

ready to spend money to develop it; but when it appears elsewhere—that is a different story.

Rachel was born in Palestine. Her people brought her to the United States in their arms. She grew up in our public schools. There the teachers discovered her fondness for beauty. Her parents insisted upon putting her into a box factory to feed cards into a machine forever. She came to the Art School begging with tears in her eyes for an art education. A generous heart made that kind of education possible. Rachel is now a fashion artist, happy and prosperous, rendering to the public the larger and more important service her native talent made possible.

Tony was an Italian. His step-father took from him a year's earnings that he had saved for beginning his art education. He ran away from home and came to the Art School, penniless, ready to sweep floors, black boots, pose as a model, anything, for the sake of getting instruction. Generous hands were held out to him. Today Tony is one of the best window decorators in the United States, and a landscape painter winning honors in Cleveland, Philadelphia, and New York.

Ivan was a Russian boy. When his father found out that his record in school and in the Museum Saturday classes had secured him admission to the Art School, he thrashed him every night for a week. His mother then said he must choose between the Art School and his home. Ivan decided to give up his home for the sake of his art—"I am going to be a portrait painter," he said; "a portrait painter as great as Rembrandt!" Generous friends helped him toward realizing his ideal. He won a European Traveling Scholarship, is now studying in London, and sending home drawings of historic sites in London for an American city daily.

Such young people constitute one of our greatest natural resources. They come to the art school out of the little villages of

Ohio, out of the wretched suburbs of mill towns, out of the dump wards of Cleveland, eager, determined, following the gleam. They take care of furnaces, wait on tables, usher in theatres, work in the post office nights, live on next to nothing a week, and go on with their studies with heroic persistence.

Sometimes they become so tired out they fall asleep in their class rooms. They are underfed and overworked and have to be taken to hospitals. They cut short their courses to earn money to keep alive. We have lost lately a half dozen of our most talented boys and girls because nobody cares to hold out a helping hand.

Two hundred dollars a year would put such heroic youth on their feet, make thorough training possible, and give to the public the skilful artists and craftsmen our arts and industries so desperately need.

Invest in talented youth and you secure an immediate result in personal satisfaction, a direct result in student growth and gratitude, and an assured future result in the finer, richer, and more satisfactory life in America, which trained talent only can achieve.

HENRY TURNER BAILEY

## CONDITIONING AESTHETIC RESPONSES

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**P**ROBABLY every art syllabus states that appreciation is a fundamental objective of art teaching. Agreement on the objective is much more general than agreement on the methods of obtaining it. Each art expert advocates that method which in his judgment is best. Thus we have in one place art history, in another art analysis, in another drawing and modeling—each with art appreciation as its aim. It is not questioned that appreciation may and often does result from these approaches; but their adoption is based on opinion rather

than on scientific study. It seems, therefore, not inappropriate to suggest that, supplementing them, a method be tried which is along the lines of recent psychological studies.

To make this suggestion clear it will be necessary to review briefly what is meant by a conditioned response. Psychologists say that it is natural for each individual to react in definite ways to certain definite stimuli. For example, a person winks when any object suddenly approaches his eyes, but he does not wink when he hears a whistle blow. However, if he should hear a whistle several times just when an object approached his eyes he might ultimately come to wink at the sound of the whistle. His winking reaction to this stimulus, which originally did not cause it, would be called a conditioned response.

Experiments in psychology point to the fact that young children make fear responses, such as trembling, screaming and running away, originally to very few stimuli. Among these seems to be the sudden approach of a large, strange object. For example, if a strange person rushed suddenly towards a small child he would probably scream and run. If the approaching person conspicuously wore a feather boa and if she repeated her action a number of times or made a very vivid first impression, the child might become afraid of feather boas, possibly of all feathers, of birds, of chicks, even of feather dusters. Such fears would be conditioned. Many of the fears of children and most of the strange aversions of adults may be traced to some such early experiences. Psychologists, after finding such fears and aversions, succeed in "unconditioning" them.

Fears may seem somewhat remote from art appreciation, but in reality there is considerable resemblance between the two types of responses. Both are emotional experiences, the one having a "feeling tone" which is pleasant; the other, one which is unpleasant. Both are caused originally by rel-

atively few stimuli. These, in the case of fear, have been tentatively determined by experimental procedure. In the case of art appreciation the roots of the aesthetic experience have not been so thoroughly studied, but are "probably the satisfyingness of glitter and color, or rhythm in percepts and movements."<sup>1</sup>

Like fears, too, aesthetic responses may be conditioned. Jacobs says: "From many experiments made with pupils I have succeeded in finding—where they liked or disliked a certain color—that their psychological reaction could be traced to an early experience."<sup>2</sup> He then quotes, to illustrate his point, a few of the "many hundred instances" which he has studied. These instances are not from the psychological laboratory or the schoolroom but from life. Every individual through his everyday experience is probably increasing the number of things to which he thrills with pleasure or from which he draws back with distaste. He does not reason why; these responses are being conditioned by his environment.

Why leave all this to chance? Since it is happening, why not try to control it? To do this intelligently would involve first a thorough study to determine to what stimuli in color, form, texture and the like, children naturally respond with pleasure or displeasure. It would also involve a study of their individual differences when they enter school, for environment has even by that time affected them. Furthermore, it would involve a very definite, short, well-chosen list of those art objects which it would be desirable for all to enjoy. Several such lists, some perhaps too long, have appeared for pictures. They are needed for other forms of art expression.

With a knowledge of the simple stimuli which actually call forth aesthetic responses and a knowledge of a few fine objects to-

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<sup>1</sup>Norsworthy and Whitley: "The Psychology of Childhood." Macmillan. 1923. p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>Jacobs: "The Art of Color." Doubleday Page. 1923. p. 29.

ward which it would be desirable to have such responses, it would then be possible to plan a procedure which would result in the association of a known simple stimulus and a desirable but as yet ineffective stimulus, and to plan for this association to occur frequently and vividly until the aesthetic response would come not merely from the original stimulus but also from the desirable stimulus alone.

To illustrate, let us assume that children like the touch of a smooth, cool surface. Why not let them handle a beautiful cast? The pleasure first aroused by touch might later come merely from seeing the cast. Or let us say they like blue. Why not use this blue as a mount for some fine picture? The pleasure aroused by seeing the mount around the picture might later come from seeing the picture on the mount and finally from the picture itself, regardless of its mount. Such procedure, wisely planned, might result in the child's enjoyment of a wide range of beautiful objects.

To be sure, this same procedure, unwisely planned, might result in enjoyment of less worthy objects. That is why the list of things to be presented should be well thought out and the approach well planned. To fix intentionally a habit of responding with satisfaction to something not fine would be a vicious thing; but that such habits are being fixed daily by every child's environment is a fact that must be faced.

An objection might be made that these conditioned responses would be purely emotional, unthinking. But should not appreciation be fundamentally an emotional experience? Later study of these same beautiful objects might give an understanding of why they are worthy, a grasp of their historic significance, an admiration of their fine workmanship. Such study at the beginning might result in a coldly critical attitude which would retract from true aesthetic enjoyment.

A further objection might be raised that these conditioned responses would result in

all children liking the same things. As a matter of fact the intent of methods now widely used is to lead every child to appreciate a definite list of pictures and statues. Conditioning his responses to a small nucleus of recognized fine things would result not in uniformity in all appreciation but in a higher common standard from which all children could start. The suggestion that certain aesthetic responses be conditioned is based on the assumption that the same original sensory appeal is the root from which may flower appreciation of more subtle and lasting beauties and also enjoyment of cruder and less worthy objects. The purpose of this method would be to assure the development of the finer flower, from the seeds of which, in the varied soils of widely differing environments, might grow finer aesthetic appreciations than are at present attained.

JEAN KIMBER

## ART EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

ART education in Virginia and elsewhere is for life's sake. Life is based on the very fundamental principles of art. In other words, art is life. We who train young minds should make it so. It is so flexible a subject that it should be taught in such a manner as to enter every phase of the child's ordinary environment and become to him closely akin to life—forever progressing, stimulating, and uplifting. Dr. M. V. O'Shea of the University of Wisconsin, who recently surveyed education in Virginia, regards it as "highly important that art instruction should aim to help pupils to appreciate and to increase aesthetic objects in their environment."

"Art instruction relating to the beautification of the home and the immediate environment," says Dr. O'Shea, "is more important than mere technical drawing or painting or anything of the kind. Art in-