



RODIN—THE CATHEDRAL

ON ART

Art is a Parable Not an Imitation

How could music be an imitation. Or architecture? Or even poetry?

The joy in Beethoven's IXth is a parable, a statement parallel to the joy which sometimes inexplicably enraptures us to our last fibers. Distinct from the latter no doubt, analogically joyful if you wish, but nonetheless able to create the human reality of joy in whoever is sufficiently attuned to its message.

Art is an Incarnation

It sublimates nature by vesting it with our own IMAGE. The Son of God is the image of the Father. Works of art constitute an image of ourselves. The truer, the deeper, the more genuine this image is of the unfathomable depths of the human heart, the greater the work. The more our works travesty our original resemblance to God, the weaker the works.

The Word of God took flesh at the Incarnation. The EMOTION-IDEAS of men take flesh—in words, pigments of color, stones and sounds. The more perfect these incarnations, the greater the works of art. Art has

nothing in common with false images of Man. Shallowness, inhuman or dehumanized passions, meaningless emotions, animal appetites. These only give birth to Peyton Places, weeping madonnas, music to dream to . . . all false parables of ourselves whose hearts and minds, never having attained their natural harmonious maturity, are led to create and be moved by such fetuses.

Art is a Blossoming Forth of Man's Powers to Create Beauty

The idea must be sincere, extracted from the inmost secret chambers of our souls, and its form must be born with it, not imposed on it. Whence the pitiful state of contemporary sacred art. We think of a church in a medieval frame of thought, and when modern materials are used, falsely, to create gothic forms, to which they are not-ordained, only monsters are born.

We have ceased to be able to create with any sincerity but keep alive the illusion that we are still doing so, while the truth remains that we are only borrowing great ideas of the past and vesting them ignominiously with a modern garment that does not become them.

Art is a Song of Praise and Love

Not a baggage of fossilized ideas and technical tricks. Art involves us as men living in this present God-given century, knowing what we know, feeling the way we do, with our own specific means of creating beauty. Art is made of intangibles, which can be pointed to, but never demonstrated or taught. Like love of God. There is no recipe. There is no scientific (and thus unfailing) way to Love. When one is in love, or has created a work of great beauty, one never adds: *Quod erat demonstrandum*.

Every soul and every body is unlike every other soul and body. Paul in Athens, Vincent in Paris, Thomas Aquinas at the University, Francis in the Assisi meadows, are magnificently different but in their love of God and men. Michel Angelo in Rome, Shakespeare in London, Picasso in Paris, Mozart in Soezburg bear no similarity to one another but in their capacity to bring to life works of great beauty. Art is the most humane of all of man's activities. It is the SOUL AND THE SENSES that hear and understand—simultaneously—music and poetry. Algebra and Philosophy rejoice the mind solely, leave the senses hungry and empty; they are thus "angelic". Food and drink can hardly be termed intellectual pleasures. But Mozart's symphonies and Shakespeares' sonnets, great ideas that have become incarnate in sounds and words, are perfectly adequate to the compound beings which God made us.

Art is the Incarnation par Excellence Of our Human Condition

The great joys of Claudel's plays answer to the great suffering of Bach's Passions. The insurmountable anguishes of Hamlet answer to the indestructable certainties of Dante. The despairs of Oedipus are compensated by the serenity of Botticelli's Madonnas. Truly, art is the greatest mirror of man. Like the Word is of the Father. The Word, divinely, eternally and unchangingly. Our works, humanly, for numbered generations and always seeking plenitude.

When one has seen the genuine past—there is none in America—what the Greeks and Romans did, the Byzantine and Romanesque churches, the supreme achievements of Medieval artists; and when one compares them,

if one still has the courage to do so, with the effeminate and disintegrated XIX century works, one suddenly becomes humble. (Unless one is so superficial and childish as to believe that a greater knowledge of matter brings with it a corresponding deepening of man's powers to think and create.) Not to have seen Europe, is similar to not having read any literature, philosophical or otherwise, prior to 1800.

Art has been revived in our century. With much agony and chaos, but rescued nonetheless. Humility, greatness, authenticity have now begun (how slowly!) to replace ostentatiousness, grandiloquence and eclecticism. But not in church building. (Are there ten churches in the U. S. A. and Canada that merit to figure in a history of contemporary architecture? No architect worthy of the name would dare say so?) Through the mercy of God and notwithstanding the stupidity or ignorance of men, a new dawn seems to loom ahead. Already, a few small humble churches, built with love and care, wisdom and poverty, and with a great respect for the material employed, all of these virtues informed by taste and knowledge, have sprung up. Who knows but in a few decades, even cathedrals But sadly, one must admit that even the idea of a church that would be for New York what Notre Dame was for Medieval Paris, or St. Peter's for Renaissance Rome, a church that would have the noble simple grandeur of the United Nations Building, that would cry to God, in a modern idiom, the glory that is due to Him from men of the XXth century, towering boldly towards the sky its song of glass and reinforced concrete, such a church is still unthinkable.

But who knows? It may be that we do not merit it. God may want it in Moscow before the end of the century. If we are not blessed with great architects devoted to the Sacred, it must be that our hearts lie not with God, but with the State, the Bank, Comfort and Hollywood. Which explains why the finest architecture can be found in New York, the United Nations, Lever Bros, in Miami's hotels, in Mexico's State University or in California's theatres. How true that art is an incarnation of our own image.

We are the mirrors, the symbols and parables of God's goodness, wisdom and omnipotence; and ART is the image of our original greatness, of our redeemed goodness, and of our unfailing weakness.

Rev. Adrien Arsenault

DIETARY MADNESS

Many of these Dietary customs are of the past, yet it is still of interest to know them.

Just as do the birds, many Far Eastern people, especially the Chinese, eat pests. The Chinese have aided the war on insects by using these pests as both food and medicine.

It is generally known that some insects taken internally do have some degree of nutritional or medicinal value. The praying mantis, for example, contains 58% protein, 12% fat, 3% ash, vitamin-B complex and vitamin A. The insect's outer skeleton is an interesting compound of sugar and amino acids. The dried centipede, composed almost entirely of muscle protein, horny substance, mineral salts and other compounds, was

considered to be a potent medicine by primitive Chinese pharmacists for snake bites, facial paralysis, convulsions and demon possession.

Today, several species of insects still are used as medicines by Chinese pharmacists, apparently because of their protein and vitamin B content. Hornets' nests, for example, contain 7.5% nitrogen, 11.5% ash and 10% water. The dried pill bug of the Chinese pharmacy contains as much as 45% ash and 23% protein. These scientific facts were, and still are, not known to many of the good Chinese. They have used them for reasons other than those derived from the ash and protein.

Powdered dried horseflies snuffed into the nose is said to remedy eye-lashes that curl the wrong way. Horseflies suck the blood of horses, so in Chinese lore they are suggested for the relief of congestion and to help cure bruises and black eyes. Following the same principle, woodpeckers which pick grubs out of tree trunks, supposedly pick worms out of aching teeth if the dead bird is administered in pill form. The longhorn beetle, known as "heavenly cow" because the horns are like a water buffalo's, is used to treat severe convulsions in infants and as a facial cosmetic in the Chinese beauty parlor. Spiders fed on lard, killed and smeared on the feet will, it is believed, enable one to walk on the surface of water. It was also said that diving beetles cured circulatory diseases, and obstructions of the bowels, and that it stopped the night crying of children.

The stinkbug, called the "nine smell insect", may be prescribed for "weakness" of the kidneys. Five-hundred lice ground up are supposed to relieve a splitting headache when taken internally, or they may be applied locally to eat off warts. Seven insects boiled with two eggs was the old standard treatment for rabies.

It is quite acceptable, however, to use almost anything for medicine; but to use insects as food, that story should be more sensational.

Bee larvae were eaten by the ancient Chinese. And some Chinese today eat locusts, dragonflies, and bumblebees. Cockroaches and locusts were a favorite dish in Szechuan. In Kwangtung grasshoppers, golden June beetles, crickets, stinkbugs, wasp larvae and silkworm larvae are still used for food. Centuries ago ants, bees and cicadas were used by the Chinese for food, and sacrificial dishes contained pickled ants' eggs, which were eaten in the south by tribal chieftains. Termites (white ants) are eaten even today by the hill tribes of Burma.

The composition of Chinese honey is much the same as that produced in other parts of the world: a very concentrated form of sugar and a little dextrin. Its nutritive and laxative properties are well recognized. Orientals used honey to clarify vision and for cloudiness of the cornea.

The ancient Chinese banquet consisted of three hundred and sixty courses—from raw monkey brain to bear palms—and the whole banquet would last from five to seven days. Snakes, dogs and cats are considered to be "winter tonics" among the common people of South China. Birds-nest soup and shark-fin soup may sound strange to you but they are much liked by the Chinese. Bird-nest soup is just a general term. More specifically, it must be called the "sea swallow nest soup". The sea swallow is a species of the sea bird living on the high