfaction of desire to de-

siring itself, or from Voluntarism to Romanticism. The thrill, zest, gusto, vivacity experienced while enthusiastically desiring came to be regarded as a greater intrinsic value than satisfaction, which terminates and thus destroys desire. Desirousness, variously described as impulse, emotion, or sentiment, and idealized as intense and prolonged, as exciting and as infinite, as voluptuous and as heroic, appealed to the young and healthy more frequently as food supplies became more abundant. "To travel hopefully is better than to arrive."<sup>4</sup> "Our reach exceeds our grasp, or what's a heaven for?" Feelings of enthusiasm are intuited as intrinsic values. Hence the aesthetic is to be located in the enjoyment of impulsiveness. Art works which stir our sentiments, arouse our impulses, inspire our enthusiasms, and prolong and intensify our yearnings should therefore be sought. Since satisfactions diminish desire while frustrations intensify them, those bored with lesser stimuli deliberately seek the frustrating, the embarrassing, the mean, the unjust, the cruel—not to produce evil but to magnify that good which exists as intensity of feeling. The "dialectics of the Romantic soul" reveal the tortuous meanderings of an enthusiast in search of ever more piquant excitement for his flagging energies. The art idealized by the Romanticist is not "restful" but "arresting," not familiar but novel, not formal but unique, not clear but intriguing.

Idealization of willfulness not only promoted ambition, ideals of progress, and appreciation of the beauty of "success" but also appeared in Lutheran and Pietistic faith (and "the beauty of holiness"), in Bergson's *élan vital*, in Freudian libidinalism, in pragmatism's "will to believe," and in existentialism. Extreme existentialists will good to exist even where otherwise there is none. Kierkegaard demanded the existence of God and of goodness even when rational argument demonstrated their non-existence. Atheistic existentialists urge us to contemplate the valuelessness of non-existence so that we may be prompted to will some value into what pitiful little existence we have. The aesthetic is located in the

"authentic," in enjoying self-willed, hence self-created and freely-chosen, value.

Quarrels between voluntarists and romanticists, compounded by disputes with varieties of rationalists, to say nothing of hedonists,<sup>5</sup> leave Western civilization still a caldron of seething issues, in aesthetics as well as religion and politics. The reason-will controversy has undergone many attempted reconciliations. William James proposed a pragmatic compromise: By way of criticizing the rationalistic doctrine that "The good is that at which all things aim," he asserted that it is as true to say that things are good because we like them as that we like them because they are good. But discord continues. And the welter of variations of each of these theories may leave an impression that Western civilization thrives in a chaos of relativisms. Western aestheticians cannot be expected to give a final definition of the nature of the aesthetic so long as Western civilization cannot make up its collective mind. However, as we shall see by observing Hindu and Chinese ideals, the persistent preoccupation of Western civilization with the reason-will controversy involves having its mind made up in certain very characteristic ways. Only after understanding how tenaciously Oriental civilizations reject both reason and will as having either status or value in ultimate reality can we recognize how distinctively reason and will have shaped the ways in which the Western mind is made up.

## II

Hindu civilization, although flourishing with a jungle-like plethora of theories and practices, also seems to embody a dominating pervasive mood. Within this mood the issue of whether reason or will is more ultimate, either as reality or value, is relatively insignificant. Both represent either illusory or degenerate forms of being and value, and function more often as evils than as goods. The dominating ideals of Hindu and Western civilizations oppose each other so completely that what is taken as most real, and good, in the one is regarded as least real, and good, in the other. Not only do both

reason and will have *no* status or value in ultimate reality but also the difference between them, presupposed as extremely important by the way in which Western civilization insists on being plagued by it, is regarded as utterly insignificant. Consequently, the aesthetic, as viewed from these opposing moods, is conceived as having antithetical natures. Generalization about the nature of the aesthetic, difficult enough when attempted within any one of the major civilizations, often appears impossible when the seemingly contradictory character of ideals of different civilizations comes to be understood.

Taking reason first, let us observe how Hindus typically eliminate it from ultimate reality. Advaita Vedanta calls ultimate reality "Nirguna Brahman," being without qualities. Samkhya-Yoga philosophers call the ultimate state of *purusha* (soul) *kai-valya*, perfect liberation from all limitations. Theravada and Sunyavada Buddhists call it "Nibbana" (Nirvana, no wind), whether conceived as *bhavana* or *sunya*. All alike, despite their other metaphysical disagreements, depict ultimacy as pure indistinctness. Hence it is beyond reason, for reason begins to act by making distinctions, and rationality exists only where there are ratios, relationships, differences, and distinctnesses. Reason cannot apprehend it, for it is utterly non-relational. Attempts to reason about it must begin by saying, relative to every distinct thing, "It is not this, it is not that, it is not the other. . . ." Yet, since ultimate reality does not cease to be, and to be what it is, when predicates are asserted, one may also say, relative to each distinct thing, "Its reality is not different from this, its reality is indistinct from that, its reality is identical with the other. . . ." The epitome of rational attempts to apprehend ultimate reality is to be found in the "Principle of Four-Cornered Negation," the negation of all negation (or difference): Regarding any thing, quality, predicate, difference, or distinction, here symbolized by "x," one may say of ultimate reality that "It neither is x, nor is not x, nor is both x and not x, nor is neither x nor not x."<sup>6</sup>

This principle, which denies rationality to ultimate reality, has molded Hindu ideals throughout the centuries. Anyone who describes the aesthetic in words which fail to entail this principle falls short of ultimacy. The ultimate intuition of intrinsic value must itself be indistinct from such pure indistinctness. That such intuition remains unavailable to human minds should be obvious, though Hindu tradition holds out the hope that some especially favored saints may attain *jivanmukti*, a beatific vision, while still lingering in bodily connection. Just as indistinctness and distinctness appear to be contradictories, so Hindu and Western ideals appear to remain poles apart. Just as the Western mind idealizes distinctions sharpened to perfection, hence divided by a "Law of Excluded Middle," so the Hindu mind idealizes indistinctness so completely that the distinction between distinctness and indistinctness is itself regarded as indistinct. If Western minds cannot apprehend as significant both the metaphysical, logical, and epistemological ultimacy of the Principle of Four-Cornered Negation, they remain unable to appreciate Hindu ideals of the aesthetic.

But just as Westerners idealize God "alone as truly beautiful" because perfect (where perfection, as omnipotence, embodies and, as omniscience, knows all actual and possible distinctions, after Aquinas, Calvin, Spinoza, Leibniz, J. Edwards, and Whitehead), so Hindus idealize ultimate reality as "Nirvana" because perfect (where perfection consists in complete absence of distinctions). Hindus idealize omnipotence as power to eliminate all distinctness, and omniscience as intuition of such perfect indistinctness. All-goodness (not "omnibenevolence," which involves good *will*) is *ananda*, the blissful being and awareness of such perfect indistinctness. The ultimate in the way of the aesthetic consists in such bliss. Art objects may suggest, symbolize, or lead us toward such bliss, but, generally speaking, so long as we devote our attention to art objects we remain distracted from the best way to the aesthetic goal. If painting, sculpture, poetry, or music can transport us toward in-



tuition of indistinctness (the identity of all things), it may serve as an aesthetic instrument. If artistic experience may embody in us "a sip of eternity," it may condition us with inclinations toward such ultimacy. But the more an artist devotes his attention to details, whether to colors or shapes, symmetry or asymmetry, harmony or uniqueness, the more apprehension of aesthetic ultimacy escapes him. Western admirers of Hindu women, garlanded in saris and bedecked with a forehead beauty mark, usually misunderstand the full significance of the patch of color. A beauty mark it is, indeed; but not because it blends harmoniously with size and shape and color of a partly veiled face. It is beautiful because it both symbolizes the ultimate unity of all things and embodies some of that unity (indifference) in a dot which, when expanded, remains plain, uniform, and usually circular. Orthodox women wear a symbol of holiness on their forehead just as orthodox Christians wear a cross; that either may contribute also the lesser, or more sensuous, beauties may serve as an additional value, but when the lesser detracts from the greater, its function is evil.

Turning next to will, let us consider how Hindus typically exorcize it from ultimate reality. Will is called *desire*, and desire is condemned not merely in its more violent forms, as lust, greed, avarice, and hatred, but also in its more subtle forms, as anxiety, restlessness, love, and hope. Desire often ends in frustration; hence, to avoid frustration, avoid desiring. The way to the goal of life is to surrender individual will, not to some superior will of God, as with Hebrews, Christians, and Moslems, but to will-lessness. Why? Because ultimate reality, whether conceived as Nirguna Brahman, as *purusha* enjoying *kaivalya*, as *annata* (no-soul) freed from all attachment in *nibbana*, or as *atman* (soul) indistinguishing itself in *sunya*, is utterly will-less. To be perfect is to lack (want) nothing; to desire is to want (lack) what is desired. Only by eliminating desire, thereby eliminating all want (lack), can one become perfect. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna, speaking as ultimate reality divinely mani-

festing itself in the world, explains why a soldier should fight with indifference to the consequences of his dutiful killing. What is ultimate about the soul of anyone killed remains eternally indestructible; therefore killing cannot destroy what is really ultimate about any man. And desire for rewards, either for killing or for refraining from killing, prevents one from attaining the goal of eternal desirelessness. In order to convince Arjuna by a final clinching argument, Krishna asserts that, despite his own activity in creating the universe again and again and again, "doing these things does not bind me to desire for rewards. [I am] like one sitting unconcerned, without interest in how they (i.e., people) are affected." <sup>7</sup>

Reality and value exist in their ultimate state only when all desire has been quieted, all will has been eliminated, all interest has subsided. Experience is aesthetic to the extent that being is enjoyed as quiescent. Intuition of intrinsic value, *an-anda*, unendingness, consists not in infinite longing, as with romanticists, but in unending peace, quiescence, will-lessness. A person enjoys the aesthetic most fully when he experiences life as most completely contented. The yogin, not the artist, seeks the aesthetic in its highest level. The orthodox view holds that a person can hardly be a good artist unless he is also something of a yogin.

Hindu civilization thus has rejected both reason and will, the two most highly idealized virtues of Western civilization, which gives them status or value in ultimate reality. Not reason, but intuition alone, can apprehend ultimate reality and value. Not willfulness, but will-lessness alone deserves and enjoys the ultimate value and reality. Furthermore, to the extent that reason and will prevent one from achieving the final intuition and complete will-lessness, they function as evils, not goods. One may, of course, will to attain will-lessness and reason his way to the ultimacy of intuition; thus will and reason may serve as instrumental goods. Reason and will may indeed serve as instrumental values in art, but the aesthetic, at least in

its purest form, cannot be attained until all traces of reason and will have been extinguished.

### III

Chinese civilization also exhibits a dominant mood and typical ideals in spite of conflicting varieties of specific views. Whereas Western civilization has been typically dualistic<sup>8</sup> and Hindu civilization has been typically spiritualistic, Chinese civilization seems predominantly naturalistic. The ultimate reality of the universe is *Tao* (Nature), and each particular thing has its own *tao* (nature) or ultimate reality. Nature is good, and each nature is also good, at least so long as it keeps to itself without either meddling willfully in the natures of other things or being imposed upon by the wills of others. The aesthetic consists in appreciating each nature as it is—intuitively, of course. Reason and will, as idealized in Western civilization, are both rejected, but not so completely as in India. Will-lessness and intuition of pure indistinctness, as idealized in India, are also rejected, but not so completely as in Europe and America. Why China developed ideals quite different from those in both India and Europe may be glimpsed in a brief review of the philosophies of Lao Tzu, Confucius, and Zen.

The ages-old naturalism inherent in rural life in China received a classic formulation in a work attributed to Lao Tzu, who lived about the sixth century B.C. The *Tao Te Ching*<sup>9</sup> describes Nature as the unending source and end of all things. Each thing, whether a desire, a day, a year, a lifetime, or a dynasty, comes into being, continues to exist for a natural period, and then declines and dies. "Nature's way is a joint process of initiation and completion, sowing and reaping, producing and consuming."<sup>10</sup> Each pair of processual opposites involves arising and subsiding, or *yang* and *yin*. Both are good, each in turn. It is good to be born and grow up, and it is good to mature, ripen, and die. But when men try to reverse the natural order of things, i.e., to ripen first and grow up later, then things

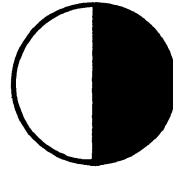
will go wrong. Whoever would either prolong or shorten his life meddles with nature. "Those too eager for activity soon become fatigued. When things exhaust their vigor, they age quickly. Such impatience is against Nature. What is against Nature dies young."<sup>11</sup> *Teh* is the ability of things to act naturally, an ability which becomes apparent when we observe that some people act in accordance with natures which are not their own. It is the willingness to let Nature, and each nature, take its course. This is the best way of doing things.

This willingness to allow nature to proceed naturally, without willful interference, either to accelerate or retard, is typically regarded as good. Whereas Western civilization idealizes willfulness, and Hindu civilization idealizes will-lessness, Chinese civilization eulogizes willingness. The aesthetic is enjoyed most fully when one is most willing to accept whatever is presented as "the best of all actually presented worlds," which, of course, it is, since it is the only actually presented world. "The chief contribution of Taoism to Asiatic life has been in the realm of aesthetics," says Okakura Kakuzo. "Chinese historians have always spoken of Taoism as the 'art of being in the world,' for it deals with the present—ourselves. It is in us that God meets Nature, and yesterday parts from tomorrow. The Present is the moving Infinity, the legitimate sphere of the Relative. Relativity seeks Adjustment; Adjustment is Art. The art of life lies in a constant readjustment to our surroundings. Taoism accepts the mundane as it is and . . . tries to find beauty in our world of woe and worry."<sup>12</sup> Lin Yutang agrees with Kakuzo: "I think of all the phases of Chinese civilization, Chinese art alone will make a lasting contribution to the culture of the world. . . . Calm and harmony [with Nature] distinguish Chinese art, and calm and harmony come from the soul of the Chinese artist. The Chinese artist is a man who is at peace with nature. . . ."<sup>13</sup> He neither willfully desires to have nature different nor willfully suppresses desires which naturally arise. When one becomes hungry, he willingly accepts his desire for food and

seeks to eat. When his desire is satisfied, he willingly accepts and enjoys the feeling of satisfaction. When his desire is frustrated, he willingly accepts his feeling of frustration. If he abhorred his desires and satisfactions, like a Hindu ascetic, or if he aggravated his desires and frustrations, like Western voluntarists and romanticists, he would be artificial and out of harmony with Nature. The aesthetic is to be found neither in artificial willfulness nor in artificial will-lessness, but in natural willingness.

Reason, too, is mistrusted in China, and the ultimate in the way of reality and value (i.e., what Nature presents here and now) must be intuited or apprehended directly. Reason takes what is presented and analyzes it. Reason abstracts artificial parts from natural wholes. Reason cuts and subdivides but can never restore the natural wholes it destroys; when it struggles to resynthesize, it does so with partial patterns, and the result is always an artificial whole. Reason not merely cuts by making distinctions but then sharpens them so much that differences come to be idealized as completely different—divided by an excluded middle. Taoism rejects the artificial results of reasoning. When differences are presented, they are accepted as they appear. When similarities are presented, they are accepted as they appear. And when similarities and differences both appear, both are accepted. When both appear, to see only the differences, or to regard the differences as more real than the similarities, as Western minds tend to do, and to admit only the similarities (indifference), or to regard the similarities as more real than the differences, as Hindu minds tend to do, must be regarded as artificial and out of harmony with Nature.

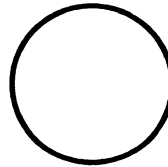
Whereas Western civilization idealizes an “either, or, but not both” logic, based on “the Law of Excluded Middle,” and Hindu civilization worships a “neither is, nor is not, nor both is and is not, nor neither is nor is not” logic, ending in the exclusion of all exclusiveness (or negation of all negation), Chinese civilization tends naturally toward a “both-and” (*yin-yang*) logic,



Either, or, but not both  
Western



Both-and  
Chinese



Neither, nor . . .  
Hindu

based on a willingness to accept distinctions which are only partially distinct, and similarities that are only partly similar. The Tao symbol idealizes this tendency. Given a circle to embody symbolically ultimacy in the way of logic, the Western mind wants to divide it into two equal halves by a straight line, the Hindu mind wants to keep the circle completely empty of divisions,<sup>14</sup> while the Chinese mind divides it by an S-curve in such a way that, although any diameter has an equal amount of white (*yang*) and black (*yin*), a circulating radius which begins by including only a little white increases the amount until its length is occupied wholly by white, yet does not finish covering the white until the black also appears and increases. The moments, if any, when such circulating diameter completely excludes the white and black from each other, as is done at all times in the Western ideal, are very few. Comparison of

the ideals depicted in these diagrams reveals clues to something basic in the mentality of the three civilizations, not merely in logic and metaphysics but also in epistemology, axiology, ethics, religion, politics,<sup>15</sup> and aesthetics. The Tao symbol is the chief symbol of one of the three great civilizations, and its symbolic significance should be better known to Western artists and aestheticians.

Western artists often seek sharp contrasts which may then be harmonized, and sometimes maximize a contrast so as to exhibit willful mastery in overcoming it harmoniously—perhaps one reason why tragic plots have such a strong appeal to Western minds. Hindu artists often symbolize identity (one and the same God manifest in a jungle of avatars), without trying to embody it; e.g., musicians prolong a song or instrumentation more extensively than silence. Chinese artists, depicting nature, include both empty space and variegated content in each painting and deliberately include both harmonious and disharmonious sounds, often imitating a whole menagerie of animals, in such a way that sometimes one dominates and sometimes another.

Turning from the Taoism of Lao Tzu, who was so extremely naturalistic in a rural way that his “shun artificiality” included “shun society” and “shun art,” to the Taoism of Confucius, who studied and approved music and the arts as part of his philosophy of proper family and courtly (i.e., social) life, what happens regarding reason and will as ideals? For Confucius, family and courtly life was just as natural as any other. He found principles for the best way (*tao*) for people to live together. The principle of reciprocity—do to others as you would have them do to you if you were in their shoes—is inherent in social life. Parent-child relations are not artificial but natural, and filial piety is a manifestation of what is natural.<sup>16</sup> Themes about ideal family life become central. Paintings of family and courtly scenes, especially in their natural, including home, surroundings result appropriately. If canons of good taste, in painting, music, dress, and archi-

ture, develop naturally, accept them willingly. Reason, although used by Confucius, was not idealized except as a means to discovering what is appropriate in natural, especially social, living. Will, in the sense of good will (*jen*), was central to his teaching, though this consists in a willingness to let each one follow his own nature and to take the trouble to gain insight into the nature of others before acting toward them. Children should willingly accept the good will of their parents for them, and parents should willingly accept the responsibility which comes to them naturally as parents. Likewise, in learning music, the pupil should willingly accept instruction, and the teacher should willingly submit to his duties in requiring what is needed from the learner. The highest ideal is that of perfectly embodying completely spontaneous willingness (*chih*) to whatever life brings. Hence, willingness, not either willfulness nor willlessness, must characterize the successful artist.

Zen, a Taoized form of Buddhism, epitomizes actualization of spontaneity, in life and in art. “Art—meaning all the fine arts, including painting and calligraphy, flower arrangement and gardening, *haiku* poetry and other literature, music, and drama—is an area of life reaping enormous riches through Zen attitudes. If aesthetic experience means something enjoyed as an end in itself, then Zen experience is always aesthetic. The Zen spirit, which looks not beyond the present, interprets every experience as intrinsically aesthetic. . . . The ‘art of living’ becomes self-evident in Zen.”<sup>17</sup> A Zen painter, for example, starting with whatever inspiration happens to arise within him and only a partially formed idea of how to express it, may begin by depicting some portion of an animal and, alertly noticing new potentialities in unintended aspects of his brush strokes, will evolve his idea as he works, using suggestions in each modification for rounding out some completed whole. The entire work, often completed in a few seconds or minutes, requires embodiment in the painter of the Taoistic attitude of willingness to enjoy being guided by appearances as they

appear. Rationalistic, preplanned designs, prolonged, meticulous, detailed execution, and perpetual revision and retouching, retard, when they do not extinguish, the Zen spirit. Voluntaristic expression of individual willfulness, whether for "success" or from egotistical desirousness, tends to destroy something of the demure willingness with which a Zen artist submits himself to the opportunities presented to him.

## CONCLUSION

Despite diversity, not merely in varieties of art forms, histories of art and of aesthetic theories but also in the dominating metaphysical ideals and their differing implications for aesthetics, common elements running through all particular views can be found. Although the problem of finding such common elements presents greater difficulty when one seeks through all three civilizations than when one is content to study only one civilization or some portion of it, when a theory drawn from such broader bases has been achieved, it should prove to be sounder, more adequate, and more enduring. Too often aestheticians working within the confines of a single culture waste their genius in drawing conclusions, unaware that some principles occur as ideals peculiar to that culture rather than as universal among mankind. Whoever proposes an aesthetic theory which does not apply equally well within the perspectives of each culture has not yet reached a finally satisfactory view.

My conclusion is, as I stated at the beginning: Aesthetic experience consists in intuition of intrinsic value. Each aesthetic experience, no matter how simple or complex, static or dynamic, reasonable or unreasonable, exciting or satisfying, nor whether in life or in any of the arts,

whether as creator, appreciator, or even owner of an art work, whether utilitarian or fine, or whether minute or magnificent, involves as an essential aspect some enjoyment of an end in itself.

## *The University of New Mexico*

<sup>1</sup> See Archie J. Bahm, *Philosophy of the Buddha* (London, 1958; New York, 1959, 1962).

<sup>2</sup> Okakura Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea* (New York, 1906, Tokyo, Rutland, 1956, 1958), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Dewitt H. Parker, *Human Values* (New York, 1931), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *El Dorado*.

<sup>5</sup> "Beauty is pleasure objectified." George Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty* (New York, 1896), p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> See P. T. Raju, "The Principle of Four-Cornered Negation in Indian Philosophy," *Review of Metaphysics*, VII (1954), 649-713.

<sup>7</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, tr. Archie J. Bahm, Ch. IX, Sloka 9. In press.

<sup>8</sup> In many ways, i.e., opposing Spirit versus Matter, Justice versus Grace, as well as Reason versus Will.

<sup>9</sup> See my edition: *Tao Teh King, or Book about Nature and Intelligence* (New York, 1958).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> Lin Yutang, *My Country and My People* (New York, 1935, 1939), pp. 287, 288.

<sup>14</sup> See Plate VIII of "The Ten Cowherding Pictures" in D. T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (New York, 1949), p. 371.

<sup>15</sup> West: "iron curtain"; India: "neutralism"; China: first on one side and then on the other, without ever abandoning either side completely. E.g., with some Chinese on the mainland (*yang*) and some on Formosa (*yin*), those on Formosa expect to return to domination of the mainland, despite control of the mainland by a Marxist (i.e., Western "either-or, but-not-both") philosophy.

<sup>16</sup> For further exposition of the philosophy of Confucius, see *The World's Living Religions* (New York, 1964), Ch. 8.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215-216. See further, pp. 206-221, especially pp. 215-218, for details.

ARCHIE J. BAHM

## *The Aesthetics of Organicism*

CONCEIVING "the aesthetic" as intuition or intrinsic value,<sup>1</sup> i.e., as any experience enjoyed as an end-in-itself or as complete in itself, places the aesthetic, or the subject-matter of aesthetics as a science, at the core, not only of philosophy of art and beauty but also of axiology, ethics, and religion (to say nothing here of political, social, and economic philosophy, and even logic and philosophy of science). The purpose of the present essay is to summarize for aesthetics some implications of this view in particular and of Organicism<sup>2</sup> in general, under the following headings: Value, Beauty, Art, Morality, and Religion.

### VALUE

Presupposing as obvious the distinction between means and ends, or instrumental and intrinsic values, we can state the Organicist view as holding that there are at least four distinguishable kinds of intrinsic value, namely, feelings of pleasure, enthusiasm, satisfaction, and contentment.

Each of these kinds has been exploited by a historical movement: Hedonism holds that pleasant feelings, whether sensuous or intellectual, are the only goods, and that unpleasant feelings, especially pains, are the only evils.<sup>3</sup> Romanticism idealizes desireousness or willfulness, especially when occurring as enthusiasm, zest, gusto,

eagerness, passion, or zeal, but also as hope, longing, and sentiment, as the only true good, with apathy as the ultimate evil.<sup>4</sup> Voluntarism claims that satisfaction is the only good, frustration the only evil. "Desire is the only basis of value; value itself does not exist until desire is being satisfied."<sup>5</sup> Anandism, the Hindu view that ultimate reality, knowledge, and value (*sat-chit-ananda*) consist in perfect quiescence, purified of all desires, objects, distinctions, regards bliss (*nirvana*) as a feeling of contentment completely freed from all anxiety.<sup>6</sup>

Organicism incorporates the positive aspects of each of the foregoing theories by claiming that pleasure, enthusiasm, satisfaction, and contentment are all obvious kinds of enjoyment, and condemns each theory to the extent that each denies or neglects the positive claims of the other three. It contends, further, that the four kinds of value not only intermingle and blend, often indistinguishably, with each other but also supplement each other in providing a richness of variety of intrinsic value. Often the four may be experienced successively, as when, in eating, the pleasing flavor of a tasty tidbit arouses desire for more and the satisfaction experienced during chewing each bite gives way to contentment when one has eaten enough. Succession and intermingling combine in orgasm, which may begin with sensory stimulation, proceed through arousal and intensification of passion, subside with clear feeling of satisfaction, and be followed by a prevailing sense of quiescent

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peace. If there are other distinguishable kinds of intrinsic value, which are not best understood as variations of these, I have not yet discovered them.<sup>7</sup>

Although the foregoing analysis may seem clear, especially to those familiar with the history of axiological controversies, actual experiences of enjoyment and suffering involve complex dynamic gestalts which can be comprehended, if at all, only through further analyses of multidimensional polarities. These include 1. an aspect-versus-class logic, 2. static-versus-dynamic existence, 3. immeasurable-versus-degree variations, 4. subjective-versus-objective appearance, 5. apparent-versus-real location, and 6. isolated-versus-contextual or gestalt-integrated occurrence.

1. The four kinds of value will be understood better if regarded as distinguishable aspects of enjoyed experiences rather than as separable kinds of entities isolatable in discrete classes. Intellect abstracts clear-cut classes of entities which exist, actually, only as varying aspects embedded concretely in the dynamic flux of experience. Awareness of the four together or, rather, enjoying awareness without analysis of the four, either all at once or in rapid succession, normally provides a richer value experience than awareness of only one, or even of only two or three of them. For want of better names, I call such experience *organic enjoyment* and experience of pain, apathy, frustration, and anxiety (all or some) together as *organic suffering*. The meaning of the term *organic* should be interpreted as stipulated here, and, in other Organicistic writings, rather than in its biological connotations merely. The Organicist use of this term has sociological, aesthetic and metaphysical, and ancient and modern, as well as biological, antecedents. For Organicism, organic enjoyment, which includes feelings of pleasure, enthusiasm, satisfaction, and contentment as variable aspects, is idealized as the type of intrinsic value to be kept in mind, rather than either alone, when the aesthetic is referred to as intuition of intrinsic value.

2. Some theorists interpret *intrinsic*

*value* as connoting staticity. For Organicism, the end-in-itself quality of intrinsic-value experiences is aspectival. Regardless of whether a value experience is enjoyed for an instant or enduringly for an hour, a day, a year, or, as reputedly with saints, for much of a lifetime, the end-in-itself quality is experienced as requiring nothing beyond itself in order to be enjoyed as intrinsic value. Staticity, in the sense of eternality or metaphysical non-temporality, is not essential to the nature of intrinsic value, as conceived in Organicism. Experience is, by its very nature, dynamic, i.e., an organic mixture of events and duration,<sup>8</sup> and enjoyment of intrinsic value may or may not be experienced as enduring for more than a few seconds. Organicism reduces experiences of intrinsic value neither to momentary events, such as an isolated pleasant sensation, nor to enduring enjoyment, such as contemplating an unchanging work of art undistracted for an hour. Value experiences are more or less enduring, and variability in such duration is to be expected normally.

3. Value experiences vary also in many other ways. Although, in a sense, each value experience is immeasurable when taken merely in itself, in another sense, when a value is experienced as increasing or decreasing in any way, and when we stop to compare values as greater or less in any manner, value experiences are interpretable as measurable, in principle. Although no enjoyment-meter has been, perhaps ever will be, discovered, it is an obvious characteristic of common sense that value experiences do differ in degree. Despite our inability to measure such degrees, in any exact way, we do, and should, speak of feeling more or less pleased, more or less enthusiastic, more or less satisfied, and more or less contented. Without accepting all details of Jeremy Bentham's "calculus of pleasures," Organicism recognizes that number, intensity, duration, and frequency may be factors in any value experience, i.e., not merely in feelings of pleasure, but also of enthusiasm, satisfaction, contentment, and, furthermore, in the richness involved in experiencing them

variably together.<sup>9</sup> These variations may be basic not only to actual enjoyments, whether ordinary or artistic, but also foundational in aesthetic judgment and art criticism.

4. Are intrinsic values subjective or objective? For Organicism, they are both. Enjoyment is obviously subjective, yet, with a few exceptions, enjoyment involves what is enjoyed. A taste sensation usually is not only pleasant but sweet or sour or experienced with some other sensuous content, familiar or unfamiliar. A desire ordinarily is experienced not merely with more or less exuberance but as a desire for some particular thing, object, or objective. A feeling of satisfaction normally is experienced as having achieved what was wanted. Contentment, unless one falls into a dreamless sleep, usually retains un-anxious traces of awareness of the satisfactions attained, the present context, or imaginative or anticipatory possibilities. The shape, content, or significance of what is enjoyed appears as objective, i.e., as objects of attention. Normally, enjoyment is neither merely subjective nor merely objective but a blend of both or, rather, an organic flux from which neither subjective nor objective aspects are totally absent.

5. Are intrinsic values real or apparent? They may be experienced as either, or even both at the same time. Objects valued in dreams and daydreams, when we awaken from them, seem merely apparent, though while we are dreaming they often seem as real as those which appear when we are awake. Most of us are naive realists<sup>10</sup> most of the time, with regard to intrinsic values as well as to physical things and their qualities, such as shapes and colors. Although some intrinsic goods and evils appear to have their locus primarily within ourselves, such as a tickling sensation, a heartburn, a frustrating perplexity preventing us from reaching a decision, or a fear persisting after our anxious belief has been demonstrated mistaken, we naturally believe that the objects we value exist independently of our being aware of them. We exert effort to

obtain a pie, a painting, or a view of the sunset reflecting in a mountain lake, because we believe they, and the value-experiences which they produce, have a real, not merely apparent, existence. And, until we become habitually critical about perceptual inferences, we tend to locate the values experienced in the objects themselves. It is a strange lover who does not value his beloved.

The role of ideals, i.e., ideas of valued objects, or objectives (ends-in-view), not yet actualized, should not be underestimated in understanding how intrinsic values are experienced. Although we do not need to go so far as to reify ideals as eternal entities, as Platonists have done, the pragmatic functioning of persisting ideals provides a practical kind of evidence of the apparent reality of what is idealized. The experienced recurrence or endurance of some *as if* intrinsic value provides pragmatic warrant for believing and behaving as if such intrinsic value were real. Hence, the Organicist view is that, "When anything appears as, or as if, real, it both *appears* as real and it *appears as real*."<sup>11</sup> Although attention may be focused upon either the apparent aspect or the as-if-real aspect of experience, both are regarded as mutually dependent, and as constantly available for reflective observation whenever one cares to observe. Organicism, holding that experiences of intrinsic values may be richer when such values are intuited as having both apparent and realistic aspects, opposes both those who regard such values as merely apparent, or merely real, or as both but involving some unlikely correspondence between them.

6. The Hedonistic paradox that, although pleasant feeling is the intrinsic value we seek, we can find it, normally, only by seeking some object or activity which yields such pleasant feeling as a by-product, becomes generalized, in Organicism, as an intrinsic-value paradox. That is, not only pleasant feeling but also enthusiasm, satisfaction, contentment, and organic enjoyment usually occur only within some complex context and in such



a way that the value aspect of a total gestalt is experienced indistinctly. The whole of an anticipated symphony, festival, or marriage is idealized as valuable. And awareness of the interdependence of parts and whole of such events is often experienced as multiple-enriched variegations as well as a unitary grandeur. Analysis of intrinsic value into four kinds is a sterile exercise if one fails to recognize that, in actual awareness, such values ordinarily exist as aspectival permeations of complex perceptual and anticipatory experiences. The "intrinsic value paradox" occurs in experience as paradoxical only if such values are first regarded as isolated entities to be sought as such, rather than as aspectival emergents pervading intricate dynamic gestalts. For the Organicist, that intrinsic values are to be found organically embedded within a perceptual-conceptual-memory-anticipation context is something to be expected. The paradox appears only when one mistakes what is organically interdependent as if it were, or should be, isolatable and independent.

#### BEAUTY

"Beauty," says George Santayana, "is constituted by the objectification of pleasure. It is pleasure objectified."<sup>12</sup> Organicism agrees, except that it extends objectification of feeling (empathy or *empfindung*) to include feelings of enthusiasm, satisfaction, contentment, and organic enjoyment. That is, not only do we project the sweetness tasted in our mouth into the cake on the plate before us, but also project the intrinsic value intuited in our eagerness for an objective, such as tomorrow's party, as if in the object, and integrate the object achieved, such as a new house, with our feeling of satisfaction, and extend our feeling of contentment into our environment and even, at times, as if into the whole universe when we have become completely pacified; and organic enjoyment may include a variegated assortment of objectifications, as when reveling in a carnival, or retain a steady object, such as our beloved during conjugal orgasm.

The aesthetic consists in intuition of intrinsic value, and beauty consists in objectification of the aesthetic.

Objectification seldom occurs as mere objectification. Experience, and consequently aesthetic experience, is characterized by organic unity.<sup>13</sup> But organic unity is not merely an objective unity, which I described earlier: "Organic unity is incomplete unity and also incomplete plurality. Organic unity solves the problem of the one and the many by consisting both at the same time of oneness and manyness, sameness and difference, unity and disunity."<sup>14</sup> It involves also a subjective unity-and-plurality, or at least a subject continually attentive through many successive acts of attention, which remains organically unified with such objective unity. The intuited objectification of value which constitutes beauty is never freed from the subject which objectifies, even though, like the glasses through which we see, subjectivity may become so transparent as to remain practically oblivious. Beauty is not something merely in the eye of the beholder, even though without the eye there is no beauty.

Some gorgeous sunsets and some works of Michelangelo are "really beautiful." "Really," here, means that the intrinsic value experienced appears to be "out there" in the object. The more fully a self appears to itself to be dependent upon what appears as objective to contribute to its experienced enjoyment, the more it tends to regard it as real, i.e., as existing independent of such experienced enjoyment, and as being the locus as well as source of the value enjoyed. Doubtless there are eon-long historical, biological conditions causing a self to project and reify its values in this way. Pragmatic justification of the seeming reality of experiences of beauty is often attained when people agreeably compare experiences of intrinsic-value proficiency in the presence of the same physical things. Comparisons based on compared feelings of contentment, satisfaction, and enthusiasm, as well as pleasure, provide a richer, and seemingly sounder, basis for judgments that an ap-

parently real beauty is properly judged to be an apparently *real* beauty. Disagreements also enter the picture, leaving the field forever open to controversies about in how far beauty may be said to be real, both in general and, more commonly, with regard to specific objective details.

ART

Art is anything man-made; fine art is art intended, by either maker or appreciator, to be capable of producing experiences of beauty or ugliness under suitable circumstances. Thus art involves instruments and control of instruments which may serve as instrumental values yielding intrinsic values. Fine art involves intention to make or modify some instrument, the making ("creative") activity, the instrument made or modified, and appreciation (i.e., intuition of intrinsic value, beauty, or disvalue, ugliness), even if only by the maker. The instrument need not be external to one's own body, for deliberate variations in one's vocal cords used in singing suffice to constitute an art instrument.

Is imaginary art art? Is a soprano, imagining a new melody without vocalizing it, being artistic? Is dream art art? Are the aesthetic experiences produced intentionally by hallucinogens, such as opium, mescaline, or LSD, properly called *art*? Yes. Such art is purely private, of course, and purely private art is not public art; but, as in the case of different kinds of public art, such as symphonic music and sculpture, each is to be judged by standards relevant to the peculiarities of its particular nature and circumstances. Organicism agrees with Croce in asserting that art exists, in a minimal sense, in imagination, but also with John Dewey in asserting that art exists more fully in a created work of art being appreciated by an audience. It is a mistake to judge imaginary art as equivalent to publically actualized art, just as it is a mistake to equate sculpture and music. Thus, for Organicism, not merely beauty but also art may be wholly subjective in the sense

that imaginary existence is sufficient for its existence. On the other hand, as noted previously, beauty, as well as art, may be judged to be as if real, where pragmatic agreement supports sustained inferences. Both beauty and art may exist anywhere on a polar range between extremes of subjectivity and apparent reality. But the great bulk of what is commonly called *art* is of a publicly appreciable sort. And artists, aestheticians, and art critics properly focus their attentions primarily upon these.

Having mentioned Croce with approval, I hasten to express disagreement also, when he says that "... art cannot be a utilitarian act; and since a utilitarian act aims always at obtaining a pleasure and therefore at keeping off a pain, art, considered in its own nature, has nothing to do with the useful and with pleasure and pain, as such."<sup>15</sup> Rather, art cannot exist without some instrument, for even imagination itself functions instrumentally in the creation of imaginary art, and an instrument is nothing if not useful, potentially at least, in the production of enjoyed intrinsic values. Organicism, in extending the range of intrinsic values to include enthusiasms, satisfactions, and contentments, as well as pleasures, identifies art with intentional, hence instrumental, production of enjoyments of these as such, even though most cases of such enjoyments are embedded aspectually in richly intricate contexts. Furthermore, since art is intentional, I must disagree with Croce when Croce says that art "does not arise as an act of the will."<sup>16</sup> Although artistic creativity and appreciation need not always involve moral action, most of it does, as we shall see below. And, although not all art experience involves conceptual knowledge, most of it does involve concepts; and some art is intended to express truth.

Edward Bullough's important contribution of the idea of psychical distance refers to something which can be explained better in terms of my distinction between aesthetic experience and moral experience.

Experience is "aesthetic" when it is enjoyed as

complete in itself and "moral" when it is felt as incomplete and needing something more to complete it. . . . This distinction between "aesthetic" and "moral" may be stated also in terms of intrinsic and instrumental values. Disregarding for present purposes those values, intrinsic or instrumental, which may exist independently of experience, we may define the "aesthetic" and the "moral" in terms of experiences as intrinsic and instrumental values. An experience itself is an intrinsic value to the extent that it is experienced as complete in itself. Such an experience is "aesthetic." An experience is itself an instrumental value to the extent that it experiences itself as a means to something more. Such an experience is "moral."<sup>17</sup>

Bullough uses the term *practical* instead of *moral* and the terms *unconcern* or *disinterest* to designate the aesthetic. Although ideas and feelings of distance, whether in space or time or culture, may indeed serve as one of the "principles of organic unity," which, earlier, I have called "isolation,"<sup>18</sup> identification of the aesthetic, which involves intrinsic value, with a non-value principle and, worse, with only one of several such principles, must be regarded as inadequate, to say the least. The problem with which Bullough struggles valiantly, but unsuccessfully according to most critics, about increasing the distance (with which he identifies the aesthetic) which does not in fact always increase the aesthetic, may be restated in terms of the aesthetic and the moral being aspectival ingredients in most experiences. Whereas some Hindus, e.g., Advaitins and Theravada Buddhists, idealize complete absence of the moral from the aesthetic, Gotama, the Buddha,<sup>19</sup> and Zen,<sup>20</sup> tend to prefer experiencing detachment continually in everyday life rather than, as in *arahatship* and *zazen*, in isolation from such life. The art of living is the most important of the fine arts, and such art is better when one recognizes the variable interdependence of the aesthetic and the moral, or of intrinsic and instrumental values, as something desirable, rather than in seeking to eliminate either one or the other. If enjoyment, i.e., intuition of intrinsic value, is the end of life, then the practical or the moral is properly defined in terms of its service to the aesthetic; to isolate one from

the other, except momentarily, is, in effect, to destroy them.

This issue recurs in disputes as to whether an art object is restful or arresting. If one's attention is not arrested by it, he will not come to rest in it. If one's interest is not aroused, it cannot be held in suspense, peace, or repose. The paradoxicalness of disinterested interest, to say nothing about obligations to become interested in disinterested interest, has been grappled with at great length in Hindu<sup>21</sup> and Buddhist<sup>22</sup> wisdom literature. The goal of life is disinterested enjoyment, i.e., aesthetic, but one cannot lose interest in life, i.e., remain purely aesthetic, without thereby soon losing a goal for life. One must remain interested in disinterestedness or disinterestedness itself will disappear.

The foregoing issues all seem to involve polarities for Organicism. And Organicism depicts resolution of such issues in terms of the nature of polarity.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, it approves focusing attention directly upon the polar nature of issues in aesthetics, as does Theodore M. Greene in discussing

...three specific polarities or tensions which must be resolved if a work of art is to possess artistic merit. These are (a) the polarity of simplicity *versus* complexity, whose resolution is the mean of organic unity; (b) the polarity of order *versus* novelty, whose mean is expressive originality; and (c) the polarity of the denial *versus* the idolatry of medium, whose resolution is the expressive exploitation of the medium. These polarities and means are all equally applicable to works of art in any medium. . . . These three means. . . are obviously aspects, or factors, of a single organic mean of artistic perfection as such.<sup>24</sup>

My reaction to Greene's analysis, after initial admiration, is four-fold: A. There are polarities involved in works of art because they are polarities of experience, not merely of art experience. B. There are more than three polarities of experience, all of which may also be taken into account in artistic analysis. C. One does not seek an Aristotelian mean between extremes, but rather regards the poles as idealized limits projected from an experienceable range of variations in either

direction. Organicism emphasizes dimension rather than mean. For the range between perfect simplicity and complete complexity is very wide, and one may, at times, properly devote himself to search for greater complexity, or for greater simplicity, in the interest of organic unity. To the extent that Greene interprets such a "mean" as "a happy resolution of the dynamic tension between the extremes of empty simplicity and unorganized complexity," however, our seeming disagreement is merely verbal. D. Although each of the three, and more, polarities may contribute to larger and more complicatedly interdependent sets of criteria for judging artistic experiences, I am disinclined to speak of artistic perfection, even though enjoyment of intrinsic value is, in a fundamental sense, what may be meant by perfection. Organicism idealizes imperfection or incompleteness as well as perfection or completeness as joint contributors to organic unity. The paradoxicalness witnessed in discussing Hedonism and disinterested interest remains inherent in the nature of polarity generally. So, there is a sense in which an experience which is both perfect and imperfect, both complete in some sense and incomplete in some other sense, is more perfect, or more complete, than one from which incompleteness is missing. Here we have a clue to the nature of the organic which Organicism idealizes. That which is perfect *merely* is imperfect in the sense that such imperfection is missing; that which is merely imperfect is perfect in whatever sense it is "mere." Thus the joint, or successive, relative domination by both complete and incomplete aspects of experience provides a dynamic richness which is better (i.e., in one sense more perfect) than an experience which is impoverished, relatively speaking, by being completely dominated by either the complete (aesthetic) or incomplete (moral) aspects alone.

Other polarities which may be involved in any artistic experience include all of the categorical polarities of existence<sup>25</sup> and experience. Experiences vary, for example, relative to whether an art object is im-

pressed or expressed, vague or clear, significant (symbolical) or self-contained in meaning, unique or universal in nature, private or social in character, important or unimportant, compared (evaluated) or uncomparred. In order to illustrate in greater detail the Organicist way of treating polarities in art, I select an issue long debated among interpreters of poetry, namely, whether a poem is better understood in terms of what is presented within the poem itself or in terms of its background, causes, associations, and comparisons. The method used by those who hold the former view is called explication, and adherents to this view have established an expository journal called *The Explicator*. Stipulatively naming the two views "explicationism" and "implicationism," I present, in skeleton outline, the Organicist view, which might be called "organiplicationism."

1. Extreme explicationism: A poem (or any work of art as experienced) is best appreciated when it is understood completely in terms of its own contents without reference to anything external to it whatsoever.
2. Extreme implicationism: A poem is a product of multiplicities of causal factors, etc., and so is best appreciated when understood completely in terms of such external factors.
3. Modified explicationism: A poem involves both internal and external aspects, or factors, but the internal factors are more important in understanding and appreciating it than the external factors.
4. Modified implicationism: A poem involves both internal and external aspects, but the external factors are more important in understanding and appreciating it than the internal factors.
5. Extreme middlism: The internal and external factors involved in the nature of a poem are exactly equal in significance for understanding and appreciation.
6. Modified middlism: The internal and external factors involved in the nature of a poem are never exactly equal in significance for understanding and appreciating it, for actually one or the other is always somewhat more important than the other.
7. Extreme dualism: The internal and ex-

ternal factors involved in the nature of a poem are completely unlike each other in nature; each is important in its own way, but neither contributes to the other in any way. 8. Extreme aspectism: The distinction between internal and external factors in a poem is completely artificial and only serves to prevent understanding and appreciation, for every aspect involved in a poem is an aspect involved in the nature of a poem regardless of whether it may seem internal or external. 9. Modified dualism: The internal and external factors involved in the nature of a poem are more different than alike; each is more important when taken by itself than when taken in relation to the other. 10. Modified aspectism: The internal and external aspects involved in the nature of a poem are more alike than different; each is more important when understood in relation to the other than when understood in terms of itself alone. 11. Extreme equalism: The similarities and differences between internal and external factors are exactly equal. 12. Modified equalism: The similarities and differences between internal and external factors are never exactly equal.

13. Organicism (organiplicationism): A poem is best appreciated when its internal and external aspects are understood interdependently. To be interdependent, two or more things must be both partly independent of and partly dependent upon each other. To the extent that a poem is something in itself, it is better understood in terms of its inner aspects, and it is possible to concentrate upon the inner aspects to the exclusion of outer aspects. To the extent that a poem is a product of other factors, it is better understood in terms of those factors, and it is possible to concentrate upon the outer aspects to the exclusion of inner aspects. To the extent that both inner and outer factors contribute to the nature of a poem, one ought to recognize the presence of one just as much as (equally) the other, even though the ways in which each contributes is different (unequal). Although internal and external factors are different in nature, and such difference should not be

reduced in any way to similarity, a poem is also something of a whole, such that both internal and external factors contribute to it, or are aspects of it, as a whole, without being reduced to functioning as mere aspects of such a whole. Such similarity and difference should be equally recognized, even though, in dynamic experience, one or the other tends to dominate more at different times. In sum, each of the previous twelve theories has a contribution to make, even though each of the extreme theories is less adequate, taken by itself, than the corresponding modified theories. Organicism, as a joint assertion of their positive claims, and as a joint denial of their negative claims (i.e., in denying what any of the other of the twelve theories asserts), regards itself as a much more adequate theory for how a poem should be interpreted than any of the other twelve.<sup>26</sup>

The foregoing twelve-fold formula will seem a sterile pattern to those who fail to understand it as a way of summarizing a multidimensional set of battles, all going on continuously. Although Organicism aims at being anti-negative, i.e., in denying the denials of all such theories, it cannot help being, and intends to be, a negation of such negations. That is, for example, it asserts that extreme explicationism is false because extreme explicationism denies what is true in not only extreme implicationism, but also in all of the other eleven isms. That is, Organicism conceives itself as always fighting twelve enemies at once, and its diagram of types of theories is a kind of intellectual mandala summarily, and formally, depicting its perpetual multi-dimensional war.

#### MORALITY

Art is intimately related with morality, in many ways. To make clear how this is so, the Organicist view of the nature of ethics must first be stated. Ethics is concerned with what is good and with what ought to be done in order to obtain it. The goods sought, ultimately, are intrinsic values

which, in order to be appreciated, must be intuited, i.e., experienced aesthetically. So long as they are unobtained, one's experiences are moral, i.e., are concerned with doing what is believed necessary to obtain them. Hence moral experiences are concerned primarily with instrumental values. Since our ideas of intrinsic values usually appear as complex gestalts involving physical, social, etc., dimensions, we have come to depict our ideals in terms of specific kinds of duties. The omnipresence of the Hedonistic, or rather the intrinsic-value, paradox leads those who seek clarity to formulate their ideals in factual terms in which the intrinsic-value aspects often remain unclear. Furthermore, since occupation with instrumental values puts a premium upon foresight, much, even most, of our ethical concerns pertain to conditional oughts, i.e., what one ought to do *if* conditions are so and so. Hence, the need for concern about potential instrumental and potential intrinsic values complicates the situation, providing additional ambiguity and unclarity which many find very baffling. When art is regarded as concerned primarily with beauty, i.e., intuition of intrinsic value, and morality with obligation, i.e., efforts with instrumental values, the two may seem quite different in nature.

However, such a view can prevail only when one lacks awareness of the intimate interdependence between intrinsic and instrumental values. Neither can exist without the other. The artist is thoroughly immersed in instrumental values while he is creating, for he has to do, and has to feel obligated to do, what he does in order to produce his desired result. (Even if what he does involves spontaneity, he ought to do what is needed to provide conditions promoting such spontaneity.) Such activity is moral activity. The appreciator also is involved in moral obligations, for example, in deciding whether or not he should look at a painting and, if he experiences beauty, whether or not he ought to look again, and for how long, and so forth. Except during moments of total absorption in appreciation, both artist

and appreciator are constantly preoccupied with morality while their attention is upon art. Unfortunately, too many identify morality narrowly with limited areas of conduct, such as those pertaining to dress, language, sexual behavior, and any deviation from such norms begets judgments about immorality. So long as an artist lives in a particular community, he is not freed from the social needs and norms of that community. But his lack of interest in such morality does not thereby eliminate his interest in all morality, for there is a morality inherent in his artistic endeavors. To separate these two kinds of morality is to misunderstand ethics.

Furthermore, as ethical, a person ought to be concerned with art to the extent that it contributes to his enjoyment of life. That is, appreciation of artistic beauty and creation of works of art are among the goods of life which one ought to seek, other things being equal. As appreciator, one may, perhaps, be obligated to visit art museums, to attend operas, assuming they are available, to sing and listen to singing, and to compliment the dress and behavior of gracious associates. As social, an appreciator may feel obligated to share with others aesthetic experiences available from art works which he owns. As creator, a person with skill may feel obligated to create, not merely because the result is enjoyable but because creative activity itself may be enjoyed. When an artist finds his work beautiful, then he may feel an obligation to publish it, i.e., to make it available for public appreciation. If mankind may be enriched by the discovery or invention of new kinds of arts, then feelings of obligation tend to exist in those who are aware of such potentialities. Art is pervaded with morality, and morality which completely neglects art is inadequate (i.e., immoral).

Art criticism, whether by professional critics or in everyday life, is a moral enterprise. The multitudes of ways in which a work of art may or may not contribute to the enjoyment of life by different people under varying circum-

stances leaves the field wide open for asserting preferences of one sort or another. To the extent that people are influenced in their appreciation and enjoyment by expressions of criticism, such criticism takes on additional moral involvements. The problem of seeking standards for judging standards of judgment becomes a central one for aesthetics as a science. The science of aesthetics, like all sciences, is a moral endeavor. For, as scientist, one seeks to understand what is true so that he, or others, may better use such understanding in order to obtain more of what is good.

## RELIGION

Religion, as conceived here, is man's quest for his ultimate values. That is, one does not become religious until he discovers that his life is worth while and that he lacks something in the way of achieving its fullness. How one conceives that lack, and what will be required to eliminate it, varies with cultures, societies, and individuals. But, however depicted, the ultimate value is regarded as an intrinsic value which must be intuited in order to be appreciated. Hence, the goal of life is aesthetic in its fulfillment. And the quest itself, to the extent that the end is not already being enjoyed, is highly moral. The art of living is the supreme art. Religious art, in this meaning of the term *religious*, is the greatest art. To the extent that living is essentially social, social arts, and socialized art, may contribute fundamentally to religion.

For Organicism, art tends to be more valuable when integrated with life; and the more ways in which it is integrated with life, the more valuable it is. And, conversely, life is more valuable when it is organically integrated with art, and with art in more ways. Although each art, and each aspect of each art, including each shade of each color, may be appreciated, momentarily, for what it is in isolation from all else, appreciation of both its value in itself and its contribution to other value-aspects of life enhances both

it as art and life as artistic. Thus a well-planned and well-executed wedding, or funeral, or inauguration of a president, may indeed be among life's greatest works of art. The Catholic sacraments are essentially both artistic and religious in intent. Art which is appreciated both for its symbolism and for its immediate values tends to be greater than that which is merely one or the other alone.

Consider a wedding, for example, with beautiful church architecture, beautiful music, beautiful costumes and coiffures, beautifully conducted. It is richer when, and because, it is experienced by all, both as presently enjoyed and as significant (i.e., moral) in contributing to the fulfillment of life as a whole, and still richer when it contributes to other lives, of parents and ancestors, children in prospect and other descendants, and contributor to local society, to mankind and, if possible somehow, to cosmic value. The artist, struggling with details of recalcitrant materials, may be unable to keep in mind the interrelations of his particular artistic activity with the intrinsic value of life as a whole, but it is a function of Organicism, as a philosophy, art, morality, and religion, to help more people become more aware of their interdependence, and of how to enrich life by regarding them as joint aspectual contributors to its enjoyment.

<sup>1</sup> See my "Comparative Aesthetics," *JAAC*, XXIV (Fall, 1965), 109.

<sup>2</sup> See my "Organicism—A New World Hypothesis," *Memorias del XIII Congreso Internacional de Filosofia* (Mexico City, Sept. 7-14, 1962), IX, 21-43; and my "Organicism—The Philosophy of Interdependence," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, VII (June, 1967), 251-284.

<sup>3</sup> See Jeremy Bentham, *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Ch. IV, and John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch. II.

<sup>4</sup> Romanticism appears in various forms in the writings of J. J. Rousseau (will to freedom from restriction), J. G. Fichte (will to be a self opposing, a not-self), F. Nietzsche (will to power), R. W. Emerson (will to appreciate), and the Existentialists (will to exist significantly).

<sup>5</sup> DeWitt H. Parker, *Human Values* (New York, 1931), p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> See my *Yoga: Union with the Ultimate* (Yoga Sutras of Patanjali), (New York, 1961), pp. 76, 126.

<sup>7</sup> For more extended treatment of these kinds of value, see my "Four Kinds of Intrinsic Value," *Darshana International*, V (July, 1965), 22-31.

<sup>8</sup> See my "Matter and Spirit: Implications of the Organicist View," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XX (Sept., 1959), 104-105.

<sup>9</sup> Hence, a calculus of organic enjoyment would be much more intricate than the Hedonistic calculus.

<sup>10</sup> For a critical exposition of naive realism, see my *Philosophy, An Introduction*, II (New York, 1953; Bombay, 1964).

<sup>11</sup> My *Types of Intuition* (Albuquerque, 1961), p. 6. See further for summary expositions of subject-object, apparent-real, and aesthetic-incomplete polarities.

<sup>12</sup> *The Sense of Beauty* (New York, 1896), p. 52.

<sup>13</sup> I became acquainted with this term through the lectures and writings of DeWitt H. Parker, my teacher. See his *The Principles of Aesthetics*, V (Boston, 1920; New York, 1946).

<sup>14</sup> My "Beauty Defined," *The Philosophical Review*, LVI (Sept., 1947), 584.

<sup>15</sup> Benedetto Croce, "The Breviary of Aesthetic," *The Rice Institute Pamphlet*, XLVII, (4 Jan. 1961), 9-10.

<sup>16</sup> Croce, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> My "Aesthetic Experience and Moral Experience," *The Journal of Philosophy*, LV (Sept., 1958), 837, 837-838.

<sup>18</sup> See my "Beauty Defined," p. 585.

<sup>19</sup> See my *Philosophy of the Buddha* (N.Y., London, 1938), esp. Chs. 1, 4-8.

<sup>20</sup> See my *The World's Living Religions* (New York, 1964), pp. 206-221.

<sup>21</sup> See *Bhagavad Gita*, esp. Ch. 5.

<sup>22</sup> See *Philosophy of the Buddha*, Ch. 8, "Dhyana."

<sup>23</sup> My "Polarity: A Descriptive Hypothesis," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XXI (March, 1961), 347-360.

<sup>24</sup> *The Arts and the Art of Criticism* (Princeton, 1947), p. 401.

<sup>25</sup> My "Existence and Its Polarities," *The Journal of Philosophy*, XLVI (Sept., 1949), 629-637.

<sup>26</sup> For a more detailed account of the nature of Organicism as an interpretive instrument, see my "Theories of Polarity," *Darshana*, II (Oct., 1962), 1-23.