

Art
and
Society

Mary Lynch
National College of Art
Fine Arts 1977

The man who makes the present and the local seem rich and strange

AT TURGENEV'S graveside Renan uttered a concept that has often been repeated: 'The silent spirit of the people is the source of all great things.'

It appears a typical piece of French rhetoric — and yet no matter how ruthlessly one questions it a certain stubborn core of truth remains.

Review by: CON HOULAN

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Art, one of the oldest mediums of communication, is in danger now, as never before, of becoming divorced from the great mass of ordinary people. In an age when enormous advances have been made by other media art has not kept up. In the developed countries, where the technical and general education of the masses has progressed out of all bounds in the last generation or so, there has been no corresponding advance in art education or art appreciation. The result now is that practice of art and appreciation of art is confined to a small section of people.

This is a state of affairs which has its effect on the general environment and which must inevitably affect the future development of art itself. It calls for a reappraisal of the relationship of art to the community as a whole and of the community to art. Art for art's sake is not good enough. We must ask ourselves who are we who paint and for whom do we paint. Do we in fact represent anyone or are we bound only to our own special view of the world? Should we strive for a more universal view? What then has been the artist's relationship to the community through the ages? How can we apply the experience of the past to raise our community's standard of visual awareness and perception?

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"If we saw the art of the past we would
situate ourselves in history.
When we are prevented from seeing it,
we are being deprived of the history
which belongs to us".

JOHN BERGER - "Ways of Seeing"



MICA SNAKE, ca. A.D. 200-500

PEARSON MUSEUM



NELSON ROCKEFELLER CONFRONTS ALASKAN TRIBAL MASK AT ART SHOW OPENING



INDIAN FIGURINE IN HOPI JAR

EXHIBITS

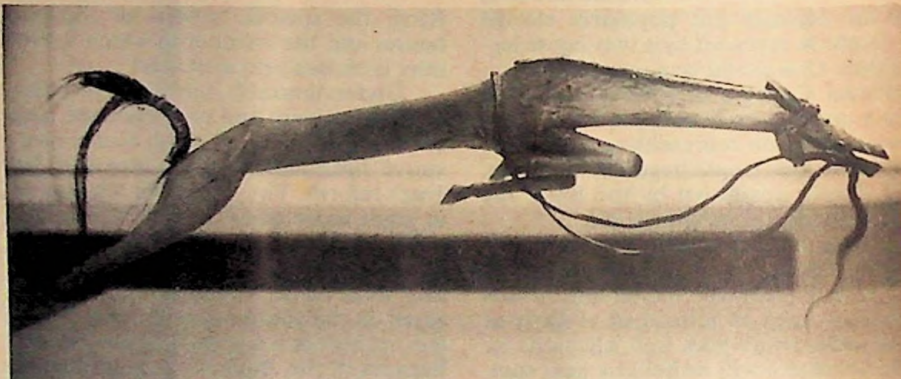
The Indians Conquer London

Lo, the poor Indian! Whose untutor'd mind sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind.

—Alexander Pope, 1732

The European view of the American Indian has always been patronizing, to say the least. Pope's snobbery only helped fix the image of the Indian as a savage—noble, perhaps, but woefully ignorant. On both sides of the Atlantic, museums tend to confine their Indian exhibits to ethnographic ghettos dominated by braves and their war bonnets.

But now a stunning show of Indian art at London's Hayward Gallery may change all that with the surprising force of its unself-conscious beauty. Jointly sponsored by Britain's Arts Council and American patrons as a U.S. Bicentennial event, the exhibition was assembled by Ralph T. Coe, assistant director of Kansas City's Nelson Gallery of Art and Atkins Museum of Fine Arts. Significantly, Coe is not an anthropologist but an art historian, who uncovered the show's 850 artifacts in obscure collections from places as distant as South Dakota and Bavaria. Before museums existed in America, European explorers used to ship their New World discoveries back home. Coe says he wanted to "bring them out of the curio cabinet with all its relics, and confer on them the identity of art."



WOODEN HORSE CARVED BY SIOUX GALLOPS ACROSS 2000 YEARS OF AMERICAN ART Out of the curio cabinet and into the realm of art at last.

He succeeded with most of London's art critics. "This is a white man's exhibition showing things of such beauty that they are inevitably taken as aesthetic marvels," wrote Caroline Tisdall of the *Guardian*. The *Times* literary supplement called it a "landmark," the *Observer* a "powerful elegy," and the *Sunday Telegraph's* critic was reminded of Miró, Calder and Braque. Coe plans to have his delicate treasures repacked in their specially carved plastic containers and flown to Kansas City for a repeat showing next spring.

Ice and Sky. The exhibit is loosely organized by geography, with scholarly gloss held to a welcome minimum. Prehistoric stone carvings from the Southeastern forests immortalize a puma or a hawk in onyx, and a snake in a slithering S of shiny mica. The subtle ochers and sharp abstractions of the Southwest desert dominate the basketwork and pottery of the Southwest, the best of it as fresh and precise but more lasting than Op art. The Eskimos, pinned between ice and sky, excelled in realism: a tiny stone nude with her arms gripped across her breasts is obviously in her death throes, and a cool, headless hermaphrodite of polished walrus ivory could be a torso of perfect Hellenic proportions.

Most startling is the dramatically spotlighted collection of Northwest Indian

masks carved for confident families, grown prosperous with fishing the warm Pacific waters, who wanted tribal status symbols. The masks have thrusting chins, hooked noses, popping eyes and arrogant high foreheads. They are expressionist versions of the grandeecs of the Italian Renaissance. "Tell me what difference in standard there should be between these and the dukes of Ferrara," says Coe challengingly. Indeed, when that noted patrician art collector Vice President Nelson Rockefeller opened the show, he stared knowingly at one Alaskan tribal eminence. The mask seemed to stare right back.

If this elegiac exhibition of the art of a vanishing race has a leitmotiv, it is an elongated, galloping wooden horse carved by a Sioux and collected by a missionary. Wounded—probably by a white man's bullet—the anguished animal seems to be flying forever across thousands of miles of American experience. It epitomizes an essential theme of American art and literature: nature corrupted and innocence defiled.

No one understands this better than the Indians. When Coe began his research, he wrote 20 Indian nations seeking their support. Only two replied. The Indians have no word for art, and Coe believes they simply were not interested in displaying it. Why? "Because they were not living it."

Lawrence Mink



MICA SNAKE, ca. A.D. 200-500



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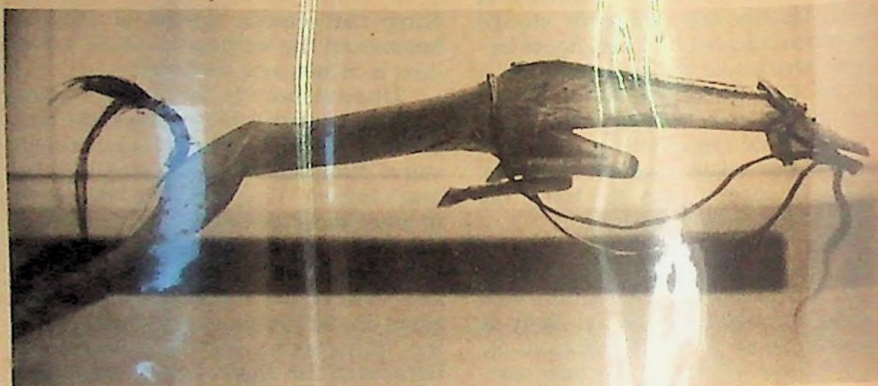
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The term primitive is used in connection with Eskimo art and the Eskimo way of life, for want of a better, but in fact, Eskimo art is a highly developed art and the Eskimo way of life achieves a balance and a unity with nature which our society might envy.

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Lawrence M...

TIME NOVEMBER 1...

Section I

PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

"The Indian artist refers continually to the spring from which his art first emerged, he never turns from that source. His art expresses for those who lack belief in myths something of the quality of myths".

SACRED CIRCLES - Arts Council 1976

In primitive society the artist reflected the visions, aspirations and beliefs of his people. His art was the peoples' art, which stamped their artefacts, their temples and their Gods. In the case of most vanished societies their art is their distinguishing mark - a Grecian urn, a Chinese vase, a Celtic shield, a Viking longboat.

An example of primitive art survives today among the Eskimo. The Eskimo, over the years, have developed a wide range of highly developed skills. They make paper-thin clothing from animal skins and have developed their own means of transport, sleds and snowshoes for overland journeys and kayaks and umiaks for sea and river travel; all excellently adapted to meet the prevailing conditions. A man cannot survive long in such difficult terrain if he fails to notice minor changes, in the weather or in the state of the ice. Hence very early in life the young Eskimo learns two of the artist's first

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requirements, to concentrate and to note minute details. From an early age too he learns all the adult skills, which are many in a community where there are few specialists. All this ingrained experience the Eskimo applies to his art and uses on such delicate works as some of the ivory carvings which, just to take one example, clearly show all the native powers of dexterity, concentration and acute observation.

The Eskimo have their own distinct concept of the world around them, of time and space. Their view of the world is basically circular, not linear. Circles are important to them, in their minds and in their images. They do not think of time as it is thought of in western society, rather, they think of time in terms of space; the space, for example, denoted by the sun's path, by the moon's, or by the Eskimo's own position relative to the journey being taken. The Eskimo conceives of all things as possessed of a soul or inua, which soul, to him, is the stable and permanent part of things; of ice flows, polar bears, driftwood, whales; animate and inanimate things alike. The Eskimos' use of animal masks for rituals, festivals and dances springs from this belief. Masks represent a fairly universal art form among primitive peoples. The Eskimo masks denote a duality by means of a second symbol, a second or inner face, or fragments of a second face, and to the Eskimo the mask represents not an individual animal, but the collective inua of the whole species, a reincarnative force.

The masks are humanoid even when denoting animals and the man-animal motif is freely used, symbolising the belief that the soul of the animal has a human aspect. Masks were also used to assist the medicine man, or shaman. The shaman received his powers from the spirit world and used by him the masks served to bridge the gap between the real and the spirit world.

Eskimo art, including carving, printmaking, and, recently, ceramics, has developed in relation to the changing ways of Eskimo life. The boldness and liveliness of design plus the originality of subject matter is widely admired and appreciated. The Eskimo are an example of a primitive people whose art has to an extraordinary degree been woven into the fabric of everyday life. The total integration of the artist and his art, as among the Eskimo, is unfortunately a lost garden of Eden for many civilisations, including our own.

Section 2

PATRONAGE

"But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
 Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
 To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
 Or set upon a golden bough to sing
 To lords and ladies of Byzantium
 Of what is past, or passing, or to come".

W.B. YEATS - Sailing to Byzantium

In primitive societies, while one cannot conceive of the artist being conscious of a need to conform, this need in fact existed - and in many cultures its rigid demands did strangle development and rob these cultures of their vigour so that the art products became completely stylised and straightjacketed. There was never-the-less, a wholeness about primitive art in that the artist fully shared and respected the entire body of his peoples' concepts and beliefs; beliefs largely in the archetypal race myths and concepts, which at any period, by their very nature, have deep significance for all men. Art in primitive societies had a pervasiveness and life force it has never enjoyed since.

Once out of the primitive stage the wholeness which existed was in danger and at later stages the artist's work tended to be directed or interfered with by influences not identifiable with the community; influences in many instances which restricted or distorted the free development of his art. In western society such influences

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came from wealthy and powerful patrons, and in society, as it was constituted for a long period, the artist, if he were to survive as an artist, was forced to seek patronage. Patronage in the times was for the artist a useful and a necessary thing; but, insofar as it took the choice of subject away from the artist and resulted in art being devoted to an unhealthy degree to religious and classical subjects, it was at best a necessary evil. However splendid the results in some cases, it automatically imposed a pietism and artificiality which, in the long run, could only hamper natural development and inhibit experimentation.

As patronage in the cruder forms by emperors and popes, and the aristocracy, clerical and lay, declined, new pressures for the artist, though less evident and, happily, less restricting came from other quarters.

GUILDS

The renaissance saw another party introduced in the shape of an adviser who acted for the humbler patron. Sometimes this advisor was an artist whose job was to evaluate commissioned works, often by comparing them with older work in the same genre, a process not calculated to encourage originality or experimentation. This personage acted mostly on behalf of the client but, shortly, the artists own guilds came into being. At first the guilds were almost exclusively

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concerned with the training of apprentices and with the building of proper standards of workmanship, but soon they came to be a powerful influence in all matters affecting art and continued so until the mid-seventeenth century when they were largely superseded by the academies.

ACADEMIES

The academies originated with the "Academie Royal de Peinture et de Sculpture", a body started in 1648 by a group of French artists outside the guilds. In 1793 this body was suppressed, during the revolution, but it was reconstituted in 1795 as the "Institute National de France" and re-organisation were effected in 1803 and again in 1816 with the restoration of the monarchy. Another body, the "Salon de Refuse's" was set up by Napoleon the Third in 1863 to display the works of artists rejected by the Academies.

A similar system to the French academies developed in England. In 1765 the "Society of Artists in Great Britain" was set up by a group of artists, among them Gainsborough, Reynolds and Richard Wilson. This body was subsequently granted a royal charter and eventually became the "Royal Academy". The "Society of Painters in Water Colour" was founded in 1805 and this became the "Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colour" in 1852.

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The academies generally were very conservative and tended to reject new and unestablished styles and methods, a tendency which lost to them many talented young artists who had to find recognition and acceptance elsewhere. Despite their conservatism, or because of it, the academies have continued to exert a powerful influence on art. But the art world was also radically affected by social and other changes in Europe which brought into being the middle classes in society and saw the advent of the professional art dealers.

From the seventeenth century onwards a tendency developed for the more open sale of new art works and away from the practice of earlier times, when commissioning was more usual. The Guilds contributed to this by displaying their members works for sale and the tendency was also strengthened as collections of art from the great houses began, more and more, to come up for auction, so that a more open market situation was brought about. This suited the middle classes and was no doubt in part brought about by them. They found it easier and generally cheaper to buy art from a shop or studio or at auctions than to commission works themselves and they were beginning to influence the market strongly. It was a situation where paintings came to be bought more because they were admired individually rather than because the artist was well known and famous. It was also a situation ripe for the professional dealer.

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DEALERS

"The dealer has to have a publicity machine to work for him, critics, columnists, and potential buyers have to be made aware of the novelty, the right people have to be invited to see it at the right time and in the right place."

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR/BRIAN BROOKS
The Art Dealers

The dealers by their popularisation of particular artists and particular styles were to exert a powerful influence.

PAUL DURAND - RUEL 1831 - 1922 was one of the most famous of the art dealers. He inherited his business from his father, Jean Marie Fortune Durand - Ruel in 1865. The business was set up in 1803, by Durand - Ruel (senior), as a stationers, which he subsequently expanded to take in the supply of artists' materials and, finally, artist's works. Paul Durand - Ruel is famous mainly for his patronage of many of the impressionists, including, Manet, Degas, Sisley, Pissarro, Monet, Renoir and Cezanne. He paid his artists generously by the standards of other dealers and often bought from them when he had no immediate prospect of selling the particular works. His generosity in this regard and the depression of the mid 1870's left him financially strained so that at the time of his death in 1922 he had no money. He had however fifteen hundred paintings which included many master-pieces. He was a genuine lover of art who

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encouraged and helped many artists in their difficult times. He showed vision in opening his gallery in New York and was responsible for widely popularising contemporary artists particularly the impressionists. Paul Durand - Ruel was the first to seriously cultivate the middle classes as customers for paintings. His influence on art was entirely good.

JOSEPH DUVEEN 1869 - 1959 was a craftier type dealer more representative of the commercial approach. He made no attempt to educate people or to open new markets. Duveen aimed to sell for high prices to the rich though they might have no genuine interest in art. He provided people with reasons for buying paintings which had no connection with art appreciation; reasons which varied from their achieving an image as public benefactors to the getting of tax concessions when works were left to the state galleries. He cultivated a fashion for old masters, in which he dealt mainly, and deliberately set out to contrive a scarcity situation which achieved high prices for some of his stock, irrespective of the actual merits of the particular works.

These two dealers, Durand - Ruel and Duveen, good and bad, represent the poles of the modern art trade which, with them, can be said to have fairly started. Most of the elements of the modern scene were already in evidence; the free market, the new rich and the boundless energy of the 19th century, all came together to stimulate activity. But these were external circumstances, there were other influences changing the artist's own attitudes.

Section 3

"It was no accident, therefore, that birth of the avant - garde coincided chronologically - and geographically too - with the first bold development of scientific revolutionary thought in Europe".

CLEMENT GREENBERG - "Art and Culture"

THE MODERN ARTIST

Up to the end of the 18th century the main influence came from patrons and from the guilds. Though it varied with different individuals, artists were generally the passive instruments of these influences and of the demands of the market. The artists own interests were mostly only secondary. This was now to change.

The change, though not to be apparent for some time, had its beginnings with the French Revolution which brought a flood of new thinking and a radical change in ordinary man's view of his own standing. After a natural reaction to the horrors of the revolution and the Napoleonic wars, which evoked a Classical and Romantic period, the new climate and thinking began to bear fruit. Artists, mostly now freelance, with a new self-confidence began to look to their own sources, dictated by their personal interests, and for their own markets. It was at this critical stage that the effects of the social and cultural changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution also began

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to exert their influence. The increasing urbanisation and industrialisation started to show in some artists' choice of subject and their new realistic approach served to focus attention on the harsh conditions they depicted. Kathi Kollwitz's work is an outstanding example of this genre. No longer was a pretty picture enough. New techniques reflected the growing scientific knowledge of the working of the human mind and eye; for example, the neo-impressionists developed a style of painting using dabs of pure colour painted directly onto the canvas so that the eye of the viewer mixed the colours to make new ones, where formerly the artist tried to achieve his effect by mixing the colours on his palette. This style of painting was known as pointillism.

"Modern art seems truly chaotic
But as time passes by the
'hidden order' in art's substructure
(the work of unconscious form creation)
rises, to the surface".

ANTON EHRENZWEIG - "The Hidden Order of Art"

Artists were becoming more dissatisfied with purely representational art and started to experiment with various new techniques in an effort towards gaining added dimension. This trend was accelerated by the advent of the camera which as a coldly mechanical method of reproduction could not be surpassed, but which too, in the hands of the expert, could be used to very telling effect. The time was ripe for non-representational art but the camera was undoubtedly a strong factor in giving this type of art its impetus.

Non-representational art, which makes up a large part of modern art, is concerned to convey more, to communicate more, than purely representational work, but it also tends, in all its isms, to be offputting for the uninitiated. Increasingly the layman has been lost along the way and, more and more, artists have gone their own way.



Pictures are not sausages

I FIND Barry Fantoni's views on David Hockney (Magazine, last week) as uninteresting as he appears to find Hockney himself.

Hockney's consistent preoccupation with the problem of Picture as Product is metaphysical, lifting his work altogether above illustrative norms: it is the overriding concern of serious modern artists in the West at present.

The jejune comparison of a (young) Hockney with a (presumably late) Matisse renders Fantoni's argument ridiculous. Pictures are not sausages; and it is precisely the mentality which "expects certain standards of draughtsmanship" in acceptable presentations of reality that led to the hothouse horrors of the Victorian age, from which the natural vigour of our own seeks its own imaginative escape routes.

In being aware of this, and in being unafraid of reality as a legitimate subject in its own right, Hockney is unfaintly fresh and original, and the use of distortion or feebleness of line (though it may deceive the unprepared) is, upon close examination, clearly a creative tool in the delineation of a particular relationship to the thing seen.

Miss Gilli Mye
London, N.

PHONYNESS: I would like to commend Barry Fantoni for assuming the role of a spokesman for all serious, practising artists who are attempting to push forward the boundaries.

It is extremely difficult to assess the importance of a current particular movement in art. In the area of painting and sculpture, the last two decades have seen wave after wave of dilettantes making the headlines, setting up secret "arty" circles and generally misleading the layman as to the function and necessity of art in our society.

The serious artist knows only too well how hard he has to fight the phyness that surrounds him. He also knows that the work of an artist who is only in for the ride dies—along with that artist.

Eric Anderson
Carmarthen, South Wales

"Art may seem to be in danger of being drowned by talk. Rarely are we presented with a new specimen of what we are willing to accept as genuine art. Yet we are overwhelmed by a flood of books, articles, dissertations, speeches, lectures, guides, ready to tell us what is art and what is not, what was done, by whom and when and why and because of whom and what. We are haunted by the vision of a small delicate body dissected by crowds of eager lay surgeons and lay analysts".

RODOLF ARNHEIM - 'Art and Visual Perception'

This is a situation which the critics can or should be able to influence in the long term.

The critic and the art writer are very important to art, particularly at present when their interpretative role is so much needed. The job is very difficult and calls for a special intuition, for even the adept will be outdistanced when genius forges ahead to a new style.

Critics too in the past and writers of books on art have tended to concentrate unduly on structure and composition; the rules rather than the spirit. These people emphasise the technicalities to the point where the layman, instead of being encouraged, is discouraged and left with the impression that painting is an esoteric art and not for the uninitiated. The end result is that more ordinary people are led to believe that it is pointless for them to be interested in art.

Section 4

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

"It is among the hopeful signs in the midst of the decay of our present society that we - some of us - have been unwilling to accept this last phase for our own culture".

CLEMENT GREENBERG - "Art and Culture"

This failure to carry along the layman has had many ill-effects, not least on some of the artists themselves. In many cases it has led to uncontrolled experiment; if the artist abandons all obligation to communicate he abandons art. To communicate, people must have something of a common language even if this is only a sign language. But is not to provide an audience for the painter that the public needs to be educated to appreciate art. We have all too many examples of the results of an uneducated public taste.

The new rich were responsible for a great body of ugly and extravagant Victorian design, the American public for the vulgarity and excesses of the car designs foisted upon them in the 1950's , 1960's and the Dublin citizens for the ruin of the Dublin skyline and the urban sprawl of 1977.

If the public get the art they deserve perhaps artists get the public they deserve.

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On every side one is beset by lack of taste, ugly and vulgar hoardings, stupefyingly vapid films, pulp magazines, bingo sessions, soap opera television, and all the while we squander resources and pollute the earth.

Our society sadly needs to re-examine its values - in all areas. Our aesthetic sense, in fact our commonsense, seems to have abandoned us. We have gone astray somewhere when television jingles which have nothing to do with the thing, tra-la, influence us to buy Brand X, Ha, Ha, and the girl on the jacket the latest nick nacket! So buy Brand Y and be merry until you die! And no one can deny the object is achieved - the Company Colossal does not spend money without results. The Ad man cometh! And to quote Robert Burns,

".....Common-sense has taen the road,
an' aff, an' up the Cowgate
Fast fast that day".

On a more serious note, this is a state of society about which none of us can be complacent. It has but one hopeful sign, in that it indicated that society can be influenced. No one will deny that the absence of artistic sense is a major deficiency in our society. Renewal and the re-assertion of proper values are called for.

"I would say that the function of art is not to transmit feeling so that others may experience the same feeling. That is only the function of the crudest forms of art - 'programme music', melodrama, sentimental fiction and the like. The real function of art is to express feeling and transmit understanding".

HERBERT READ "The Meaning of Art".

In the everyday affairs of contemporary society the artist is often condemned to be a purveyor of pseudo art in advertising and gimmick design and to have no real say in important areas where his aesthetic sense can be of most value; advising on town and country planning, on major buildings and building schemes, and particularly in the vital area of education. Our people are blind to their needs. - Once the TAM rating is good the most rubbishy programme is retained and the system is self-perpetuating.

We need a really aggressive ministry for art or some body with a national programme dedicated to the raising of standards. To begin with, our people should be encouraged to take an interest in art and re-assured that their opinions are valid, and that the humble, 'I like it', need not be humble at all; that, in fact, they may forget much of the humbug written about art. It is sufficient to appreciate that a painting is the artist's vision or experience of the subject and that it is the artist's loss if the viewer is not enriched.

THURSDAY 5th MAY

Mayor slams 'neat wrap' education

EVENING PRESS.

THE educational establishment has been slammed by the Lord Mayor of Dublin for adopting conservative, almost entrenched attitudes, producing neatly wrapped stereotypes.

Mr. Jim Mitchell attacked the educational system which, he claimed, had become exam-orientated and in need of drastic change.

He described the system as a basic factory for producing stereotypes, instead of teaching children to choose from a mind shattering garray of possibilities confronting them.

Calling for greater emphasis on the art of communication, the Mayor asked: "How many graduates leaving university today with half a dozen languages are not able to carry on a simple conversation with their father and mother." Present day students were neatly wrapped in theory and data, he said.

He added: "Education to me goes beyond knowledge. It is the ability to cope with life and live with your fellowmen in harmony and peace, recognising and appreciating your differences and sharing your common interests."

The Mayor's attack came at a seminar on "education for life, not for exams" in Inchicore last night. He urged a new look at the present system where the passing of exams had become an end in itself.

"We tend to assume that education is the domain of the thinker, the analyst, the questioning mind, the fertile ground for future ideas", said Mr. Mitchell.

He claimed the true quality of education was independent thought and a sense of security fostered from within. "We must teach our children to be independent thinkers, self sufficient and confident in their own ability".

Co - education, community schools and interdenominational education had a great deal more relevance for life than "cramming" for exams, the Mayor added. Educational priorities faded into insignificance before the ultimate priority — the ability of our children to live in a future world coping with struggle, frustration, pain and disappointment, which were the true realities of life.

Mr. Mitchell stressed that more attention should be paid to subjects such as recreation, health and sex. Much of the learning really needed was being almost totally neglected, he said.

Education must be for life, not for exams", added the Mayor. "We owe it to ourselves to our children and to our future".

Journey out of blindness

THE DARK TOWER AND OTHER STORIES by G. S. Lewis edited by Walter Hooper/Collins £3.95 pp 158

Richard Gregory

THIS collection of six short stories and incomplete larger works have themes of science fiction and fantasies of mind. "The Dark Tower" is an incomplete novel exploring ideas of time. This starts evocatively like early Wells, but degenerates into confusion. "The Man Born Blind" describes the situation of someone made to see after a life of blindness. "A blind man has few friends; a blind man who has recently received his sight has, in a sense, none. He belongs to neither the world of the blind nor to that of the seeing, and no one can share his experience."

This story reads like case histories of recovery from blindness and yet is not factual. I must confess to finding the clinical cases far more interesting than the fictional counterpart. Lewis expresses something of the frustration and the depression which these people almost all experience; but there is nothing here to illuminate our understanding of this rare human experience. It could be that physiological bombardment of new signals upsets brain processes. It could be an experience similar to, though more dramatic than, emigration or winning the football pools. But gaining sight is returning from abnormal to normal—which makes us peculiarly insensitive to the predicament of newly sighted adults.

The most recent cases are indeed stranger than fiction—more like Greek mythology. An Italian psychologist, Alberto Valvo, has described six cases of congenital blindness, in which one of the patient's teeth was drilled to hold an acrylic lens and transplanted into the eye. The tooth serves as buffer to prevent rejection of the lens. So we have six adults (including a Professor of Philosophy) living in Rome, seeing for the first time through artificial lenses—with teeth implanted in their eyes.

They confirm earlier findings that new vision is limited to what has been previously learned by touch. Vision is almost immediately available for familiar situations—even telling the time or reading letters previously learned by touch—but is slow to develop for perceiving things specifically visual. All this confirms the notion that sensory signals mainly elicit what is already in us, rather than telling us about the world directly.

Professor Gregory is the author of "Concepts and Mechanisms of Perception" (Duckworth 1974).

EDUCATION

"Extensive psychological testing has shown that the mysterious quality called 'creative imagination' seems to exist in all people. But is severely diminished by the time an individual reaches the age of six. (You mustn't do this! You mustn't do that, you call that a drawing of your mother? Why your mother only has two legs! Nice girls don't do things like that!) Set up a whole screen of blocks in the mind of a child that later inhibits his ability to ideate freely".

VICTOR PAPANEK - "Design for the Real World".

It is in our education system that the greatest change must be made. In our National schools, almost from the child's first day (we may discount the defective gestures made in the infant classes), academic subjects are predominant and little or no scope is left for creativity. In our secondary schools what little art there is, is taught as an examination subject where the emphasis is on drawing a factual likeness. This approach is quite inimical to the serious student's proper development at this stage and fails completely to give the generality of the students any real appreciation of art. The emphasis in both primary and secondary schools is on examination success in academic subjects, where memory is all sufficient, so that there is virtually no encouragement for the artistically inclined or for creative activity and no general interest in art is fostered. This is an unfortunate situation which must be changed if the innate talent of our children is to be cultivated and if the community at large is to be endowed with an aesthetic sense.

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It may appear that the effort to convert society is doomed to failure or that it is unrealistic to expect the man in the street to take an interest in art or to appreciate it, but there are many instances where modern communities have developed a strong interest in music, drama and ballet. Why not art?

The task is great but the effort is self-rewarding. As a good climate for promotion of art is brought about we will see more artists employed, with the attendant benefits, more innate talent will be tapped, and with our better understanding of the danger of inhibiting creativity in the young we will get more and better artists who will be able to do new and better things.

But in our efforts to educate we must beware. We must remember Hans Anderson's the story of the Emperors new clothes, and the little boy who reported the Emperor's nakedness. While we must equip the little boy to recognise magic when magic is there, we must preserve the purity of his vision which enables him to see thorough the suit of humbug and fraud.

CONCLUSION

"Hence it developed that the true and most important function of the avant-garde was not to experiment but to find a path along which it would be possible to keep culture moving in the midst of ideological confusion and violence".

CLEMENT GREENBERG - "Art and Culture"

Our ability to create is one of the major traits distinguishing us from the animals. It is a tragedy that this should be the very faculty of the human mind most vulnerable and most often attacked and frustrated in contemporary society.

The field of secular knowledge has become so vast that there is only room to learn the accepted ways of doing things ; the opportunity for discovering or creating new ways is denied and any discipline not immediately connected with job qualification must be neglected, in our competition-mad system. Because too we live in a rapidly changing and complex society, often in densely populated areas, we must conform in many ways, but we have allowed the pressure for conformity to push us too far.

In our education system we must equip our young people to fit into society, but it is vital that in the process we must not rob them

of the will and ability to change that society for the better or to contribute new and valuable ideas.

For the individuals sake we must provide the outlet for the creative faculty; to thwart it results for many in intense frustration and lack of self-fulfilment; for the community's sake, for all our sakes, ^{we} must disseminate an appreciation of art and aesthetic form.

The relationship of the artist to his community has gone through various stages, from the ideal relationship in primitive societies to the alienisation of the present day. In primitive societies the artist represented the beliefs and concepts of his society, his artefacts served their every day needs and his ceremonial masks, totems etc. served in their communication with the spirit world. He fully shared his society's beliefs and concepts.

Now, alas, as never before, the artist is alienated from his society. The impasse has been reached where the general body of society does not have beliefs or concepts homogeneous enough or worthwhile enough to compel representation and the artist's own vision has led him where society is not equipped to follow.

It is clearly a time to take stock, a time to re-examine all our values, a time when the artist must once again assume for his community the mediumship with the spirit world of spiritual and aesthetic values as part of a greater movement for regeneration of our society.

"Art is the distinguishing dignity of man and it is by art that he becomes dignified, and 'democracy' means nothing, or means only something bad, if it misconceives the the right of man to exercise his distinctive function as man i.e. as artist, as culture - making animal."

DAVID JONES "Epoch and Artist"

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