providing the means by which this self-expression may be encouraged and developed to its logical conclusion: the flowering of individual personality and the enrichment of society.

This approach towards a better world (that art should be the basis of education) has been a constant challenge to philosophers and educationalists since it was first formulated by Plato many centuries ago, but "It is surely one of the curiosities of history that one of the most cherished notions of this great man has never been taken seriously by any of his followers, Schiller alone being an exception. Scholars have played with his thesis as with a toy: they have acknowledged its beauty, its logic, its completeness; but never for a moment have they considered its feasibility. They have treated Plato's most passionate ideal as an idle paradox, only to be understood in the context of a lost civilization."

That we ourselves are running a grave risk of becoming another "lost civilization" - by squandering the richness of our knowledge and scientific discoveries through the stupid failure to recognize the vast potentialities of a scientific application of all this knowledge as the only means of discovering a more balanced way of life - I shall attempt to show in the final chapter of this dissertation. But before I proceed to that conclusion, it will be necessary, in order to embody all the aspects of art that enter into a consideration of methods of art education, to deal, briefly, with the part that art has played in the civilization of the past.

24 Herbert Read: Education through Art (London 1942) p.1
6. ART AND CIVILISATION
In the previous chapters I have shown that perceptual reactions are an attribute of the whole individual and are influenced by past experience, learning, level of adjustment and the influence of prevailing conditions which act through conscious or unconscious levels of the mind.

All these factors have, in turn, been influenced also by direct knowledge or intuitive awareness of past forces that have entered into the history of mankind at one stage or another, and which we have inherited. Greek science and philosophy, Roman law, an Asiatic religion — to mention only a few of these past cultures — influence our present institutions, beliefs, and ways of thinking. And these fields of culture emerge from an interpenetration of other cultures reaching still further back into history and pre-history. The present is inevitably linked with the past, and the on-going process into the future is an unbroken movement towards the complete self-realization of the individual, his identification with an integrated society, and, ultimately, with an integrated world.

We cannot, of course, attempt an essay into the metaphysics of a future world, but, in our contemporary efforts to attain integration, it would be wasteful as well as stupid to deny the lessons that are to be learned from efforts of man since his emergence from the as yet unfathomed darkness of pre-history. The present maladjustment in society is, in
a certain sense, due to such a denial, and our confusion as to the values of the arts of contemporary as well as historic cultures is directly attributable to the failure to recognize the creative activity as an autonomous activity and a normal faculty and function of man.

A 'synoptic' view of past manifestations of art as part of the universal pattern of human behaviour, together with an exploration of the relations which exist between the form of society at any given period and the form of society at the present time, is essential in our approach to the formulation of an integrated system of art education. Next to creative expression, a study of the History of Fine Arts is one of the surest methods of cultivating the sensibility at the same time as the intellect, and thereby establishing a higher level of social adjustment of the individual. "Esthetic experience is a manifestation, a record and celebration of the life of a civilization, a means of promoting its development, and is also the ultimate judgement upon the quality of a civilization. For while it is produced and enjoyed by individuals, those individuals are what they are in the content of their experience because of the cultures in which they participate."

Dewey goes on to say that "There are transient and there are enduring elements in a civilization. The enduring forces are not separate; they are functions of a multitude of

\[ \text{John Dewey: Art as Experience (New York 1934) p.326} \]
passing incidents as the latter are organized into the meanings that form minds. Art is the great force in effecting this consolidation. The individuals who have minds, pass away one by one. The works in which meanings have received objective expression endure. They become part of the environment, and interaction with this phase of the environment is the axis of continuity in the life of civilization.

And that "...the arts by which primitive folk commemorated and transmitted their customs and institutions, arts that were communal, are the sources out of which all fine arts have developed. The patterns that were characteristic of weapons, rugs and blankets, baskets and jars, were marks of tribal union. Today the anthropologist relies upon the pattern carved on a club, or painted on a bowl, to determine its origin. Rite and ceremony as well as legend bound the living and the dead in a common partnership. They were aesthetic, but they were more than aesthetic. The rites of mourning expressed more than grief; the war and harvest dance were more than a gathering of energy for tasks to be performed; magic was more than a way of commanding forces of nature to do the bidding of man; feasts were more than a satisfaction of hunger. Each of these communal modes of activity united the practical, the social and the educative in an integrated whole having aesthetic form. They introduced social values into experience in a way that was most impressive. They connected things
that were overtly important and overtly done with the substantial life of the community. Art was in them, for these activities conformed to the needs and conditions of the most intense, most readily grasped and longest remembered experience. But they were more than just art, although the aesthetic strand was ubiquitous."

According to Read, "The essential nature of art will be found, neither in the production of objects to satisfy practical needs, nor in the expression of religious or philosophical ideas, but in its capacity to create a synthetic and self-consistent world: a world which is neither the world of practical needs and desires, nor the world of dreams and fantasy, but a world compounded of these contradictions: a convincing representation of the totality of experience: a mode, therefore, of envisaging the individual's perception of some aspect of universal truth. Art is what it has become the fashion to call a dialectical activity; it confronts the thesis, say that of reason, with its antithesis, say that of the imagination, and evolves a new unity or synthesis in which the contradictions are reconciled."

He believes that we have reached a certain crisis in the development of our civilization in which the real nature of art is being obscured and that art itself is dying of...

2 Op. cit. pp. 326, 327, 328

3 Herbert Read: Art and Society (New York 1937) pp. xii, xiii
misuse. "It is not altogether a question of indifference — art can survive indifference, as the history of art in England proves. It is rather a question of forcing art into false moral issues; of confusing art which is an intuitive faculty, with various modes of intellectual judgement; of making art subordinate, not merely to political doctrines, but also to philosophical points of view."

Art, he maintains, "is an autonomous activity, influenced like all our activities by the material conditions of existence, but as a mode of knowledge at once its own reality and its own end. It has necessary relations with politics, with religion, and with other modes of reacting to our human destiny. But as a mode of reaction it is distinct and contributes in its own right to that process of integration which we call civilization or a culture."

"The practice and appreciation of art are individual; art begins as a solitary activity, and only in so far as society recognizes and absorbs such units of experience does art become woven into the social fabric. The strands in the 'pattern of culture' represent the supernormal activity of a few individuals, however communal the pattern itself may be; and the value of the pattern will depend on the delicacy with which the relationship of the artist and society is adjusted. Art...is fundamentally an instinctive force; and instincts are apt to recoil into a shell of unconsciousness if treated too deliberately. We begin by admitting that art can only develop in a favourable climate of social amenities and cultural aspirations; but art is not some—
thing which can be imposed on a culture, like a certificate of respectability. Actually it is a spark springing, at the right moment, between two opposite poles, one of which is the individual, the other the society. The individual objectifies and therefore socializes his own experience; the group accepts this individual expression as a socially valid symbol or myth.

The significance of a balanced relationship between the individual and the community of which he is a part has been stressed by both these writers, and the consequent relation of the objectification of the individual’s creative impulses to the responsive appreciation of his fellow-men is self-evident. On the grounds of this fact, and the assumption that in a modern civilization we should confine ourselves strictly to expression in terms of the present, leaving history to historians and anthropologists, a school of thought has arisen which asserts that by studying the History of the visual Arts, we obscure our own aesthetic vision and clutter the approach toward a pure form of modern art by the resultant tendency to apply past standards to the art of the present.

The justification for this assertion lies not in its validity, which is doubtful, but in the fact that the methods by which we have been accustomed to study the Fine Arts is fundamentally wrong, and aesthetically careless.

Art "speaking from the standpoint of the

influence of collective culture upon creation and enjoyment of works of art, is expressive of a deep-seated attitude of adjustment, of an underlying idea and ideal of generic human attitude, the art characteristic of a civilization is the means for entering sympathetically into the deepest elements in the experience of remote and foreign civilizations. By this fact is explained also the human imports of their arts for ourselves. They effect a broadening and deepening of our own experience, rendering it less local and provincial, as far as we grasp, by this means, the attitudes basic in other forms of experience. And we arrive at the attitudes expressed in art of another civilization, its products. ‘A matter of concern to the “esthete” alone’ is true; but, when they do not impress us aesthetically, Chinese art then seems ‘queer’, because of its un wonted schemes of perspective; Byzantine art, stiff and awkward; Negro art, grotesque.”

This is precisely what has happened because of the failure of our educational methods to determine the relation of art of the period to the rest of the prevailing cultural traits of that period, and to instruct in the light of this relationship and a comparison with our own social cultural activities. In addition to this failure to achieve a balanced appreciation of the arts of the past, we find that the position of the artist in the social structure has become extremely anomalous, and the need for art is superseded by the materialistic needs of an unstable and frightened world.

We have travelled a long way since those epoch-making cultures of Egyptian, Babylonian, Cretan, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Persian, Christian and Renaissance civilizations, each of which has left its imprint on our own cultural activities. We seem to have been swept along in a vast wave of disintegration, during which, curiously enough, we find growing out of this disruption like an agonized scream of protest, a sudden glorification of individual prowess entirely detached from the society of which it should have been an expression. Gone is the position of the artist as a normal working member of his community, respected by his fellow-men with the same regard they held towards all forms of social activity that were well done and therefore pleasing.

The artist of the last few centuries, if he was a success, was lionized, and his work was imprisoned in a museum for the delectation of connoisseurs and for the pastime of a semi-enlightened public that had no real use for art. If he was a failure he became a social outcast, a pariah doomed to eventual spiritual and physical starvation by being separated from the community or whole of which he should have been a living part. If we are to recover what History has proved to be significant in civilization, then we must revise our attitude towards art and art education and promote conditions "where painters and sculptors, who, under our present financier-run tyranny, are compelled to be simply mountebanks or lap-dogs, and their works a sort of hot-house flowers, would again find themselves in normal employ-
The attitude that has been responsible for these conditions is neatly summarised by Dr. Read as "represented by a popular writer such as Mr. H.G. Wells. In two impressive volumes, The Outline of History and The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind, this modern pantologist gives, or professes to give, a survey of all the activities of the human race. Art you will find, does not occupy a very conspicuous place. In the first of these works (where, incidentally, Shakespeare is only mentioned in a footnote) the plastic arts are referred to in half a dozen places, and in one of these the reason for this comparative neglect is given: 'Artistic productions, unlike philosophical thought and scientific discovery, are the ornaments and expression rather than the creative substance of history'. In the second work, in a sub-section of a chapter, the existence of art is more fully recognized. Five pages are devoted to it. Along with sport, it is explained as an outlet for mankind's surplus energy. What energy man can spare from war, commerce, science and other practical activities, he expends in these useless but quite delightful occupations—painting, sculpture, poetry, music, dancing, cricket, football and other forms of mental or physical gymnastics."

"This is not an original point of view—it has been advanced with a certain seriousness by a sociologist like Karl Groos—but
Mr. Wells no doubt derived it from his master, Herbert Spencer. However scientific it may be made to seem, this view of art is actually a typical product of philistinism, and its wide acceptance would only be possible in an Anglo-Saxon community. Centuries of moral prejudice and of that scientific arrogance which is one of the by-products of puritanism, have made us essentially art-shy. 7

His book Art and Society will have served its purpose, he writes, if it is received as a protest against this, our worst intellectual disgrace.

Art, he says, "must rather be recognized as the most certain mode of expression which mankind has achieved. As such it has been propagated from the very dawn of civilization. In every age man has made things for his use, and followed thousands of occupations made necessary by his struggle for existence. He has fought endlessly for power and leisure and for material happiness. He has created languages and symbols, and built up an impressive fund of learning; his resource and invention have never been exhausted. And yet all the time, in every phase of civilization, he has felt that what we call the scientific attitude is inadequate. The mind he has developed from his deliberate cunning can only cope with objective facts; beyond these objective facts is a whole aspect of the world which is only accessible to instinct and intuition. The development

of these obscure modes of apprehension has been the purpose of art; and we are nowhere near an understanding of mankind and the history of mankind until we admit the significance and indeed the superiority of knowledge embodied in Art. We may venture to claim superiority for such knowledge because whilst nothing has proved so impermanent and provisional as that which we are pleased to call scientific fact and philosophy built on it, art, on the contrary, is everywhere, in its highest manifestations, universal and eternal."

"...Art is a mode of knowledge, and the world of art is a system of knowledge as valuable to man — indeed, more valuable — than the world of philosophy or the world of science. It is only when we have clearly recognized the function of art as a mode of knowledge parallel to the other modes by which man arrives at an understanding of his environment that we can begin to appreciate its significance in the history of mankind." 8

There is no need to labour this point (that our attitude towards art needs revision) any further. The effect of this attitude, and its consequences in the field of education, I will discuss in the second part of this work. I should, however, like to draw attention at this stage to one more potentiality of art, namely that art can make an additional contribution "toward a better world" if it is used intelligently in that aspect of education that is concerned with ethics.

8 *p. cit. pp. xviii, xix
Do we not speak of the art of living, the
pattern of civilization, unity, harmony and
colour in human relationships, of the rhythm
of life, of balance in judgement and mental
poise, of the structure of the universe, of
standards of value, of design for living,
of a sense of proportion — of good or bad
form in behaviour? These terms are obviously
part of the language of ethics and morals,
and yet — as we have seen — they belong to
the terminology of the fine arts, and no
one is likely to have a keener appreciation
of the meaning of these words in both the
aesthetic and the ethical sense than the
artist and the student of art.

It is therefore not unreasonable to suggest
that integration in morals and ethics through
art education is another avenue worth explor­ing in our search for a better world. The
artist, the student and connoisseur of arts
have to learn to apply these terms to the
objectification of the creative impulse, and
evaluate thereby its good or bad form and it
is not inconceivable that in evolving a
system of education that will develop the
intuitive and imaginative faculties of the
child by means of expression in art, we
could co-ordinate training in aesthetics with
training in ethics and develop an 'aesthetic
of human behaviour'.

"It is by way of communication that art
becomes the incomparable organ of instruction,
but the way is so remote from that usually
associated with the idea of education, it is a way that lifts art so far above what we are accustomed to think of as instruction, that we are repelled by any suggestion of teaching and learning in connection with art. But our revolt is in fact a reaction upon education that proceeds by setting so literal as to exclude the imagination as one not touching the desires and emotions of men."

"...The problem of the relation of art and morals is too often treated as if the problem existed only on the side of art. It is virtually assumed that morals are satisfactory in idea if not in fact and that the only question is whether art is neat ways art should conform to a moral system already developed......Imagination is the chief instrument of the good. It is more or less commonplace to say that a man's ideas and treatment of his fellows depend upon his power to put his own imaginatively in their place. But the primacy of imagination extends far beyond the scope of direct personal relationships. Except where 'ideal' is used in conventional deference or as a name for sentimental reverie, the ideal factors in every moral outlook and human loyalty are imaginative. The historic alliance of religion and art has its roots in this common quality. Hence it is that art is more moral than moralities. For the latter either are, or tend to become, consecrations of the status quo, reflections of custom, reinforcements of the established order. 
The moral prophets of humanity have always been poets even though they spoke in free verse or by parable. Uniformly, however, their vision of possibilities has soon been converted into a proclamation of facts that already exist and are hardened into semi-political institutions. Their imaginative presentation of ideals that should command thought and desire have been treated as rules of policy. Art has been the means of keeping alive the sense of purposes that outrun evidence and of meanings that transcend indurated habit.

"Morals are assigned a special compartment in theory and practice because they reflect the divisions embodied in economic and political institutions. Wherever social divisions and barriers exist, practices and ideas that correspond to them fix metes and bounds, so that liberal action is placed under restraint. Creative intelligence is looked upon with distrust; the innovations that are the essences of individuality are feared, the generous impulse is put under bonds not to disturb the peace. Were art an acknowledged power in human association and not treated as the pleasuring of an idle moment or as a means of ostentatious display, and were morals understood to be identical with every aspect of value that is shared in experience, the 'problem' of the relation of art and morals would not exist."

"The idea and practice of morality are saturated with conceptions that stem from
praise or blame, reward and punishment. Mankind is divided into sheep and goats, the vicious and virtuous, the law-abiding and criminal, the good and bad. To be beyond good and evil is an impossibility for man, and yet as long as the good signifies only that which is lauded and rewarded, and the evil that which is currently condemned or outlawed, the ideal factors of morality are always and everywhere beyond good and evil. Because art is wholly innocent of ideas derived from praise and blame, it is looked upon with the eye of suspicion by the guardians of custom, or only the art that is itself so old and 'classic' as to receive conventional praise is grudgingly admitted — provided, as with, say the case of Shakespeare, signs of regard for conventional morality can be ingenuously extracted from his work. Yet this indifference to praise and blame because of pre-occupation with imaginative experience constitutes the heart of moral potency of art. From it proceeds the liberating and uniting power of art."

"....Art is a mode of prediction not found in charts and statistics, and it insinuates possibilities of human relations not to be found in rule and precept, admonition and administration." 9

I hope that this lengthy quotation from Dewey's Art as Experience will serve to substantiate my claim that art may also serve

in the field of moral education. This claim is by no means original, as any careful study of the theory and psychology of art will reveal. Its inclusion here is part of that survey of the social significance of art without which an effective system of art education could not be designed. To sum up the position, I would like to quote from the conclusion of Read's Art and Society.

"The necessity for the future, then, is a re-integration of art as an independent mode of apprehension and expression; as the sensuous correlative, equal and opposite, of intellectual abstraction. It may be that intellectual elements enter into the artist's mind, there to be given their concrete and objective symbols; and it may be that since, in Hegel's words, 'reality anywhere and everywhere, whether the life of Nature or mind, is defaced and slain by its comprehension; that so far from being brought more close to us by the comprehension of thinking, it is only by this means that it is in the complete sense removed apart from us, so that in his attempt to grasp through thought as a means the nature of life, man rather renders nugatory this very aim' - it may be that for this reason a philosopher must first reach a comprehension of reality through the sensuous medium of art. In any case, art is the fundamental necessity. And the maintenance of art in its full creative vitality requires...open cultivation of the sensuous and instinctive elements of the personality....Indeed, we may confidently assert, on the evidence of the facts....rewieved, that nothing like the full
creative vitality of art has ever yet been realised by a civilized society. That general release from fear and repression which is promised by the technique of modern psychology no less than by the growing determination to win for humanity the benefits of modern methods of production— that great revolution for which many of us are working with all our forces— will re-create the conditions of great art. This, at least, is a possible faith to oppose to all who would leave us in despair and cynicism, without pleasure, without joy, without the highest and subtlest ecstasy of art, of poetry, the creation of a world of imaginative reality.
In the preceding section, we discussed the relationship between art and society. We observed that the position of the artist in society is crucial in determining the role of art in society. Art, as an expression of human creativity, has the power to influence society and provoke social change. It is through the lens of art that we can explore the complexities of human existence and the nuances of cultural expressions.

Moreover, art serves as a bridge between different societies and cultures, promoting understanding and breaking down barriers. The international art world is a reflection of the global community, with artists from diverse backgrounds coming together to share their visions and perspectives. This interplay of ideas and styles enriches the art world and contributes to a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Before proceeding to an analysis of the specific contributions of South African artists to the international art scene, it is essential to understand the role and impact of art in South Africa. The apartheid era had a profound effect on the arts, leading to the emergence of a unique artistic identity that reflects the country's complex history and rich cultural heritage. This section will explore the context in which South African artists operated and the challenges they faced in navigating the international art world.

This approach, which seeks to understand the role of art in society, provides a framework for analyzing the impact of art on society. It allows us to appreciate the diversity of artistic expressions and the potential of art to inspire social change. Through a detailed examination of the context and influence of art in South Africa, we can gain insights into the broader significance of art in the modern world.