

THE ARTIST'S ADVOCATE
A PRIMER FOR THE ARTIST

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THIS BOOK IS A TRIBUTE AND A REMEMBRANCE
TO EVERY PURE AND WISE SPIRIT WHO HAS
TAKEN THE FLESH.

INTRODUCTION

THE CHIEF AIM OF THIS BOOK IS TO INTRODUCE TO THE STUDENT OF LIFE AN AWARENESS OF CERTAIN BASIC PRINCIPLES ON ART. THIS MAY BE APPLIED TO ANY FORM OF ART. ANOTHER AIM IS TO POSSIBLY PROVIDE A DIRECTION, A VALUE SYSTEM, EVEN A CRITERIA IN WHICH TO GUIDE HIS CREATIVE ENERGY, ESPECIALLY IF THERE DOES NOT HAPPEN TO BE TEACHERS OR INFLUENCE TO CONTAIN AND INSPIRE THE STUDENT TO MORE SENSITIVE LEVELS.

THE ARTIST'S ADVOCATE CONTAINS ISOLATED IDEAS THAT ARE COMPLETE IN THEMSELVES AND ARE THEREFORE NOT DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER. ONE MAY TAKE IT UP OR LAY IT DOWN AT WILL, AND AFTER READING ONE OR MORE FRAGMENTS ONE MAY FIND AN EXCUSE FOR A LONG AND FRUITFUL MEDITATION.

THE BOOK WILL FULFILL ITS PURPOSE IF IT INSPIRES THE STUDENT OF ANY AGE LEVEL TO CREATE THINGS WITH INTEGRITY, FULFILLMENT, AND LOVE.

1. THOUGHTS

A MAN DOES NOT BECOME AN ARTIST BY CHOICE, BUT BY CULTIVATION AND ALWAYS AND UNCONTROLLABLY BY HIGH COMPULSION.

AN ARTIST MUST PUT INTO HIS WORK HIS SUBTLEST AND DEEPEST THOUGHT, WITH DELICATE ATTENTION AND ADHERENCE TO THE LAWS OF CONSTRUCTION, THUS PLACING A HIGHER VALUE ON THE THOUGHT THAN ON THE METHOD OF MANNER OF ITS EXPRESSION.

TO PRODUCE ART, IT IS NECESSARY NOT MERELY FOR THE ARTIST TO PREPARE HIMSELF. WHEN A WORK IS NOT ART IT IS BECAUSE THE ARTIST LACKS MORAL AND SPIRITUAL FIBRE. HE DEPENDS UPON HIS KNOWLEDGE OF TECHNIQUE OR LABORIOUS DEXTERITY OF HAND TO COVER THIS DEFICIENCY THERE MAY BE BEAUTY OF A MECHANICAL KIND, BUT NOT THE HIGHEST FORM OF BEAUTY WITH THE NOBLEST PASSION FOR TRUTH.

TO PROPERLY COMPREHEND THE NATURE OF AN ARTIST WE MUST SEARCH INTO THE RULING FORCE OF HIS LIFE AND INQUIRE WHAT THE BASIS OF NEARLY ALL HIS ACTIONS ARE. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT LOVE SHOULD BE THE MOTIVATING IMPULSE IN AN ARTIST'S LIFE. IT HARDLY IS POSSIBLE TO CONCEIVE OF AN ARTIST PASSING THROUGH HIS EXISTENCE WITHOUT MANIFESTING LOVE IN SOME FORM. LOVE IS TRULY A NECESSITY AND LIVES IN THE WORLD OF THE ARTIST'S HEART. THE HEART OF THE TRUE ARTIST NEVER GROWS OLD, AND WHEN IT HAS CEASED TO LIVE IT HAS CEASED TO LOVE.

WHILE SOME PEOPLE PROVE THEMSELVES TO BE THE GREATER ARTISTS OTHERS PROVE THEMSELVES TO BE THE GREATER MINDS. A GREAT MIND BRINGS TO THE WORK OF AN ARTIST A SHARP AND SUBTLE INTELLECT, A PENETRATING INSIGHT, AND THE EXPERIENCE OF A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD; AND IN ALL THINGS THE ORIGINAL FORCE OF A POWERFUL INDIVIDUALITY.

THE FACULTY TO PENETRATE THE UNSEEN AND WORK IN CONSTANT DELICATE CONTACT WITH THE INVISIBLE IS A FACULTY THAT IS NECESSARY TO THE EQUIPMENT OF A TRUE ARTIST. HE SHOULD SEE FURTHER, DEEPER, AND HIGHER THAN ORDINARY MEN, AND INTERPRET FOR THEM WHAT THEY FEEL BUT DO NOT FULLY COMPREHEND. HE INSPIRES AND STIMULATES THOUGHT. HE GIVES ENCOURAGEMENT AND HOPE AND IS OUR GUIDE, TEACHER, AND FRIEND.

HAVE THE FACULTIES OF BEING RECEPTIVE AND CONSISTENT, AND AT ALL TIMES ASSIST IN THE SPREADING OF CULTURE THROUGH THE SUBTLE INFLUENCE OF YOUR WORK BY NOT BEING TOO TECHNICAL, OBSCURE, SCHOLASTIC, OR DRY. GREAT ART EVEN WHILE IT INSTRUCTS, ENTERTAINS BY APPEALING TO THE IMAGINATION. THE GIFTS OF HUMOR, HONESTY, INDEPENDENCE OF MIND, AND THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF A RELIANT NATURE ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT SHOULD BE INHERENT IN YOUR WORK. THE FORCE OF AN ARTIST'S STYLE GOES WELL WITH THE INDEPENDENCE OF HIS OPINIONS.

CREATE FIRST FOR YOUR OWN PLEASURE AND NOT WITH THE ARTISTIC RESTRAINT AND CAREFULNESS WHICH THE SENSE OF PUBLIC PRAISE AND CRITICISM IMPOSE. CREATE NOT SO MUCH IN THE MATTER OF PRODUCTION BUT IN THE MUCH RARER FUNCTION OF CREATING GREAT IDEAS WHICH REPRODUCE THEMSELVES. INVESTIGATE, EXPERIMENT, COPE WITH YOUR FAULTS BY EMPTYING FROM YOUR MIND THE TRIVIAL NOTIONS THAT CAN STOP YOU FROM BEING PATIENT AND OPTIMISTIC ABOUT YOURSELF. POLISH AND REMOULD YOUR WORK, NOT ALWAYS PERHAPS TO ITS ADVANTAGE, BUT ALWAYS WITH THE INTENT OF MAKING IT MORE PERFECT, MORE COMPLETE AND CONCISE IN ARTISTIC WORKMANSHIP. TRY TO ENLARGE THE POTENTIALITIES OF THE ARTISTIC LANGUAGE IN ARTICULATION AND EXPRESSION AND IN PRECISION AND SPLENDOR, SEEING EVERYTHING THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF AN INTENSE AND SEARCHING IMAGINATION. LOOK AT YOUR WORK WITH MODESTY AND ADMIT ITS SHORTCOMINGS. ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE OF ART BY PERCEIVING THE MAGNITUDE OF YOUR ATTEMPT WITH A BOLD AWARENESS OF WONDER AND HUMILITY. ABOVE ALL, ACT WITH IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE TO YOUR INTUITION RECOGNIZING THE DIGNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUR CRAFT.

LIVE NOT FOR THINGS THAT ARE TIME-BOUND BUT FOR THINGS ETERNAL. SET YOURSELF, ABOVE ALL, TO BE TRUE TO YOUR OWN SELF AND TO RETAIN THE DARING OF BEING ABSOLUTELY FAITHFUL TO THE INNER VOICE OF YOUR SUPREME CONVICTION.

IF A TRUE ARTIST IS A SAGE HE IS A SAGE FOR YOUTH. YOUTH IS OUR PERENNIAL IDEALIST AND YOUNG ARTISTS ABSORB FROM A TRUE ARTIST'S WORK PRECISELY THE IDEAS THAT KEEP COURAGE AND DIGNITY ALIVE IN THE WORLD.

WHAT IS TRUTH? IS IT THAT MAN LIVES NOT BY BREAD ALONE THAT THE SOUL HAS CLAIMS AS WELL AS THE STOMACH, THAT TO MAKE MONEY FOR ITSELF IS A DISHONORABLE PURSUIT, AND WHERE MONEY IS MADE BY THE SACRIFICE OF MEN IT IS MORE HARMFUL THAN WAR BECAUSE IT IS MORE DELIBERATELY CRUEL? IS IT BECAUSE THE WORLD HAS GROWN IN WEALTH NOT IN CHARACTER THAT WE HAVE, SIDE BY SIDE, THE WASTEFULNESS OF THE RICH AND THE WANT OF THE POOR? WE PERSUADE OURSELVES THAT WE LIVE IN AN ERA OF UNEXAMPLED PROSPERITY AND WE ARE BLIND TO THE REALITIES OF UNEXAMPLED CORRUPTION AND MATERIALISM. EVERYWHERE, THROUGH AN ARTIST'S WORK THERE SHOULD BE A PROTEST AGAINST COMMERCIALISM AND MATERIALISM...THE GREED AND INSINCERITY THAT SEEM TO BE THE CURSE OF OUR MODERN CIVILIZATION.. THAT WHICH PUTS MUSIC, LITERATURE, AND ALL MEANS OF AESTHETIC ENJOYMENT BEYOND OUR REACH. WE HAVE YET TO LEARN THE ART OF WISE AND NOBLE LIVING.

TRUE ARTISTS SEE THE HIGHER ASPECTS OF TRUTH, AND FOR THAT REASON THEY HAVE REACHED A NOBLE IDEAL OF BEAUTY. BAD ART, THEREFORE, MEANS A BAD AGE ... AN IGNORANTLY-MINDED ARTIST WHO IS THE PRODUCT OF HIS AGE AND ACTS IN CONFORMITY WITH IT; WHOSE ART IS DESTITUTE OF RICH IMAGINATION AND FEELING, WRONG IN ITS IDEALS, AND MISGUIDED IN ITS METHODS; WHOSE ART INEVITABLY LACKS TRUTH AND NOBILITY OF SPIRIT.

THE DEEPER VALUES OF INTELLECTUAL LIFE HAVE MORE OFTEN THAN NOT OWED THEIR ORIGINS TO MEN WHO HAVE QUARRELED WITH THEIR AGE AND RECEIVED LITTLE BUT RIDICULE FROM THEIR CONTEMPORARIES. . . MEN WANDERING IN THE BITTERNESS OF SELF-EXILE LIKE CEZANNE AND GAUGIN, OR STARVING IN THE ARTISTS'S GARRET LIKE VAN GOGH. PYTHAGORAS WAS MISUNDERSTOOD, SOCRATES, GALILEO, JESUS, AND EVERY PURE AND WISE SPIRIT THAT TOOK THE FLESH. TO BE GREAT IS TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD. SENSE IS MORE THAN SOUND. SUBSTANCE IS MORE THAN FORM. SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE IS MORE THAN ARTISTIC ADORNMENT.

MOST TRULY GREAT ARTISTS WHO HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED GENIUSES HAVE HAD TO HARDEN THEMSELVES AGAINST THE INDIFFERENCE OF THEIR TIME AND HAVE HAD TO SAY, "NONE OF THESE THINGS BOTHER ME." THEY HAVE RETREATED FROM THE IGNORANCE OF THEIR CONTEMPORARIES TO THE CERTAIN PRAISE OF PROSPERITY. . . AND NOT IN VAIN WHERE SUCH MEN FIND LISTENERS THEY MAKE DISCIPLES, AND EACH HEART UPON WHICH THE FIRE OF THEIR GENIUS FALLS BECOMES DEDICATED TO THE SACRED PURPOSE OF THEIR SERVICE.

GENIUS IS SO RARE A GIFT THAT IT MUST BE TAKEN ON ITS OWN TERMS AND NOT QUARRELED WITH. IT SPEAKS ITS OWN LANGUAGE AND IS INDIFFERENT TO THE REPROACH OR DESIRE OF THOSE WHOM IT ADDRESSES. MANY GREAT ARTISTS HAVE HAD THE BITTER CONSCIOUSNESS OF A WANT OF GENIUS. BY GENIUS I MEAN ORIGINALITY, FERTILITY, COHERENCE, AND ARTICULATION.

ART IS SIMPLY AN ASPIRATION.
WHEN YOU ARE SATISFIED WITH YOUR
WORK THEN YOU HAVE RENOUNCED ALL
THAT MADE YOUR WORK TRUE AND WORTHY.
THE MERE VISIBLE RESULTS OF ART ARE
WORTHLESS IN THEMSELVES AND THE
PASSION OF ACCUMULATING THEM IS AN
UNWORTHY PASSION IF IT HAS NO HIGH-
ER PURPOSE.

SINCERITY IS THE CHIEF SOURCE OF
THE ARTIST'S ENERGY AND THE BURDEN
OF HIS MESSAGE OF TRUTH. DO NOT
IGNORE THE FACTS OF UGLINESS, BUT
BE AWARE OF THE PASSION THAT GOES
PERPETUALLY TOWARD THE FAIREST
FORMS AND THE RICHEST ASPECTS OF
THINGS.

TO BE TOLD WHAT LIFE MEANS MAY BE
OF INTEREST TO US, BUT IT IS NOT
LIKELY TO MOVE US DEEPLY OR CHANGE
US. BUT TO BE SHOWN VITALLY AND
VIVIDLY WHAT LIFE HAS MEANT TO ANY
HUMAN BEING CAN HARDLY FAIL TO
REACH OUR EMOTIONS AND AFFECT OUR
WHOLE MENTAL BEING. LIFE TEACHES
MORE THAN ANY MAN CAN TEACH.

IT IS LIFE EVERYWHERE THAT SHOULD
MOVE YOU TO CREATE. IN THE CROWDS
OF MEN, IN THE DRAMAS AND TRAGEDIES
BRED BY THE PASSIONS AND INSTINCTS
OF THE HUMAN HEART, FIND THE FOOD
UPON WHICH YOUR HEART AND ART CAN
THRIVE. APPROACH LIFE NOT WITH THE
HASTY ZEAL OF A PERSON WHO PERCEIVES
ONLY VAGUE IMPRESSIONS, BUT WITH THE
COOL EYE OF A TRUE ARTIST. ABOVE ALL,
BE A STUDENT OF LIFE AS ALL TRUE
ARTISTS MUST BE.

IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY RATIONAL BEING TO HAVE OPINIONS. IN ORDER TO HAVE OPINIONS IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE BELIEFS AND FEELINGS. IN ORDER TO HAVE BELIEFS AND FEELINGS IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE STANDARDS. ARTISTIC CRITICISMS ARE ESTIMATES, BUT WITHOUT DEFINITE AESTHETIC STANDARDS THERE CAN BE NO MEASUREMENT OF A WORK OF ART. THERE IS NO ESTIMATING THE TRUTH OR FALSITY OF ANYTHING UNLESS THERE IS SOME CRITERIA OR IDEA BY WHICH IT MAY BE JUDGED. UNTIL WE HAVE PERSONAL AESTHETIC STANDARDS BY WHICH TO MEASURE LIFE, WE CANNOT HAVE ANY MORAL IDENTITY. UNTIL WE HAVE AESTHETIC STANDARDS BY WHICH TO ESTIMATE IDEAS WE HAVE NO INTELLECTUAL IDENTITY. UNTIL WE HAVE DEFINITE AND DEFINED IDEAS WITH WHICH TO EVALUATE ART IT IS HARDLY POSSIBLE TO CONSIDER THAT WE HAVE ARTISTIC IDENTITY, OR THAT WE ARE ENTITLED TO LAY CLAIM TO ANY ARTISTIC OPINION OF OUR OWN. IN TERMS OF PURPOSE AND/OR PERCEPTION THERE IS, UNFORTUNATELY, NO MARKET WHERE STANDARDS MAY BE BOUGHT.

THE SUCCESSFUL WILL TELL YOU, "SUCCESS IS THE UNFAILING REWARD OF MERIT." THE WORLD TOO READILY BELIEVES THIS. THE TEST OF POPULARITY AT ALL TIMES IS AN IMPERFECT ONE AND IN MANY CASES IS WHOLLY INADEQUATE AND UNSATISFACTORY AS AN INDEX OF ONE'S TRUE POSITION IN THE ART OF OUR DAY. THE INFLUENCE OF AN ARTIST IS OFTEN ALL OUT OF PROPORTION TO HIS POPULARITY AND IS BY NO MEANS MEASURED BY THE NUMBER OF VIEWERS OR LISTENERS, OR THE POVERTY OR ABUNDANCE OF PUBLIC PRAISE.

IF TRUTH IS BEAUTY, THEN FALSEHOOD IS UGLINESS, AND WHEREVER THE REPULSIVE AND DISGUSTING EXIST THE REASON LIES IN SOME OUTRAGE OF TRUTH. IF THERE BE A VIOLATION OF BEAUTY IN ART, IT IS BECAUSE THERE HAS BEEN AN EVIL CONTEMPT FOR TRUTH.