In the preceding chapters I have been at pains to substantiate — by extensive quotation from recognised authorities — my claim that art has a positive significance in the structure of civilization; that the practice and appreciation of art is a normal activity and that its exclusion from life disturbs the equilibrium necessary for the integration of the individual and, through the individual, of the world in which he lives. I have presented evidence from the findings of semanticists (Chapter 2), psychologists (Chapters 3, 4, 5) and philosophers (Chapters 1, 2, 6) to prove that art, like every other human activity is conditioned by the development and temperament of the individual and by the material circumstances of existence; that it has necessary relations with politics, with religion, with environment and with other factors conditioning human destiny, and that the relationship between the artist and society will reflect the pattern of culture in the social fabric.

Before proceeding to an outline of the educational problems involved in obtaining for our civilization the cultural benefits which a properly directed participation in this vital human activity would produce, it becomes necessary to examine the position of the artist in South Africa, and the extent to which our art is a reflection of our cultural development.

The strands which are woven into the social fabric of the white civilization in Southern Africa are of uneven structure, full of fluctuating strengths and weaknesses and richly coloured with the great variation of religions and secular prejudices, traditions, national pride and emotional complexes that characterise the different European races that have become part of this fabric during the process of evolution. And the pattern of this fabric is set off against the equally complex and
insistent background of the African people and their sharply contrasting conditions of life.

As a field for aesthetic development in terms of the present South Africa possesses characteristics that are unique. We have here in Bushman painting an art which reflects the highest achievements ever reached by man in creative expression, and which is a survival of the very first forms of art known to man; in the art of the Bantu we have a continuation of the abstract geometric and symbolic art of the Neolithic cultures that were the aesthetic expression of that primitive communal and tribal life in which our own complex society has its origin; and practically untrammeled by the traditional cultures of their European ancestors, we have a hardy race of pioneers raised in surroundings of unrivaled beauty and inexhaustible wealth, to form, after centuries of struggle for survival, a nation of South Africans, a nation which by the very nature of its history and the comprehensive scope of its problems holds more promise for social integration than any nation in the world.

Under such conditions it would not seem unreasonable to expect definite indications of an art that would give objective expression to these unique conditions, but of this there is at the moment not even the faintest sign. It is true, of course, that during the struggle for survival in an untamed country, art would naturally be relegated to the background by more immediate, more material needs. But when prosperity and a certain degree of social security at last secured centuries of toil, South Africans become aware not only of their cultural heritage, but also of a need for creative expression to achieve the psychological adjustment which their temperaments needed. The artistic urge, inherited from nations
famed for generations as world leaders in the field of art, demanded an outlet in some form or other. And at this critical stage a most regrettable step was taken.

Instead of basing their art on the special attributes which condition their lives and environment, they sought to express themselves in the already outworn forms of European academic tradition. So, contrary to the general belief, our artists are contributing nothing to the establishment of an indigenous culture. They are content to continue with the reproduction of weak imitations of imitations of European masters — either in the "academic" manner, or amongst the more "enlightened", in the impressionistic idiom — littering the country with their boring repetitions and doing irreparable harm to genuine appreciation of the work of those masters.

It is true that some of these artists, obeying an instinctive urge, occasionally catch in their work the flavour of the sun-drenched "vlaktes" of their country, but even this fleeting achievement is obscured by an approach to the subject which is as unsuitable as it is outworn. Unfortunately such artists have their patrons who can breathlessly admire an abortion of a painting of the Drakensberg, or of the head of a native or of one of those inevitable "brandwagts van die vlaktes", for no other reason than that it appears to them to be so "true to Nature". With very few exceptions, our artists are all working (in terms of the European tradition) by the light of nature. Even amongst the best of them a fine or subtle composition seems an accident, or surely it would occur more often. This immunity from the responsibilities of design has already become a tradition, for we are taught to admire works which are conscientiously "faithful to Nature", Nature we
cannot deny, but art — if it is to objectify an emotional perception or experience — should control. This precept is in danger of being forgotten, and our educational system threatens its complete obliteration. Our artists instead of expressing themselves and their African environment, are attempting to revive our interest in the moth-eaten forms of the Europe of half a century ago when the visual arts had declined to the lowest ebb they have ever reached in the history of mankind.

The art of the nineteenth century represents a most curious dead-end in human development. Until the close of the eighteenth century we can say that every period had its specific style, however obscure and unworthy. But after this period the spirit of man apparently ceased to express itself in direct and original modes. It began instead to emulate previous modes of expression. And so we get that series of revivals of style the Neo-Gothic, the Neo-Classic, the Neo-Romantic and the debased eclecticism that followed in the wake of an intellectual interest in past forms stimulated by the excavations of Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities. These revivals of style ended at the close of the nineteenth century in the final sterilization of the academic tradition.

The dilettante craze for the antique which flourished from Renaissance until modern times had rarely, if ever, any aesthetic basis. It was partly a cultural snobism fanned by the propagandists of the "classic ideal", partly a genuine historical or archaeological interest, and partly the by-product of a classical education. (If the interest in these classical forms had been an aesthetic one, the last generation would not have been satisfied with a garbled imitation of the productions of a distant and alien civilization, but would have demanded equally significant forms
Such was the nature of nineteenth century art in Europe while South Africans were engaged in taming this country for civilization. When they eventually found time to attend to their inherent interest in art forms, there existed in them only a confused hunger for aesthetic satisfaction, and no developed sense of receptivity or discernment. So it was not surprising that they turned to this, the nearest and most obvious kind of art to satisfy their hunger. And it was still less surprising that a number of third-rate artist-adventurers from Europe (where their poor efforts would never have received recognition) came to be regarded as masters by a simple and generous public who knew no better.

To these half-baked products of the nineteenth century Beaux-Arts and Academy schools the young South African had to turn for tuition and guidance. Is it a wonder then that the majority of our few indigenous artists are producing such astounding banalities and even achieving fame thereby? This ersatz art has received further encouragement from fanatic "nationalists" who regard every production bearing a South African label as a significant contribution to what they self-consciously uphold as an indigenous "culture", to be defended with characteristic obstinacy against any reform or criticism. The fact that the origin of this type of art was acceptable to the puritans of the Victorian era also helped to establish it here where a rigid adherence to the demands of a Calvinistic religion made suspect the moral validity of pleasure in the Fine Arts. In addition, not having outgrown the materialistic tendencies ingrained during the struggle for survival, our artists are inclined to pander to any demands from which they can derive immediate material gain, whether it be national sentiment, religious...
or political prejudices or the arrogance of semi-enlightenment.

It has been said that the art of a nation is the index of its culture. If there is any truth in this statement, then South Africa is indeed in a sorry plight.

Although everywhere around us we can see how rapidly we are adapting our material progress to keep pace with the most advanced developments in the field of science, our cultural activities do not reflect a true understanding of the forces which have shaken art out of a negative preoccupation with its classic navel.

Our theatre expends its great energy and really remarkable talent by wastefully marking time on adaptations of moth-eaten works of the past or by entering into spineless compromises with the more insistent ideas of modernity.

Our writers continue to present us with watered-down depictions of life, using the standards of the matriculation syllabus as their highest aspiration. For the developed reader our literature offers nothing but spare diet. Its carefully sterilized conception of life, its materialistic and hypocritical concessions to what our writers regard as suitable for a Calvinistic and prudish public and its self-conscious contributions to "culture" obliterate any signs there may be of creative expression.

John Ruskin, first Slade Professor in the Fine Arts at Oxford University. ("The art of any country is the exponent of its social and political virtues and also that "with mathematical precision, subject to no error or exception, the art of a nation, so far as it exists, is an exponent of its ethical state")
The same conditions exist in the field of painting and sculpture. Almost all the work produced are miserable compromises - compromises not with some force against which these arts cannot survive without making concessions, but compromises with the prejudices of a semi-enlightened and often uncultured public.

This then is the present scope of the artistic activity of the European population of South Africa, the greater part of which is still mainly occupied with purely material pursuits. (The few exceptions that do not fit readily into this general survey, exist in a world of their own, and these esoteric productions are limited to appreciation by a privileged minority which has yet to make its presence felt in the general art consciousness of the people of this country.) In the light of our knowledge of the significant part that art can play in the integration of the individual and its vital importance as an integral part of civilization, these facts reflect conditions that place us on a level with barbarians and philistines and not - as we are apt to believe - on the upper cultural strata of an enlightened world.

In the introductory chapter to this work I stated that the conditions under which the South African nation has had to develop were not favourable for the flowering of an indigenous art, and that one could not condemn this nation for regarding art as a luxury while materialistic needs were the fundamental concern of its survival. But those conditions belong to the past, and if South Africa is to enjoy a cultural development that will be commensurate with her material progress, it will be necessary to untie the knee-halters of the obsolete alien and utterly unsatisfactory system of art training which is now in use, and to evolve a new system that will leave us free to give expression to art forms objectifying and giving meaning to our own special environment and our own special way of living.
In doing so we must take into consideration all the factors, psychological, sociological, physiological, philosophical and scientific, which direct contemporary life and thought, and apply the relevant principles that have been established in modern methods of education. Moreover we must concern ourselves not only with the assimilation of knowledge but its proper application to the problems of living.

At the present moment our system of education in South Africa is so constructed that many of these factors are excluded. The present rigid standards demanded for matriculation allow for no resiliency in their application, and were originally laid down to meet the materialistic needs of the community; the low scale of teachers’ salaries places them in the anomalous position of being the cultural leaders of their communities while receiving the salaries of ordinary labourers, discourages them from spending the time and the expense to amplify their initially limited training - and fails to attract the more highly trained and talented man and woman who might otherwise have chosen teaching as a career.

Moreover, as I have said, there is still much of puritanical doubt as to the moral validity of the pleasure in the arts of painting, sculpture and drama, a most definite antagonism towards the art of dancing* and an unbalanced tendency to regard literature as the only art that can officially be recognised by the Church without departing from its rigid adherence to the principles of Calvinism. And the

* It is possible that the great interest in the revival of folk dancing (disguised under the more acceptable name of "volkspele") may help to dispel this antagonism.
protestant churches which uphold these principles, have a very considerable influence on our system of education.

The result is that art is very much neglected in our schools. It is true that some effort is being made to correct this, but so far these efforts have been confined to the more privileged schools, and usually the qualifications of teachers undertaking instruction in Fine Arts are very inadequate—the main demand being an ability on the part of the teacher to draw and paint and to give instruction in these practical subjects in addition to other work unrelated to the Fine Arts. In very few instances do such qualifications include a knowledge of the sociological, psychological and physiological factors which control the creative expression of children, and an appreciation of the extent to which such expression could be directed to assist in the child's education in other subjects and prepare him for his allotted role in a mature society.

Such art schools as do exist for the professional training of artists are designed on the same lines as the obsolete Academy and Beaux Arts Schools of Europe which I have already discussed, but they include special courses in commercial art (another product of the Industrial Age) which are the mainstay of their existence since the great majority of art students that pass through these schools qualify themselves to serve industry and advertising. Of the remaining students most become art teachers leaving only a very small
percentage devoting its full attention to the practice of painting and sculpture. It is a significant fact that out of this small percentage, many students leave these art schools before completing the courses, and train themselves rather than to continue paying fees for courses at these schools which they feel intuitively are unsuitable, inadequate and inimical to the development of their talent.

The courses in the Fine Arts offered at our Universities also adds to the confusion of the art Education in this country. What contribution such courses have made to our general culture has been due more to the initiative and personality of the individuals conducting them than to any constructive scheme of training, and as the introduction of Fine Arts courses in our universities is a comparatively recent and hastily planned thing, this contribution can be discounted. The average graduate from a South African university remains abysmally ignorant of this vital cultural force and his post-graduate activities in the material world are never conducive to enlightenment in this matter; the student who has completed a theoretical course in Fine Arts is keenly aware of the shortcomings of his qualifications (as is his teacher) since they are not founded on direct references to original works of art such as are available to the art students in Europe and America in the rich collections of local art galleries and national museums; the student seeking professional training as a painter and sculptor encounters the same disadvantages found in our art schools, and to
these can be added the usual lack of equipment and accommodation for practical work and the limitations of the inadequate and overworked staffs of our poorly endowed seats of learning; and finally, as the place of art in civilization is not yet recognized in South Africa, the student wishing to qualify as a teacher in the Fine Arts (which is only included in the curricula of a few privileged schools) must protect himself by also taking up other equally complex and exacting studies as an alternative qualification, with the result that, under the conditions I have described in this chapter, he never masters his subjects, and never rises above mediocrity as a teacher.

The fact that South Africans lack neither talent nor sensitivity in the field of art makes these conditions even more deplorable. The solution of the complex problem that these conditions have presented is - if we accept the contention that art is a normal activity of the human being, essential to his individual integration and to the development of the civilization of which he is a member - the immediate responsibility of the authorities that direct our education, since obviously, it is only through education that these discrepancies can be adjusted.

So, although the actual design of a system that could be adopted to fit the specific needs of this country is outside the scope of this work, which is concerned only with the presentation of the evidence that must be considered before such a design is
attempted, I would like to conclude this survey of "essential considerations" with an outline of the possible scope of art training in our schools and universities and the responsibilities of educationalists in formulating a system of education that will ensure us against social disintegration.
8 APPROACH TO ART EDUCATION

The emerging school staff will find it essential to develop a curriculum which reflects the current state of world affairs. This must not only be relevant but also creative, with an emphasis on fostering the development of individual and social values, including moral and ethical principles.

As educational institutions evolve, the emphasis on art education, particularly at higher levels, becomes even more critical. Art can provide a unique means of self-expression and personal growth.

Many contemporary artists are influenced by the developments of the past century, which have led to new approaches in art education. This new emphasis on creativity and individual expression is essential for the development of future artists.

The approach to art education should be adaptable to the changing needs of society. The curriculum must be flexible and responsive to the diverse interests of students. This requires a comprehensive understanding of both historical and contemporary art movements.

In conclusion, art education plays a crucial role in the development of individuals and society. It is essential to integrate art into the curriculum in a way that promotes creativity, critical thinking, and personal growth.
The object of education is to develop the mind of the individual and prepare him for the fulfillment of his allotted or chosen role within the framework of the society of which he is a part. In its most ideal form, education should aim for a complete integration of the individual in order to achieve a security of social harmony and to lay sound foundations for the structure of a better world.

The extent to which our educational methods have failed in achieving this object is reflected in the present chaotic state of world affairs to which each nation makes its contribution. In no period of history has there been so much evidence of political disorder, individual and social maladjustment, racial bigotry and injustice.

The so-called "democratic" countries of the civilized world, of which ours is an articulate and active part, have as much blame in these conditions as have the more obvious instigators of the universal mass. If anything, we are more contemptible because of the holier-than-those-cum-ostrich mentality which has coloured our activities since the Reformation.

Today, surrounded as we are by incontrovertible evidence (from scientific, psychological, philosophical and historical sources) that our methods of education are obsolete and inadequate and that their results are a threat to the stability of the world, we are talking glibly of post-war reconstruction in the smug belief that such reconstruction will be effected by a reaffirmation of the "sound democratic principles" that camouflaged our pre-war incompetence. Faced with the immediate
problem of social integration our leaders, motivated by political timidity or political expediency, are either rehearsing the ostrich act, or preparing to evade the main issue by floodlighting minor problems and putting a deterrent salve on only the more insistent eruptions of social disease.

The educational system of South Africa, with its origin in the materialistic demands of the Industrial Age, is failing in its social and in its intellectual function by herding children through the requisite number of years and classes of the matriculation ladder without any regard for the adjustment of unbalanced temperaments or the integrated development of individual character. Very few children emerge from this system with an ability to think independently, to weigh evidence and gain access to accredited sources of knowledge — in fact, as is proved later by both their taste in art and their political judgement they show an extraordinary lack of capacity to discriminate between reliable and unreliable sources of information, and fall easy victims to the propaganda of corrupt social forces operating in the field of politics or in the field of art.

In short, our system of education pays only lip service to democracy, for, by denying the individual the right to develop at the same time his unique personality and sensitivity (through creative expression), his intellect, and his responsibility to the democratic community of which he is a member, we practise the worst principles of the political systems which we condemn. The true democrat will acknowledge the fact that each individual is born with certain potentialities which have a positive value to that individual and that these potentialities should be allowed development within the framework of a society liberal
enough to allow for an infinite variation of individual types. But we ignore the fact that such a variation actually does exist, and support a Victorian system of education designed on the lines of a sausage machine.

The institutions for higher education are mostly concerned with vocational training which by its materialistic nature and the exacting demands of specialization tends to preclude those cultural courses which may have made up for the discrepancies in school education. The result of this state of affairs is that doctors, engineers, scientists, lawyers and teachers destined to play leading parts in the development of their country are launched from our universities with their inherent sensibilities for the proper appreciation of art atrophied by neglect.

The remedy for this state of affairs, as I suggested in my introductory chapter, lies in the introduction of a carefully designed system of art education in all Government schools; the introduction of art appreciation classes for non-art students in Universities and Colleges, and similar classes for adults not attending Universities in art centres, art galleries and other cultural organisations. In order to do this the first step must be to train the required teachers, museum directors and social workers and to ensure a proper training in this country for the artists that we need to objectify and give meaning to our lives and environment.

The Beaux Arts-Academy system has failed because it is based on the classic ideal of beauty as interpreted by a generation whose cultural activities cannot be reconciled with our own, and because it depends for its results on a direct reference to the original works of historic masters housed
in galleries and museums from which we are separated by more than an ocean and the vicissitudes of travel. It must therefore be discarded and replaced with a system more likely to suit our requirements, a system that takes cognizance of any relevant aspect in the progress of civilization from primitive times to the present.

An examination of the various contemporary methods of art education in Europe and the United States of America reveals four well defined approaches which must guide us in formulating our own system. These are the psycho-philosophical, the scientific, the historical and the practical.

1. THE PSYCHO-PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH.

The scope of this approach has been indicated in the previous chapters of this thesis, and I have used the evidence presented by this approach to support my contention that art is essential to civilization. It is concerned with the subjective activity involved in the appreciation and creation of art forms, and is "aesthetics" properly speaking. This approach has a very limited experimental field and must to a large extent rely on introspection as the method of study, and involves the formulation of logical definitions and laws of an a priori kind applied as a philosophy of art. Training along these lines will include the following:

(a) An examination of the theories and definitions of art postulated by philosophers throughout the ages, and the extent to which these principles can be applied to contemporary forms of art. In doing so, certain semantic considerations in art terminology that arise during this study must be clarified to avoid confusion in