

THE MYSTIC VISION

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"It should not be hard for you to stop sometimes, and look into the stains of walls, or ashes of a fire, or clouds, or mud, or like places in which you may find really marvelous ideas."<sup>1</sup>

In everyday life, man makes constant application of intuition and the unconscious mind. It is said that we cannot give definition to certain truths and beliefs; that they cannot be demonstrated by language or syllogisms, truths and beliefs, that must be understood and learned by the use of intuition.

We look and we think we see; we listen and we think we hear; we feel; we touch. We examine our thoughts and we think we are understanding the depths of our hearts and consciousness. What we think, see, and hear, are merely the functions of our senses which will serve as a guide to our conduct, but which really give no more than a practical simplification of knowledge and reality.

Knowledge has two forms; it is either intuitive knowledge or logical knowledge; knowledge obtained through the imagination or knowledge obtained through the intellect; knowledge of the universal or knowledge of the individual; it is productive of either images and/or concepts.<sup>2</sup>

In the creation of art, as often as not, intuition becomes a valued and useful tool. Where do these impressions

arise, these impressions that are transferred through the mind and hand, and given existence in the form of objective reality? For the realist, it arises from the direct observation of the environment, but for the expressionist, it arises from a myriad of experiences, events, and impressions that have been filed and stored away in the vault of the unconscious and realized as the result of a process of exploration, construction, and intuitive notion.

"The artist's eye should always be turned upon the inner life, and the ear always alert for the voice of inward necessity. This is the only way of giving expression to what the mystic vision commands."<sup>3</sup>

Kandinsky

The realist, the idealist, is historically embodied with the application in the arts which was that of Classical Greece; an application that involves a preconception, a planning out, that is intended to eliminate any doubt or need for contact with the intuitive self.

The Greek sculptor's preoccupation with the ideal figurative form is an example of this preconception. The sculptors would many times select anatomical reference from a number of models and various body types in order to construct the most ideal figure. There was a directness in application which enabled the Greeks to keep their eyes upon the essentials, without distraction of superfluous details; those be-

ing, according to Aristotle, that which makes no perceptible difference by its presence or its absence, which is no real part of the whole. The Greek sculptor went right to the essentials of the observable natural figurative form, properly accented anatomical structure, simplified rendering, in which the important parts of the figure were made to stand out. There were no incidents or superfluities; only an organic whole. The Greek realism was an idealism because of its feeling for form and beauty; it being an integral part of the Greek life. It was not truth or expression of nature that the Greeks strove for, but rather the perfection of the ideal. This constant attempt to achieve the ideal was a repression, rather than an acceptance of the internal intuitive spirit.

The psyche and the unconscious, of which intuition is a part, is as limitless in its applications and variations as is that of nature, and as in attempting to define nature we cannot define exactly what the intuitive psyche is. We can merely speculate what perhaps intuition is, and best describe its function.

"The deeper layers of the psyche lose their individual uniqueness as they retreat farther and farther into darkness. Lower down as they approach the autonomous functional systems they become increasingly collective until they are universalized and extinguished in the body's materiality (in chemical sub-

stance). The body's carbon is simply carbon. Hence, at bottom, the psyche is simply world."<sup>4</sup>

The unconscious consists of a multitude of thoughts, impressions, and images, that have been temporarily obscured from the conscious. When something slips from our conscious, it does not cease to exist, it is just temporarily out of sight of our conscious thought. On occasion, the unconscious aspects of the mind can become so strong and powerful that it behaves as if it were the conscious and it cannot be sure if thought, speech, or action is conscious or not. It is normal and necessary for us to forget and push conscious thoughts out of sight into the unconscious. There is no room for our conscious minds to hold all the impressions, ideas and feelings that arise from our life experience, and if all these aspects of thought would remain in our consciousness, our minds would become hopelessly cluttered.

In all forms of expressionism the internal intuitive spirit flourishes and becomes the essence of the creative act. The ability of the artist to become totally absorbed in the creative unconscious is somewhat a measure of a successful work.

The expressionist is concerned with truth and a personal internal interpretation of that truth. It is intuition that is the interpreter's tool, an internal analysis of hidden un-

conscious belief. It is the creation of a real object snatched from the psyche and made to exist, where nothing existed before.

In the past, aestheticians were satisfied with an idealistic explanation of art, the explanation being that art was significant because it was the embodiment of transcendental ideas. This conception of art has forever been exploded by the creative achievements of modern art, and more so by the achievements of the abstract expressionists; achievements which are neither conceptual nor transcendental, but are quite real nevertheless; an art that is not significant of any expressible ideal, but an art that gives concrete existence to what is numinous; that which is beyond the limits of rational discourse; an internal art that brings the dynamics of the subjective experience to a point of rest in a concrete object. These dynamic energies which are contained within the artist's psyche become the artist's peculiarity. The artistic virtue is that this peculiarity can direct the internal intuitive forces of the psyche into matter; the realization of three dimensional form, or two dimensional space.

The expressionist has taken the position of finding a correspondence between the concrete symbols of art and the subjective reality of the imagination. Preconception and idealism become as much a burden for the expressionist as intuition

and internal unconscious expression would have been superfluous to the Greek sculptor. To the expressionist, intuitive persistence is art's existence, and is its reality.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Carl G. Jung, Man and His Symbols, New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1964, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Benedetto Croce, "Art As Intuition," Problems in Esthetics, New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1970, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup>Jung, Man and His Symbols, p. 309.



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