THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF
SUSANNE K. LANGER FOR ART EDUCATION

by

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A DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Rationale of the Study

The central question art educators are asking is:

What is the unique contribution that art can make to the education of man? This question is implicit in the writings of Barkan, Eisner, Goodlad, Hubbard, Johnson, Kaelin, Kuhn, Lanier, Michael, and Templeton. ¹

American education is currently undergoing a nationwide reassessment and reform which is having an impact on all fields of educational study; consequently art educators are also developing a new rationale and redefinition of purpose for art education. The availability of federal funds and the existence of the National Assessment Program have encouraged art educators to attempt to analyze and to make explicit their practices and have necessitated a growing concern with evaluation. The re-examination of beliefs, methods, and goals is the result of realizations that the potential for creative behavior can and should be fostered in areas additional to the arts, that self-expression through art production as the only objective in art education is primarily therapeutic and

therefore belongs to the field of mental health, and that a media based curriculum in art education possesses the inherent danger of too much stress on technical aspects of production.

This shifting of goals from the fostering of creativity and of personal development through self-expression toward more critical thinking about art does not imply that art learning situations cannot help in the maintenance, development, and release of creative behavior, nor is the need for emotionally healthy, creative individuals being repudiated. The problem of identifying the unique contribution of art arises because of the current attention by educators to the development of creative thinking abilities in all areas of study; the promotion of creative behavior is not unique to art education.

While retaining the previous valuing of the psychological and emotional development of the individual the emphasis in the field has shifted to maximizing the intellectual aspects of art education. This shift to emphasizing subject content is evidenced by the emerging objectives of the development of critical abilities in the areas of
inquiry, analysis, description, interpretation, and evaluation of art. These general terms suggest an attempt to arrive at a clear understanding of art through an intellectual approach.

The hypothetical construct of the structure of knowledge might provide a basis for additional understanding of the potentials of a more intellectual emphasis in art education programs. The identification of the unique structure of art and mode of inquiry of art provided by aesthetic philosophy could serve as the theoretical framework for the teaching of subject content in art education. The analysis of philosophic concepts of art and mode of inquiry of art is consistent with the current educational emphasis on identification of basic structures of the separate disciplines or domains. This curriculum reform movement is based upon the assumption that educational methods and goals are derived primarily from the identification of the appropriate structures and strategies of inquiry of the various disciplines. This position is

\[^2\text{Jackson Lee Ice, "Criticism in Art Education: Its Role and Relevance," Art Education, XXII, No. 9 (December, 1969), 13-16.}\]
supported by such contemporary writers as Bruner, Clinchy, Goodlad, Sizer, and Smith.  

The content of art programs derived from the structure of art would avoid an over-emphasis on art history because the structure of art is broader than both studio production and art history. Critical analysis limited to the area of the history of art could pose a problem to the teacher of art as he attempts to identify content consistent with the intellectual movement in the field. Shifting the emphasis in art education programs from teaching production to teaching history does not solve

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the problem of identifying the unique structure and contribution of art.

Aesthetic philosophy is assumed to be central to the problem of theoretical thought in art instruction by such writers as Beardsley, Broudy, Burt, Eisner and Ecker, Feldman, Gotshalk, Kaelin, Smith, Sparshott, and Weitz.  

The theories of art underlying basic assumptions are believed to be relevant to the identification of the unique character of art necessary for the teaching of content.

This assumption about the importance of philosophy for education is shared by many educators. Scholars primarily concerned with curriculum are generally in agreement that theoretical decisions about the curriculum should be based on philosophical criteria, in combination with criteria derived from the social, the psychological, and the subject-matter sources.\(^5\) Not only do Macdonald and Huebner\(^6\) value philosophical criteria as a relevant source

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for educational theorizing, but they theorize within the field of curriculum from a philosophical point of view. Although there is considerable agreement that there is a relationship between philosophy and education, little agreement exists as to the exact nature of that relationship.

In this study, the term philosophy refers to the framework for the conception of coherent meanings in the whole domain of human thought and feeling; philosophizing is the attempt to make explicit the implicit assumptions on which humans operate. The crucial issues of education involve philosophical questions because education is concerned with enabling the individual, and through individuals all of society, to conceive of the meanings of life, and to give coherence to that life through those meanings. This conception of the relationship of philosophy to education


is characterized by organizational unity; there is an interdependence and harmonious interrelationship of parts with one another and with the environment. This organizational relationship of philosophy to education implies a unity of theory with educational practice.

All theory, whether scientific or philosophical, is an attempt to clarify human thinking. The questions asked by science are different from those asked by philosophy and the methods of inquiry of the two domains are different. Scientific theorizing attempts clarification of facts on the basis of inference and observation. Philosophical theorizing attempts clarification of questions that cannot be answered by factual inquiry. Smith notes that facts are employed in philosophical investigation, but facts alone cannot answer philosophical questions because "... the way these questions are answered determines what is factual as well as how the results of factual inquiry are to be determined."\(^8\) This view is evidenced by Langer.

She states:

[Philosophical questions] are radically different from scientific questions, because they concern the implications and other interrelations of ideas, not the order of physical events; their answers are interpretations instead of factual reports, and their function is not to increase our knowledge of nature, but our understanding of what we know. Actually the growth of conception which is the aim of philosophy, has a direct bearing on our ability to observe facts; for it is a systematic conception that makes some facts important and others trivial.⁹

As the results of scientific inquiry affect philosophical inquiry, the results of philosophical investigation affect scientific investigation. Arnstine maintains:

If we may trust that all empirical investigators are confronted with the same range (i.e., visible, audible, etc.) of events in a world common to them all, then we may suppose that the differences in the events they select for study and the differences in the inferences they make on the basis of often quite similar sets of events, are differences in the assumptions they have made (consciously or not) about the nature of the reality with which they are dealing. . . . The reality in question is that of the nature of man, or mind. These assumptions, in turn, can be traced back to philosophic world views that

have for several millennia dominated Western culture.\textsuperscript{10}

The philosophical orientation of the individual indirectly influences his perception and consequently his course of action.

This position is supported by Burns.\textsuperscript{11} He rejects the assumption that logical implications exist between formal philosophy and specific educational practices. Although the connection between philosophy and educational practice does not meet the strict requirements of formal logic, because there is no formal way by which philosophy of education can logically deduce specific instructions for practice from philosophical premises, he maintains there may be psychological, or pragmatic, implications. In this position the causal conditions for behavior are psychological presuppositions based upon particular philosophic beliefs.


How are philosophic beliefs formulated within the domain of formal philosophy? Smith maintains:

... the philosopher seeks to answer his questions by constructing definitions and making conceptual and linguistic analyses, by arguments that involve cases and counter-examples, by the use of particular facts and possible cases, as well as by other logical and linguistic techniques.\(^\text{12}\)

Smith elaborates on this statement by delineating three methods of philosophic inquiry: analytic, critical, and synthetic.\(^\text{13}\) These methods tend to be determined and shaped by the tasks undertaken. The explication of concepts involves the use of the analytic method. The limits of meaning accorded a term are analyzed by the use of possible cases beyond the ordinary uses of a word, the meanings of concepts are explored by examining their possible interrelationships, and conceptual systems are investigated by an analysis of their language and logic. The clarification and criticism of beliefs, points of view, or programs proceeds by both the analytic and critical


\(^{13}\) Ibid., pp. 957-63.
methods. The method of criticism evaluates doctrines and practices and assesses factual claims in terms of some criteria of adequacy or value standards. The standards and criteria may also be evaluated. The formulation and justification of theory involves the use of the synthetic method, which presupposes the analytic and critical methods. This task may employ methods and procedures for assembling knowledge from many dimensions of experience and organizing them into a coherent whole. Smith emphasizes the conceptual, the analytical, and the logical nature of philosophic methods which are to a large degree determined by the specific task. These tasks are directed toward the overall objective of clarifying, evaluating, and giving meaning to the whole of human life. The philosopher seeks understanding through clarification of meanings.

The concern with meanings is evidenced in the writings of Langer. She maintains "the continual pursuit of meanings--wider, clearer, more negotiable, more articulate meanings--is philosophy."\(^{14}\) Again she states:

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Philosophy is a fabric of ideas . . . it is the study of the conceptual framework in which all our propositions, true or false, are made. It deals primarily with meanings--with the sense of what we say.15

Langer refers to the philosophic methods of inquiry into meanings in this statement:

The establishment of coherent meanings is not a simple process, for which one could prescribe a clear-cut method, such as logical analysis and selection of premises for a system which may thereupon be expected to follow deductively, and to be both consistent and adequate for direct application. . . . There is no set of premises to be got out of common sense, simply by analyses and selection. Analysis of commonsense notions is only a first step. After that, philosophy is the logical construction of basic concepts, a process of giving words adequate meanings; and that can be done only with a constant eye on the subject matter to which the new concepts will have to be adequate.16

Langer refers to the analytical and logical methods of inquiry but implies the possibility of the need for additional processes. Beardsley refers to the method Langer used in Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling, Vol. I in these statements:

15 Langer, Feeling and Form, p. 3.

Not that this inquiry, any more than others, has proceeded only by logical steps. Mrs. Langer, for example, goes on to say, "The fact that expressive form is always organic or 'living' form made the biological foundation of feeling probable" (p. xix); her readers, I think, will see in this inference not so much a genuine probabilistic connection as an intuitive or creative leap. But she convinces us that in her mind one question did lead to another. . . .

The philosopher constructs theory through logical means, but when the strict requirements of formal logic are no longer adequate for a conception of the whole of life, the intuitive method may be employed.

How is it determined whether or not a theoretical construction has sufficient validity? If a theoretical system of means and ends is developed the consequences of those means can be tested for consistency with the anticipated ends. Smith states, however, that it is not required of the philosopher to test the construct he proposes.18 Philosophic inquiry may be directed toward questions which

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may defy immediate empirical validation. Langer maintains that

... no philosophical construction is absolutely final. It is, at best, sufficient. The sign of its sufficiency is that its concepts can be progressively elaborated to articulate more and more detailed problems.\textsuperscript{19}

A philosophical construct does not always require pragmatic validation in the strict sense of empirical verification, but may contain the ideas which generate new frameworks of thought and conception, and, in this manner, contain pragmatic validity. In \textit{Philosophy in a New Key} Langer discusses this type of formulative conception which generates new ideas and therefore changes the history of thought and life.\textsuperscript{20} She terms them "generative ideas."\textsuperscript{21}

The generative ideas of an age influence the philosophical orientation of the individual and this orientation, in turn, indirectly influences his perception and consequently his course of action. This implies an

\textsuperscript{19}Langer, "On the Relations Between Philosophy and Education," p. 139.

\textsuperscript{20}Langer, \textit{Philosophy in a New Key}, pp. 21-25.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 21.
indirect relationship between philosophy and educational practice.

Newsome, like Burns, also rejects the direct relationship of theory to practice but does concede a connection between the two. Theoretical knowledge promotes understanding and provides a basis for rational and scientific explanations in the sense that it affords "economy and system in organization of abstract terms and concepts." 22

Also viewing theory as an agent of clarification, Gowin says:

It [philosophic theory] is not a guide to action in the same sense that a musical score is a guide to the action of a performing musician. It is a guide to the action of thinking, as it were, but not a guide to direct acting. 23

He maintains that educational theory, since it carries a component of moral responsibility in the sense that it possesses a human referent, will have to be formulated in


an essentially different pattern of formal adequacy than scientific theory. This concern with moral responsibility implies an interest in the axiological dimension of educational activity.

Peters and White view the role of educational philosophy, as is all other philosophy, as being concerned with the meaning and interrelationships of concepts and with the justification of assumptions. It may be said that philosophy attempts to clarify human thinking by providing a means for grasping the totality of life; this may begin with the clarification of conceptions and assumptions. Peters and White point out that philosophy can aid in the development of educational policy based on research (which might, or might not, be empirical research) through its role as a clarificator of aims.

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24 Ibid., p. 12.

Schwab\textsuperscript{26} maintains the relationship of theory to practice is relative. This relativity results from the differences in both the syntactical structure (manner and extent to which knowledge can be verified) and the substantive structure (identifying and understanding the powers and limitations as reflected in the knowledge produced) in the domains of knowledge. Three examples of relationships were cited:

1. Knowledge, e.g., Freudian personality theory, that is so highly metaphorical that it is only in practice that it becomes meaningful. Teaching must interpret the results of practice in terms of the theory and reinterpret the theory in terms of the practice.

2. Knowledge, e.g., disease taxonomy, that has developed at the expense of the richness of detail involved in each particular specified. The instruction in simplified theory should be

supplemented by the practical experience of
the variability involved and of the ways the
variability may be accounted for in practice.

3. Knowledge, e.g., administrative theory, that
has such underdeveloped theoretical foundations
that a great chasm exists between theory and
practice. Teaching, in this instance, must
involve action with the awareness of tentative
theory.

On the basis of the above statements it might be said that
as the method of philosophic inquiry is relative to the
task, the relationship of philosophic theory to educational
practice is relative.

If a relationship between philosophy and educational
practice exists, however indirect and relative this con-
nection may be, how are philosophic theories translated
into practices? Willower\textsuperscript{27} maintains theory and practice
may be brought into closer congruence through a kind of

\textsuperscript{27}Donald J. Willower, "The Form of Knowledge and
the Theory-Practice Relationship," \textit{Educational Theory},
vertical integration: the specification of theory to lower levels of abstraction, or lower degrees of generality. This type of implication is possible because knowledge consists of concepts, generalizations or statements of relationships among concepts, and theories which can be specified to lower levels of abstraction. Willower views these levels of abstraction as being conceptual, not existing per se, and having no fixed set of categories or levels to which all theories must adhere.

Willower points out some limitations of this type of implication. There is difficulty in identifying the conditions when a situation calls for the application of theoretical knowledge, and the recognition of how the appropriate knowledge can be made applicable to the given situation. The practitioner must be perceptive to the environment, but because he is a participant in and a part of that environment, the task is extremely complicated. The complexity and fluidity characterizing the natural setting are not consistent with the controlled settings in which high level generalizations are developed.
Although these limitations are recognized, Willower maintains the value of attempting to bring theory and practice into a closer relationship. He says:

Recipes, do's and don'ts, the cookbook approach to education, must ultimately fail because they leave the practitioner lacking in the understanding of general relationships. He is left, in effect, flying blind. Successful transfer for the practitioner must be based on his understanding of relationships. This means that he must be exposed to knowledge about his field in the form of generalizations on relatively high levels of abstraction. These have wide potential precisely because of their generality. However, to utilize theory, the practitioner has to make the connection between the world of people and events. The specification of theoretical generalizations to lower levels of abstraction clarifies this connection for the practitioner. It encourages him to think in terms of relationships between and among the variables he deals with. It provides the content which shows the significance of theory for practice, and underscores the potential of the relationship.28

On the basis of the above statements it might be said that philosophy is the theoretical foundation for clarifying educational thought, and consequently, educational practice, and this clarification may be implemented by the

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28 Ibid., p. 49.
specification of philosophic theory to lower levels of
generality.

One possible agent for this specification could be
the curriculum theorist. Estes\(^{29}\) defines the task of the
curriculum theorist as being concerned with the development
of a rational framework for systematically interpreting and
logically clarifying curricular theorizing. He says this
theorizing operates at a high level of generalization and
depends at least in part upon philosophical statements as
criteria for interpretation and clarification. Moreover,
he recommends the curriculum theorist have some degree of
competency as a specialist within the field of curriculum
and within the field about which he is theorizing. In this
study, curricular theorizing refers to the formulation of
a conceptual framework for art curricula supported by
philosophical statements as criteria.

Curriculum theory may be understood to function as
criticism and/or validation of educational theory.

\(^{29}\)Estes, "A Delineation of the Curriculum Theorist
and Two Exemplars of Philosophical Curricular Theorizing,"
p. 37.
Hirst\textsuperscript{30} proposes that the term educational theory designates that field of study which indirectly connects philosophy, and many branches of knowledge, and educational practice; educational theory thereby determines educational practice. Hirst states:

Though educational theory must be built so as to be consistent with some set of philosophical and other beliefs, it is not in general deduced from these and there is no logically necessary relationship between the two.\textsuperscript{31}

He maintains a double-decker system exists. He says:

If the sciences and humanities are said to be first order subjects because they seek to describe and explain the world, philosophy can be said to be a second order subject because it seeks to describe and explain the way in which first order subjects do their job. In this double-decker system, lower deck activities are concerned with understanding the world, upper deck activities with understanding what goes on the lower deck. Seen in this way, philosophy has a contribution to make to educational theory wherever second order understanding is necessary, wherever we need to know about the nature of

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\item \textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 94.
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This study proposes that curriculum theory, in combination with other theories such as instructional theory, composes that field of study Hirst terms educational theory. Seen in this way, curriculum theory may be viewed as a form of educational theory, a comprehensive term here used to designate various kinds of theories concerned with the practice of education. Curriculum theory may be primarily concerned with any one of the various sources contributing to educational theory, e.g., philosophic theory.

In this study, art is understood to be a first order subject because it seeks to describe and explain the nature of the world; aesthetic philosophy is a second order subject because it seeks to describe and explain the way in which art functions. The curriculum theorist acts as the agent for the clarification of the connection between art and aesthetic philosophy, and, consequently, between the practice of art in pedagogical situations and the theory (or theories) of art. In this way, curricular

\[32\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 90-91.}\]
theorizing contributes in both a formal and a substantial way to educational theory, and, consequently, could contribute to educational practice.

Sparshott maintains that an aesthetic theory is probably not as necessary to the person creating art (artist) as it is necessary to the person discussing art (critic, historian), for critical activities of all kinds presuppose theories. Although Sparshott does not include the term "teacher" in his categories of those who must exercise discursive reasoning about art theory, the general trend in art education programs toward critical analysis and historical perspective presupposes the teacher as being both critic and historian.

The importance of aesthetic philosophy as a means of clarification for art education programs is pointed out by Broudy:

Art criticism involves explication of the work of art and appraisal of it. Neither activity would be possible if some analysis of the work were not possible; if it were not possible for the critic to point to certain identifiable

\[\text{\textsuperscript{33}}\text{Sparshott, "The Case for Aesthetics," pp. 9-11.}\]
features of the work of art. Rational appraisal would be impossible if there could be no statement of rules and principles that works of art exemplified, or failed to exemplify, or exemplified in varying degrees. In addition, critical discourse is useless if it is so private and esoteric that others cannot understand it.  

Broudy agrees with the current trend toward incorporating critical analysis into art programs. He states:

> Educationally, the important point is that there are definitions, rules, and procedures in art that can be identified, pointed to and stated. This means that there can be systematic instruction in or, at least, about art, and that it need not be confined to apprentice training in art production.  

Aesthetic philosophy is the field of study which seeks to identify and clarify definitions, rules, procedures, and principles of art. Therefore, it is possible that aesthetics might contribute substantially to any art program. Feldman supports this statement. He maintained:

> "All plans, motives, goals for the teaching of art take their origin from aesthetics."  

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34 Broudy, "The Structure of Knowledge in the Arts," pp. 94-95.


36 Feldman, "Research as the Verification of Aesthetics," p. 60.
Eisner and Ecker\(^{37}\) also state the need for a philosophical foundation for art education programs. They maintain that the future of art in the public schools depends upon vigorous philosophical inquiry, as well as scientific research. They say:

Implicit value assumptions in empirical research may be revealed by . . . philosophic questions, and if pursued with vigor they call for philosophic inquiry. Their resolution depends upon logical analysis and criticism of alternate concepts of art, learning, curriculum, and the like, and possibly they might require the proposal of new objectives of human endeavor. Philosophic questions about art education, as with other areas of human experience, characteristically center on value problems. Art experience, perhaps more than other kinds of experience, is an affair to be intrinsically valued. Thus, questions about the nature of what it is that is to be valued for its own sake and problems arising when views concerning this nature conflict with one another require much more carefully wrought answers than our common sense can provide.\(^{38}\)

They note that many of the problems relevant to art education programs involve value questions concerning what ought to be. These questions must be confronted through

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38 Ibid., p. 19.
the philosophic methods of analysis, criticism, and speculation, because no adequate answers to these questions can be logically derived solely from the descriptive findings of the social sciences. They affirm the belief that the field ought to have more empirical data on such relevant subjects as creativity, but note that this opinion is, in itself, a value judgment. Professional theorizing, in their opinion, should proceed by analyzing and criticizing the major theories of art and art education, in order to offer a basis for choice among these alternatives.

Champlin also maintains the future of art education depends upon philosophic inquiry, especially in the area of determining long-range goals. He states:

[Philosophic] inquiry should be our goal. But in our attempt to establish criteria of adequacy for inquiry we mustn't lose sight that we proceed--not in a vacuum and not as "philosophers," but, philosophizing, as art educators.  

The need for research to establish long-range goals in art

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40 Ibid., p. 17.
education is also expressed by Eisner. He defines the technologists in art education as being concerned with immediate short-range betterment of teaching in a particular situation. The theoreticians in art education, however, are oriented toward the production of ideas for long-range goals. Through theoretical research Eisner envisions a new era in art education emerging; one in which art education is "becoming a domain for scholarly study as well as a field devoted to the artistic betterment of man." This statement indicates a valuing of the movement toward maximizing the intellectual aspects of art education while retaining the previous fostering of the psychological and emotional development of the individual.

Eisner delineates the type of theoretical research he envisions in the following statement:

Turning to the philosophical domain, the type of inquiries that would be useful are those which analyze the works of others in order to

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42Ibid., p. 55.
identify the foundations upon which the works rest, studies which develop a philosophic conception of the process of artistic action and studies which develop conceptions of a normative variety regarding the role of art in education and in American life.  

He further states:

I would hope that the philosophic doctoral dissertation is not out of date and that philosophic research and theorizing receive the type of support needed from funding agencies who, at present, seem to view research in the more limited way I described earlier [empirical research].

On the basis of the above statements it can be said that art education needs both scientific and philosophic research for clarifying its methods and goals if it is to realize the hope of providing for both the cognitive and affective dimensions of the unique contribution that art can make to the education of man.

Crawford presents a more detailed description

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43 Ibid., p. 61.
44 Ibid., p. 62.
than Eisner of the contribution which he considers aesthetics can offer to the art education program. He maintains that any misunderstanding of the relevance of aesthetics to art education is a misconception of contemporary aesthetics: the assumption that aesthetics is an attempt to work out an all-encompassing system of final, absolute aesthetic standards. This assumption, and consequently criticism of aesthetics, is made by Weitz. He states:

... aesthetic theory is a logically vain attempt to define what cannot be defined, to state the necessary and sufficient properties, to conceive the concept of art as closed when its very use reveals and demands its openness.46

However, Weitz does recognize some use of aesthetic theory for clarifying the arts, as revealed in the following comments:

If we take the aesthetic theories literally . . . they all fail; but if we reconstruct them, in terms of their function and point, as serious and argued—for recommendations to concentrate on certain criteria of excellence in art, we shall see that aesthetic theory is far from worthless. Indeed, it becomes as central as anything in

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aesthetics, in our understanding of art, for it teaches us what to look for and how to look at it in art. What is central and must be articulated in all the theories are their debates over the reasons for excellence in art... as criteria of evaluation—the whole of which converges on the perennial problem of what makes a work of art good.47

But Crawford envisions a broader role for the contributions of aesthetics in the art program. He maintains it can function to the extent that the problems of aesthetics are themselves raised within the content of an art program. By either specifically recommending or providing clarity on the general goals, aesthetics acts as a guide to curricula and values by dealing with the assumptions, presuppositions, and criteria used in a program.

This guiding function of aesthetics is possible when art is conceived as a process rather than an abstract or ideal entity requiring definition, Crawford believes. This conceptualization of art as a process, rather than a definable entity, suggests an open, ongoing quality, intrinsic to the artistic act itself; the concept of art which Weitz demands.

47 Ibid., p. 94.
Crawford identifies three categories of the process of art: the artist, the object of art, and artistic appreciation or criticism. Crawford suggests the following type of problems which might be involved in the three categories:

1. The Artist: problems about the nature of creativity and the categorization of controls within the various media, and problems emanating from such concepts as imagination, insight, conception, inspiration, making as compared with creating, work as compared with play, and scientific discovery and inventiveness as compared with artistic discovery and inventiveness.

2. The Object of Art: problems concerning the ontological status of the object, e.g., Is it a physical entity or a mental construction or an intentional object? What does a poem create?, including the description and characterization of aesthetic objects using a systematic vocabulary not confined to a
specific medium of expression, e.g., idea, image, balance.

3. Artistic Appreciation or Criticism: problems arising from the relation of the third category to the second (appreciation to work of art), e.g., Are aesthetic values objective? Is art just a matter of taste? Can we give principles of evaluation for the arts? What are the meanings of such terms as "beautiful," "good work of art," "weak"?

Crawford believes it necessary to approach aesthetic theory, not only through the kinds of problems enumerated above, but also in a broader sense; in this broader sense of aesthetics a clear relationship between aesthetics and art education emerges which allows art education to become aesthetic education.

The following topics are among those mentioned by Crawford as problems which might be attacked through approaching aesthetics in this broader sense:

1. Problems concerning the conditions necessary for promoting and for valuing the arts, and the
kinds of institutions necessary for this promoting and valuing, and the conflicts between an interest in art and other special interest, e.g., censorship.

2. Problems resulting from the descriptive categories applicable to all the arts, e.g., What should be the range of an art education program?

3. Problems concerning the rationale behind evaluative criteria for art, e.g., Should an art education program concern itself with problems of art criticism and, if so, to what extent, and by what means?

The three categories--artist, art object, appreciation--suggested by Crawford consist of what might be termed the internal relationships in the process of art: the distinguishing characteristics of art and the mode of inquiry of art. The problems mentioned by Crawford in what he terms the broader conception of the process of art might be thought of as the external relationships in the process of art: the way art functions within the environmental
context. This conception of aesthetic philosophy is consistent with the view that aesthetics is a second-order subject because it seeks to explain and describe the way the first-order subject, art, functions, both internally and externally.

A number of philosophers, interested in the relevance of aesthetics to education, developed their theories in both the descriptive area and the prescriptive area. Dewey and Read have greatly influenced the development of art education. The way art itself is conceived has implications for the orientation to practice in art education and how that practice could occur. Aesthetic theory contains implications for art education whether these implications are explicitly stated in the theory or only implicit in the theory.

This study assumes the significance of all aesthetic

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theories for art education, and recognizes the significance of those theories of aestheticians who have not specified implications for education from their theoretical constructions. The curriculum theorist may act not only as the agent for the clarification between the practice of art in pedagogical situations and aesthetic philosophy, but may also act as the agent for theorizing about those implications for art education practice which are implicit in aesthetic theory. The philosophic concepts explicitly stated in the theory act as criteria for those implications. Noting the recommendation by Estes that the curriculum theorist should be competent within the field about which he is theorizing, the agent for this theorizing might be an art educator.

The philosophy of aesthetics developed by Susanne K. Langer is one interpretation of the structure and function of art which does not prescribe implications for art education programs, yet could provide generative ideas for theorizing about those programs. Read states that Langer

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has evolved a wholly new theory of aesthetics and that he considers it to be the only adequate theory of art presently available. Thomas\textsuperscript{51} cites the aesthetics of Langer as a most significant, although as yet untapped, source for illuminating one of the central problems of art education, the need for a philosophical base, and also as a source for providing some of the solutions to that problem.

**Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study is related (1) to the rationale as stated above, (2) to the identification of a possible aesthetic framework for the clarification of the process of art, and (3) to the importance of this framework for making implications about art education curricula.

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study is (1) to identify, order, and describe the general philosophical concepts and the aesthetic concepts of Susanne K. Langer and (2) to make

\textsuperscript{51}Ivan Thomas, "Review of Problems of Art," Art Education, XXI, No. 7 (October, 1968), 43.
implications about art curricula employing those concepts as criteria.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to a descriptive study of the philosophy of Susanne K. Langer and to making implications about art curricula at a high level of generality employing those concepts as criteria derived from that philosophy. The selected works of Langer from which these concepts as criteria will be identified are:

- Feeling and Form
- Philosophical Sketches
- Philosophy in a New Key
- Problems of Art

The curriculum structure in art education derived from the philosophy of Langer is not to be considered as the only framework for the reconstruction of a theoretical base for art education programs. There is no single theoretical base for making curricular implications in art education but various theoretical bases. The clarification of this structure provides an opportunity for more meaningful selection, through the awareness of more
alternatives, to the specialist who must make the final choice.

The emphasis upon the structure of the process of art does not in itself constitute an adequate answer to the problems involved in curriculum planning. Although the concern with humanizing education is recognized as being implicit in the value orientation of art education, the primary emphasis at present is to make explicit the theoretical structure of art.

Procedure of the Study

The central concepts in the philosophy of Langer will be identified, explicated, and ordered. Two categories will be used: (1) her general philosophical concepts and (2) her aesthetic concepts. The identification of these concepts will be based upon (1) their recurrence

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throughout her writings, (2) her explicit identification of them as central concepts, (3) their consistency with the conditions of relevance set forth above by art educators, and (4) this writer's judgment of them as central to Langer's philosophy and of significance to art education, for both the clarification of the process of art and the generation of new ideas for the teaching of that process.

The concepts will serve as criteria for making implications about art curricula. Concepts identified as primarily aesthetic will serve as the organizational framework for this theorizing. Both logical implications and psychological implications will be employed in this theorizing.

The organizational framework of this study is understood to be one possible method for identifying, explicating, and ordering concepts.

This study will be composed of five chapters. Chapter I explores the relevance of philosophy to education and delineates the contemporary interest within the field of art education in the reconstruction of the theoretical foundations based on philosophical criteria. The aesthetic
concepts of Susanne K. Langer are identified as a possible source for this criteria. Chapter II will present the general philosophical concepts of Susanne K. Langer and Chapter III will deal with her aesthetic concepts. Chapter IV will make implications for art curricula using the criteria developed in the two previous chapters. The final chapter will consist of a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations.
The purpose of this chapter is to set forth the philosophical position of Langer. The central concepts of her general philosophical position will be identified, ordered, and described.

In the first volume of *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, Langer proposes a philosophical theory that will, when completed, provide a new conceptual framework for the empirical study of human mentality. Her thesis is that man departed from the normal pattern of mentality to develop a vast and special function, feeling. This evolution of feeling resulted in the separation of human and animal mentality. The characteristic human mental function is the symbolic transformation of experience. The basic

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human need and power to symbolize is biologically determined by the unique development of human feeling.

During this century, the concept of symbolism as the characteristically human element in cognition is a pervasive theme in literature from various fields. Langer credits Freud, Peirce, Whitehead, and especially Cassirer with the recognition of the importance of symbolic formulations; throughout her writings she mentions her debt to them. Langer has also done extensive research in biology, biochemistry, and other technical disciplines, as well as in philosophy and psychology, to provide the diverse foundations for her inquiry.

From the generative idea of the modes of symbolic expression presented in her early book, Philosophy in a New Key, Langer developed the theory of art as the symbolic expression of an artist's knowledge of feeling, which is the theme of Feeling and Form and Problems of

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2 Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951). (Hereinafter referred to as Key.)

3 Susanne K. Langer, Feeling and Form (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953). (Hereinafter referred to as F. and F.)
Art. From this theory she was led to the investigation of the relationship of mind and feeling. The preliminary outline of this research appeared in *Philosophical Sketches*; her developed thesis will be presented in a three-volume work entitled *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*. Only one volume of this work has been completed.

The construction of a coherent theory begins with the formulation of key problems; that is, a set of connected ideas about a whole subject begins with the establishment of central concepts. Since there is no general rule for identifying central problems, Langer uses the concept of generativeness as criterion. If the constructed concept generates implications, and by these implications generate other concepts, this is a significant sign that central philosophical issues have been identified. Although Langer agrees that the philosopher's aim is

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generality, she maintains that the method is not to deal in generalities; more is needed than the logical analysis of general terms. Phenomena do not need to be designated so much as to be described in such a way as to facilitate an understanding of relationships. Isolating, labeling, and pairing phenomena for building taxonomies does not provide any principles of analysis or construction or ways to describe the relations between terms. Langer sees the need for a conceptual structure that may be expanded by modification to reveal relationships, thereby extending systematic knowledge, within many fields.6

Although the arts display great unity and logic, the philosophy of art consists of rival doctrines; new theories fail to make old ones obsolete. Langer maintains that this results from the lack of fundamentally clear systematic thought in the domain of art criticism. Because of the general principle that philosophy deals with general notions, aesthetic theory usually begins with obvious questions, i.e., what is beauty? Although such questions are

6 Langer, F. and F., pp. 4-6; Mind, pp. xxi-xxii; Sketches, pp. 12-16; Problems, pp. 1-3.
valid, philosophic theory should not begin here; answers to these types of questions should occur at the end of a philosophic inquiry. Langer also states that attention to generalities usually results in the analysis of such concepts as:

- beauty, value, culture, and so forth. Such concepts, however, have no systematic virtue; they are not terms of description, as scientific concepts, e.g. mass, time, location, etc., are. They have no unit, and cannot be combined in definite proportions. They are "abstract qualities" like the elementary notions of Greek nature philosophy—wetness and dryness, heat and cold, lightness and heaviness. And just as no physics ever resulted from the classification of these attributes, so no art theory emerges from the contemplation of "aesthetic values."

Philosophy of art should construct, by a process of generalization, a coherent theory of art based on propositions that have implications for deeper and deeper understandings.

Through her construction of aesthetic theory, Langer identified concepts which hold implications beyond art criticism. The most significant concept, which has its

7 Langer, F. and F., pp. 4-5.
8 Ibid., p. 5.
roots in Aristotelian thought, is that artistic form, to be expressive of feeling, must be a semblance of organic form. This idea led Langer to the study of actual living form and the phenomena of feeling. The concepts developed in this undertaking generated new insights about the relations of feeling to thinking and, consequently, about the whole concept of human mentality.  

She states:

It was the discovery that works of art are images of the forms of feeling, and that their expressiveness can rise to the presentation of all aspects of mind and human personality, which led me to the present undertaking of constructing a biological theory of feeling that should logically lead to an adequate concept of mind, with all that the possession of mind implies. The fact that expressive form is always organic or "living" form made the biological theory of feeling probable. In the artist's projection, feeling is a heightened form of life; so any work expressing felt tensions, rhythms and activities expresses their unfelt substructure of vital processes, which is the whole of life. If vitality and feeling are conceived in this way there is no sharp break, let alone metaphysical gap, between physical and mental realities, yet there are thresholds where mentality begins, and especially where human mentality transcends the animal level, and mind, sensu stricto, emerges.

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9 Langer, Mind, pp. xv-sviii.
10 Ibid., pp. xviii-xix.
The significant characteristics of the artistic semblance of life are the measure of the phenomena which constitutes the domains of the biological and social sciences.

Langer does not claim that her theory of mentality can be proven either correct or incorrect at this time; in fact, she is primarily concerned with its validity in the sense of serviceability. Her interest is in stimulating a reconception of our present conceptual framework for the study of vital processes.\(^1\)

Current theories of human mentality are sterile and, consequently, much research in the biological and social sciences is inconsequential, Langer believes.\(^2\) One misconception is the belief that feeling is an entity distinct from physical entities. Another problem plaguing the life sciences is their failure to make a distinction between research into organic processes and research about inorganic matter. The procedures of classical physics, which have served as a model, may not be suitable because

\(^1\)Langer, *Mind*, pp. xxii-xxiii; *Sketches*, pp. 28-29.

the image of reality, which in physics is derived from inorganic nature, is implicit in the model.\textsuperscript{13} Langer believes it is not the time to talk in terms of concrete elements, but to make abstractions. A sounder substructure is required, one based on philosophical thought which begins with new ideas and expectations without concern for statistics or formalized language. This substructure proposed by Langer is the concept of life projected by the vital image in art. She maintains that the life sciences have skipped the stage of intellectual gestation, which should be one of "philosophical imagination and adventure."\textsuperscript{14} Because philosophical thought generates the reconception of facts through new abstract principles, the sciences must begin from philosophical sources.\textsuperscript{15} What is needed is a new image of vital process, i.e., a new image of life.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13}Langer, \textit{Mind}, pp. xviii, 33; \textit{Sketches}, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{14}Langer, \textit{Mind}, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{15}Langer, \textit{Sketches}, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{16}Langer, \textit{Mind}, p. 369.
The first requirement for an understanding of life is to discover the differences between inorganic and organic nature. This distinction is difficult, not only because all categories tend to have imperfect boundaries, but also because of the tendency to conceive of vitality as being incarnate in both organic and inorganic matter. This treatment of things and events in nature as vital phenomena is a result of their symbolically rich appearance; they are not instances of life, but symbolic images of it.

The value of images should not be negated, however, for... they, and they only, originally made us aware of the wholeness and over-all form of entities, acts and facts in the world; and little though we may know it, only an image can hold us to a conception of a total phenomenon, against which we can measure the adequacy of the scientific terms wherein we describe it. We are actually suffering today from the lack of suitable images of the phenomena that are currently

17 Ibid., p. xviii.
18 Ibid., pp. xviii, 259.
receiving our most ardent scientific attention, the objects of biology and psychology. This lack is blocking the progress of scientifically oriented thought toward systematic insight into the nature of life and especially of mind: the lack of any image of the phenomenon under investigation, whereby to measure the theories made on the basis of physical models. In borrowing models from physics, one is apt to borrow its image of reality as well; and that image derives from inorganic nature. It is becoming more and more obvious that it does not fit the forms of life very far above the level of their organic chemistry.\textsuperscript{19}

Langer believes that before psychologists had a clear image of mentality they became committed to a model of the system of physical laws. The material was thereby cut down to what could be represented by the model. This resulted in the elimination of what Langer considers to be the very subject matter of psychology: the psychical phase of vital functions. Only its overt record, behavior, was left.\textsuperscript{20}

The distinction between an image and a model should be clear for an understanding of Langer's theory. She maintains:

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. xviii.

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 59.
An image is different from a model, and serves a different purpose. Briefly stated, an image shows how something appears; a model shows how something works.\(^{21}\)

Although an image may be constructed on different principles than the phenomenal character of its object, the image confronts us like the phenomenon itself. Because the image abstracts the semblance of the phenomenon by organizing and enhancing the impression, what is there becomes available for direct perception. An image does not exemplify the same principles of construction as the phenomenon it symbolizes but reveals what the object looks or seems like. The image is a rendering of the appearance of its object, but is not necessarily visual. Langer states that imagination is made up of images; a continual play of impressions composes most of a human's awareness of the world, therefore what she terms "our primitive intellectual equipment" is largely images. She states:

\[\ldots\text{We apprehend everything which comes to us as impact from the world (objective experiences) by imposing some image on it that stresses its}\]

\(^{21}\text{Ibid., p. xix.}\)
salient features and shapes it for recognition and memory.22

The image serves to hold the reality itself for memory; it is the measure of adequacy for the scope of intellectual constructions.23

Although images which are constantly and spontaneously produced are often fragmentary, they have great intellectual value. This is because:

... they usually, and perhaps always, fit more than one actual experience. We not only produce them by every act of memory (and perhaps by other acts), but we impose them on new perceptions, constantly, without intent or effort, as the normal process of formulating our sensory impressions and apprehended facts. Consequently we tend to see the form of one thing in another, which is the most essential factor in making the maelstrom of events and things pressing upon our sense organs a single world. ... In this way all the things which one image roughly fits are gathered together as instances of one conception. The image is not, I think, made of an accumulation of specific impressions, as many specific photographs, superimposed, constitute a composite photograph. ... I do not know what the cerebral function of fitting images to sensations is; but it is, or at least enters into, the act of interpretation,

22 Ibid., p. 59.
23 Ibid., pp. xix, 59, 67-69.
and is probably intimately related to the process of concept formation. . . .24

Humans interpret new phenomenon by imposing on it the image that fits it better than any other image, but the interpretation may be changed at a later time. Just as one image may be exemplified by many phenomena (or objects, or acts, or events), the phenomena may exemplify a number of images.25 The term "image" should be understood as a formulation, an envisagement, a gestalt: the beginning of conception and knowledge.

Models belong to the level of discursive thought and deliberate analogical reasoning; they are coherent, not fragmentary. A principle of construction, function, or operation, not the semblance of the phenomenal character, is what a model illustrates. Although the model need not resemble the phenomenon in appearance, it is a symbolic projection of its object which must, to a stipulated limit of accuracy, be true to the original object in every connection and proportion. The factors of the model

24 Ibid., p. 60.
25 Ibid., p. 61.
must match respective factors of the object. A single systematic abstraction which can be expressed in mathematical terms is usually the basis of a model. Since a model functions in such a way as to provide scientific concepts, which an image cannot do, it is a model, not an image, with which one works in science. But the initial stages of any research require that the material be negotiated by images which organize and hold the reality of the phenomenon under investigation. Resorting to images which reveal the original data becomes unnecessary and may even limit logical conception with the full development of systematic thought. When an image has served its purpose it must be discarded but at the incipient stage of model building the image is a necessity. 26

The image of feeling projected by a work of art serves to hold the illusive idea of reality itself; it is a permanent image of a form of feeling. She maintains that biological thought becomes more comprehensive and bolder with better knowledge of the morphology of vital processes;

however, this is not a simple process. She states:

But to discover the phenomena revealed in music, painting or any other order of art, one has to know what problems the maker of the symbol encounters and how he meets them. Only then can one see new forms of vital experience emerge. The techniques of art are different from those of science, and studio thought is not that of the laboratory. This means, of course, that to make art illuminate a field of science one has to be intellectually at home in both realms. Art is just as comprehensible as science, but in its own terms; that is, one can always ask, and usually can determine, how the artistic semblance of life is made and in what it consists.27

She further cautions:

The direct perception of artistic import, however, is not systematic and cannot be manipulated according to any rule. It is intuitive, immediate, and its deliverances are ineffable. That is why no amount of artistic perceptiveness ever leads to scientific knowledge of the reality expressed, which is the life of feeling. What it gives us is always and only an image. But without this or some other image we cannot ask questions about the empirical data with which knowledge begins, because the image enters into the objectification of the data themselves. Unless they are objectively seen and intimately known we cannot formulate scientific questions and hypotheses about them.28

27 Ibid., pp. xix-xx.

28 Ibid., p. 65.
Art is the objectification of feeling, but its import comes through a type of perception that does not lend itself to discursive analysis. Langer recommends an indirect approach to understanding the semblance of life projected by art: the analysis of the created elements in the work. In creating a work of art the artist must solve many technical problems to attain and sustain expressiveness; it is the analysis of the problems encountered, and decisions made in the process of solving them, that can be studied and analyzed. 29

However, the artist cannot be analytical about his acts; he is not thinking about projecting the semblance of vital processes, he thinks about the work itself. The idea to be expressed is usually not thought of in verbal terms, in fact, to attempt to force the idea into discursive form will probably kill it. He will know when, and if, he is successful. 30

29 Ibid., pp. 65-69.
30 Ibid., p. 69.
Feeling

The study of mind requires an image of feeling, Langer maintains, for feeling is the basis of human mentality. She defines feeling "in the broad sense of whatever is felt in any way, as sensory stimulus or inward tension, pain, emotion or intent," and states that it "is the mark of mentality." Feeling should be understood as the basis of

... complexities of perception and conception, emotional sensitivity and selectivity, logical and semantic intuition, abstraction, communication, and cognition. ... All those developments from simpler forms of feeling which become so specialized that they are no longer called by that word compose the mentality of man, the mind, the material of psychology.

Most people are concerned with overt behavior, not with the nature of feeling. Langer says:

The real patterns of feeling--how a small fright, or "startle," terminates, how the tensions of boredom increase or give way to self-entertainment, how daydreaming weaves in and out of realistic thought, how the feeling of a place, a time of day, an ordinary situation is built up--these felt

31 Ibid., p. 4.
32 Ibid., p. 55.
events, which compose the fabric of mental life, usually pass unobserved, unrecorded and therefore essentially unknown to the average person.\textsuperscript{33}

However, she adds:

But for the study of mind such conceptual knowledge (of feeling) is needed, because the dynamic forms of felt experience are a major exhibit of the rhythms and integrations, and ultimately the sources, of mental activity. Feeling is the constant, systematic, but private display of what is going on in our own system, the index of much that goes on below the limen of sentience, and ultimately of the whole organic process, or life, that feeds and uses the sensory and cerebral system.\textsuperscript{34}

These most personal and immediate experiences in life remain opaque because, "they are known without symbolic mediation, and therefore without conceptual form."\textsuperscript{35} No image of felt life, of feeling, is possible without symbolic conception.

The artist projects the forms of feeling into symbolic form; works of art express the nature of feelings conceived. Langer says:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 57.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 58.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 57.
\end{itemize}
Feeling is like the dynamic and rhythmic structures created by artists; artistic form is always the form of felt life, whether of impression, emotion, overt action, thought, dream or even obscure organic process rising to a high level and going into psychical phase, perhaps acutely, perhaps barely and vaguely. It is the way acts and impacts feel that makes them important in art; their material identity may be suggested in quite sketchy or distorted fashion, where it is wanted at all, for it serves artistic purposes only in so far as it helps the expressive function.  

She maintains that a work of art.

. . . presents the semblance of feeling so directly to logical intuition that we seem to perceive feeling itself in the work; but of course the work does not contain feeling, any more than a proposition about the mortality of Socrates contains a philosopher. It only presents a form which is subtly but entirely congruent with forms of mentality and vital experience, which we recognize intuitively as something very much like feeling; and this abstract likeness to feeling teaches one, without effort or explicit awareness, what feeling is like.  

This image of feeling not only enables the human to better understand his own life of feeling, but also to understand that the basic forms of feeling are shared by all men.

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36 Ibid., p. 64.

37 Ibid., p. 67.
Through the symbolism of art the sentience and being of all men can be known.\textsuperscript{38}

If no image of feeling is possible without symbolic conception, how does the artist transform that elusive quality of feeling into perceptible form? Langer says:

The answer is, I think, that he has seen it; it is this apparition that he tries to re-create. His idea is initiated by experiences, or perhaps even one isolated experience, of actuality colored by his own way of feeling (rather than by some emotion of the moment), and the image he creates is of the way things appear to his imagination under the influence of his highly developed emotional life.\textsuperscript{39}

The artist's imagination furnishes the material for his artistic expression, which is the only adequate symbolic projection of insights into feeling.\textsuperscript{40}

Langer rejects the idea of a fundamental dualism of physical and mental entities: the mutual exclusiveness of mind and body.\textsuperscript{41} Feeling is a phase of vital process

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38}Ibid., p. 64.
\item \textsuperscript{39}Ibid., p. 118.
\item \textsuperscript{40}Ibid., pp. 103-104.
\item \textsuperscript{41}Langer, Mind, pp. 3-32; Sketches, pp. 11-29.
\end{itemize}
itself, not an entity. To illustrate this concept she says:

When iron is heated to a critical degree it becomes red; yet its redness is not a new entity which must have gone somewhere else when it is no longer in the iron. It was a phase of the iron itself, at high temperature. Heat is not a thing, but an agitation, measurable in degrees, not amounts, and when the iron is no longer hot there will be comparable degrees of heat, or of some equivalent process or sum total of processes, outside the iron. But the redness simply disappears; it was a phase of the heated iron.42

This is an example of how "constituents of one kind, brought together in a special combination, may seem to produce a new ingredient which is, however, a phase of their own occurrence."43 She adds:

As soon as feeling is regarded as a phase of a physiological process instead of a product (perhaps a by-product) of it, a new entity metaphysically different from it, the paradox of the physical and psychical disappears; for the thesis I hope to substantiate here is that the entire psychological field--including human conception, responsible action, rationality, knowledge--is a vast and branching development of feeling. This does not mean that all reasoning is "really" rationalization, all

42 Langer, Mind., p. 21.

43 Ibid.
judgment "really" emotional, all moral intentions specious, and so on. There is not some primitive form of feeling which is its "real" form, any more than a bird is "really" an egg or water is "really" a vapor. Emotion as we know it is not even a primitive form of feeling; it is not a rudimentary nervous process, such as fairly simple organisms might exhibit, in a psychical phase. Human emotion is phylogenetically a high development from simpler processes, and reason is another one; human mentality is an unsurveyably complex dynamism of their interactions with each other, and with several further specialized forms of cerebral activity, implicating the whole organic substructure.44

Langer maintains that the concept of feeling, as an intra-organic phase of the vital process itself, provides the basis for analysis and research not possible within a dichotomous framework. Commenting on the conversion of nerve impulses into thought she states:

If, instead of "converted into thought," we say, "felt as thought," the investigation of mental functions is shifted from the realm of mysterious transubstantiation to that of physiological processes, where we face problems of complexity and degree, which are difficult, but not unassailable in principle.45

This orientation is toward the concept of a threshold in

44 Ibid., p. 23.

45 Langer, Sketches, p. 18.
the rise and abatement of cerebral processes; when these processes reach a certain level of intensity they go into psychical phase, i.e., they are felt. This generates ideas about subjective and objective aspects of feeling.

Langer divides feeling into two general categories. She differentiates between those nervous processes originating at the periphery of the central nervous system which are normally felt as impact and those nervous processes which originate within the central nervous system, especially within the brain, which are felt as autogenic action. 46 This distinction enables her to define the terms "subjective" and "objective"; whatever is felt as impact is experienced as objective and whatever is felt as action is experienced as subjective. 47 Some implications of this concept are drawn when Langer comments:

The first consequence of these definitions is that one does not find a class of objective things . . . and another class of subjective things. . . . Any felt process may be subjective at one time and objective at another, and

46 Langer, Sketches, pp. 21-22; Mind, p. 23.
47 Langer, Sketches, p. 20.
contain shifting elements of both kinds all the time. "Subjective" and "objective" denote functional properties. Since organic functions have dynamic forms, which they build up and melt down again constantly, their identifiable properties are transient. The properties in question are two possible modes of feeling, i.e., of psychical phases of activity. 48

Feeling is a culmination of vital processes rising from unfelt physiological processes to intense acts, which we perceive directly in their psychical phases as impacts or actions. 49

Langer notes that man's nervous sensitivity is so high that "to respond with a muscular act to every stimulus of which he takes cognizance would keep him in a perpetual St. Vitus's dance." 50 Therefore, Langer concludes that . . . many acts, started in his brain by his constant discriminative perception of sights, sounds, proprioceptive reports, and so on, have no overt phase at all, but are finished in the brain; their conclusion is the formation of an image, the activation of other cell assemblies that run through their own repertoire of word formation or what not, perhaps the whole

48 Langer, Mind, p. 31.
49 Ibid., p. 199.
50 Langer, Sketches, p. 27.
elaborate process that constitutes an act of ideation.51

This heightened and largely self-perpetuating activity results in a continuous feeling of inward action with

. . . a texture of subjectivity, on which such objectively felt events as perceptions impinge, and from which our more sustained and complete subjective acts, such as concerted thought or distinct emotions, stand out as articulated forms.52

Langer theorizes that the completion of peripherally or centrally started acts within the brain may have caused an intolerable crowding of impulses which resulted in a spontaneous symbolic identification of "percepts, recollections, and free images or figments with each other which grew into a characteristic and pervasive tendency."53 The extraordinary development of man's central nervous system, characterized by feeling, evolved into the mind as a humanoid speciality, a phenomenon requiring symbolic expression.

51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., p. 28.
Abstraction

All symbols have the ability to formulate human experience. Kant recognized the importance of the mind in relationship to the perceptible, but Langer credits Cassirer with the recognition of the extent to which symbolism formulates things and events around man into a "world."\(^5^4\) This formulative function of symbols bestows conceptual identity; it gives rise to the perception of form: abstraction.

Abstract thought has arisen from a spontaneous intellectual practice which was unique to the humanoid.\(^5^5\) Langer does not view the process of abstraction as a difficult, unnatural process. It is

\[\ldots\] just as the recognition of relations, of instances, and meaning is. It is one of the basic acts of logical intuition, and its primitive and typical occurrence is in the process of symbolization.\(^5^6\)

Abstraction is basic to the recognition of congruence,

\(^{5^4}\)Ibid., p. 59.

\(^{5^5}\)Langer, Problems, p. 167.

\(^{5^6}\)Langer, Sketches, p. 60.
relevance, similarity, and distinctness; the recognition of these relational factors is what Langer terms "logical intuition." 57

The basic intellectual function of man is intuition, Langer maintains. She means by intuition essentially what Locke called "natural light." Intuition is the perception of (1) relations, (2) forms or abstractive seeing, (3) instances or exemplifications of forms, and (4) significance or meaning. The development of intuition resulted in man's capacity for planned, goal-directed behavior; no longer was the human species dependent on direct stimulus or instinct. 58

The abstractive process is inherent in perception which results in a process of simplifying, of eliminating extraneous stimuli, thereby leaving only those necessary to maintain the proper load on the nervous system. In contrast, the emotive act is an act of emphasizing, and

57 Langer, Problems, p. 166.
58 Langer, Mind, pp. 128-29; Problems, pp. 59-74.
unlike the abstractive act, is an act that is felt.  

Langer comments on the abstractive process inherent in perception when she says:

Our merest sense-experience is a process of formulation. . . . An object is not a datum, but a form construed by the sensitive and intelligent organ (eye, ear), a form which is at once an experience individual thing and a symbol for the concept of it, for this sort of thing. . . .

A tendency to organize the sensory field into groups and patterns of sense-data, to perceive forms rather than a flux of light impressions, seems to be inherent in our receptor apparatus just as much as in the higher nervous centers with which we do arithmatic and logic. But this unconscious appreciation of forms is the primitive root of all abstraction, which in turn is the keynote of all rationality; so it appears that the conditions of rationality lie deep in our pure animal experience—in our power of perceiving, in the elementary functions of our eyes and ears and fingers. . . . I believe our ingrained habit of hypostatizing impressions, of seeing things and not sense-data, rests on the fact that we promptly and unconsciously abstract a form from each sensory experience, and use this form to conceive the experience as a whole, as a "thing."

. . . Unless the Gestalt-psychologists are right in their belief that Gestaltung is of the very nature of perception, I do not know how the hiatus between perception and conception, sense-organ and mind-organ, chaotic stimulus and logical response, is ever to be closed and

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59 Langer, Sketches, p. 71.
welded. A mind that works primarily with meanings must have organs that supply it primarily with forms.  

Langer cites evidence which supports the hypotheses that the sensory organs and cortical structures automatically abstract the formal features from experience in both human and non-human creatures. This sort of abstraction is a mechanical, selective response on the organic level, but not on a conceptual level. These processes explain the element of pattern recognition which is necessary, but not sufficient for the development of abstract concepts. Langer maintains that the additional element required for conceptionalization is emotional.

Human action has conceptual form or, in other words, symbolic rendering because of a symbolic envisagement of the world. The action is viewed as a dynamic element wherein imagination anticipates potential change: man can choose; to act or not act is his option. Langer views this as the most momentous effect of the ability to

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60 Langer, Key, pp. 83-84.
61 Langer, Sketches, pp. 65-68.
use symbols, i.e., of intuition. However, the development of intuition has also enabled the human to vastly expand his emotional capacity. She says:

Sheer conceptions evoke emotions, emotions focus and intensify attention, attention eventuates in symbolic expression that formulates more conceptions and sustains or reshapes emotion; so the conceptual frame in which we feel our own activity and the impingements of outward events grows larger as long as the emotive and intellectual processes keep pace with each other in a dialectical advance, rhythmically self-sustaining like all major organic functions.62

Somewhere in the evolutionary process of the humanoid there arose an instinctive mental activity that has evolved into contemporary man's highly developed ability of abstract thought. This mental activity is the process of symbol-making. There can be no understanding without symbolization, and no symbolization without abstraction.63 Man has evolved into a species with such a highly developed emotional capacity that his intuition has reached the level of the abstraction of pure conceptual form: the level enabling and necessitating symbolic transformation.

63 Langer, Mind, pp. 129-30; Problems, p. 93.
Symbolic Transformation

Langer proposes a reconsideration of the inventory of human needs: the conception of the mind in service to characteristically human needs. Man does not act like non-human creatures because the human mind is trying to do something only the human needs to do. Non-human creatures do not act humanly because they do not need to.

Human mentality is unique not only in its highly developed sensory and emotional capacity but also in the occurrence of

... the constant stream of cerebral activities which are essentially subjective, having no perceptible overt phases, but terminate as images, ideas, thoughts, recollections, often elaborate figments, entirely within the organism in which they take rise. These phenomena have a pattern of their own, unlike any other large and well-known order of events; they are elusive, occur without visible source and usually end without visible trace; placeless, yet highly individual, sometimes systematically continuous, sometimes repetitious, at other times mixed and rapid in their passage, and usually tinged, if not saturated, with emotional feeling. The most persistent impression we have of such events is that they "are and are not really there." Yet they are generally estimated as the highest.

64 Langer, Key, p. 45.
values in life, lifting human existence out of the animal world into a different realm altogether.65

She also states:

The fact that the human brain is constantly carrying on a process of symbolic transformation of the experimental data that come to it causes it to be a veritable fountain of more or less spontaneous ideas. As all registered experience tends to terminate in action, it is only natural that a typically human function should require a typically human form of overt activity; and that is just what we find in the sheer expression of ideas. This is the activity of which beasts appear to have no need. And it accounts for just those traits in man which he does not hold in common with the other animals—ritual, art, laughter, weeping, speech, superstition, and scientific genius.66

The human mind is producing more than is commonly called "thought." The essential act of mind is symbolization: the act essential to thought, and prior to it. Experiences are actively translated into symbols; the mind is in a constant process of ideation.67 This cerebral activity is felt as subjective and emotional, and therefore is felt to have significance.

65 Langer, Mind, p. 229.
66 Langer, Key, p. 47.
67 Ibid., pp. 45-46.
The formulative function of the abstractive process inherent in perception, whereby the form is experienced as both an individual thing and a concept for that thing, combined with the feeling of the significance of the form, leads to the conception of meaning. The assignment of meaning to objects, events, forms, and other phenomena, and to the symbols of their conception, is the basis of human mentality.

This conception of meaning could occur only in a species which assigned significance to objects, forms, and sounds. The sense of significance, a "vague emotional arrest of the mind by something that is neither dangerous nor useful in reality" is probably the earliest manifestation of the symbol-making tendency. Langer cites research by Yerkes, Kellogg, Köhler, and Learned which indicates something very much like an aesthetic sense of import is occasionally displayed by the anthropoid apes. She states:

- **68** Ibid., p. 100.
- **69** Ibid., pp. 100-101.
The reaction on the part of the apes, limited as it was to about one subject in every three or four, has just that characteristic of being common, yet individual, that belongs to aesthetic experiences. Some [chimpanzees] are sensitive to the sight [of toadstools], and the rest are not; to some of them it seems to convey something—to others it is just a thing, a toadstool or what you will.70

This example of the dawning of symbolic behavior by some apes, and other similar examples cited by Langer, suggest that some primates may, in Langer's words, "be near the threshold of fantasy, the preparation for thought."71 Symbolic representation, not communication, lies at the origin of language.72

The basis of animal intelligence rests on the interpretation of signals or signs, not symbols.73 (Langer employs the term "sign" rather than "signal" in Philosophy in a New Key; however, in the preface to the second edition, pages v-vi, she notes that in subsequent writings

70 Ibid., p. 101.
71 Langer, Sketches, p. 74.
72 Langer, Key, pp. 99-104.
73 Ibid., p. 59.
the term "signal" is used to mean what was originally termed "sign": explicitly recognized signals--red lights, bells, etc.--and the phenomena regarded as signals to our seness--objects which orient us to our environment, sensations, etc. This leaves the word "sign" to denote any vehicle of meaning, signal or symbol. When desirable for clarity, this study will employ the term "signal" although the source of the idea may read "sign.") Interpretation of signals is the simplest form of knowledge; it is the kind of knowledge we share with non-human creatures and is acquired entirely by experience. A signal indicates the existence of a thing, event, or condition; it is a symptom of a state of affairs. There is a logical relationship between a signal and its object; they are associated as a pair. A signal is proxy for its object.

This is not the case with symbols, however, As Langer says, the latter

. . . are not proxy for their objects, but are vehicles for the conception of objects. To

74 Ibid., p. 60.
75 Ibid., p. 58.
conceive a thing or a situation is not the same thing as to "react toward it" overtly, or to be aware of its presence. In talking about things we have conceptions of them, not the things themselves; and it is the conceptions, not the things, that symbols directly "mean." Behavior toward conceptions is what words normally evoke; this is the typical process of thinking.

Conceptions depend on symbolization, which, in turn, rests on the recognition of congruent forms. This makes abstraction necessary in any type symbolization, because abstraction, or the recognition of pure form, is necessary to the understanding of relationships.

Langer proposes a definition of "symbol" based on the formulative function it possesses which results in some sort of conception always being abstracted from any symbolized experience. She defines symbol as "any device whereby we make an abstraction . . . and all abstraction involves symbolization." She further states:

... a device for presenting an idea is what we call a symbol . . . symbolic expression . . .

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76 Ibid., p. 61
77 Langer, Problems, p. 167.
78 Langer, Sketches, p. 60.
extends our knowledge beyond our actual experience.  

In referring to the distinctive function of the human mind as the ability to use symbols for ideas, Langer says:

By "symbol" I mean all kinds of signs that can be used and understood whether the things they refer to are there or not. . . . They [symbols] are all different from signs that animals use. Animals interpret signs, too, but only as pointers to actual things and events, cues to action or expectation, threats and promises, landmarks and earmarks in the world. Human beings use signs, too, but above all they use symbols—especially words—to think and talk about things that are neither present nor expected. The words convey ideas, that may or may not have counterparts in actuality. The power of thinking about things expresses itself in language, imagination, and speculation—the chief products of human mentality that animals do not share. . . . This difference of mentality between man and animal seems to me to make a cleft between them almost as great as the division between animals and plants.

Man is separated from the other animals by this power of symbolic transformation: the power to recognize, to give meaning to, and therefore to symbolize, the form embodied in sense-datum. This form is recognized through the

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79 Ibid., p. 78.

80 Ibid., pp. 98-99.
unconscious, spontaneous, and constant abstractive process: the process of recognizing the concept in any configuration and forming a conception accordingly. The highly developed emotional capacity of the human imparts a sense of significance to the form and the perception of meaning is felt: the form becomes expressive of "something."

Physiognomic Perception

In babyhood the human has a lalling stage characterized by constant vocalization; it is during this stage that the impulse to speak must be exploited for language to be acquired. Langer maintains that

... there is an optimum period of learning, and this is a stage of mental development in which several impulses and interests happen to coincide: the lalling instinct, the imitative impulse, a natural interest in distinctive sounds, and a great sensitivity to "expressiveness" of any sort. Where any one of these characteristics is absent or is not synchronized with the others, the "linguistic intuition" miscarries.

The last requirement here mentioned is really the "higher function" of the mind that shines forth so conspicuously in human intercourse; yet it is the one that linguists and psychologists either overlook entirely, or certainly do not credit to early childhood. The peculiar

\[81\] Langer, Key, p. 70.
impressionability of childhood is usually treated under the rubric of attention to exact colors, sounds, etc.; but what is much more important, I think, is the child's tendency to read a vague sort of meaning into pure visual and auditory forms. . . .

. . . Fear lives in pure Gestalten, warning or friendliness emanates from objects that have no faces and no voices, no heads or hands; for they all have "expression" for the child, though not—as adults often suppose—anthropomorphic form. 82

This stage of oversensitivity to expressive form is termed the "physiognomic" stage of perception, "in which over-all qualities of fearfulness, friendliness, serenity, etc., seem to characterize objects more naturally than their physical constitution." 83

Physiognomic perception is dynamic with little differentiation between feeling, perceiving, and imagining; it is the stage of intrinsic expressiveness. Langer reports that according to Kroh:

. . . the spontaneous interpretation of objects as expressive forms belongs to an early level of experience, the time of learning to distinguish and organize the data of the outer world,

82 Ibid., pp. 110-11.
83 Langer, Mind, pp. 132-33.
when autogenic activities still mingle freely with peripherally engendered ones, so that the mental functions are not yet felt sharply as subjective or objective. Furthermore, they are transformed into a presentational datum which "mirrors" their dynamism and appears as its expression.84

Langer maintains that Kroh is referring to the concept of symbolic transformation. She further states:

••• The "transformation" operating spontaneously and involuntarily at a mental level of sheer perception is precisely the projection of feeling--vital, sensory and emotive--as the most obvious quality of a perceived gestalt. To take up this sort of emotive import is a natural propensity of percepts in childhood experience. It tends, also, to persist in some people's mature mentality; and there it becomes the source of artistic vision, the quality to be abstracted by the creation of forms so articulated as to emphasize their import and suppress any practical appeal they would normally make. This is the just ground for the frequent assertion that an artist must see and feel as a child; and it is, I think, the only ground for that widely misused statement. For he must not "feel as a child," and project childish feeling, but only translate feeling into perceivable quality, by intense concentration on the potentialities of forms to symbolize it even for people who no longer see actual things "physiognomically."85

84 Ibid., p. 177.

85 Ibid., pp. 177-78.
She believes that from this "primitive symbolic relation in which symbol and sense are seen as an identity" stem all the higher forms of symbolism, by virtue of which "man's mentality, and his alone, is a mind." Langer says:

... it is just this crazy play of associations, this uncritical fusion of impressions, that exercises the power of symbolic transformation. To project feelings into outer objects is the first way of symbolizing, and thus of conceiving those feelings. This activity belongs to about the earliest period of childhood that memory can recover. The conception of "self," which is usually thought to mark the beginning of actual memory, may possibly depend on this process of symbolically epitomizing our feelings.

From this dawn of memory, where we needs must begin any firsthand record, to adolescence, there is a constant decrease in such dreamlike experience, a growing shift from subjective, symbolic, to practical associations.

The physiognomic nature of human perception results in experiential data embodying expressive qualities of great significance. This is the emotional element which, in combination with the abstractive process inherent in perception, makes conceptualization possible.

86 Langer, Sketches, p. 28.
87 Langer, Key, p. 111.
Discursive and Non-discursive Symbolism

Conceptual form is dependent on symbolic mediation; however, there is more than one type of symbolism. Langer distinguishes between the discursive and non-discursive forms of symbolic transformation; each type has both advantages and limitations, and, consequently, different uses. However, both types of symbolism are rational; it is only their forms that are different.  

Langer states:

Discursive thought gives rise to science, and a theory of knowledge restricted to its products culminates in the critique of science; but the recognition of non-discursive thought makes it just as possible to construct a theory of understanding that naturally culminates in a critique of art. The parent stock of both conceptual types, of verbal and non-verbal formulation, is the basic human act of symbolic transformation. The root is the same, only the flower is different.

Langer theorizes that rationality arose as an elaboration of feeling; intellect is a specialized, intensive feeling about intuitions. Reason is not intrinsically different from other mental functions; reasoning is the process of

88 Langer, Sketches, p. 81.
89 Langer, Key, p. 127.
building up insights into complex relational patterns.

The primitive vital processes that have evolved into human mentality are the source of all symbolic forms.\textsuperscript{90}

All symbolism is a vehicle of meaning. She says:

Wherever a symbol operates, there is a meaning; and conversely, different classes of experience—say, reason, intuition, appreciation—correspond to different types of symbolic mediation. No symbol is exempt from the office of logical formulation, of conceptualizing what it conveys; however simple its import, or however great, this import is a meaning, and therefore an element for understanding.\textsuperscript{91}

Reason encompasses much that has been considered irrational, i.e., emotions, intuitions. That type of knowledge considered "intuitive" is perfectly rational; it is not conceived through discursive thought but is a product of non-discursive symbolism, "which the mind reads in a flash, and preserves in a disposition or an attitude."\textsuperscript{92} Langer maintains that if the mind is conceived as an organ of understanding it follows that the source of any knowledge

\textsuperscript{90}\textsuperscript{Langer, Mind, pp. 146-49; Problems, p. 124.}

\textsuperscript{91}\textsuperscript{Langer, Key, p. 90.}

\textsuperscript{92}\textsuperscript{Ibid., p. 91.}
is necessarily rational; the mind is the expression of reason.

She states:

Rationality is the essence of mind, and symbolic transformation its elementary process. It is a fundamental error, therefore, to recognize it only in the phenomenon of systematic, explicit reasoning. That is a mature and precarious product.

Rationality, however, is embodied in every mental act, not only when the mind is "at its fullest stretch and compass." It permeates the peripheral activities of the human nervous system, just as truly as the cortical functions. All forms of symbolic transformation are in essence cognitive.

Non-discursive symbolism conceptualizes the flux of sheer impressions and sensations into a world of order, a world of concrete things, not chaotic colors and noises. Discursive symbolism cannot function in this manner, nor can it express the nature of feeling. Language, which is the paradigm of symbolism so that every discursive form is called a language, cannot express the insight into the actual flow of feelings, the nature of sentience, the image

93 Ibid.
of vital experience, the process of rationality itself.

Langer explains:

Such knowledge is not expressible in ordinary discourse. The reason for this ineffability is not that the ideas to be expressed are too high, too spiritual, or too anything-else, but that the forms of feeling and the forms of discursive expression are logically incommensurate, so that any exact concepts of feeling and emotion cannot be projected into the logical form of literal language. 94

But feelings do have definite forms which become progressively articulated and their projection is through non-discursive symbolism. 95

Langer enumerates the salient characteristics of language, or discursive form:

1. Every language has a vocabulary and a syntax. Following the rules of the syntax it is possible to construct composite symbols by combining the elements or single units.

2. Because these single units are of a conventional nature, with fixed meanings, it is

94 Langer, Problems, p. 91.

95 Langer, Key, pp. 75-94; Mind, p. 102; Problems, p. 91.
possible to define them, i.e., to construct a dictionary.

3. Because most units have an alternate unit, or a composite of units, which is its rough equivalent, most discursive systems may be translated into another discursive system.  

The relations between discursive structures and their meanings is one of logical analogy. The enormous power of language rests on the singleness of the discursive projection whereby the logical form is recognized in different exemplifications by reason of their conventional and public nature. 

The very characteristics that enable discursive form to be so powerful also result in setting limitations on its use. The forms of awareness that are not essentially recognition of facts, the life of feeling which constitutes an important part of reality, cannot be expressed in discursive form. The reason why language

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96 Langer, Key, p. 87.

97 Langer, Key, p. 77; Mind, pp. 75, 102.
cannot render the inner, subjective life is not because feeling is irrational; Langer maintains:

... on the contrary, they seem irrational because language does not help to make them conceivable, and most people cannot conceive anything without the logical scaffolding of words ... the form of language does not reflect the natural form of feeling, so that we cannot shape our extensive concepts of feeling with the help of ordinary, discursive language.98

The forms of feeling, the life of sentience, can only be projected in non-discursive form: in artistic expression.

The symbolic form of artistic expression is characterized by Langer in the following way:

1. The elements and relationships are of such a complex nature, and consequently its logical structure is so complex, that there cannot be any general rules for their manipulation. The elements cannot be broken into units, their meaning is understood only as a whole, through their relations within a simultaneously, integrally presented total structure.

98Langer, Sketches, p. 79.
2. Because the units cannot be separated and their meaning defined they are not conventional, nor is the whole conventional.

3. Because there can be no vocabulary or dictionary of meanings for artistic elements, there can be no translation of artistic form. Not only can artistic form not be translated into discursive form, but one order of art cannot be translated into another, i.e., sculpture cannot be translated into music nor poetry into the dance.\textsuperscript{99}

The logical structure of artistic expression is so complex that it defies the formulation of rules, but in its very complexity lies its great potentiality for the expression of the life of feeling.\textsuperscript{100} Works of art manifest the same logical form as characterize felt experience.

Human feeling has

... an intricate dynamic pattern, possible combinations and new emergent phenomena. It is

\textsuperscript{99}Langer, \textit{Key}, pp. 88-89.

\textsuperscript{100}Langer, \textit{Mind}, p. 104.
a pattern of organically interdependent and interdetermined tensions and resolutions, a pattern of almost infinitely complex activation and cadence...

It is, I think, this dynamic pattern that finds its formal expression in the arts.101

Artistic form formulates our ideas of subjective experience so that they can be grasped and contemplated; it is the means by which an experience, whether seen, heard, felt, or imagined, may be given perceptual unity, that is, the configuration, or Gestalt, of an experience. The arts objectify subjective experience by symbolizing the intricate, interdependent, dynamic pattern of vital processes which are indivisible and inviolable, as are the elements in art.102

Discursive and Artistic Abstraction

In both discursive and artistic form abstraction is the recognition of pure form, i.e., the relational structure, apart from the specific thing in which it is exemplified. The process of abstraction differs in the

101 Langer, Sketches, p. 80.
102 Langer, Problems, p. 165.
two modes of symbolic transformation.

Discursive symbolism, which includes language, science, mathematics, and logic, employs the term "form" to mean the structure expressed in terms and relationships among terms that can be named. No matter how complex the combinations may be they can be expressed in verbal or algorithmic propositions.\(^{103}\)

The artistic conception of "form" is closer to the original meaning of the word, which was "visible and tangible shape." Artistic form is not systematic unity but perceptual unity. It is the configuration, the Gestalt, of experience.\(^{104}\)

All discourse is a device for connecting the relational factors in experience in order to build up a total conception. Langer says:

Discursive thinking, once started, runs on its own loosely syllogistic pattern from one proposition to another, actually or only potentially worded, but with prepared forms of conception always at hand. Where it seizes on any material--

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\(^{103}\)Ibid., p. 164.

\(^{104}\)Ibid., p. 165.
sensations, memories, fantasies, reflections—it puts its seal of fixity, categorical divisions, oppositions, exclusions, on every emerging idea, and automatically makes entities out of any elements that will take the stamp of denotative words. By virtue of its habitual exercise, it has an easy victory over any other process of conception and expression that competes with it; and similarly its mode of abstraction overrides the subtler abstractive techniques of art.\textsuperscript{105}

The abstraction of concepts by the process of progressive generalization systematically pursued is the procedure of discursive thought. This process, which is employed in language, physics, mathematics, and logic, is termed "generalizing abstraction" by Langer.\textsuperscript{106}

Artistic abstraction progresses differently. Langer states:

It begins with the perception of a total Gestalt and proceeds to distinctions of ideal elements within it. Therefore its symbolism is a physical or imaginal whole whereof the details are articulated, rather than a vocabulary of symbols that may be combined to present a coherent structure. That is why artistic form is properly called "organic" and discursive form "systematic," and also why discursive symbolism is appropriate to

\textsuperscript{105}Langer, \textit{Mind}, pp. 155-56.

science and artistic symbolism to the conception and expression of vital experience, or what is commonly termed "the life of feeling."  

Artistic abstraction is more difficult to achieve and to analyze than discursive abstraction, for it has no technical formula. The entire pattern cannot be carried from one level of abstractness to another because it has no successive levels of abstractness. The artistic projection is based on a great variety of principles and involves a multitude of procedures. Therefore, it is not analyzable in any single set of terms. Each work of art must be examined in its own terms; this entails the analysis of each decision and procedure of the artist to determine what each choice contributes to the creation of the entire expressive form.  

The objective and guiding principle of discursive thought is generalization. The symbols employed are conventional, public, and each symbol is always a class label as well as a term for its specific object. The discursive  

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108 Langer, Mind, pp. 156-57.
symbol is a symbol for its kind. But the art symbol, which is the work as a whole, is never a symbol of "this kind," never exemplary, never conventional. Although the work of art may contain conventional symbols within it, i.e., cross, halo, the work itself is unique and specific. The artist must so forcefully abstract the specific object that it is clearly an instance of a form, a visible or audible, indivisible form created by the interaction of its elements. This form is given directly to perception and is not recognized nor abstracted by the method of progressive generalization, but imaginatively grasped simply by virtue of its articulate character which imbues the work with a quality of livingness.109

*Act*

The semblance of life created in works of art results from the fact that all artistic elements have formal properties which, in nature, characterize acts. The image for the logical treatment of acts was suggested to Langer by the semblance of organic form which is

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The act is the basic phenomenon of life. It is a special sort of event which occurs in all organisms, in both animals and plants; it may be intentional or unconscious, of short or long duration, felt or unfelt, local or affecting the whole organism. The act is the unit of living form; it is not the material part of a living thing, but composes the elements in the continuum of a life.

The structure of acts is characterized by the dynamism of life and results in their typical dynamic form. This tensive internal structure of acts makes their elements indivisible and relational. The basic act form is exemplified by movement, whether it is a behavioral act, like the intentional twitch of a horse's skin, or a subordinate element, like the tensing of a muscle in vocalization. Langer identifies three phases of the act form:

110Langer, Mind, pp. 204, 274-75.
112Langer, Mind, pp. 261, 292.
1. The initial phase, perhaps just a potential act, is an impulse which is already an articulated or complex process and an integral part of the act itself.

2. The phase of acceleration may consist of growing articulation.

3. The phase of consummation is the turning point.

The initial phase is characterized by the building up of a tension or energy which must be spent. Subsequent phases are the acting out of the tension, resulting in some change occurring. The complete resolution of the tension signifies the end of the act. In complex acts the various elements of the total event seem to occur, not in a chain reaction, but as by a "pre-established harmony," and subordinate acts seem to converge into a larger whole; unity occurs. The total act is characterized by both dynamism and unity.\(^{113}\)

In spite of the principle of homeostasis which tends to hold organisms in a steady state, growth is an

\(^{113}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 267-99.}\)
equally basic principle in all vital processes. In the course of evolution acts grow: in scope, in complexity, and in intensity. They diversify, reintegrate, and shift to higher levels. Growth produces change because of the tensions produced, which, in turn, produces more growth, tension, change. Langer maintains that a mode of growth may:

... reach its own kind of limit, where it can develop no further in the same pattern, so a crisis occurs; the creature's activity undergoes a radical change, as the same essential impulse finds a different road to consummation.  

Langer proposes that evolution be conceived, not as the anatomical changes that form the record of acts, but as a pattern of acts. Nothing needs to be lost; the activity has simply changed. This change may be a shift of functions from former means to new ones. But the change may not be a simple shift in patterns, which is systematically probable, but a spectacular, rare, and intrinsically unpredictable change in the quality of events. A change of phase in causally unbroken continuities occurs.

114 Ibid., p. 416.
115 Ibid., pp. 396, 413, 415-16, 442-43.
This is a revolutionary event because acts are characterized by continuity, the started activity tends toward continuous elaboration and rhythms accelerate. Therefore, the established activities assume a guiding function, interacting to control the frequency of the later rhythms. This inherited dynamic complex is reflected in each new activity; in similar situations acts tend to recur or be similar. Langer theorizes that this may be the most essential, but simple, principle underlying the dynamic unity of each vital stock.116

Yet this principle of unity does not negate the dynamic quality of the act form. Langer states:

Because acts are events of distinct form, held together by the impetus given in an original impulse, they can be partially altered in passage and still achieve a normal consummation.117

Since impulses pressing for actualization and acts in progress constitute the immediate situation, their impressions are gathered by each act as it moves toward consummation. This hereditary complex of conflicting

116 Ibid., pp. 383-84.
117 Ibid., pp. 385-86.
rhythms is entirely dynamic. Langer maintains:

... life itself is a central pattern of expression, in which each impulse determines its own obstacles, i.e., its own counter-pressions, intraorganic or external. In this way, each agent defines its own ambient, which is not the environment it shares with other beings, but is a unique tangle of pressive forces that encircle its acts, through which they wind or push their way, and in the midst of which they also find implementing and promoting conditions which yield to their advance and take their imprint.\textsuperscript{118}

The image of life that emerges in Langer's writings is one of constant becoming, of preparing for further developments, of freedom combined with necessity. The rhythmic, dynamic principle of growth is characterized by unity and unimaginable possibilities of change. This is the image of vital processes revealed by the semblance of life projected in works of art.

\textsuperscript{118}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 377.
CHAPTER III

AESTHETIC CONCEPTS OF SUSANNE K. LANGER

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and describe the central concepts in Langer's aesthetic. Four categories will be employed for this ordering.

Langer's philosophical art theory is based on the belief that art is a natural, dynamic dimension of human life, as important as any other dimension; yet art is the source of experiences essentially different from the experiences of everyday life. This assumption does not lead her to the analysis of the "aesthetic attitude" as the key datum in aesthetic experience. Langer directs her inquiry toward the identification and explification of the issues she believes central to an understanding of art: issues which arise from studying the work of art itself. She maintains that the analysis of the psychological attitude of the audience does not help in the understanding of the work of art itself, and it is the work that holds the
key to the appreciation of the nature and significance of art and those experiences termed "aesthetic" or "artistic."  

Approaching art theory in this way has not been a popular method with philosophers during this century. Langer suggests that this is a result of the orientation of American scholarship toward behaviorism and pragmatism; questions about art are generally restricted to those which can be asked within a psychological framework. She maintains that contemporary intellectual research

... has grown up under the mentorship of natural science, it brings with it not only the great ideals of empiricism, namely observation, analysis and verification, but also certain cherished hypotheses, primarily from the least perfect and successful of the sciences, psychology and sociology. The chief assumption that determines the entire procedure of pragmatic philosophy is that all human interests are direct or oblique manifestations of "drives" motivated by animal needs... .

The effect of the genetic premise on art theory is that aesthetic values must be treated either as direct satisfactions, i.e., pleasures, or as instrumental values, that is to say, means to fulfillment of biological needs. It is either a leisure interest, like sports and hobbies, or it is valuable for getting on with

\(^1\) Susanne K. Langer, _Feeling and Form_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 3-41. (Hereinafter referred to as F. and F.)
the world's work--strengthening morale, integrating social groups, or venting dangerous repressed feelings in a harmless emotional catharsis. But in either case, artistic experience is not essentially different from ordinary physical, practical, and social experience.²

Langer takes issue with such pragmatists as Dewey;³ her hypothesis is that artistic experiences are symbolic experiences which are essentially different in both form and function from other experiences. She does credit the pragmatists with the recognition that art should not be removed from everyday life because it is a vital and natural force in human life.⁴ This belief in the vitality of art leads her to the study of the work itself as the source of that vitality, not the study of human behavior in the presence of the work, which is only a result of that vitality.

With this premise it is natural that she would place great value on the opinions and remarks of those who

²Ibid., pp. 35-36.


⁴Langer, F. and F., p. 38.
create the art works. Therefore, Langer maintains that philosophy of art should begin in the studio; this entails the study of art from the standpoint of artists and the adoption, to some extent, of the language artists use. Their language is metaphorical and is difficult to translate into the more literal vocabulary of philosophy. Artists employ such metaphors as: "dead," "alive," "spirit," "motion," "vitality," and "antimate." The work of art is spoken of as if it were a living creature.

Langer says:

Another metaphor of the studio, borrowed from the biological realm, is the familiar statement that every art work must be organic. Most artists will not even agree with a literal-minded critic that this is a metaphor. "Organic" simply and directly refers, in their vocabulary, to something characteristic of good pictures and statues, poems and plays, ballets and buildings and pieces of music. It does not refer to biological functions like digestion and circulation. But--breathing? Heartbeat? Well, maybe. Mobility? Yes, perhaps. Feeling? Oh, yes, certainly.6

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5 Ibid., p. ix.

Why do artists speak in this metaphorical mode? Langer explains:

The reason artists talk as they do is not entirely (though it is partly) that they are discursively untrained and popular in their speech. . . . Their vocabulary is metaphorical because it has to be plastic and powerful to let them speak their serious and often difficult thoughts. They cannot see art as "merely" this-or-that easily comprehensible phenomenon; they are too interested in it to make concessions to language.7

Metaphorical expressions are logical analogies whereby the abstractable forms in reality, those difficult relational factors, can be conceived within the framework of language.8 By speaking metaphorically artists can attempt to translate the non-discursive mode of abstraction into linguistic generalizations that are essentially non-discursive but are contained within the discursive mode.

In Feeling and Form, Langer maintains that the most crucial issue in art theory is artistic creation. She says:


8Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 123-26. (Hereinafter referred to as Key.)
Once you answer the question: "What does art create?" all the further questions of why and how, of personality, talent and genius, etc., seem to emerge in a new light from the central thesis. That means, simply, that the thesis is central, and that the problem which elicited it is fecund and ultimately general.9

She later extends this concept of centrality to include three issues. In *Problems of Art* she states:

Art has many problems, and every problem has many facets. But the basic issues—What is created, what is expressed, what is experienced—underlie them all, and all special solutions are developments of the crucial answers.10

The answers to these three questions furnish the criteria for what Langer believes to be the principles of art, those characteristics contained in each work of art, regardless of whether it is of the poetic, musical, balletic, or plastic order of art, and regardless of the culture and age in which it was created.

These principles of art are few, but they are indispensable. Langer states that they are:

... the creation of what might be termed "an apparition," ... the achievement of organic

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unity or "livingness," the articulation of feeling.\textsuperscript{11}

The concept of apparition, or illusion, is the theme of the section on "Artistic Creation." The achievement of organic unity is the criterion for the expression of the quality of felt-life, and is the subject of the section entitled "Artistic Expression." The structure of feeling is perceptible because feeling is articulated by the processes of artistic illusion and expression. The perception of this articulation is the theme of the third section in this chapter: "Artistic Experience."

In addition to the three categories identified by Langer--artistic creation, artistic expression, artistic experience--this study considers the additional category of artistic function relevant to art education. The function of art in both the life of the culture and the life of the individual is of central concern for theorizing about art education curriculum. Therefore, the category of experience is divided into two concepts: (1) the experience of the audience (artistic experience) and

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 137.
(2) what this means for the individual and society (artistic function). These conceptual categories provide a framework for identifying, explicating, and ordering the central aesthetic concepts of Langer from the perspectives of both the maker of art and the beholder of art.

Artistic Creation

The concept of artistic creation is basic to Langer's theory; the term "creating" denotes an order of "making" or "constructing" essentially different from the manner in which the term is often employed by educators. The essential characteristics of artistic creation are not related to the rearrangement or integration of established patterns, forms, or ideas; neither are they necessarily the

invention of a new pattern, form, or idea, no matter how novel.

Artistic creation is the act of using physical materials—whether they be paint, canvas, metal, stone, piano, human body, or print on paper—to create something over and above what is physically there: the work of art. Langer uses a number of terms to designate what is created, among them: apparition, virtual entity, dynamic image, illusion, semblance, and art symbol. These terms are essentially interchangeable.

The terms Langer uses to describe the created art symbol are indicative of the quality of unreality which is a crucial factor in her conception of the nature of art. The work of art is an apparition, a virtual entity, a dynamic image, an illusion, or a semblance which exists only for perception. Langer remarks on the importance of this sense of "otherness" when she says:

Shiller was the first thinker who saw what really makes "Schein," or semblance, important for art: the fact that it liberates perception—and with it, the power of conception—

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13 Langer, Problems, p. 5.
from all practical purposes, and lets the mind dwell on the sheer appearance of things. The function of artistic illusion is not "make-believe," as many philosophers and psychologists assume, but the very opposite, disengagement from belief—the contemplation of sensory qualities without their usual meanings of "Here's that chair," "That's my telephone," "These figures ought to add up to the bank's statement," etc. The knowledge that what is before us has no practical significance in the world is what enables us to give attention to its appearance as such.  

The sense of pure perceptual form resulting from the importance of the appearance of the work is what causes the aura of unreality that can pervade practical objects such as some pots and buildings. The function of the semblance, she states:

... is to give forms a new embodiment in purely qualitative, unreal instances, setting them free from their normal embodiment in real things so that they may be recognized in their own right, and freely conceived and composed in the interest of the artist's aim—significance, or logical expression.

The created form is immediately perceptible; yet it reaches

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14 Langer, F. and F., p. 49.
15 Ibid., p. 50.
16 Ibid.
beyond its physical appearance to become a semblance, an illusion, an apparition. But the virtual object that is the work of art seems to not only be charged with feeling but also with a sense of reality.\(^{17}\)

The work of art presents the paradox of seeming to possess both an aura of unreality and heightened reality. The sense of unreality or strangeness exists because the form itself, not its use, is presented directly for perception. In this sheer appearance, this apparition, illusion or semblance, we feel a highly charged reality which was inconceivable until revealed in the form of an image directly perceivable.

The materials of the work of art existed before, but what the artist creates did not exist before, anywhere, nor did any of its parts. Langer's term "image" should not be understood as having reference only to the plastic arts, for an image does not necessarily assume visual form. Neither should the term "illusion" be considered to be associated with make-believe, but rather as being a sheer

\(^{17}\) Langer, F. and F., pp. 49-52; Problems, p. 6.
image, or, in other words, the pure form, i.e., the configuration, of experience. The artist creates the illusion of life, the semblance of living form.

In this principle of artistic creation lies both the unity and diversity of all the orders of art. All of the arts are created forms expressive of the life of feeling, yet each of the arts has its own kind of primary illusion by virtue of which these forms are created and from which each art derives its autonomy. The term "primary" should be understood as meaning that the particular type of illusion is always made in a particular order of art.\(^{18}\)

The following orders with their corresponding primary illusions are proposed by Langer: Balletic--Powers, Musical--Time, Poetic--Events, and Plastic--Space. She notes that just as powers, time, events, and space are all interrelated in reality, the arts are also connected by complex relations.\(^{19}\)

\(^{18}\) Langer, Problems, pp. 80-82.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 11.
The dance creates a world of virtual power. This power is not physical power that can be scientifically established and measured, but is a pure appearance, an illusion. Since this power appears to be part of our direct experience, Langer refers to it as "virtual," i.e., non-actual semblance.\(^{20}\)

Langer refers to the primary illusion of power created in the dance when she states:

In watching a collective dance--say, an artistically successful ballet--one does not see people running around; one sees the dance driving this way, drawn that way, gathering here, spreading there--fleeing, resting, rising, and so forth; and all the motion seems to spring from powers beyond the performers. In a pas de deux the two dancers appear to magnetize each other; the relation between them is more than a spatial one, it is a relation of forces; but the forces they exercise, that seem to be as physical as those which orient the compass needle toward its pole, really do not exist physically at all. They are dance forces, virtual powers.\(^{21}\)

It is significant that the prototype of the forces and energies projected by the dance is the sense of vital power inherent in felt life, not the field of forces known to


\(^{21}\) Ibid., pp. 175-76.
physics. Through the establishment of the illusion of power the dance is symbolic of power, and this illusion can be so forceful that the dance seems not to be symbolic of power, but to actually be power. The concept of power becomes so tangible, so highly charged with the feeling of reality that it is directly available for our perception. Dancers do not imitate the act of being physically powerful by flexing their muscles, or some such display, but by transforming the idea of power into symbolic form; the dance is the symbolic transformation of the experience of power.

The primary illusion of music is the semblance of felt time; time that is virtual, not scientific or practical, not clock time. Felt time is not one-dimensional, as is clock time, but has both depth and breadth, and is therefore difficult to conceive. Langer theorizes that humans perceive the existence of time through the experiencing of tensions—physical, emotional, or intellectual—and their resolutions. The measure of virtual time is not

\[\text{Ibid., p. 176.}\]
that of clock time; the movement of virtual time is not actual, but is an illusion: the symbol of the feeling of the passage of time. Of course, clock time is also a symbolic measure of time, but its characteristics of fixed, conventional units and linear succession limit it to the discursive concept of time. Our conception of time is widened and deepened by the logical expression, the transformation, of vital, experienced time projected in the artistic symbolism of music.23

The term poetic should be understood as meaning all of the great literary forms which are not discursive, but use language to create the semblance of experienced events, the illusion of life. Langer includes all modes of both poetry and prose fiction; if they set up the poetic illusion in which all events are virtual experiences, they are poetic. Langer considers the film to be a new poetic mode, not merely a new technical device contained in the mode of drama, nor is it a new mode of plastic art as is often maintained. Langer comments on the primary illusion of poesis:

23 Ibid., pp. 104-19.
The virtual world in which poetic events develop is always peculiar to the work; it is the particular illusion of life those events create, as the virtual space of a picture is the particular space of the forms in it. To be imaginatively coherent, the "world" of a poem must be made out of events that are in the imaginative mode—the mode of naive experience, in which action and feeling, sensory value and moral value, causal connection and symbolic connection, are still undivorced. For the primary illusion of literature, the semblance of life, is abstracted from immediate, personal life, as the primary illusion of the other arts—virtual space, time, and power—are images of perceived space, vital time, felt power.\textsuperscript{24}

She also states:

... we come to the principle of poetic creation: virtual events are qualitative in their very constitution—the "facts" have no existence apart from values; their emotional import is part of their appearance; they cannot, therefore, be stated and then "reacted to." They occur only as they seem—they are poetic facts, not neutral facts toward which we are invited to take a poetic attitude.\textsuperscript{25}

The poet creates a literary work which is symbolic of the feeling of living experience and he is free to use any device which furthers the semblance; he is not bound by a literal, logical model, as is the writer of a discourse.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 217
\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 223.
The poet creates an image with the power to formulate the appearance of reality; this power of language is fundamentally different from the communicative function of language which is paramount in discourse.  

The primary illusion of all plastic art is virtual space: space that is purely visual and exists for vision alone. The experiential space of the practical world is not the space of plastic art, for, as Langer explains:

Space as we know it in the practical world has no shape. Even in science it has none, though it has "logical form." There are spacial relations, but there is no concrete totality of space. Space itself is amorphous in our active lives and purely abstract in scientific thought. It is a substrate of all our experience, gradually discovered by the collaboration of our several senses...  

Plastic art depends on the visual sense alone. That is why a photographic or direct copy of nature is not enough.

She said "The copy of things seen would need the same supplementation from non-visual sources that the original

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perception demanded."²⁸ Plastic art is not an imitation, but a formulation of the visual, the spatial, not a re-creation, but a creation. Langer suggests that the reason that such artists as Cézanne and Leonardo believed that they were copying nature was because their vision was so selective that they actually abstracted and articulated new forms in the act of seeing, not the act of painting.²⁹

Because the space of all plastic art is entirely visual it has no continuity with practical space. Yet, Langer points out that it sets its own limits but these limits cannot be said to divide plastic space from common space, for the concept of division implies the concept of connection. There is no connection between the two types of space for artistic space is entirely self-contained.³⁰ The artist creates a work in which space becomes perceptible and spatial relationships are visible; the space created is so tangible that it formulates our perception

²⁸ Ibid., p. 73.
²⁹ Ibid., pp. 78-79.
³⁰ Ibid., p. 72.
and conception of space and spatial relationships.

The creation of the primary illusion of space in the plastic arts is so forceful that it immediately effects a complete mental reorientation to symbolic forms. Langer maintains:

That is why artists and trained art lovers have no need of cultivating the "aesthetic attitude." They are not selecting sense data from the actual world and contemplating them as pure qualitative experiences. The painter "selected" them, and he employed just those sensory qualities that he could use, in creating the illusionary forms he wanted for the organization of his total virtual space. Our contemplation of his created forms, the whole organized semblance, should be made so easy for us that the return to actuality is a jolt. Sometimes, in the presence of great art, attention to the actual environment is hard to sustain.31

The artist creates the primary illusion of virtual space for the audience, but as in the other orders of art, the primary illusion is only the basic creation in which all other created forms exist.32

Each of the great orders of art creates its own distinct type of primary illusion, or in other words, each

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31 Ibid., p. 84.

32 Ibid., pp. 79, 84.
genus creates a different kind of experience, and it is precisely this that makes the distinction between the different orders of art. The arts are defined by their primary illusions, not by their materials and techniques.\textsuperscript{33} For example, a particular work of art is not categorized as being in the plastic order because of the obvious reason, the materials used, but because of the kind of illusion created. It is not plastic art because it is canvas and paint, or marble, or metal, but because it creates virtual space as its primary illusion. This illusion is the background for all of the other created forms or elements in the work and it is so complete that it assimilates secondary illusions.\textsuperscript{34}

What is a primary illusion in one art may appear as a secondary illusion in another. For example, there are effects of time and movement in the plastic arts which always retain the quality of virtual time, the primary illusion of music. Also, music may contain spatial effects

\textsuperscript{33}Langer, \textit{Problems}, pp. 79-83.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., p. 85.
characteristic of the plastic arts. These secondary illusions are never completely developed, as is the primary illusion. However, these secondary illusions support the intent of the primary illusion and are an essential factor in the creation of a work.\textsuperscript{35}

The artist creates an illusion which is symbolic of living experience, but how does he do this? Langer maintains that:

Every symbolic projection is a transformation. . . . The function of a symbol is not only to convey a form, but in the first place to abstract it; and this requires transformation, because it is the sameness of logical structure in experientially different loci that makes it apparent.\textsuperscript{36}

The artist abstracts the form, or in other words, he transforms the configuration of living experiences into perceptible symbols. This process of objectification of subjective life makes the image of felt reality apparent.

This transformation is possible because works of art


\textsuperscript{36} Langer, \textit{Mind}, p. 105.
manifest the same logical, or relational, structure as vital processes.

The artist selects the characteristics and aspects of appearance he conceives and combines them into a whole which is characterized by complex interrelations. It is by virtue of this abstraction and articulation of the form that the artist projects the quality, the "feel," of the "object." The creation of the primary illusion is the process of abstracting an aspect of the appearance of either powers, or time, or events, or space, to project a quality of the feeling of life. There are innumeral ways of abstracting the form, but the artist is always proceeding toward the realization of a specific statement, a clear instance of form embodying a quality of expressiveness.

Each order of art has different modes of creating the primary illusion, different ways of abstracting the illusion. This study describes only those modes of creating the primary illusion of virtual space: painting, sculpture, and architecture.

Painting creates the illusion of space by the
impression of what Langer terms virtual scene. She points out that a painting usually does not completely fill the viewer's field of vision, yet it is a total visual field. Continuing, she states:

Its first office is to create a single, self-contained, perceptual space, that seems to confront us as naturally as the scene before our eyes when we open them on the actual world. That is to say, the illusion created in pictorial art is a virtual scene. I do not mean a "scene" in the special sense of "scenery"--the picture may represent only one object or even consist of pure decorative forms without representative value--but it always creates a space opposite the eye and related directly and essentially to the eye. That is what I call "scene."38

The fact that the painter is creating the illusion of space on a two-dimensional surface causes him to confront the problem of form in a manner distinct from the other modes of creating virtual space. Both sculpture and architecture are creating spatial relations for the eye in space that is actually three-dimensional.

The sculptor must make space visible, as must the painter and architect, and the fact that he is working in

37 Langer, F. and F., p. 86.
38 Ibid.
three dimensions does not lessen his problem. Empty space has no visibility, for it has no shape. The sculptor, in creating the work, creates virtual kinetic volume; not only the solid mass but also the void around the piece becomes visible. Langer says: "The source of this illusion . . . is the fundamental principle of sculptural volume: the semblance of organism." Langer adds: "... its form is the form of life, and the space it makes visible is vitalized as it would be by organic activity at its center." Although the artist creates only the shape of the surface of a sculpture, she describes the virtual interior of the work by stating:

The center is a matrix of tensions and movements that seem to express themselves toward the surface; actually, of course, the surface is all that has shape, and the "kernel" is purely implicit in the outward form.

Virtual space in sculpture is created by the establishment of tension and movement in the center of the piece which

39 Ibid., p. 88.

40 Ibid., p. 89.

41 Langer, Mind, p. 160.
appear to be expressing themselves toward the surface. This creates the illusion that space expands or contracts under the tensions of form, an illusion also created by architecture. ⁴²

The work of sculpture is the center of three-dimensional space, and, like painting, creates visible space, but unlike painting, does not create a space of direct vision, a scene. Sculpture dominates a surrounding space, and, Langer states:

... this environment derives all proportions and relations from it, as the actual environment does from one's self. The work is a semblance of a self, and creates the semblance of a tactual space—and, moreover, a visual semblance. It effects the objectification of self and environment for the sense of sight. Sculpture is literally the image of kinetic volume in sensory space. ⁴³

Langer proposes that because the space created is other than that of our own environment, the created world becomes an objective image of our own surrounding space. By virtue of the fact that we do not treat the sculpture as an

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Langer, F. and F., pp. 91-92.
object, but as the center of a spacial environment, it is illusionary, a semblance of the self and its world.  

Because of the obvious utilitarian functions of architecture, it is difficult to realize that it, too, creates a spatial illusion. However, the comments of architects are illuminating; they speak of space artistically, not scientifically, conceived. Space is "living," "organic," even "omnipresent."  

Langer proposes that the basic abstraction of architecture is the creation of an ethnic domain. She defines "domain" in a non-geographical sense, as a created thing or place, a sphere of influence. She illustrates this concept by the idea of a Gypsy, or of an Indian, or of a circus camp; each may change its physical location, but each remains a self-contained place.  

Langer explains the relationship of the concepts of culture and architecture through the concepts of

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44 Ibid., p. 92.
45 Ibid., p. 94.
46 Ibid., p. 95.
ingredient and image. The ingredients of a culture are the activities of the humans and the functional pattern that results from those activities. These are both intangible and physical, together they "mean" the total pattern of the life in the culture and can be recognized only by those familiar with the culture. It is different with the image. Langer says:

The architect creates its image: a physically present human environment that expresses the characteristic rhythmic functional patterns which constitute a culture. Such patterns are the alternations of sleep and waking, venture and safety, emotion and calm, austerity and abandon; the tempo, and the smoothness or abruptness of life; the simple forms of childhood and the complexities of full moral stature, the sacramental and the capricious moods that mark a social order, and that are repeated, though with characteristic selection, by every personal life springing from that order.  

Because architecture is an art symbol it is an image of the culture not only in the sense that it reveals the appearance of the culture, i.e., what the culture was, or is, like, but also serves to formulate the culture, i.e., to influence the concept of life.

47 Ibid., p. 96.
Commenting on the relationship of the individual to his culture, she says:

Architecture creates the semblance of that World which is the counterpart of a Self. It is a total environment made visible. Where the Self is collective, as in a tribe, its World is communal; for personal Selfhood, it is the home.\textsuperscript{48}

She theorizes that the human environment is the counterpart of human life and therefore contains the imprint of that life's functional pattern; in her words, "it is the complementary organic form."\textsuperscript{49} If architecture is to create the ethnic domain with the imprint of human life, Langer maintains that it must be organic in form.

Contemporary life is reflected in the relative importance of our art forms. She states:

Modern sculpture returns to independent existence as the concept of social environment falls emotionally into confusion, becomes sociological and problematic, and "life" is really understood only from within the individual. Again the direct expression is of Self, and the ethnic domain created by implication, its emotive value but vaguely apprehended. And painting--the

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 98.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 99.
semblance of objective, visual scene—comes into its own as the paramount art of our day.

At the time when society most needs the formulative influence of powerful architecture to establish cohesiveness and a sense of involvement with the culture, its function is least valued.

The three modes of establishing the semblance of space are distinct and yet related. Langer maintains that because each creates virtual space, while the modes of the other art orders do not, it explains:

... why a painter is likely to be a competent judge of architecture, sculpture, textile design, jewelry, pottery, or any other visual creation, but is no more likely than any layman (and, of course, no less likely either) to have a special understanding of music or literature. Indeed, he is apt to judge some other arts, such as ballet or theater, entirely from the standpoint of plastic form, which is not paramount in their realms at all.

Artists, like all specialists, have a far deeper understanding of and sensitivity to their own symbolic order than to other orders of symbolic activity.

50 Ibid., p. 102.
51 Ibid., p. 103.
Langer's analysis of the act of musical creation in *Feeling and Form* indicates the process of creation as it is practiced in all of the orders. The stages in the process are distinguishable, but not always separable. The first stage is the conception, the idea or Gestalt, of the fundamental form of the piece. This idea occurs within the artist's mind, and Langer notes:

... henceforth his mind is no longer free to wander irresponsibly from theme to theme. ... This form is the "composition" which he feels called upon to develop.

This "composition" is the basic form which is to be developed and which controls every created element in the work. Once the artist finds the form, the completed work is implicit there, although:

... its final, completely articulate character is not determined yet, because there are many possible ways of developing the composition. Yet in the whole process of subsequent invention and elaboration, the general Gestalt serves as a measure of right and wrong, too much and too little, strong and weak. One might call that original conception the commanding form of the

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work. It requires such things as ornamentation or intensification or greater simplicity; it may rule out some favorite device of its creator, and force him to find a new one; like a living organism it maintains its identity, and in the face of influences that should mould it into something functionally different, it seems to preserve its original purposes and become distorted from its true lines rather than simply replaced by something else.54

The commanding form of the piece is so powerful that once it has been grasped by the imagination, it assumes an impersonal character. It is the artist's image of the quality he must work for.

The ways of getting, holding, and developing the original conception are legion. The idea may be strong or vulnerable, new or familiar, rapid or slow in developing; but always the artist's guide is the conviction that the quality he wants will emerge and that he will recognize it. The artist is guided by artistic insight; in the original conception there is enough of the quality to cause all future created elements to be either congruent or incongruent. There exists the possibility that the

54 Ibid., pp. 121-22.
original idea may yield elements of pure design, even though the idea involved representational forms. This is an example of the abstraction of gestalt from one object to another, the process of seeing one form as the image of another.  

But regardless of style, culture, or any such variable, Langer maintains that artists usually begin their work in the same way. The process of artistic abstraction begins by the establishment of the sense of illusion. She says:

The work has to be uncoupled from all realistic connections and its appearance made self-sufficient in such a way that one's interest does not tend to go beyond it. At the same time, this purely apparent entity is simplified so that the ear, eye, or (in the case of literary art) the constructive imagination can take in the whole pattern all the time, and every detail be seen in a fundamental, unfailing context—seem related, not seen and then rationally related. Whether there is much detail or little, what there is must seem an articulation of the total semblance. In the case of a piece that is not physically perceivable at one time, as for instance a novel, a long drama or opera, or a series of frescoes constituting a single work, the proportion of the whole has to be established at all times by implication,

55 Langer, Mind, pp. 120-21, 169-70.
which is a special and technical problem. In any event, the perception of a work of art as "significant form"—significant of the nature of human feeling—always proceeds from the total form to its subordinate features.\textsuperscript{56}

The form, thus freed from irrelevances and cognitive associations, can be manipulated in the sole interests of expressiveness. The audience, also freed from mundane associations, is more likely to perceive the import of the work.\textsuperscript{57}

The artist is creating an image, he is not re-creating a model, nor is he finding symbols of conventional reference and using them to give meaning to his work. Langer maintains that the artist can be said to be "re-creating" only in the sense that he is trying to express:

\textldots that quality which he has once known, the emotional "value" that events, situations, sounds or sights in their passing have had for him. He need not represent those same items of his experience, though psychologically it is a natural thing to do if they were outstanding forms; the rhythm they let him see and feel may

\textsuperscript{56}Langer, \emph{Problems}, p. 178.

\textsuperscript{57}Langer, \emph{F. and F.}, p. 59.
be projected in other sensible forms, perhaps even more purely. When he finds a theme that excites him it is because he thinks that in his rendering of it he can endow it with some quality, which is really a way of feeling. That process is the abstractive process of art. 58

Langer points out that an artist does not think abstractly in the sense that he uses general discursive concepts to verbalize about his work; he thinks abstractively. Although he is entirely absorbed in making a new abstraction he does not do it consciously. He thinks about the quality, the feeling, he wants the piece to have. It is significant for art education purposes to note that Langer suggests that a young artist would be working for the quality he had seen created in another's work, not the quality he has seen in life. But every artist begins with this idea of the quality he wants. 59

The achievement of the expression of this idea is his only aim. Therefore, there can be no compromise with so-called "standards of beauty" such as balance and harmony.

58 Langer, Mind, p. 119.
59 Ibid.
They are only necessary if they help create the quality desired. 60

Artistic Expression

It is this interest in expressive quality that unifies all of the great orders of art, just as the differences in the primary illusion created by each serves to differentiate them. Each work of art is an expressive form. Langer defines an "expressive form" as:

... any perceptible or imaginable whole that exhibits relationships of parts, or points, or even qualities or aspects within the whole, so that it may be taken to represent some other whole whose elements have analogous relations. 61

Because a work of art is an expressive form it can be symbolic of any "other whole" with which its structure is logically congruent.

Artistic form is congruent with dynamic living form. Art is the symbolic expression of human feeling, of sentient being, of organic processes; art expresses

60 Ibid., pp. 121-24.

61 Langer, Problems, p. 20.
the quality of life itself. Langer maintains that it is this quality, or feeling, of expressiveness that constitutes "beauty" in art. She says:

Every kind of art is beautiful, as all life is beautiful, and for much the same reason: that it embodies sentience, from the most elementary sense of vitality, individual being and continuity, to the full expansion of human perception, human love and hate, triumph and misery, enlightenment, wisdom.

It is precisely this criterion of expressive quality that designates what should be called "art." A work of art must be an expression of human feeling, the articulated image of the elusive forms of life.

This definition has some interesting consequences concerning the relationship of "art" and "craft." Langer states:

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63 Langer, Mind, p. 127.

64 Langer, Mind, p. 127; Problems, p. 25.
The crafts . . . provide opportunities to make works of art; they have actually been the school of feeling (feeling becomes clear and conscious only through its symbols), as they were the incentives to articulation and the first formulators of abstractive vision. Whether art is practiced in the service of religion or of entertainment, or in the household by women potters and weavers, or passionately in forlorn attics with leaky skylights, makes no differences to its own aims, its purity, or its dignity and importance.65

There should be a distinction between art and craft only if there is a difference in the aim of the work. Works of art are always made for their expressive value, never just for utilitarian purposes, which is the case with many so-called crafts.66 However, works of art may also have an instrumental value, but only in addition to their primary value as expressive symbols, i.e., some furniture, such as the pedestal chair by Saarinen, and some buildings, such as the Robie House by Wright.

Langer points out four examples of work which can be used as a guide for determining what is not art. The piece is non-art if:

1. There is no evidence of any intuitive use of the material for the embodiment of feeling.

2. The product presents artistic problems but is too governed by taste to embody the maker's true ideas, i.e., most fashions in dress, but traditional costumes (kimonos) and often the exception.

3. It is writing which produces no literary image of mental experience or illusion of growing thought.

4. It was produced by a non-human animal.\textsuperscript{67}

It is evident from the first three examples that the criterion of expressiveness is not met. But what of the last example? Langer maintains that if "expression" is taken to mean "self-expression" then animal "art" is not, in principle, excluded.\textsuperscript{68}

But Langer does not mean self-expression when she speaks of artistic expression; this distinction is of

\textsuperscript{67} Langer, \textit{Mind}, pp. 140-45.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 141.
paramount importance in her theory of art. Self-expression is a psychological concept. It is the signal of the emotion it conveys and is symptomatic, the record of subjective feeling. Langer's theory of artistic expression is based on the theory of symbolism: the work of art is a symbol. The art symbol, like the discursive symbol, is characterized by the functions of formulation, representation, and abstraction. Symbolic expression involves the presentation of concepts given objectively for contemplation. 69

This is a radically different function from self-expression. Langer says:

Now, I believe the expression of feeling in a work of art--the function that makes the work an expressive form--is not symptomatic at all. An artist working on a tragedy need not be in personal despair or violent upheaval; nobody, indeed, could work in such a state of mind. His mind would be occupied with the causes of his emotional upset. Self-expression does not require composition and lucidity; a screaming baby gives his feeling far more release than any musician, but we don't go into a concert hall to hear a baby scream; in fact, if that

baby is brought in we are likely to go out. We don't want self-expression.\textsuperscript{70}

The artist is not concerned with working so that he provides himself or his audience with an emotional catharsis. Of course, the arts can be used for emotional release and restoration of emotional balance; this is the purpose of therapeutic art activities in psychiatric hospitals. But this is not the primary function of art. The office of art is to reflect the morphology of the literally unspeakable aspect of existence so that it can become conceivable. Artistic expression is a logical concept.

Langer proposes the reason why artistic expression and the intuition of artistic import have never been recognized as characteristic mental acts. She says:

\begin{quote}
\ldots the treatment of art as emotional self-expression and social communication is so much more familiar to common sense that it is axiomatically accepted, and once accepted, obscures the subtler phenomena of metaphorical presentation and insight.\textsuperscript{71}
\end{quote}

The idea of conceptual, not emotional, expression requires

\textsuperscript{70} Langer, \textit{Problems}, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{71} Langer, \textit{Mind}, p. 89.
a difficult distinction between an "emotion directly felt and one that is contemplated and imaginatively grasped."  

She points out that the difficulty is compounded by the fact that:

... creative work always produces an actual excitement, which is colored by the feeling to be projected, and is sometimes more massive than the intended import. It is, I believe, this intellectual excitement, the feeling of heightened sensibility and mental capacity which goes with acts of insight and intuitive judgment, that the artist feels as he works, and afterward evokes in those people who appreciate his creation. But ... this is not the import of art; what the created form expresses is the nature of feelings conceived, imaginatively realized, and rendered by a labor of formulation and abstractive vision. Their envisagement may be spontaneous and easy or very arduous and slow; the result need not show the way it was achieved.

The artist is not depicting emotions directly felt but is creating the image of what he knows about human feelings, not his own actual feelings but his conception of feelings.

But how does the artist express the form and structure of felt-life? Langer stoutly maintains that there can be no rules of manipulation whereby works of art

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., pp. 89-90.
can be composed, for the creative processes and combination of processes and means of elaboration are numberless.  

Nevertheless, Langer believes there is a structure to artistic processes, and she proposes that it resembles the structure of the processes of imagination. Two basic tenets are set forth: (1) images are symbolic and their structure is therein determined, and (2) image formation is an act and is therefore characterized by complexity and dynamism, as are all vital processes. These two fundamental ideas are applicable to both the spontaneous images of imagination and the constructed images in art.

The structure of both spontaneous and constructed images is determined by the primary function of symbolization, therefore the structure must express the logical form of a symbol. The logical form of symbolization governing image-making is not that of optics which governs physical vision, or acoustics, or phonetics, etc. Symbolic forms are guided by imagination, that self-expanding and

\footnote{Ibid., pp. 90-104.}  
\footnote{Ibid., pp. 90-106.}
self-elaborating process of interpretation which is fed by sensory perception. 76

Since Langer maintains "the work of art is not a 'copy' of a physical object at all, but the plastic 'realization' . . . of a mental image," she says that all technical formulas to aid the exact reproduction of physical vision are irrelevant and possibly harmful to plastic expression. 77 Technical devices do not help in the making of the image for they are really aids for making a model of the object. They replace the advanced intellectual achievement of representing extensional variation with a device which does not require any mental tension, whereas the process of visual imagination demands increasing conceptual differentiation of spacial properties which produces a maximum of tension. 78

Langer maintains that the spacial properties abstracted in the artistic process are not those of geometric interest. She maintains that they are noted and

76 Ibid., pp. 94-97.
77 Ibid., p. 95.
78 Ibid., pp. 95-96.
formulated, not selected, by virtue of their dynamic, cohesive and non-geometric aspects, because:

. . . the space they are to organize is not actual space (the space of our actions, which is abstracted and refined by scientific thought), but virtual space. All presentation of the artist's idea—his conception of human feeling—is made through the expressiveness he gives to that virtual space (or time, or other substrate, according to the art), which he creates and fills with appearances. 79

This artistic process of expression is actually an act of sustained imagination.

Langer points out that the great complexity of the imaginal process is known by all artists. Their work is guided by imagination; the art symbol is a constructed symbol guided by an artistic, not a discursive, idea. Langer states that the product of the artistic process, the image,

. . . still bears the stamp of the thing it really is—part of the cerebral process itself, a quintessence of the very act that produces it, with its deeper reaches into the rest of the life in which it occurs. In the actual event this involvement with the whole vital substructure is simple given by the feeling of activities

79 Ibid., p. 97.
interplaying with the moments of envisagement. But works of art are not natural occurrences with the stamp of life upon them. They are constructed symbols, made in the mode of imagination, because imagination reflects the forms of feeling from which it springs, and the principles of representation by which human sensibility records itself. If a piece of art is to express the pulse of life that underlies and pervades every passage of feeling, some semblance of that vital pulse has to be created by artistic means.\(^80\)

Any aspect of the various forms of feeling may furnish the ideas for art; the artist may express anything he may imagine and it will be valid "subject matter."

One example of subject matter appropriate for art is the image of rationality. Langer says that the vision of rationality appears as:

\[\ldots \text{brilliance, perfection of form, a semblance of the tersest economy (which may be achieved with or without an actual restriction of means), or of great daring in the certainty of equally great competence (where the daring may be purely virtual, the competence that of a machine; there are beautiful designs in our contemporary art which depend for their feeling quality on their milled precision of form, and yet--without deluding anyone--create an impression of consummate skill).}\] \(^81\)

\(^{80}\) Ibid., p. 99.

\(^{81}\) Ibid., p. 150.
This view of the world as primarily intellectual experience which is the artistic projection of intellectual feeling is not so-called "intellectual art." Langer states that the latter is:

... a product of discursive thinking about principles of construction, relation to material, communication and especially the "message" of the work in the making. "Intellectual art" does not express rationality, but illustrates it.82

Art is not the illustration of an idea, it is the expression of conceived feelings, imaginatively symbolized.

Yet there is a place in art for the employment of principles or devices of construction. Langer points out that they are many and the most important have given rise to great traditions in art. She says:

Representation in painting, diatonic harmony in music, metrical versification in poetry are examples of such major devices of composition. They are exemplified in thousands of works; yet they are not indispensable. Painting can eschew representation, music can be atonal, poetry can be poetry without any metrical scaffold.83

The difficult arises when theorists, and even artists who

82Ibid.

83Ibid., p. 137.
are convinced that at last they have found "the" art form, confuse these devices of construction, which are really devices of creation and expression, with the principles of art.

The artist expresses the complex idea of the way subjective experiences feel. By virtue of the fact that a work of art is an expressive form it can project the qualities which are the essential elements in the basic phenomenon of life, the act. A work of art, like the act, is characterized by both dynamism and unity. Although either may predominate in any given work, Langer maintains that it is the interaction of these two elements which results in the quality of "livingness."^84

Living form, in both art and nature, is dynamic; however, dynamic form is not sufficient for the form to be organic. It must also be a single system, a unit of interrelated, interdependent centers of activity. Langer states that the basic process of life is

... the constant breaking down and reconstruction of every living part. For an organism is

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^84 Ibid., p. 173.
always taking in material that is not of its own system, splitting it up, and transforming some of it into living matter. Concomitantly, some living matter is always breaking down and resigning from the total activity. The one process is growth, and the other decay. Every organism is always both growing and decaying. When growth exceeds decay, the system increases (the process we commonly mean by "growth"); when they are evenly balanced, it maintains itself; when decay has the ascendancy, it ages. Finally, growth stops all at once; the life is gone, and decay quickly dissolves the whole structure.  

This dynamic process of growth is possible because the pattern of events is rhythmic, the system is held together by the inviolable rhythm. Here lies the unity of life, with its dialectic of growth and decay.  

The relationship of dynamism and unity is intimate.

Langer states:

They are not opposed to each other as "motion and rest," for tensions arise from the very existence of closed forms, from within them and from their outward relations, and rest or resolution may result from balance or convergence of tensions. They are aspects, abstracted from the actual sense of life in different and incommensurable ways. Intellectually we can conceive them only by turns, though perhaps very

85 Langer, Problems, pp. 49-50.
86 Ibid., pp. 47-53.
quick turns; but in the visual arts we see them, in the poetic art we understand them, in music we hear them, simultaneously. That is a fundamental fact of artistic structure, and one of its differences from discursive form. Within a work of art this sets up a level of deeper tensions than those which we perceive as such: a permanent tonicity, which pervades the work and is the most elementary source of its apparent life, or "livingness." \(^{87}\)

The most fundamental task of the artist is the creation of the decisive tensions in a work for they immediately engender a structure; the very first element sets up the general range of tensions. \(^{88}\)

Langer notes that the immediate effect of the first, tension-producing element is obvious only to the artist in the plastic arts; however, this is not necessarily true in the other orders. In plastic work the immediate effect of tension that occurs between the line, spot, color, or any element on a blank ground, and the contour of the format, not only produces the range of tensions, but also creates the virtual space, the primary illusion. Whatever the first move may be, the artist is

\(^{87}\) Langer, *Mind*, pp. 173-75.

\(^{88}\) Ibid., pp. 157-59.
making an abstraction of formal relationships, he is making forces visible and setting up the scope and limits that will serve as the framework for the expression of feelings conceived.  

Just as the artist may create his forms by building up, elaborating, and resolving tensions, he may choose to construct form by the process of subordinating tensions to the unity of a sustansive element. Langer says:

Instead of starting with the expression of linear forces which make points of arrest by their intersection, or with points that beget lines by their motions and volumes by expansion, the first productive envisagement may be of pre-eminent bounded shapes, carved out of the total virtual space of the work.

Here the artist is making use of the tendency of the human to automatically see abstractly, his tendency to closure of form, to simplification, to unification.

Langer proposes that representation in art is not competing with artistic aims but is the normal means of abstracting by emphasis. She says:

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89 Ibid., pp. 158-61.

90 Ibid., p. 165.
It (representation) provides terms in which a visual structure may be seen at once as a whole, and its parts as articulations of the whole. This character usually imparts itself to the entire work, so it comes with a single impact. The semblance of objects seems to objectify the total expressive form.91

It is a means of achieving the expressive quality and is also a means whereby the student can learn one method of artistic abstraction. She says:

Not duplication of things which are already in existence, but the gathering and projection of their forms, for their expressive and compositional values, is the artist's intent. His imagination draws on nature; in looking and noting he learns the potential growth and expressiveness of forms, and the continuous order of their distortions without loss of their basic identity. In this way, differences in directions seem to come from motions, and differences in volumes still imply an "absolute size."92

Not only will his imagination draw on nature, but will begin to influence his seeing; the physical world will take on imaginative aspects of organic form unseen before.

An example of the transformation of visual forms is the abstraction of gestalt from one form to another,

91 Ibid., pp. 166-69.
92 Ibid., p. 166.
the intuitive seeing of one form in another. This is a means of abstracting not only shapes but nameless characteristics or qualities. Langer states that the resultant ambiguity does not result in the artist's giving the form a profusion of meanings, as the religious symbol-user tends to do, (but) the artist sees the gestalt emerge as something in its own right; and if he imposes another interpretation on it, he does so to see it undergo some further transformation, until it yields elements of pure design. Such elements, then, can be developed through a wide range of motifs, or used without any representational intent.  

Langer points out that this seeing of one thing in another has been an effective and important organizing device throughout the history of art. However, the tradition of Western European art, so influenced by the Greek concept of representation, has often been influenced by the laws of scientific optics rather than by fundamental artistic concepts.

Whether the artist's work is predominantly dynamic or unified, he uses devices and techniques to project the

93 Ibid., pp. 171-72.

94 Ibid., p. 172.
image of feeling. Technique is simply the power of producing the image of existence, the sensuous effect; it is the skill of getting effects. The achievement of effects requires abstraction, but effects are conventions, not laws. Techniques are traditional, conventional means of achieving the quality of life, and when they lose their usefulness for this purpose, they must be discarded.  

The artist uses technical devices and techniques so intuitively that he probably could not explain his choices or his reasons for those choices. Yet they are crucial to the creation of the primary illusion and the semblance of substantiality, and, consequently, to the expression of the idea.  

The sense of bodily existence is wholly illusory, just as is the primary illusion. Langer maintains there are a number of ways to create this sense of substantiality; she notes such conditions as the complexity of its structure, its sense of uniqueness. However, she maintains that

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96 Langer, Mind, pp. 205, 240.
the most important factor in the creation of its tangible character is the interaction of the primary illusion with the secondary illusions. The former seems to have an air of indefinite potentiality because it is steady and completely developed; the negative background for the manifestations of the highly developed, incompletely developed secondary illusions that arise and dissolve again. The interaction of the two creates the sense of constant becoming, of process. The work seems to have a core from which all the elements seem to emerge, partially developed and still unfolding. This sense of indefinite potentiality is the essence of bodily existence, Langer maintains, and is what causes the art work to have a counterpart in nature.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 205-10.} The art work has the semblance of bodily existence and is symbolic of life primarily because its form is logically congruent with the form of acts.

All created elements in a work of art are act-like; they have formal properties which in nature characterize acts. The sense of inviolability, fusability, the
retention of past phases in succeeding ones, and the complexity of the relationship of the elements to the whole are mentioned by Langer as some of the act-like properties of artistic elements. 98 Essentially they are all part of the dialectical structure resulting from the formal properties of dynamism and unity. All living form, whether in art or nature, is characterized by dynamic unity.

The continuous dynamic pattern within a unit can continue because the pattern of events is rhythmic. Langer does not consider rhythm to be periodic succession; it is related to function rather than time. It is a change begun and completed, and the completion appears as a new beginning. 99 Langer states:

The essence of rhythm is the alternation of tension building up to a crisis, and ebbing away in a graduated course of relaxation whereby a new build-up of tension is prepared and driven to the next crisis, which necessitates the next cadence. If the series of actions thus engendered consists of alternating contraries, such as rise and fall, push and pull, suction and expulsion, and each element in spending itself

98 Ibid., p. 204.
99 Langer, Problems, pp. 50-51.
prepares and initiates its own converse, the resulting rhythm is a dialectic.\textsuperscript{100}

Dialectical rhythms are vital to organic processes; their virtual image is basic to living form in art. Continuing, Langer says:

The concatenation of minute acts—close to the molecular level—into continuous series, self-sustaining by virtue of the cyclic structure of their elements, each of which has a definite magnitude measurable from any phase of the cycle to its repetition, is the basic pattern of life. It is carried on by such diminutive and intricate mechanisms that every development of our optical enlarging instruments reveals new functioning structures in what heretofore looked like homogeneous substance. Most, if not all, of the processes we can distinguish as yet are summations of smaller ones; and the summations take the form of rhythmically concatenated acts, which either summate or differentially interact to produce larger rhythms. The parabolic curve which expresses the typical act form emerges again and again, at each level of integration, in the physiological rhythms of every organism; and this form, with its main phases of inception, acceleration, consummation and cadential finish, is what makes the rhythmic pattern, and is accordingly the basis not only of the distinguishable unit acts in a continuous activity, but also of their self-concatenation, and the consequent self-perpetuation of the continuum.\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{100} Langer, \textit{Mind}, p. 324.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
Just as the basic pattern of life is sustained and grows by rhythmic patterns which are unified, vital form in art is dynamic, rhythmic, growing, unified form.

The act process, while unified, rhythmicized, and self-perpetuating, also produces checks on its own activities. This striving toward both growth and equilibrium effects the continuous balance of life. This continuity of life has apparently remained unbroken in the stock, i.e., the original living entity of indefinite duration. 102

The act form is seen by Langer as playing a significant role in the dynamism of continuous stocks for it exhibits not only the principle of progressive involvement, but also the converse principle of individuation. Individuality arises from the process of individuation, a biological process that characterizes the life of every stock, whether plant or animal. All of the higher animals are final individuations that end in death, but man is the only one who knows this; he can conceive of his own death because he can think symbolically about life. Because of

102 Langer, Mind, pp. 325-28; Sketches, p. 114.
his symbolic conception man can also know that he is part of a greater life, the life of the stock, which lives on after his individual death. Man's insight into nature gives him a fundamental knowledge of his involvement with the stock, the counterpart of his individuation. 103

Langer maintains that the most consequential aspect of life, "that which ties together its lowest and its highest forms." is individuation. 104 She further states:

Though we have no physical model of this endless rhythm of individuation and involvement, we do have its image in the world of art. . . . 105

All the traits of "livingness" in art are prerequisites for the expression of individuation. 106

The image of life that appears as the "livingness" in art is one of the logical patterns of the processes of growth, the simultaneous expression of successive phases,

104Langer, Mind, p. 222.
105Ibid., p. 355.
106Ibid., p. 222.
in a single form. This vitality is essentially spacial as well as essentially temporal. The interrelations and interdependency of the elements create the dialectical structure which, in turn, creates the substantiality, or "livingness" of the work of art.

The semblance of living form in art may be achieved by many means; this makes it possible to have a particular impression created by one device and also have many other created elements incidently serve the same purpose. Langer states:

This practice, which is intuitive and far-reaching, makes the created work seem like a direct exhibit of life rather than a symbolic presentation, because it obscures the technique in distributing it over many unapparent devices. It also has another, more remarkable, effect: it makes many subordinate features of a work reflect each other, so that each one of them connotes the whole, carrying the traditional and personal style like an "individuality factor" even in separation (within variable limits). That is why a sculptural fragment may still be beautiful, and a mutilated work especially of sculpture or architecture, tends to close in on itself and restore its organic semblance, sometimes to perfection.  

Because of the multiple means of expression and the

\[107\] Ibid., p. 215.
multiple functions of the elements there is a profound freedom in artistic creation and expression. Langer theorizes that this fact has a peculiar influence on the created form itself. She says:

In a good work, every subordinate form appears not only to emerge from the inner substance, but also to be prepared by something else, perhaps by many factors. In a picture, every color or line or every lacuna that sets up a virtual tension does so because other factors are there to meet it. If we start with any feature, its place appears to have been ready to receive it, and its occurrence, in turn, to support the creation of qualities that one would attribute primarily to other constituents of the picture. It is as though a series of preparations were simultaneously taking place. This means, of course, that the sense of preparation is symbolically projected as an aspect of the artistic import. 108

The freedom is not absolute, but the artist is faced with options; as each choice is made it dooms its alternatives, but new options arise. 109

The artist's decisions are not evident in the finished work, but an aspect of his method of working leaves its record. Langer says the viewer feels

108 Ibid., p. 218.
109 Ibid., p. 219.
... the sense of movement from option to option, the recurrent progression from potentiality to realization, every decision producing new possibilities and offering new choices. The dynamic pattern belongs to art itself, because it is an inescapable pattern of life. That is why a really "living" work always seems reasonable in every respect, yet not predictable, as though it could, nevertheless, have been different. All its internal articulations are prepared, yet not caused, by their environment; the resulting impression is motivation instead of causation.110

The image of life projected in works of art is one of motivated activity.111

Motivation is seen by Langer as more than categorical drives engendered by basic physiological needs. She proposes that motivation be envisaged as all purposive activations, as causation of acts. This is an abstraction of the idea of motivation whereas the concept is widened to include both indirect and direct causation of acts, i.e., causation via both intraorganic and external sources. However, the latter is possible only if the ongoing activity is altered within the organism so that it is

110 Ibid., pp. 219-20.
111 Ibid., p. 220.
replaced by a new act. The organism is not passive, or even partially so. It is dynamic, unified—made up of its own acts because each motivation of those acts is affected by the inherited dynamic complex of conflicting yet continuous rhythms.

Langer maintains that nowhere else, except in art and life, do we find the conditions of necessity and freedom. The semblance of necessity or inevitability in art is, Langer says:

... of one piece with that of internal freedom. These two pervasive elements are counterparts, and can enter into all sorts of dialectical relations with each other, even intersect—which they do, indeed, in every optional act: for the agent, if he may choose, also must choose. This is the real "inexorable law" of nature: the perpetual advance of life, from one situation to another, unbroken from birth to death. But the sense of inevitability which all great art conveys is most perfectly made without reference to that actuality. It is created by the fittingness of forms, the build-up of tensions and the logic of their resolutions, the exact degrees to which the elements are articulated, etc.; the idea is completely abstracted from actual life, transformed into quality, projected in sensuous terms. Yet we know it for what it is.

112 Ibid., pp. 275-88.
113 Ibid., p. 221.
The artist expresses the quality of life—what it feels like to be human, with human sensitivities to the meaning of life with its rhythmical growth and, finally, inevitable death.

In the plastic arts the semblance of growth must be created without any actual temporal ingredient. Langer illuminates the manner by which this is accomplished when she states:

The sense of becoming, i.e., of process, is symbolically rendered very largely by gradients of apparent completeness, among elements so related to each other that they possess a visual unity and make a forcible impression of evolution from the slightest to the richest articulation of volume, line, surface and implied inner tensions. It may be reinforced by many other elements, including motifs, which often determine centers of interest and axes of symmetry. But gradients of all sorts run through every artistic structure and make its rhythmic quality. \[114\]

Langer illustrates the developing of potential forms to varying degrees by the following comments:

In a Cambodian Buddha statue . . . there is usually a perfect elaboration of the head, and a flowing line to the hands, which are given

slightly less articulation; the torso and crossed legs are very simply treated as large surfaces and opposed curves. There is a gradient of development toward the head, culminating in the face, and lesser one toward the hands, that leads up to their delicate form and gesture. Such a figure has the living stillness of a plant; its "inward action" is concentrated in its apex, the head, which consequently predominate without being given any other emphasis by way of extraordinary proportion, posture or features. Its expressiveness suffuses the figure and makes the columnar body seem to subserve the development of the meditative head and the reflection of its poise in the hands; the traditional lotus pedestal repeats the theme of slow and gradual efflorescence.\textsuperscript{115}

The idea Langer presents is basically that all semblances of movement are perceived as growth processes.

Langer points out that in both art and nature it is not necessary for something to become larger for it to be growing; the principle of growth is the assimilation of factors now originally belonging to the organism, whereby they enter into its life. Langer says:

Permanence of form . . . is the constant aim of living matter; not the final goal (for it is what finally fails) . . . "living" itself is a process, a continuous change; if it stands still the form disintegrates--for the permanence is a

pattern of changes.

Nothing, therefore, is as fundamental in the fabric of our feeling as the sense of permanence and change and their intimate unity. What we call "motion" in art is not necessarily change of place, but is change made perceivable, i.e., imaginable, in any way whatever.

A form that exemplifies permanence, such as a fixed line or a delimited space (the most permanent anchors of vision), yet symbolizes motion, carries with it the concept of growth. 116

This concept of motion-in-permanence is an aspect of the total envisagement of living form as dynamic unity.

The deviation from a type causing unique features is not the basis for organic individuality. Langer maintains that it is the fact that the ontogenetic processes of its individuation are encoded in its bodily form. Visible examples of this are the gradients of pigmentation and patterning of insect wings and the growth rings of mushrooms. 117

Individuality in art, as in nature, seems to depend upon factual uniqueness, but this is not true. In fact, it may not be the "original" piece, but may be a

117 Ibid., pp. 331-33.
reproduction such as an etching or metal casting from a mold or perhaps a beautifully designed glass goblet or piece of furniture. Yet the piece seems unique. The reason, Langer maintains, is because

... the individuality of a work of art is not a factual condition but a quality, as virtual as all other artistic qualities. It is the semblance of organism that creates the apparent uniqueness of a piece. The work seems unique when it is "alive," i.e., expressive. Consequently this all-important character may grow but slowly under the artist's hand. Instead of being one of the elementary ingredients in the "Idea" with which he starts, it is the reward of his work. Sometimes its promise is evident from the beginning; but again sometimes it hinges on revelations of implicit form and even discoveries of possible feeling which come to him only as he concentrates on his idea and sees its image develop. 

The same quality, that of expressiveness, is what constitutes both the sense of originality and beauty in art. The work must be expressive of life.

The more elementary vital rhythms of life are expressed in pure ornaments, folk art, and nursery rhymes; these types of compositions spring from direct perceptual interest—the love of color, form, etc. But true works of

\[118\] Ibid., pp. 209-10.
art, Langer maintains, must have a superstructure of higher developments which makes them expressive of what she considers the most consequential aspect of life: individuation. The artist creates tensions and unity, rhythmic movement to express the process of growth, gradients of development, and the sense of becoming, of preparation, of motivation; all of these elements are created for the expression of the sense of individuation.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 222-23.}

The semblance of individuation is part of the illusion of organic form as are all of the created elements. The process of individuation occurs when the work expresses not only the semblance of uniqueness but also internal individuation. Langer says:

The artistic organization the mutual influence of forms is patent; they are often involved with each other to the point of complete interdependence. But at any point a subordinate form may take on an active, even ruling function, a motif may develop and detach itself from the fabric of the whole to some degree; it launches on a process of individuation. This is prepared by the semblance of becoming, of something, constantly emerging, which is part of all "livingness" in art; but special internal
individuation occurs in every piece that may properly be called a work." ...  

Langer maintains that the standard artistic practices of a society may lead to true art works: when someone sensitive to plastic qualities modifies traditional motifs to project his own personal expression. Langer says that the sense of individuation may arise from both traditional motifs and pure design. This occurs if the work should

. . . bring forth an autonomous form, and be transmuted into an individual expression, with the beauty of an emotional idea; or it may be invaded by a new element which changes its decorative motifs and rhythms into supports for a different composition altogether, and makes them seem to emerge from a matrix that did not exist before, but which now they serve to constitute and also derive from.  

She comments on the commanding form of the work:

From the very inception of the work it is not a familiar rhythm, the typical expression of a style, that guides the artist, but his personal idea; and the central feeling on this level is always specifically human feeling.  

Langer says that the effect of the artist's departure from

\[ \text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 222.} \]

\[ \text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 223.} \]

\[ \text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 225.} \]
traditional ways of working results in

... a new created element: as the artist's work proceeds, the development of the form seems like more than elaboration, it seems like a gradual individuation. The actual procedures—adding, filling, simplifying, clarifying, etc.—are not new, but the semblance of growth is new, for it seems to be an individuating process instead of a typical organic completion.\(^{123}\)

It appears that this new element could go beyond its present degree but something stops it, perhaps the rivalry of other elements or the exhaustion of its own impetus.

Langer compares Egyptian and Greek sculpture to illustrate these effects. She says:

In Egyptian sculpture, for instance, every contour that is articulated at all is carried to completion; its growth impulse is spent. The represented being may be young, but the statue is always mature. This, more than any conventional pose, makes it hieratic, in spite of the frequent realism of physique and features. It is grown form, not growing; its limits of individuation are predetermined by those of its initial force. Greek sculpture, by contrast, seems in the process of individuation. Forms interplay and suggest each other, edges disappear in volumes, planes merge their movements. If Greek art (this goes for architecture, ceramics, drama, or what you will) makes an impression of perfection, it is different from

\(^{123}\) Ibid.
the perfection of great Egyptian works; it reaches a perfect moment, like an eternalized act of coming into its own.  

There are degrees of individuation, not only in works by different artists, but also in the works of different ages.

Works of art project the image of mentality as exhibiting the mysterious quality of intangible elements that arise from the activity of the mind, but yet do not seem to be of it. This is the artistic projection of the mental images arising from unknown sources, elusive, individual, repetitious or chaotic and charged with feeling.  

The artist usually develops the various elements implicit in the original idea to different degrees, creating a sense of subordinate and dominant internal forms. He may repeat elements in a pattern, while deleting others; the rhythm is maintained by the repeated elements. This is a major device for the projection of individuation.

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125 Ibid., pp. 229-30.
because the essence of design is repetition. Natural forms repeat themselves. In both animal and plant growth there exists the principle of self-imitation in its basic activities; this is reflected in the general isomorphy of parts articulated within the individual organism. This is the fundamental principle of organic structure underlying repetition with variation, one of the major devices for creating living form in art. 126

The most powerful means of expressing human mentality is the creation of secondary illusions. They not only give the work a sense of substance which the image of feeling must appear to transcend, but they also produce that image with its appearance of disembodied being. Because the secondary illusions seem to be derived from an order of existence other than that of the work in which they occur, yet the possibility of their occurrence is ever present, the art work is capable of expressing the complex and incalculable character of life. Their shifting character, appearing then fading, causes them to

126 Ibid., pp. 138-39, 227-29.
project the outstanding attribute of human mentality, the termination of autonomous acts in psychical phases that resemble those of perceptual acts in many respects; that is to say, the occurrence of images. \textsuperscript{127}

Yet they may be created without going outside the order of art in which they are projected, but only to a different mode within the order, i.e., sculptural qualities in painting. \textsuperscript{128}

However it is created the powerful secondary illusion can create the impression of a shift from one order of existence to another. It is transition from one level of feeling to another made perceptible. As powerful as this concept may be, Langer maintains that secondary illusions are not the greatest transformation that may occur in artistic expression. She states:

There is one step beyond that play of secondary illusions in which different perceptual realms seem to interact, and make a semblance of rising and fading presences that in actuality belong only to mental images--memory, fantasy and shifting perceptions. This further step I can only call "transcendence," because it seems to

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., p. 240.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., pp. 230-40.
transcend the sensory vehicle altogether and make an almost pure presentation of the "Idea." Such a rarified projection cannot stand alone; it arises from a constellation of devices, making a manifold abstraction.\textsuperscript{129}

It is at the point of transcendence that the closest relationship among the orders of art exists, where they seem to merge into one import.\textsuperscript{130}

A sense of simplification attends the projection of the quality of transcendence. When the limit of complexity and intensity is reached, there is a tendency for the elements to break into a larger pattern which engulfs the previous elements.\textsuperscript{131} This is the artistic counterpart of what Langer believes is a universal principle of evolution: the differentiation of forms to the smallest functional subunits, and then the integration of the smaller subunits to large subunits. This is a shift of functions wherein process of individuation is reversed and old processes give way to new ones.\textsuperscript{132}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 242.
\textsuperscript{130} Langer, \textit{Mind}, pp. 239-42; \textit{Sketches}, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{131} Langer, \textit{Mind}, p. 243.
\end{flushright}
No matter whether the piece of work expresses only the elementary vital rhythms of life or is a rarified example which transcends its medium of expression, this statement by Langer is applicable:

The expressive form, or art symbol, is ... the work of art itself, as it meets the eye (let us, for simplicity's sake, stay in the realm of pictorial art). It is the visible form, the apparition created out of paint deployed on a ground. The paint and the ground themselves disappear. One does not see a picture as a piece of spotted canvas, any more than one sees a screen with shadows on it in a movie. Whether there be things and persons in the picture or not, it presents volumes in a purely created space. These volumes define and organize the pictorial space which they are, in fact, creating; the purely visible space seems to be alive with their balanced or strained interactions. The line that divides them (which may be physically drawn, or implied) create a rhythmic unity, for what they divide they also relate, to the point of complete integration. If a picture is successful it presents us with something quite properly, even though metaphorically, called "living form."\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{133} Langer, Problems, pp. 127-38.
Artistic Experience

By artistic perception Langer means the perception of expressiveness. She maintains that because of this expressiveness the work of art has an import which is a "presented conception of what life feels like." The perception of the import has the immediacy of qualitative experience. The quality of expressiveness in the piece may invoke excitement, emotions, and heightened sensibilities in the viewer. But these feelings are not the import of art.

The emotional and personal response of the viewer has confused even aestheticians as to the prime purpose of art, Langer maintains. For example, she cites the major device for animating the work: the deployment of sensory materials by degrees. She states:

The implicit existence of gradients in all sensation reinforces our appreciation of living form by giving it an echo, or reiteration, in sense, which is always charged with feeling and consequently tends to subjectify the form, to

134 Ibid., p. 59.

135 Langer, Mind, p. 90; Problems, p. 129.
make its import felt yet hold that import to the projective medium.136

Because of the importance of this articulatory device, the major purpose of art is often thought to be direct sensory pleasure. But some works are given to imagination, not the outward senses.137

Yet the piece of art does seem to have a life of its own, to be imbued with feeling. The import of the work seems to be in the work, because what is expressed cannot be grasped apart from the work; it does not point to a meaning beyond its own presence. A work of art is the direct presentation of a feeling, it is the expressive form. Because works of art do not signify concepts beyond themselves, Langer says they do not have meaning in the strict sense of the word, but they have import.138

Neither is the expressive form a symbol in the same sense that words are symbols. Langer says:

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136 Langer, Mind, p. 214.

137 Langer, Mind, p. 214; Sketches, p. 76.

It is a symbol in a special and derivative sense, because it does not fulfill all the functions of a true symbol: it formulates and objectifies experience for direct intellectual perception, or intuition, but it does not abstract a concept for discursive thought. Its import is seen in it; not, like the meaning of a genuine symbol, by means of it but separable from the sign. The symbol in art is a metaphor, an image with overt or convert literal signification; the art symbol is the absolute image—the image of what otherwise would be irrational, as it is literally ineffable: direct awareness, emotion, vitality, personal identity—life lived and felt, the matrix of mentality.\textsuperscript{139}

So, the art work is a special kind of symbol with an import which is something like meaning.

Langer's comments are significant in explaining what is felt by the viewer and in clarifying the term import. She states:

The exhilaration of a direct aesthetic experience indicates the depth to which that experience goes. A work of art, or anything that affects us as art does, may truly be said to "do something to us," though not in the usual sense which aestheticians rightly deny—giving us emotions and moods. What it does to us is to formulate our conceptions of feeling and our conceptions of visual, factual, and audible reality together. It gives us forms of imagination and forms of feeling, inseparably; that is to say, it clarifies and organizes

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 139.
intuition itself. That is why it has the force of a revelation, and inspires a feeling of deep intellectual satisfaction, though it elicits no conscious intellectual work (reasoning). Aesthetic intuition seizes the greatest form, and therefore the main import, at once; there is no need of working through lesser ideas and serried implications first without a vision of the whole, as in discursive reasoning, where the total intuition of relatedness comes to the conclusion, like a prize. In art, it is the impact of the whole, the immediate revelation of vital import, that acts as the psychological lure to long contemplation. 140

The art work formulates new ways of seeing congruence and relationships in life itself; that is the import of art.

Langer maintains that the one qualification necessary for the understanding of art is responsiveness; this is the ability necessary to receive the import. She believes that it either exists or does not, like talent. Although different, both are heightened or reduced by experience. Commenting on responsiveness, she states:

Since it is intuitive, it cannot be taught; but the free exercise of artistic intuition often depends on clearing the mind of intellectual prejudices and false conceptions that inhibit people's natural responsiveness. 141

140 Langer, F. and F., p. 397.

141 Ibid., p. 396.
She notes as examples the person who believes he must translate poetry into prose, consequently, his intellectual attitude, resting on a theoretical belief, keeps him from being responsive, and the person who, because of academic training, thinks of paintings primarily in terms of schools or periods. The latter would approach the works in order to make intellectual judgments about them; this could block his ability to intuitively respond.  

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Langer distinguishes between the attitude of the artist at work and the attitude of the viewer. The characteristic of working attitude is one of creative imagination; that of the audience is responsiveness. However, she notes that both qualifications must be present, for we move freely back and forth between them. But the point here is that the person responsive to works of art must also be a person who is creatively imaginative. 143

142 Ibid., pp. 396-97.
143 Ibid., p. 397.
Artistic Function

Every culture, Langer points out, has developed both art and language; even those without myths or religion. This fact is not consistent with the contemporary belief that art is a cultural frill, an expendable luxury. She maintains that the facts bear out the conviction held by most artists, which is, she says:

... that art is the epitome of human life, the truest record of insight and feeling, and the strongest military or economic society without art is poor in comparison with the most primitive tribe of savage painters, dancers, or idol carvers. Wherever a society has really achieved culture (in the ethnological sense, not the popular sense of "social form") it has begotten art, not late in its career, but at the very inception of it.

Art is, indeed, the spearhead of human development, social and individual. The vulgarization of art is the surest symptom of ethnic decline. The growth of a new art or even a great and radically new style always bespeaks a new and vigorous mind, whether collective or single.144

The arts have such a momentous influence on human life because their primary function is to objectify feeling so that it can be contemplated and understood.145

144 Langer, Sketches, p. 75.
145 Ibid., pp. 75-80.
The cognitive value of the arts is a result of that objectification of subjective life into symbolic forms because then, Langer theorizes, these forms can be used to

... imagine feeling and understand its nature. Self-knowledge, insight into all phases of life and mind, springs from artistic imagination. That is the cognitive value of the arts.146

But there are other functions of art that are not primarily intellectual. Just as language formulates our sense experience the arts formulate our emotive experience. She believes the arts to be at the matrix of personal education. She states: "... a wide neglect of artistic education is a neglect in the education of feeling."147

She adds:

The arts objectify subjective reality, and subjectify outward experience of nature. Art education is the education of feeling, and a society that neglects it gives itself up to formless emotion. Bad art is a corruption of feeling. This is a large factor in the irrationalism which dictators and demagogues exploit.148

146 Ibid., p. 82.
147 Ibid., p. 83.
148 Ibid., p. 84.
The neglect of art education results in both personal and cultural insecurity; life lacks congruence and relatedness.

Man needs both individuation and involvement.

Describing the rhythmical pattern of man's relation to his stock, Langer says:

"... Every human individual is a culmination of a long line--its ancestry--and each is destined to die. The living stock is like a palm tree, a trunk composed of its own past leaves. Each leaf springs from the trunk, unfolds, grows, and does off; its past is incorporated in the trunk, where new life has usually arisen from it. So there constantly are ends, but the stock lives on, and each leaf has that whole trunk behind it." 149

Because of our power of symbolic conception we know that we each must die, this causes the necessity of extreme individuation: self-realization. We want this infinitesimal life-span to be as complete as possible. 150

Yet the need for the greatest possible individuation is complemented by the need for involvement, not just on a personal basis, but involvement with the entire human

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149 Ibid., p. 100.
race, both past and present. This is our social sense.

Langer states:

Each person is not only a free, single end, like the green palm leaf that unfolds, grows in a curve of beauty, and dies in its season; he is like the whole palm leaf, the part inside the trunk, too. He is the culmination of his entire ancestry, and represents that whole human past. In his brief individuation he is an expression of all humanity. That is what makes every person's life sacred and all-important. A single ruined life is the bankruptcy of a long line. This is what I mean by the individual's involvement with all mankind.\textsuperscript{151}

Yet, unlike the other creatures who do not have complete individuation, man is in danger of breaking the bonds of rootedness with his own kind by virtue of the fact that he has unlimited selfhood.\textsuperscript{152}

Langer proposes that the only way a balance can be maintained is through the very power that brought about the problem. She states:

\textldots the natural ties to his kind which he loses with the great growth of his mind are replaced by that same mental power that broke them, the power of symbolization; and we can

\textsuperscript{151}Ibid., p. 102.

\textsuperscript{152}Ibid., pp. 102-104.
afford to carry our individuation just as far as symbols of our social involvement hold the balance against it.\textsuperscript{153}

How can symbols help retain that sense of community? She says:

The mental function of symbolization, which augments the scope of our world so that no system of instinctive responses could meet its demands, and therefore breaks the most constant bond of the individual to its kind, makes the bond largely unnecessary to us by providing symbols of our participation in the greater life of mankind, symbols of humanity and of our involvement in it.\textsuperscript{154}

Man can afford to become individuated just to the point that he can replace the natural bonds with symbolic ones. Symbols must substitute for the natural ties of brotherhood, the instinctual identification with like kind which man has lost.\textsuperscript{155}

Because humanity, both past and present, is so enormous, it cannot be conceived, except through symbols. The church, the clan, or any other such frame of reference,

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., p. 115.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., p. 113.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., pp. 105, 113-14.
serves as a symbol of mankind, and, consequently, of a greater life which is a unified whole. Yet, when these symbolic forms of unity begin to fragment to an excessive degree, as in contemporary society, the "emotional effect on people as individuals is that the holiness goes out of all institutions."¹⁵⁶ Langer says that the rapid break up of social units results in the negation of our inherited symbols of humanity; people feel a sense of alienation and loss of involvement, alone. In desperation they turn to exotic cults or back to religion, and, she says:

... reject what seems to hurry the fragmentation of society--science, technology, and the cultivation of reason that begot those advances--and long to return to the unconscious, instinct-guided self-realization of animals, or at least to the tribal pieties they attribute to unknown savages. Meanwhile they do not know that the most dramatic rejection of social involvement lies in their repudiation of the onerous things civilized life visits on them, for our strongest bond to our kind is the acceptance of commitments we did not make, commitments made for us by the circumstances of our birth or the decrees of our elders. No matter how much we want to stop the process of individuation, our acts hurry it.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 119.
¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 120-21.
The proposal is made by Langer that society is breaking up into its ultimate units—single individuals; the process of individuation has almost reached its limit. 158

This is of momentous consequence. She states:

I think we are witnessing the beginning of a vast change in society, nothing less than a biological shift of functions to new structures. The organismlike phase of society, in which more and more subordinate forms become articulated, is reaching its close; the new structures which are in the making—and, indeed, have long been so—are products of integration, new wholes made out of very small ones, even out of the ultimate units. In society, such integral forms are institutions. In the past, institutions were based on the natural social articulations, and were recognized and sanctioned natural products. In the future they will have to spring more and more from the higher mental processes which are peculiar to man—conscious planning and ruling. 159

At this stage Langer cannot suggest any design for this reintegration, but she does suggest the direction in which man must proceed if he is to retain his mental orientation.

New cultures cannot be forced; they begin, she says, when

158 Ibid., p. 120.
159 Ibid.
imagination catches fire, and objects and actions become life symbols, and the new life symbols become motifs for art. Art, which formulates and fixes human ways of feeling, is always the spearhead of a new culture, for culture is the objective record of developed feeling.160 Although art may be the necessary formulative factor in a beginning culture, what really completes the culture is what follows, such as the felt life of overt action, the philosophy, religion, law, institutions, etc.161

Langer presents the idea that the new world culture will be constructed by the same force that is destroying the old: science. She maintains that the new culture that will embrace all humanity must be global. She says:

At present, scientific thinking is the only one of our great and prevailing activities which is universal in fact as well as in principle. We already claim the universality of art, and gradually come to appreciate other people's art, but it still starts by being exotic and often remains so even if we know and love it. Science is not native or exotic; it belongs to humanity and is the same wherever it is found. Only it is not likely to beget a culture unless, and until, a truly universal artistic imagination catches fire from its torch and serves without

160 Ibid., p. 92.
161 Ibid., pp. 92-93.
The new forces below the level of conceptualization must be formulated and articulated. The function of art is to sort out all the amorphous, subjective feelings at work in the world today, to objectify them so that they can be understood, and will no longer be destructive. The artistic process is always constructive.

\[162\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 93.}\]
CHAPTER IV

IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATION

The philosophy of Langer provides a conceptual structure which has implications beyond art and art education. Her ideas generate suggestions for all education: for structuring the curriculum, for selecting conceptual content, and for determining the learning theory and teaching methods most consistent with the nature of man.

The purpose of this chapter is to show the implications of Langer's philosophical concepts for art education. These implications will be based on the criteria of (1) those general concepts described in Chapter II and (2) those specific aesthetic concepts described in Chapter III. The aesthetic concepts of artistic creation, artistic expression, artistic experience, and artistic function will also serve as the focus for that theorizing.
Artistic Creation

Artistic creation is the act of taking physical materials and using them to create something over and above what is physically there: an illusion. This illusion serves to set the forms free from practical associations of use, allowing them to be perceived for their expressive quality.

Each order of art is defined by its own primary illusion, not by virtue of its materials, and each order has a variety of modes for creating this illusion. The plastic arts derive their autonomy from the creation of virtual space; the modes of creation are: painting (scene), sculpture (kinetic volume), and architecture (ethnic domain). Because all the modes of creating virtual space are related by their spacial properties but separated from the other orders of art, an artist in any plastic mode is sensitive to all plastic form, but not necessarily to the other orders of art.

The creation of the work of art is guided by the original idea; this idea acts as a commanding form against which all created elements must seem related. This idea is
an image of a quality of expressiveness and the achievement of this quality is the only aim of the artist.

Implications

This concept of creation in art is not consistent with the generally accepted educational definition of creativity. The latter does not distinguish between creativity in discursive and artistic modes of symbolization, nor is it conceived as an aspect of symbolization. Langer's concept is more subtle and difficult to conceive because it is not defined in terms of specific traits or behavior, but in terms of a self-expanding, self-evolving, imaginative process which redefines its means with each specific creation. This expansion and clarification of the concept of artistic creation suggests that the objectives derived from the promotion of creativity do not overlap in the discursive and artistic domains; both processes and products differ in kind.

The natural structure of the curriculum is based on the distinguishing conceptual experiences that result from the natural divisions implicit in symbolic transformation:
(1) the distinguishing characteristics of discursive and artistic abstraction, (2) the divisions among the orders of art, and (3) the natural divisions within each order. This has numerous further implications:

1. The means for achieving balance in the total curriculum, as well as in specific subjects and courses, could be viewed from the standpoint of distinguishing modes of abstraction.

2. Discursive mode forms a major division of learning, artistic mode another, i.e., English or the so-called language arts (which is a contradiction of terms in this theory) would be divided between the two divisions and the dance would be classified as an art, not as an area of physical education, as is sometimes the case.

3. There would be a reconsideration of the divisions contained within the various orders of art; consistency of the mode with the primary illusion of the order would be paramount. This is a means for suggesting the most appropriate
placement of such modes as television and photography. Since Langer specifically states that film is in the poetic order it would be recognized by the plastic arts that spacial effects in the film are secondary illusions.

This study theorizes that television and photography are evolving modes which, at this time, cannot be definitively classified, but appear to belong to the poetic and plastic orders, respectively. However, it should be noted that some features of television are discursive, such as news analysis. This study further theorizes that within the plastic order all modes of plastic expression can be categorized within the three divisions suggested by Langer: scene, kinetic volume, and ethnic domain.

Scene is not limited to painting, but includes drawing, printmaking, batik, stitchery, and any other creation which exhibits the characteristics of scene. In some cases the decision would be determined by the characteristics
exhibited by a specific piece, i.e., one weaving might be an expression of scene, another, of kinetic volume.

4. The specialist within each order of art is competent, to a degree, in all modes within that order, but is not necessarily competent outside that order. Therefore, the definitive structure inherent in the concept of artistic creation is also applicable to instructional distribution. However, the unity of all the arts contained in the concept of expression necessitates the inclusion in the curriculum of experiences which stress the unity of all artistic form.

5. Since each order of art is essentially a different type of experience which is conceptually formulative, individuals need to experience all the arts. If each order is to be experienced in totality, all modes of creating within that order need to be experienced.

6. The media-based curriculum in the plastic arts
is inappropriate because the arts do not derive their autonomy by virtue of the materials used, but by virtue of the illusion, or experience, created. Media are tools for the creation of the plastic expression, and are not the basis of the curriculum structure.

7. Just as the plastic arts exist because of a particular kind of created illusion which expresses an aspect of feeling, so does each of the other orders of art. The internal emphasis of each art form should be on its particular way of creating, of expressing, and of experiencing the quality of expressiveness, not on manipulating materials, techniques, or devices for rendering a technical formula. The aim of programs in all the arts is to develop the ability to imaginatively grasp the expressive quality of life, it is a process of formulation and conceptualization in the mode of sustained imagination—the opposite of a discursive interpretation of another's expression.
Original ideas which guide the creation of art works vary greatly, not only in the way they occur, but also in their strength and time needed to develop. This fact, combined with the multiplicity of means for creating a specific instance of form, requires a flexible learning situation and teacher who values individual differences. After the initial idea occurs, the student must be allowed to proceed at his own rate and to discover the means whereby he will elaborate on that original idea. The teacher must be sensitive to the fact that any attempt to verbally analyze the work in progress will tend to destroy the idea. This study theorizes that the art teacher is a resource person who: (1) provides the means for having the necessary technical information, (2) provides stimulators (human, visual, material, ideational, etc.) for ideas, (3) helps students formulate their ideas more clearly before beginning work, (4) helps students analyze their work after it is finished, and (5) constantly reinforces any tendency toward the sensitivity to expressive form and artistic imagination.
Artistic Expression

In the concept of artistic expression lies the unity of all the arts, for all orders are the symbolic expression of human feeling. It is this quality of expressiveness which defines art. Through the arts the literally unspeakable becomes conceivable because it has symbolic form. Art is the expression of feelings conceived, not of emotions directly felt.

But art is not the illustration of an idea—not the analytical rendering of a discursive idea. It is the imaginative expression of that quality of life which the artist knows. As long as this criterion of expressiveness is met, any idea and any medium is appropriate.

Expression in the plastic arts requires the advanced intellectual ability of conceptual differentiation of spacial properties. Any device for technically rendering the semblance of space is improper because it does not require the sustained artistic imagination which the creation of expressive form requires.

However, certain devices of construction and techniques are necessary for the execution of the expressive
idea. But they are not rules to be followed at all times; they are dispensable in the sense that they are not constant and must be discarded when they no longer serve the purpose of expressiveness. The artist uses them intuitively, not discursively.

Langer uses the terms expressive form, art symbol, living form, organic form, and artistic form interchangeably. This type of symbolism is expressive of life because its form is logically congruent with organic form in nature. The quality of life is expressed in art by the creation of act-like elements which compose the work. This creates the semblance of life, Langer theorizes, because the act form in nature is the phenomenon of life, it composes the elements in the continuum of a life.

The created art work, as the act in nature, is characterized by both dynamism and unity, either may predominate; this form is held together by the inviolable rhythm. The devices of construction and techniques are used by the artist to create the illusion of organic qualities--the semblance of substantiality, of becoming, of process, of growth, of freedom and necessity, of
individuation, and, in rare cases, of transcendence.

Against the primary illusion of space, the plastic artist creates elements which move and grow, rise and fall, appear and disappear, as the images of mentality itself. With this creation the artist expresses the quality of life itself.

**Implications**

Langer's criteria of expressive quality is a non-hierarchical concept of art. This implies no hierarchy of orders of art, of media, of modes of creating, of created elements, nor of aspects of feelings expressed. However, the last item does not mean that there is not a fundamental difference between the elementary vital rhythms expressed in a decorative moulding and the expression of individuation in a sculpture by Michelangelo. It means that any sculpture by Michelangelo, no matter what feeling is expressed, has the potential for being of the quality of any other sculpture by Michelangelo, or one by Picasso, for that matter. One is not better because its theme is more "lofty" or because it makes the viewer feel more "noble."
The concept of equality of materials, themes, modes, etc. would have numerous implications for education:

1. The curriculum in higher education would reflect this non-hierarchical concept of art. The areas open to advanced study would be extended to include some means of expression now often considered "crafts" or appropriate only for preliminary study. In the plastic arts drawing becomes as important as painting, pottery as important as marble carving. The validity of expression lies in the specific work, not in the materials used.

2. When this non-hierarchical concept is combined with the necessity for working in the mode of imagination, some ideas about sequence are suggested. The logical sequence in art becomes one of moving from work that requires less imagination toward work that not only requires more imagination, but more sustained imagination. This would be affected by many factors, such as: physical properties of materials,
size and complexity of the work, and the stage of maturation. This type of sequencing would involve several factors: (1) the physical plant must include adequate space for work in progress, (2) the curriculum structure must be flexible enough to allow time for students to complete sustained ideas, and (3) the selection of learning experiences for both short and long range goals would move from less to more imaginative tasks. This type of sequence also has the advantage of allowing the student to learn rapidly at first; the more work that can be done in a shorter period of time, the greater the possibility provided for more rapid learning.

The unity of artistic expression and the definitive features of artistic abstraction would be implicit concepts in any art curriculum. They would become the central theme in courses integrating all the arts. This source of unification would provide a valid bases for content selection and the elements around which specialists in the various
arts could build a program broad in scope and rich in conceptual depth.

Langer distinguishes among (1) rules and technical formulas for the manipulation of spacial properties, (2) techniques and devices of construction, and (3) principles of art. The most crucial issue facing educators in this concept is not the identification of rules and formulas; point perspective is obviously a technical formula and, therefore, should not be taught. However, the distinction between devices and principles is more subtle and, consequently, more difficult. A possible method for this identification would be to categorize in the following way:

1. A principle of life
2. Devices that express that principle
3. The principle of art that correlates with them

An example of this is:

1. Form tends toward self-imitation (principle of life)
2. Repetition with variation (device of construction)
3. Artistic form is "living" form (principle of art)

Since the devices are not universals, but do compose the major portion of the content of studio, they are really most of the "talk" and the "task," and because of this they must be discovered in such a way that the student never thinks of them as rules to be followed. They are simply devices and the student is free to create a new way.

This presents a real problem: the student must be involved in creating elements expressive of life, and in order to do this, devices must be used. Yet these devices must not be used discursively, but intuitively. This study theorizes that neither the teacher nor the student should approach the class in a discursive way. This implies that the non-discursive approach would be implicit in talk and explicit in assignments. The discursive approach is intrinsic in all pre-planned, structured units or courses in art history, art appreciation, and critical analysis. These areas of art learning would grow naturally out of the studio class. This means that the teacher must be sensitive to any spontaneous opportunity for developing
this type of artistic understanding.

The teacher must provide opportunities for this type of spontaneous interest to develop. Works of art should be present constantly. But they, and any other kind of resource such as reproductions, must be presented in a way to promote artistic imagination, never for their discursive value. Yet the value of art works can not be negated for fear that they will be approached in an unimaginative way. The student who can no longer see the expressive quality of phenomena in the natural world can see this quality in works of art. He needs this, not only because it is the quality he too will try to create, but because it is an aid in the conceptualization of reality.

The school should be housed in a work of architecture, not in just a building. For architecture, as all works of art, formulates the conceptions of the human: conceptions not only about education, but about reality itself, for architecture is the ethnic domain of the culture, the symbol of the world.

This study proposes the studio approach to the teaching of the plastic arts. This approach is appropriate
for all students, for artistic symbolism is a basic human need, as natural as language. The human needs to create art, to develop his creative imagination, and, through this, his responsiveness to expressive form in both nature and art. Artistic imagination and artistic responsiveness are mutually reinforcing.

When the student is creating art he, like the artist, is engaged in acts of diverging, converging, diverging; of producing options, limiting options, producing options; of producing tensions, resolving tensions, producing tensions. It could be said that the student is engaged in a process of self-expanding growth, a process characterized by dynamism and unity, held together by its inviolable rhythm. Although the process requires convergence as well as divergence, they are not balanced in the sense of equality. The opportunity for divergence must predominate for the process of artistic creation, like the process of learning, and, indeed, the process of life, is not a static system of maintenance, but a dynamic process of growing, of becoming. In short, the student discovers ways of creating and responding to form expressive of life
because he is actively engaged in a process which is itself symbolic of the process of life.

Artistic Experience

Art is a natural symbolic mode, as normal as discursive symbolism, but it is the source of experiences different from all others. Artistic perception is the perception of the quality of expressiveness. Like artistic creation and expression it cannot be manipulated by any rules. The viewer cannot approach the work of art in terms of its instrumental value, for the artist has created an illusion which sets the piece free from practical associations so that the expressive qualities become immediately perceptible. The work of art does not point beyond itself.

Because the quality of feeling is so directly presented it seems to be embodied in the work itself. This may result in the viewer's feeling a sense of excitement and direct sensory pleasure. But this is not the import of art.

The import of art is its formulative function, its ability to formulate man's conception of relations—
formulate intuition itself. The viewer immediately and intuitively perceives an image of the life of feeling, and this image is the measure of the validity of our models. Yet if the image is to be of service to discursive analysis, the artistic process of creation and expression must be understood.

The qualification necessary for artistic perception is that of responsiveness. The attitude of responsiveness necessitates a highly sensitive artistic imagination. Improper academic training and prejudice can create inhibitions or misconceptions that inhibit responsiveness and, therefore, block the perception of the import.

Implications

The ability to imagine artistically which the studio class seeks to develop is also the basis for the ability to respond imaginatively to works of art. Therefore, the studio class is not only appropriate for those students who will be producers of art, but is also the best experience for the future audience of art.

Since the experiencing of art cannot be approached
with a discursive concept of rules in mind, in fact to do so would tend to block responsiveness, works of art should be approached in the most natural way. They should be an innate part of the life of the student. The understanding of the artistic process should come about as a natural outgrowth of doing art, seeing art, feeling art, and even talking art. This would develop during a long time of being involved with art, not as the result of any attempt at premature discursive analysis.

Langer proposes that art is the only source of experiences primarily formulative of intuition. Since under her definition of intuition it is the basic intellectual function, it can be hypothesized that artistic experiences are basic to the development of intelligence in man. If it is granted that the schools are the primary source for the intellectual development of men, then it is mandatory for the schools to provide and promote experiences in the arts for all students.

**Artistic Function**

The arts function in a crucial role in relation to both the individual and the society. They lie at the heart
of both personal and cultural education. Since artistic imagination is the source of all insights into life and mentality and the arts formulate the emotive experience for the human, the arts have both cognitive and emotive value. Art education is the education of human feeling and to neglect it is to give the human and society up to emotional and cultural insecurity and disorder.

Man's power to symbolize has separated him from like-kind and set him on the road toward complete individuation. Yet man cannot survive without bonds of involvement with mankind, and, for man, these bonds must largely be symbolic ones. Langer theorizes that man can afford to break the natural bonds only to the extent that he can replace them with symbolic ones.

This process of individuation is so accelerated at the present that she believes society is engaged in a momentous change—a biological shift of functions. Although no one knows what will evolve, Langer theorizes that the new world culture will be constructed by the same force that destroyed the old: science. Yet a new culture cannot be forced, but must evolve naturally from new feelings
which are not chaotic, but are developed and are symbolized by art.

In this way art functions as the vanguard, the spearhead of all culture. But art will not formulate new feelings by deliberate intent, but because artistic imagination is afire with the idea of science.

Implications

Man is a creature who has not only the power but also the need to symbolize. Education should recognize this need for symbolization, not only for the individual but also for the society.

All symbols have the ability to formulate human experience; the child should be given the opportunity to work symbolically in all forms. Symbols help him to bestow conceptual identity on his experiences and therefore give rise to abstract thinking processes through the perception of form. Through the opportunity to develop these natural abilities and needs, the capacity to recognize and give meaning to the relational factors in experience can result. This is the necessary factor in the ability to develop
planned, goal-directed behavior, in short, behavior that is not chaotic.

Man is able to conceive of reality through his symbolic envisagement of the world. His conception of the world and his place in that world should not be limited to a discursive concept. Education may be limited to a discursive, a model, concept of reality. A symbolic envisagement of education, of human action in education, of the world, of reality itself, which is discursive leads to a model concept exemplified by behavioral goals. Like psychology, education has not begun with the image of developing mentality, its subject matter, but with the model: overt behavior. The image of mentality projected in works of art could be of value to education, and through education, to the individual and society. The arts could function as the image for building models and as part of the symbolic bonds necessary for involvement.

A Conceptual Model of Objectives in Art Education

Langer's theory suggests that the learning process is a dynamic interaction between the individual and his
environment; the student is actively engaged in the process of intuitively, insightfully, and intellectually relating the features of experience. He learns, as he lives, by the process of reorganizing, reconstructing, reformulating, or, in Langer's terminology, symbolically transforming experiential data into a unified whole. Because of this tendency toward the conceptualization of relationships, continuity of learning is important in all educational experiences, the curriculum would move toward an increased integration of concepts. Because of her interest in the Gestalt theory of perception, it could be theorized that the Gestalt learning theory is the most appropriate for implementing her philosophy.

Art is conceptualized not as a treasury of knowledge of facts to be transmitted to the students by the teacher, but as a process for understanding certain basic concepts, which, in turn, are ways of conceptualizing reality. The content in art could be approached as one way of symbolically envisaging the world, and man's place in the world.

This view implies that knowledge of facts compose
the lowest level of artistic learning; they are only a means to the conception of relationships. The subject content of art is not facts, nor technical information, not the names of artists or dates, nor is it even the devices and techniques to be mastered in production. This study theorizes that the objectives in art be conceived as powers that students develop; they are essentially those abilities which enable the student to grow in understanding and conceptualizing the meaning of art. The sequence of learning would move toward the more sustained imaginative processes necessary for the recognition of the relational aspects in increasingly complex ideas.

The determinants of the art curriculum could be described in the following manner:

1. Nature of man: dynamic and unified whose characteristic basic need is symbolic transformation.

2. Nature of learning: dynamic and unified and characterized by symbolic transformation.

3. Nature of plastic arts: dynamic and unified and characterized by artistic symbolization.
As living is a continuous change-in-permanence, so is the process of learning. This is the concept of dynamic unity which underlies the basic phenomena of life, the act, and all vital processes.

The art curriculum could be conceived as being composed of the same properties found in all vital processes: dynamism and unity, a whole which is composed of dynamic elements held together with a rhythmical growth which is self-perpetuating. This implies that the art curriculum would be open-ended; one learning experience would grow out of the previous learning experience and be the beginning of the next learning experience.

This concept of curriculum suggests that learning be conceived as both the content and the process; they are interacting, interdependent elements. This learning would occur through the experiences provided in a curriculum unified by the recurrence of themes which build up into a dynamic whole. These themes are those concepts which Langer identifies as being the principles of art and which this study has conceptualized as artistic creation, artistic expression, artistic experience, and artistic
function. The conceptualization of these concepts would be both the short and long range goals, for they are the universals, the essentials of art. The objectives in Figure 1 are listed in an ascending order from bottom to top; they are conceived as a sequence which moves from less to more complex and interrelated abilities to imaginatively relate experiential data.

The conceptual model in art consists of five levels of objectives. These objectives are conceptualized as appropriate for any program in art education which is comprehensive in time; it is appropriate for any age level. The following is a characterization of the model:

**Level 1. Technical Facts** are specific skills and processes, general and specific knowledge on which to build. This is not the level of chief focus for the teacher. Much of this information can be obtained from books, such as, how to: mix dry tempera, cut a wood block, stretch a canvas. Teacher "help" would largely be determined by the maturational level of the student.
CREATION OF ARTISTIC FORM AND/OR PERCEPTION
OF ARTISTIC IMPORT
The ability to imaginatively create and
imaginatively respond to created expressive form in
order to clarify, objectify, organize, develop, and
formulate emotive experience so that it can be
contemplated and understood

ARTISTIC ABSTRACTION
The imaginative grasp of an instance of form
The perception of the pure form, i.e., the
relational structure, the dynamic-unity of life
projected in a single instance of artistic form

PRINCIPLES OF ART (INDISPENSABLE)
The understanding of the concepts of unity and
diversity among the orders of art
The understanding of the concepts of artistic
creation, artistic expression, artistic experience,
and artistic function

TECHNIQUES AND DEVICES OF CONSTRUCTION
(DISPENSABLE)
The discovery of various means of creating and
expressing the semblance of living form in the
modes within an order of art

TECHNICAL FACTS
The knowledge of the use of various materials
for attaining the higher levels of art learning

Fig. 1.--A Conceptual Model of Objectives in Art Education
Level 2. **Techniques and Devices of Construction** are basic ways of creating and expressing organic structure. These devices can be used to understand a wide range of ways of expression. They are necessary and compose the "core" of the art learning process. These ideas compose not only the ways of creating expressive form, but also the means for recognizing styles, both personal and cultural. They are the centers, in combination with Level 3, around which the curriculum is organized. They constitute the content of short-range goals, as well as long-range goals.

Level 3. **Principles of Art** are the concepts which constitute the criteria for long-range goals and they determine the natural structural divisions within the arts. They compose the rationale for the autonomy of the arts and of each order of art. They are complex concepts which must
be examined again and again. They are constant and are constant in the curriculum. They are the main source of unity in the curriculum. The principles of art are not immediate goals but are recurrent themes throughout all the years, throughout all the arts.

Level 4. **Artistic Abstraction** is the process of artistic learning which is distinct from discursive abstraction, and is therefore the basis for the natural structural divisions within the total school curriculum. Artistic abstraction is consequently a basis for achieving balance in the total curriculum.

Level 5. **Creation of Artistic Form and/or Perception of Artistic Import** is the highest level of functioning because it is the level of the integration of discursive and artistic symbolism—where both act as formulators but are perceived as
congruent. This is the ability to imaginatively create expressive form and the ability to imaginatively respond to created expressive form in order to clarify, objectify, organize, develop, and formulate emotive experience so that it can be contemplated and understood.

The order of art education objectives is suggested by this study. It is recognized, however, that the specific organization of learning experiences would be largely determined by specific factors in each specific situation. Therefore, no recommendation is made in this area, and the objectives are conceived as applicable to a great variety of conditions, in terms of both educational level and curriculum structure. It is possible to integrate these objectives into the core, subject-centered, child-centered, or broad fields curricula, for example. It is also possible that these goals can be correlated with other subject area concepts, either in integrated courses or those that retain their separateness. For example, the concept of artistic expressiveness could be explored within all the
arts. Another method would be to correlate the concept of the interdependency of all created elements in art with the concept of human interdependency which is a major concept through all levels in social studies.

The most important factor in both the determination of learning experiences and the evaluation of those experiences could be expressed in terms of form. The relational features of all aspects of the total process of education are seen as those of the act process: the dynamic, unified, rhythmical process of constant becoming.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was (1) to identify, order, and describe the general philosophical concepts and the aesthetic concepts of Susanne K. Langer and (2) to make implications about art education curricula employing those concepts as criteria.

This study was limited to describing Langer's philosophy, and to theorizing at a high level of generality employing those aesthetic concepts derived from selected works by Langer. This study was not intended to be the definitive framework for the reconstruction of a theoretical base in art education, but rather as an additional way of looking at art learning.

The general philosophical concepts identified, ordered, and described were: image, feeling, abstraction, symbolic transformation, physiognomic perception, discursive
and non-discursive symbolism, discursive and artistic abstraction, and act. Aesthetic concepts identified, ordered, and described were those of artistic creation, artistic expression, artistic experience, and artistic function. These aesthetic criteria were derived from the principles of art, identified by Langer as the concepts of illusion, unity, and articulation, and the basic issues, identified as what is created, what is expressed, and what is experienced. For purposes of clarification, the last category was divided into two concepts: (1) what is experienced, or felt, by the viewer (artistic experience) and (2) what this means for both the viewer as an individual and for society (artistic function).

The aesthetic criteria were:

1. **Artistic Creation**—the act of taking physical materials and using them to create something over and above what is physically there: an illusion.

2. **Artistic Expression**—the imaginative expression of the quality of feelings conceived in a form logically congruent with organic form in nature.
3. Artistic Experience--the immediate perception of the quality of expressiveness projected in the work of art.

4. Artistic Function--the source of all insights into life and mentality and the formulators of emotive experience.

These concepts suggest that art is an area basic to the mental and emotional development of both the individual and society. The form and function of artistic symbolism is unique because it fulfills a basic human "need" which cannot be met by non-artistic symbolism. In fact, the discursive model, in its incipient stage, is dependent on the image of reality projected by artistic form. Therefore, it is the conclusion of this study that all levels of educational curriculum recognize that education in the arts for all humans is as important as education in discursive thought. Since the characteristic human mental function is the symbolic transformation of experience, and all symbols play a primarily formulative function, it appears that access to the use of all types of
symbolization are not only a basic human need but also a basic human right.

Conclusions

Langer's theory meets the conditions set forth by Crawford as necessary for any aesthetic theory which could contribute to art education. She discusses problems revolving around the areas he designates as: the artist, the object of art, and artistic appreciation. Problems concerning the way art functions within the environmental context are also examined.

For the curriculum theorist concerned with art, Langer's philosophy meets her criterion of significance: further ideas are generated. Central concepts are identified which not only can stimulate thinking about art education but also can be developed as the basis of a theoretical framework for the teaching of art. Therefore, the philosophy of art developed by Langer could be of significance for curricular theorizing in art education and could also be of service to theorizing in all the orders of art.
It is a conclusion of this study, however, that the deepest significance of Langer's philosophy lies in the implications it can hold for education in general. Her theory proposes that models in the life sciences should be based on the image of life presented by the arts; they have not been so based. This study concludes that educational theories will be invalid to the extent that they base their models upon invalid life science models.

This suggests that the process of education needs to be reexamined on all levels in terms of both methods and goals. The curriculum of other areas as well as art education cannot be logically justified if based upon an invalid model; all curriculum areas should refocus their attention.

The importance of the arts in terms of both personal and societal development and stability suggests that education should consider the reevaluation of the present concept of required and elective subjects.

Recommendations

It is recommended that parallel studies based on the aesthetic theory of Langer be done by curriculum
theorists in each order of art. It is further recommended that after these are completed they be synthesized into a conceptualization of her theory appropriate for courses integrating the orders of art.

The combined effort of theorists in the arts could be extended to include analyses of other aestheticians. This study proposes that these could lead to the comparative analysis of aesthetic theories.

This type of theoretical approach to the teaching of art would be beneficial not only for the establishment of goals in art education, but would also provide a well articulated and consistent foundation for those goals.
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