

It can be said that poetry is a condition of life was saying  
something so obvious that it is constantly overlooked  
and is concerned with the record and perpetuation  
of the experiences which seem to him most  
valuable. At the same time, he is also the man who is  
most likely to have experiences of value to record. He is  
at the point at which the growth of the mind shows itself.  
His experiences represent conciliations of impulses  
which in most minds are still confused and conflicting.  
His work is the ordering of what in most minds are  
disordered. That his failures to bring order out  
of chaos are often more conspicuous than those of other  
men is due in part at least to his greater audacity, it  
is a penalty of ambition and a consequence of his greater  
plasticity. But when he succeeds, the value of what he has  
accomplished is found always in a more perfect organization  
which makes more of the possibilities of response and  
activity available.

What value is and which experiences are most valuable  
will never be understood so long as we think in terms  
of large abstractions, the virtues and vices. Instead of

recognizing that value lies in the minute particulars of response and attitude, we have tried to find it in conformity to abstractions and general rules of conduct. The artist is an expert in the minute particulars and a real artist pays little or no attention to generalisation. Generalisations in actual practice are too crude to discriminate between what is valuable and the reverse. For this reason the moralist has always tended to distrust or to ignore him. Yet the fine ~~life~~ conduct of life springs only from fine ordering of responses. This ordering is far too subtle to be touched by any general ethical maxims. Therefore, this neglect of art by the moralist has been tantamount to a disqualification. The basis of morality, as Shelley insisted, is laid not by preachers but by poets. But taste and crude responses are not mere flaws in an otherwise admirable person. They are actually a root evil from which other defects follow. No life can be excellent in which the elementary responses are disorganised and unfused.

Outlining the relationship of poetry and morality Shelley has observed: "The whole objection of immorality

... will either to instruct or to delight or to combine  
poetry is to please or to instruct or to delight or to combine  
The age-long controversy as to whether the business of  
poetry is confined to the noble alone.

of relationship between art and morality. Not that the  
therefore, it has misunderstood the precise nature  
But Shelley's view of morality is too narrow and simple  
to serve, is useful."

affections, enlarges the imagination, and adds spirit  
of thought, matter, strength and beauty in  
receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations  
and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the  
"But poetry acts in a divine manner, it awakens  
another."

and a certain and delicate and sublimated one  
of admirable doctines that we take, and despite  
examples of evil and domestic life; nor is it for  
poetry has created and profounds states and passions  
man, eternal since changes the elements of  
in which poetry acts to produce the moral improvement  
of the people from a misapprehension of the nature

the two, said Seneca. "It is only for the purpose of being useful that poetry ought to be agreeable; pleasure is only a means which she uses for the end of profit!" So thought Boileau and Rapin. Dryden, was "satisfied it it cause delight: for delight is the chief, it not the only, end of poetry: instruction can be admitted but in the second place; for poetry only instructs, if it delights!"

But it is wrong to think that the arts are merely concerned with happy solutions and in genius reconciliations of an impulse with pleasure, pleasure, however, has its place in the whole account of value and an important place. But it must ~~be~~ not be allowed to encroach upon ground to which it has no right

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