

Text #1

László Moholy-Nagy: 'The New Vision', 1928

Efforts toward reform.

The creative human being knows (and suffers from it) that the deep values of life are being destroyed under pressure of moneymaking, competition, trade mentality. He suffers from the materialistic evaluation of his vitality, from the flattening out of his inheritance, from the impairing of his biological balance.

And yet, although the present social structure is a thoroughly unsuitable medium for the balanced outlet of human capacities, in the private life of individuals some glimpses of a functional understanding have already appeared.

The advances in art, literature, the theatre and the moving-picture in our time, and the various educational movements give important indications of this fact. So does the interest in physical culture, in recreation and leisure, and in treatments by 'natural' rather than chemical methods.

Such efforts, taken as a whole, portend a world. But no small unit of this growth should be studied as an isolated fact. Not the occupation (science, art, economics, technical knowledge, education methods) and their integration must be constantly clarified within the social whole.

Not the product, but man, is the end in view. Proceeding from such a basic readjustment we may work out an individual plan of life, with self-analysis as its background. Not the occupation, not the goods to be manufactured, ought to be put in the foreground, but rather the recognition of man's organic function. With this functional preparation, he can then pass to action, to a life evolved from within. We then lay the organic system of production whose focal point is man, not profit.

Everyone is talented.

Text #2

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: 'Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art', 1941

As everyone makes use of things that are made artfully, as the designation 'artefact' implies, and everyone possesses an art of some sort, whether of painting, sculpture, blacksmithing, weaving, cookery or agriculture, no necessity is felt to explain the nature of art in general, but only to communicate a knowledge of particular arts to those who are to practise them; which knowledge is regularly passed on from master to apprentice, without there being any necessity for 'schools of art'. An integrated society of this sort can function harmoniously for millennia, in the absence of external interference. On the other hand, the contentment of innumerable peoples can be destroyed in a generation by the withering touch of our civilization; the local market is flooded by a production in quantity with which the responsible maker by art can not compete; the vocational structure of society, with all its guild organization and standards of workmanship, is undermined; the artist is robbed of his art and forced to find himself a 'job'; until finally the ancient society is industrialized and reduced to the level of such societies as ours, in which business takes precedence of life.