Art: Object, Process, and Reflection

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Fine and Applied Arts
in Candidacy for the Degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

ART: OBJECT, PROCESS, AND REFLECTION

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May, 1980
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Date: 9/12/80

Graduate Academic Council
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Date: 9/30/80

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Date: 5/22/80
The following accompanied my thesis exhibition:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of Mankind is Man.
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A Being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast;
In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
Chaos of Thought and Passion, all confused;
Still by himself abused, or disabused;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet prey to all;
Sole judge of Truth, in endless Error hurled:
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

from Essay on Man II
by Alexander Pope
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PREFACE

The creation of this thesis was exactly that -- a creation. My understanding of the creative process is reflected in the following discussion. I approached the topic in much the same way I approach a bare canvas. Initially, I felt hesitant and skeptical about putting my thoughts into words. I find I make more progress when I paint. It seemed that if the thesis research was to be meaningful, the time spent and the work involved should be as important as my painting. As my paintings reveal themselves slowly, so did this paper. The early phase was one of reading and brow-beating. I found several authors that inspired me and I absorbed as many of their concepts as I could.

Writing about art is a difficult task. For every theory there is an equally acceptable opposite. With this in mind, I began to write and gradually some order emerged. Needless to say, this composition proved to be especially meaningful. It is not a final truth but a beginning to a long search. Trying to find the best words to use is very helpful for those that wish to teach. It also leads to an understanding which although
probably temporary is still beneficial. The partial truths that we find along the way serve as an impetus to purposeful activity. Action is better than stagnation. This thesis has internalized my philosophy.

I have viewed the creative process in art as a cycle involving three stages: object, process, and reflection. I perceive each of these stages as integral parts of a complex whole, each one dependent upon the other. The object phase is the easiest to examine. The process and the reflection are generally more subjective. Certainly, the "guts" of the creative process is that which cannot be verbalized.
I. OBJECT

The object phase involves all the characteristics an artist brings to the creative act. He is not unlike most people. An artist is molded in part by the specific environment that he lives in. A high percentage of his behavior is determined by the society which nurtures him, its cultural traditions, values, and norms. Artists also possess universal human instincts and concerns beyond direct societal influence. Their art will reveal the collective traits common to all human beings. The artist and his work is characterized by cultural influence, shared human traits, and unique personal vision.

Fundamentally, we are all visual artists at the beginning of our lives. Before verbal communication develops, we exist in a world that is visually oriented. At this stage our dominant activity is a process of classification. We use our developing visual perception to classify concrete objects, forms, and colors according to a basic cause and effect relationship. We interact with the things that surround us in an attempt to find a pattern in their relationship to each other and to ourselves. Frequently we ignore the specific
details in order to find a coherent wholeness or unity among the various stimuli. This is necessary in the early stages of life to attain a sense of security and meaning. We are compensating for a frightening complexity, striving for simplicity. This adaptation phase is a natural function of human development. Inclined to order, this process of discrimination, differentiation, or whatever one calls it, is analogous to the character of the artistic process -- finding a simple order in a chaotic complexity.

Twentieth century Western civilization tends to emphasize concrete abilities and rational skills. We are a materialistic society and, as of yet, we have not developed a counterbalance to our worship of things. The search for spiritual value does not get the same emphasis that logic, reason, and rationality seem to receive. The emphasis on skillful material production seems to dominate our educational system.

As children enter school the adaptation process they have begun continues, but it takes on an entirely different nature. For an organized society to operate smoothly it is necessary for the members of that society to co-operate as a unit. Early formal education stresses assimilation into society, as is undoubtedly necessary.
But unfortunately, the intuitive responses and astute skills of observation that substantiate the preliminary adjustment period are de-emphasized. Instead students are trained to accept facts, learn systems, and participate in a society based on tangible production. The intuitive skills that we applied in our early quest for security are replaced by standard givens that others have formulated. In other words, instead of relying on ourselves for security we turn to the community. And justly so. We are all in this life together. We must be able to co-operate.

However, the inner part of being seems to suffer. Lost is the ability to look at life in a manner that is detached from usefulness. We cease to look for wholeness and unity without reverence for a tangible end product. In a sense, we lose respect for our own subjectivity.

Despite the nature of our society, many people do get involved in the arts. From early on, students are recognized for having artistic inclinations. Talent or manual dexterity, as well as a fertile sensitivity, are strong determining factors. However, the nature of formal education as it exists now does not allow sufficient freedom for the inner, intuitive nature of
all students. Especially for potential artists, even if they are encouraged, the affective, feeling realm of education is neglected. Art is considered to be an embellishment of the society and artists are expected to conform. The ability to find an independent solution which characterizes the artistic process, is sacrificed for the sake of practical skills. All students, not just art students, lose a little freedom and creativity.

The educational process for young artists can be extremely difficult. It often takes years for them to reach the level of "innocence" which they had previously been trained to obscure. An artist has to rely on feelings, intuitions, and spiritual values in a society that emphasizes concrete skills and products, a reliance which, to society, seems incongruous.

The young artist has to re-focus himself on primary responses and perceptions that are similar, in a more developed stage, to the initial adaptation phase of early childhood. This then, is the paradox. The young artist, whether he intends to or not, has to rebel in a society that relies on systematic logic. He becomes, oftentimes unwarily, a non-conformist.

Certainly, all of us are born with an inherent potential to become skillful in one area or another.
Without delving too much deeply into an area I am not qualified to discuss, I will, however, state that some people are born with a greater potential for artistic activity than others. Recent findings, as I understand them, place different functions of the brain within one cerebral hemisphere or the other. The right side controls emotions, intuition, and spacial concepts. It processes information in a diffuse manner, integrating all input simultaneously rather than sequentially. The whole is more generally appreciated than the parts. The left hemisphere controls analytic functions, reason, logic, and verbal skills. The left side manages sequential, operational functions. The emphasis is on the specific details of information rather than the general unified whole. The right hemisphere, therefore can be related to art, the left hemisphere to science. We all possess varied capabilities in both sides of the brain and each side also has varying degrees of function.

Now I suggest it can be said we are a left-sided civilization with order, law, and reason as the supreme priorities. Yet, on a physiological level, certain people are born with a strong inclination towards the right hemisphere. Regardless of the type of training or education they are subjected to, the right hemisphere
will always determine, to a certain extent, how much these people will assimilate or absorb. Artists are stronger in functions of the right hemisphere and are more inclined to activities that emanate from it, despite the consistent pressure of a left-sided culture.

There are other factors besides physical, educational, or developmental that help determine the substance of the artist. Certainly, the artist has to possess a great strength of character. However responsive an artist is to his intuitions, which are so essential, there is always the inner conflict, since intuition involves anxiety and insecurity. The artist can never be certain that what he feels is justified or right. This uncertain inner conflict creates anxious tension. To resolve this, the artist has to be determined to faithfully accept this predicament. Living, as an artist does, with this tension as a continuous part of his existence, tends to minimize it and make it more tolerable. The tension serves as a necessary part of life. Its recognition can result in a faithful optimism and an increase in strength.

The artist makes a conscious choice when he decides to take the difficult path set before him, oftentimes
against the advice of family and friends. Thus, he becomes a loner and, for a period of time, a non-participant or outside observer. He is forced into this alienation by non-acceptance.

The myth of the artist as an idiosyncratic, eccentric madman underlies our cultural attitudes. If young people do choose the arts as the major focus in their lives, they cannot help but reflect this mythic image. We all identify with certain roles within our society and as a sense of our identity we have to accept, to a certain extent, the characteristics that are given to us by that society. Whether these characteristics are true givens or not is beside the point. They do take on real qualities as part of our conscious psychological development. For an artist, the myth becomes part of his life-style, his self-image, and his art.

An artist throughout his early life is observing and absorbing. He develops a certain state of mind or attitude about his world. This is related to his own individual experiences as a member of a social group, a family, and a broad culture. This attitude most frequently takes on a personal manner and is internal, defying verbal identification. The creative process is
a means to objectify this vague notion.

Additionally, the artist's feelings evolve through an increased awareness of self. By this, I mean the artist begins to self-actualize, to know his deep, inner feelings through his own experiences. Each person is required to make many decisions in life and as the person becomes more confident with these decisions they become less agonizing. A peaceful state of mind is attained. For the artist these decisions are not commonly rational but rely on intuitive responses. The central focus is an emotional search for self-knowledge. The beginning or continuation of this intrinsic odyssey is oftentimes the sole intention in art.

A general feeling or attitude about the world and a need for self-knowledge are directly related to the artist's initial intentions. This realization at the object stage determines the meaning we will derive from the actual active process.

The object stage will also determine what form the art process takes and what means will be used. Taken quite literally, the object refers specifically to the "stuff" of art. For a painter the basic elements are paint, and all the accompanying tools such as paper, canvas, brushes, etc. Also to be considered are the
basics of design: shape and form, line, tone, value space, dimension, etc. Whatever materials the artist chooses to use are part of the initial conceptualization. This conceptualization, akin to intention and volition, is inherent in the object stage.

The artist has to choose specific materials that he will use in the creative process. Presumably, a certain comfort with specific tools is attained with familiarity. An artist tries numerous resources and acquaints himself with the qualities of each medium. The artist also has to choose how he will manipulate the material he has chosen. Oftentimes, this is not pre-determined but results in relation to specific circumstances or qualities of the materials themselves. An artist might also combine various different media to attain a desired result.

An artist's philosophical intentions are not just related to a vague notion, a spiritual odyssey, or manipulation of materials. After all, an artist lives within the culture and is as much a social, political, and economic creature as the next person. The meaning in art is not just about self-development or the creative process. Art can involve all areas of life, conscious and sub-conscious. The fact is that
the creative process brings meaning to life and not just to art. Certainly, art is a means to formulate an intrinsic idea and this relates to life on a very deep level. But art can also choose to be specific commentary on the daily routine of living. Further, it can be relatively selfless.

The essential image in art is based on an intuitive choice. It relates specifically to the conceived intention. Choosing the essential image is the first step in the creative process.
II. PROCESS

After considering the developmental stages of the artist, his society, his materials, his personality, and his intentions, we must now examine the creative act itself. The activity that occurs in the production of the object can be observed and noted. Essentially, we can look at three related concepts in the process stage: the problem, the creative drive, and individuation.

As an artist matures, his ability to solve artistic problems increases with the continued exercise of skilled behaviors. What exactly is involved in a problem situation? Furthermore, what constitutes an artistic problem?

Problems exist in all levels of society. We all encounter problem situations on a daily basis. Essentially, a problem is an assignment which involves three stages: the conceptualization (determining the elements of the problem), the execution (the carrying out of the conceived notion), and the solution (the successful completion of the problem). Conceptualization involves thinking and rethinking. It is an intrinsic, intellectual activity. The making or acting out of
the initial concept is the execution. It is an external activity. Trying to get the idea (the internal) and the method (the external) to balance and work successfully is the essence of a problem. It involves difficulty and extreme introspection. When the balance is achieved the problem has reached the third step, the solution.

Perhaps, it does not seem possible to discuss problem-solving in the realm of art, since art is subjective and the rewards are ethereal. In the area of science we can more easily envisage the problem-solving process. Generally, a scientist hopes to conceive problems that can be directly applied to fact and the external world. He can prove specifically with sequential steps that a solution is correct. Furthermore, a scientist can seek help from others and their suggestions can be applied directly to the problem. Similarly, the same problem can be re-solved by many different people using the same method of execution. The steps in a scientific problem are primarily clear and logical.

Unlike science, art problems are primarily subjective. Throughout the solution of an artistic problem the artist has to rely on his own ability to
make decisions. No solution will ever repeat itself. Certainly, at the conceptualization stage, through the execution, and on to the final solution, the individual artist is solely responsible, basing his activity on feelings and intuitions. However, by viewing the artistic process as only a fulfillment of emotions, we lose some appreciation for what goes on in the relationship between the artist and his materials. If we view art as a problem-solving activity, we become more aware of the significance of the choices the artist makes as he proceeds. We also become more sensitive to the manner in which the external material of art can express internal concepts.

Both art and science rely heavily on the conceptualization of the problem but there is one slight difference. A scientist highlights the conceived idea more than an artist does. In science rarely does the initial concept change. Throughout the executional stage the scientist arranges and re-arranges his material to find a configuration that answers or solves the problem. However, for the artist the conceptualization is not always as definite although still extremely important. It is more subjective and can fluctuate throughout the entire problem situation.
The artist's conceptualization is on-going throughout the problem. Oftentimes the original idea changes as the artist manipulates the medium in which he is working. Similarly, the idea might also emerge as a direct result of the art material or technique. Although the conceptualization as an intellectual base is vital in art even before the active process begins, the emphasis in an artistic problem is the execution rather than the idea. Here the concept is clarified and the means to its solution developed.

Despite basic differences, an artistic problem and a scientific problem do have similarities. Both art and science in the problem-solving process try to find a unique, meaningful relationship between man and his external world. They also stress an activity which serves to go beyond mere conceptualization. Problem-solving involves an active purpose.

Besides being a specific type of problem involving tangible materials and modes, the problem situation implies a psychological process. The psycho-analytical approach to problem-solving helps us to understand the motivational idea -- the reasons for the need to create. Beyond what we discussed earlier in the object stage, where the beginning urges are felt, we must also
consider the drives that substantiate the process itself.

Creativity has its source in conflict. The needs felt in the conceptual stage of the artistic problem parallel those in the executional stage. The inclination is one towards a personal psychic balance based on a co-relationship of the two stages.

Artistic problems produce tensions. The artist is compelled to seek a reduction of these tensions. The natural human state requires an equilibrium and humans are always attempting to attain a state of mental balance. This is a primary human drive towards the natural ideal. This need can be viewed as the ultimate reason for any type of activity, particularly art. Throughout one's actions, the interaction of conscious and unconscious mental activities determines choice, direction, and solution.

Another way of looking at the act of creativity involves the mental activity itself as an end rather than a means. This approach would consider the natural drive to be one of tension-creation rather than tension-reduction. Humans need to seek stimulation. Perhaps, we all pursue stimulating activity as an intrinsic tendency. An artist may be developing problematic situations as a form of sensory interaction with his
environment. He may be driven by the creative challenge itself. The manipulation of artistic media satisfies a purely basic need for exciting sensory activity.

The tension-reduction model seems to be a primary need, a requirement for survival. It relates to basics like food, shelter, and clothing. The tension-creation model seems to be more of an auxiliary need, coming from civilized society. It creates a contrived tension that holds no real danger but exists for its own sake.

Certainly, the tension-reduction approach seems quite compatible to the artistic process. To a certain extent, we all suffer from anxiety. To carry on in our lives, we must relieve the anxious feelings. An artist presumably attempts to reduce the tension by transferring it to an external form. The tension-reduction approach considers art to be a process of retrieval, a cycle which continuously fluctuates between anxiety and peace of mind. It looks at the creative process as an attempt to return to a peaceful inner calm that existed prior to the feeling of conflict. Artistic activity on this level goes back and forth between two inner states.
The tension-creation model is primarily an external activity. We all need to learn and exploring the world around us is mandatory for learning to occur. Artists do through exploratory processes find stimulus and sensory interaction. The environment is constantly presenting the artist with totally new situations.

To explain the process of art the resulting alternative is undoubtedly the integration of the tension-reduction and the tension-creation models. The artistic process is not entirely internal. Certainly, art is a relief from tension but there is no absolute cause or cure. The problem has to be deciphered each time. Tension-creation is discovery. The artist seeks new undiscovered forms through exploration, not for their own sake but to achieve an emergent balance. The release from tension is created anew each time. Art serves as an unique symbol of the inter-relationship of inner strife and external stimuli.

Throughout the creative process the artist deals with area beneath the threshold of conscious awareness. He seeks to formulate something which has not been seen before. This newly created form is a direct result of the interaction with his own time and place.
The consideration of environmental factors and the unique tensions that they create is extremely important. Without the influence of external factors the artistic process is meaningless.

There are other factors to be considered when we look at the entire process of art as it relates not to a specific artistic problem but to the entirety of an artist's life. As an artist matures his forms of expression also becomes more mature. What role does the creative process take in the development of the artist and his art?

Art is born in the unconscious, intuitive feelings of the artist. Man has the unique capability to be consciously aware of his existence. From early on, an artist has to recognize his own inclinations and consciously make efforts to activate them. If a person does decide to become an artist, he is consciously stating the importance of his own feelings. He is reacting to an inner drive that determines his entire behavior. Essentially, an artist is agreeing to take on the unknown, the inner drives of his unconscious mind. This confrontation is a process of individuation. Individuation is living up to one's true potential by trying to realize the inner self.
Each time an artist approaches an artistic problem he is attempting a form of psychic revelation. He is discovering something about his inner self, putting into form a "felt" image. Essentially, the creative process can be considered analogous to dreams. Dreams come from an unconscious realm but are directly influenced by conscious activity. Dreams reveal an inner state and by dreaming we become aware of this state and it becomes part of our conscious nature. Dreams do not usually repeat themselves but unique similarities do occur with a patterning effect. This meandering pattern offers individual tendencies that reveal a slow process of psychic growth. As we mature and more of our unconscious self is revealed to us we can extend our personalities to become more complete human beings. Becoming a more complete human being involves the peaceful state of mind. This tranquility comes from self-realization. We can more fully comprehend our own behavior.

Each art object or problem an artist approaches is a new experience. And yet each new experience belongs to the individual artist and is controlled by his reactions. As in dreams, art reveals similarities but each problem is a new inner revelation, determined
by intuitive responses to the real world. The similarities or repetitions that appear manifest themselves in a unique style. As an artist lives, proceeding from one creation to another, each step contributes to his total psychic growth.

Similarly, each individual creation can be considered a process of self-awareness. Throughout the creation of a single work, an artist makes many intuitive and logical choices. This sequence culminates in an equilibrium between the conscious choice and the unconscious one. The artistic process becomes a natural compensation for the tension created by the intrinsic drive for self-knowledge.
III. REFLECTION

The third stage in art, reflection, represents a relationship of symbols. Through the use of a symbolic medium the artist participates in an inner search. The essential quality of this search is indefinite while it is being undertaken. Only at the completion can the reflective process bring meaning to this active phase.

Reflection on the art object operates on two different levels. For the artist it evokes a memory. The artist views the completed object as a symbol of the catharsis he experienced. For the viewer the object acts as a stimulus to contemplation, quite apart from the process although related to it. However, the pure significance of the creative process can never be completely comprehended. For the artist and the viewer the materialization of the creative experience is never the true essence. The process is primarily internal and the external object never can truly represent this. The viewer can make an attempt at empathic interpretation, but again this attempt is internal and extremely personal.

If art is so unclear and elusive for both the
artist and the observer, what is its purpose? To answer this question, we have to believe that the object can serve as an important impetus for the primary internal search. We have to look at art not as an end in itself but as a means towards another experience. Reflection, an afterthought on the process, stimulated by the object, can cause a transformation. It is an experience based on intuitive responses which transforms the artist and the viewer.

The stage of reflection is a "stepping back" for the artist. It is a stage when the problem has been attacked and the artist can consider what has actually happened. For the viewer it is a contemplative stage where the art object is the object of meditation. The "stepping back" and the contemplation transform the artistic process into something more meaningful. They serve to stretch the concerns beyond merely aesthetic ones to concerns that are focused at the very meaning of life.

The supreme transformative experience is one that achieves a wholeness and peaceful unity within the mind. The apparent differences between art and science dissolve. Emotions and reason become one. The schizophrenic nature of the human mind becomes an absurdity.
In other words, the external material nature of the world is transformed into a spiritual understanding. For the artist and the viewer this resultant understanding is a tranquility that follows a cathartic struggle.

The co-existence of the internal, unconscious domain and the external, conscious domain is oftentimes unbalanced. Retaining the necessary equilibrium is a painful process. Through catharsis the artist and the viewer can transcend the reliance on conscious activity to a level that allows for unconscious activity. When we consider art, we do not magically transform the art object into a spiritual emanation. However, the relationship with the object allows the ultimate purpose to be fulfilled: the free flow of the inner self, the spirit.

A true artist places himself in the position of primordial man every time he begins a new work. He becomes "everyman". Such an artist considers the internal structure of all things, the beginning of all things, and the meaning of all things. Art seeks the essential relationship between the internal world and the external world. This relationship is a universal one, beyond time, place, or boundaries. However, the
artist takes the only alternative presented to him in such a complex setting. He activates himself by searching for the answers in the external reality that is peculiar to his own environment. He recognizes the essential futility in the search for the meaning in life, given its complications, contradictions, and brevity, but at the same time he realizes the necessity of his inner drive, a hunger of the spirit. The artist learns to live with this basic dilemma that has plagued man for centuries. This adaptation transforms a troubled mind into a balanced one. The balance has a healing effect on the artist.

At this point, I would like to consider pure religious experience. Early man composed myths and rituals to bring meaning to life. As tribes grew into large civilizations, the more aware, spiritual individuals developed methods and foundations that would allow the transformative process to continue on a more collective basis. For centuries man has sought the meaning in life, based on the belief that the truth is within all of us.

When I speak of religion I do not mean dogmatic doctrines and pre-conceived systems of revelation. The pure religious experience is one of internal necessity.
It was felt by prehistoric man and is still felt by us today. It is similar to the process of individuation—the search for self. It is an experience that has to be felt singularly. No person can ever tell another how to find inner peace. It is a ritual of an existential nature with the primary responsibility placed on the individual. Like art, religion is in the realm of intuitions and emotions.

The myths, legends, and practices that are part of organized religion will help an individual achieve spiritual harmony. There are also people in religion who can help direct others towards the fruits of the visionary experience. Certainly, all these aides are important in any religious experience, but one should not become too burdened with these methods. They should all serve one ultimate purpose: the transformation of life. This is a re-direction towards a consideration of life's purpose. It is a striving for the unattainable with no clear or obvious goals. Religion implies a sense of wonderment, with insecurity, and ever-present hope, and faithful optimism. Certainly, it is primarily internal and of the mind and heart.

Just as religion is an inner experience, so is
art. The reflective stage allows the artist to examine the seriate development of his own intuitive responses. As he works his way through an art work, he makes many decisions. The final solution is a consummation of this experience. The creation of the object acts as a means to allow individuation to occur. The resulting transformation is a reflection of this process. Similarly, each work acts as a beginning point for a consecutive process of further development. The art object is merely the means to instigate a visionary search. The object hopefully acts as a record of this experience. Furthermore, the object acts as an example of the inner search for others to ponder. But the primary consideration is the intellectual, intrinsic development beyond material concerns.

The reflective period serves to illuminate the meaning of art. It is a transformation of the individual. Furthermore, the fully individuated person will contribute greatly to the development of the civilization. The religious fervor of the self-search will eventually result in a catharsis within the collective society. The mind is gradually evolving to a point where the spirit will perceive the essential
wholeness of the world. The creative process is a constant reminder of the need for inner wisdom. It serves as a seed that will plant itself and expand our consciousness.

Reflection on the creative process is primarily cerebral. It is important in the development of the artist and serves to enhance the maturation of an artist's work. However, the reflective stage is temporary and can only exist with the completion of the active process. Action is the real truth. The process of doing clarifies concept and leads to continued visionary experiences.

The reflective stage also allows us to consider the sources for the creative experience. Educational, societal, and developmental influences color our responses. An awareness of these behavioral determinants helps us to realize the underlying, eternal truth.
CONCLUSION

The object phase refers specifically to those "things" that an artist brings to the creative process. This stage is one of thought and volition. The process phase is the actual manipulation of the artistic materials. It is primarily an extrinsic activity but involves an intrinsic problem situation. The process of art serves to clarify the conceptual idea. What happens in the process stage is directly affected by the object stage. The reflective phase is an intrinsic activity. It is primarily of the mind and serves an intellectual and spiritual function. It is a recollection of the productive process. Reflection helps one to consider the connection between the two prior stages. An attempt to find this relationship transforms our manner of thinking. Our state of consciousness is altered. Art then serves a great purpose -- it becomes the big, unanswerable question.
I am presenting four paintings of my own for the reader's reference (following this section). I find it extremely difficult to comment specifically on my own work. Verbal commentary seems superfluous to the presentation. What you have just read will probably help you to appreciate my painting a little more, although the conceived ideal is not frequently achieved. My work grows through insecurity and resolves itself in ambiguity. I guess what I am really trying to say is that I strive for a non-clarity in my work. I seek a point in my work where absolutes dissolve. This often presents itself as a confusing complexity, but that is the world. Insecurity, ambiguity, anxiety, tension, conflict -- all these are there. These qualities stimulate thought and cause change. The human figure is a clear image to deal with, yet still unclear in its implications. Why I do one thing rather than another is not obvious to me. There are no clearcut answers. All my actions are conditional. I paint for the sake of necessity. I feel a need to do something -- to try to understand. Yet I realize understanding is only a tentative
state.

This thesis served a great purpose for me. Working on the paintings for my exhibition and composing the written material revealed some great "truths" to me. As I worked through the first and second sections of the paper I was attempting to find a justification for art. Pure objectivity was my major goal. I began to appreciate such things as humanism, behavioralism, and pure spirituality. However, the relationship between these areas is a questionable one. The ideas that I finally accepted and presented in this paper are ones that I truly believe, although only partially. The working-through and the conceived rationale in the object and the process stages led me to the reflective phase. Not only was I considering reflection as it relates to art but I was also reflecting upon the writing of this thesis paper. During the months of preparation and writing I was continuously painting. Ultimately, I discovered the spiritual priority in my own painting and I am more content with this state than ever.
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