

THE TRUE VALUE OF OPPOSITIONS.

Good and evil – the two principle oppositions of life – everybody knows them. Everybody suffers or is happy on account of one or the other of them. But everybody is not aware of the true value of these oppositions, and in general does not even see their necessity; one demands good, escaping, if possible from evil.

By intuition, man wants good, unity, poise, especially for himself. It is thus that he falls back into the search for false ease and static equilibrium, which is contrary to the dynamic equilibrium of life. He is self-satisfied with false unity and in searching for this he obviously discards that duality of oppositions, which, at bottom, is only apparent, but which is, nevertheless, real to us.

It is evident that, so far, man in general, feeling the profound unity of life, but living in this unbalanced world, does not accept simultaneously the duality of oppositions: does not live as a whole in which this duality is lost. For such life we should have a more perfect reality, also a more advanced development and more culture. That is why one is satisfied with unity which is only apparent and confines oneself continually in particular forms of all sorts. Living among these non-equivalent oppositions and being himself a complex of these oppositions, man[?] has not the certainty of the possibility of real harmony in life. It is natural that he merely seeks “the better” in the oppositions that life offers him, taking it as an experienced unity. However, life shows us that its beauty consists in this, that it is precisely the inevitable unbalanced oppositions that pushes us to the search of equivalent oppositions, which alone create real unity, that unity which, so far, has only been realized in thought and in art. Thus it is in reality. But equally on the moral plane, the opposition of ideas and conceptions bring us to the truth: the unification, the annihilation of oppositions.

(+In) Creating apparent unities, man tries to go too fast. But in stopping at these, he goes too slowly. That which emerges forcefully is the purification and mutual separation of false unities: of particular forms. It is thus that oppositions show themselves in true relation to one another. The equivalence of these found, the rhythm comes out, the way is clear, open to life.

If at present we imagine ourselves able to live in true unity and do not see the existing lack of balance, we shall be disillusioned. Life shows us that we have to “create” this unity, and that this is only done in separating, in breaking and in reconstructing the apparent unities which exist or easily appear anywhere. Being within reality, one must take reality into account, and for that one must face it, and observe that reality is not a shut, completed form, but a perpetual movement of changing oppositions.

Life, history, science, art teach us that it is only by the discernment and experience of oppositions that slowly we reach unity, the fullness of life, and find that life is but a constant deepening of the same thing.

Fortunately, man in our days believes no longer, but observes. It is therefore of the greatest importance that we establish in the midst of the chaos and abundance of life, the free domain of art, the true way to arrive at a balance of oppositions which creates, in full relativity, complete life, harmony, happiness. Art justifies in a plastic way what is difficult to state literally.

Generally in life, one observes many oppositions as so many particular forms, but one misses seeing them as “rapports”. However, it is exactly the proper and mutual “rapports” between the elements which determines the whole.

Art has never failed to search for these “rapports” nor failed to break the static aspect that reality imposes upon us. In plastic art, the artist has detected, and studied attentively the oppositions of reality, searched to compose lines, forms and colours in just and equivalent relations, so as to create the dynamic equilibrium which annihilates the static equilibrium of

things. It is there that the work of art emotionalizes us by its harmony (the unification of good and evil). It is there that we recover suffering and joy - there that it is complete.

In art the chief oppositions express themselves in rectangular relation (established or not established) which is absolute. But this "rapport" gains a relative and living expression through secondary "rapports": other "rapports" of position, "rapports" of dimensions, "rapports" of value, always varying. The work never shows a repetition of plastic means, but always a constant opposition of these.

Although these "rapports" have always been established intuitively, the artist, by nature only seeking to express the beauty of particular forms became more and more conscious of what he was doing. It is thus through centuries that a culture of "rapports" was born, which in these days opens out. In the past this culture opposed itself to the culture of particular form, and it is through the reciprocal action of these two cultures that we can now-a-days consider this last as reaching its end: the search for "rapports" has annihilated particular form, which had been more and more separated and broken up, and neutral form, pure line, pure colour, have become the only means of expressing these "rapports". The culture of pure "rapports" is born.

It is thus through the culture of the particular form, and not through the neglect of this, that art, in the new art, has arrived at the culture of pure "rapports". For centuries and centuries form never lost its naturalistic aspect, until these new times (since Impressionism) having been first modified, it was then annihilated.

Let us rejoice to be alive in the period when art has liberated itself from the domination of particular forms. It is these forms which prevent full delight in the unity, that only neutral form, pure line and colour can establish clearly, if these means are lost in the composition.