

On Moral Fiction

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PART ONE!

CHAPTER ONE

PREMISES ON ART AND MORALITY

4 – Though more difficult to read than ever, criticism has become trivial.

We must holler, “Hey let’s be serious’.

5 – “The traditional view is that true art is moral: it seeks to improve life, not debase it. It seeks to hold off, at least for a while, the twilight of the gods and us.

6 – Art is essentially serious and beneficial, a game played against chaos and death, against entropy. It is a tragic game, for those who have the wit to take it seriously, because our side must lose; a comic game – or so a troll might say – because only a clown with sawdust brains would take our side and eagerly join in.”

“Art builds temporary walls against life’s leveling force, the ruin of what is splendidly unnatural in us, consciousness, the state in which not all atoms are equal. In corpses, entropy has won; the brain and the toenail have equal say. Art asserts and reasserts those values which hold off dissolution, struggling to keep the mind intact and preserve the city, the mind’s safe preserve. Art rediscovers, generation by generation what is necessary to humanness. Criticism restates and clarifies, reinforces the wall. Neither the artist nor the critic believes, when he stands back from his work, that he will hold off death of consciousness forever; and to the extent that each laughs at his feeble construction he knows that he’s involved in a game.”

8 – By its nature, criticism makes art sound more intellectual than it is.

9 – True art is a conduit between body and soul, between feeling unabstracted and abstraction unfelt. Philosophy is more concerned with coherence than with what William James called life’s “buzzing, blooming confusion.” And what philosophy does for actuality, critics do for art.”

10 – Metaphysical systems do not, generally speaking, break down, shattered by later, keener insight; they are simply abandoned.” They lose currency.

12 – Good writers invent style at least partly in order to be interesting to themselves. Only after a style has begun to assert itself does the writer’s intellect make sense of it.”

13 – The artist’s imagination, or the world it builds, is the laboratory of the unexperienced, both the heroic and the unspeakable. It is original because it does not start out with a clear picture of what it wants to say.

14 – As a general rule, the artist who begins with a doctrine to promulgate, instead of a rabble multitude of ideas and emotions, is beaten before he starts.

Criticism, when most interesting and vital, tends toward art, that is, bad science, making up fictions about fictions. To make the concrete abstract is inescapably to distort.

15 – I have claimed that art is essentially and primarily moral – that is, life giving – moral in its process of creation and moral in what it says.

16 – When every new novelist, composer, and painter – or so we’re told – is more “disturbing” than the last, the good of humanity is left in the hand of politicians.

17 – Modern critics tell us that works of art are like trees – simply objects for perception – all avoid on principle the humanistic questions: who will this work of art help? What baby is it squashing?

CHAPTER TWO !!

18 - TV is ‘good’ only when it has “a clear positive moral effect, presenting valid models for imitation, eternal verities worth keeping in mind, and a benevolent vision of the possible which can inspire and incite human beings toward virtue, toward life affirmation as opposed to destruction or indifference.”

19 – Cornball morality leads to rebellion and the loss of faith. We recognize true art by its honest search for and analysis of values. Of course, given our usual embarrassment in the presence of words like ‘morality,’ this may seem a foolish way to speak about art.

20 – What of artists who say they only work for themselves, and that anything else would aim at the lowest common denominator? An artist who works out of scorn of humanity or a base motive will not be remembered. And, he is writing for others like himself.

Also bad is praise of the artist as freak; forgetting what he has in common with all other human beings.

21 – In some sense the allowance of the freak is an advance. But one effect of the advance is that we begin to praise writers for their oddity, not for their wisdom, universality or even for their art.

22 - To worship the unaccountable and freaky is to give up the right to say “be good” to our children, if we’re consistent. Even if the acting is great, there is something wrong with snuff films.

The only problem with the word ‘morality’ is that its been used as a cover in the past in some quarters.

23 – But one might as well turn against turnips because Sherman sometimes ate them in his march across the South.

Moral action is action which affirms life.

It is not wrong, as Plato argued, to show an immoral act. We must look at the entire production, what Aristotle called the 'energeia' – the actualization of the potential which exists in character and situation that gives us the poet's fix on good and evil.

24 – The annoying thing about discredited gospels is that they continue, though dead as doornails, to exert their effect. Freud for example.

25 – Sartre is a handy symbol of what has gone wrong in modern thinking. Cut off from objective assessment of both naturalist (values implied by our mammalian heritage and conscious nature) and idealist hypothesis (notions of God and rational goodness).

Tolstoy, after his crisis, came up with the theory, (not that everyone should follow their own rules), but with a theory of submission. A theory which equally emphasized freedom and that with that freedom a man ought to be quite, look and listen, try to feel out in his heart and bones what God requires of him.

26 – Tolstoy conceived a transcendental goal for humanity as a whole; like the earlier English and French Romantics, he envisioned a world not ruled by policeman, but by moral choice, wherein we work to be Christlike.

He said, Art should cause violence to be set aside.

27 – "Critics' veneration of the tragically neurotic self-pity and anger ("unflinching honesty") and, finally, suicide of Sylvia Plath is perhaps one of the reasons Ann Sexton is now dead."

No one doubts ideals expressed in art can effect behavior in the world, at least in some people some of the time.

28 – Homer's Achilles had a great values impact.

29 – "The Gods set ideals, heroes enact them, and artists or artist-historians preserve the image as a guide for man."

32 – Aquinas, Like Dante, realized that reason can support mutually exclusive conclusions with equal force, so it is at best a limited guide. Aquinas then, abandoning his Summa, turned mystic.

33 – Dante and Sartre had about the same despair, but the outcome was so different. Sartre found no guide in his life. Dante found it in Beatrice.

34 – To speak basely or wrongly in front of her filled him with shame.

35 – Even be the sky 'unGoded', we have values in the romantic vision.

36 – Romantics became heroic models of life and singers of the hero's deeds. The absolute good became an image of what life might be.

37 – Rousseau said bad institutions, not man's fall, created misery and injustice. Humanity became divine, and the poet became its spokesperson.

38 – The Romantic’s optimism was not to endure.

39 – In the 14th century people hated nature, they did so in the 18th, until gentlemen turned it into formal gardens, by the 19th century all adored nature. Art instructs. Why would anyone deny it? Not usually out of meanness, but out of cultural assumptions.

CHAPTER THREE

41 – If we accept that art instructs, and that murder for kicks is wrong, what do people have against morality in art? Some are against it as they associate it with God. Maybe our pluralism convinces us that no value should be put above another, perhaps love of individualism. But, we see the worst with fervor and the best with apathy.

43 – Escapist fiction has always been conservative and conformist, serious fiction individualistic. But that is changing as cynicism, despair, greed, sadism and nihilism become increasingly chic. We have come to praise the moral freak as superior to ourselves. We have come to praise sincerity (based on a moment’s emotion) rather than sincerity, (based on careful thought). “Civilization has lost control of serious art.”

44 – If we cannot make out what guilt is, virtue is academic.

If all are guilty, which seems to be our persuasion, then no models of goodness, for life or art, exist; moral art is a lie.

46 – Attacks on morality come from Freud, Sartre, and Wittgenstein. Consider what they might have done to our model moral artist, Dante.

48 – Sartre actually uses Dante’s inferno in his description of bad faith.

When we lack the requisite certainty for affirmation, we grope from the present to the future, via a suspension of judgment.

49 – We can see moral relativism in that it has been axiomatic with Anglo-Saxons for centuries that “cursing” is strictly for people of base education.

50 – Now we see it as rebellion against tyranny.

If so many die in poverty, we ask, can we claim ‘true morality’?

51 – It has become offensive for a privileged caste to suggest that anything might turn out well.

52 – The artist who gives all his energy to texture has no standard for judging the atoms or battling the particulars of his work; he can say virtually nothing because his work consists wholly of nonessentials. The artist who ignores specifics can only say what everyone else says.

CHAPTER FOUR

53 – A proper balance of detail and generality, the particular and the universal, is as crucial for the critic as for the artist. We get non-essentials or abstractions. The first is the most common recent error.

54 – The hardest stories to read are the easiest to teach, they are ‘post-modern’.

56 – Critics support and celebrate ideas that no father would wittingly teach to his children.

To say your art is morally indifferent lacks ‘truthfulness.’ And, this is mostly what we find. And good artists are ignored, so they don’t exist.

57 – This is why our cinematography is so far ahead of our cinema.

58 – Even Edward Albee has an unhealthy fascination with ugliness and pain. Even at his best, Tom Stoppard’s plays evade concerns, they have no conclusions, and the existential accidents upon which they are based are very contrived, so we don’t even expect a theatrical finale. It is full of pizzazz about meaninglessness and the impossibility of knowing.

So they raise expectations and then disappoint.

60 – We had the same situation in the middle Ages when the message was fixed, (love charity, shun carnality), and the poet had only surface and decoration to work with. Now we have no fixed meaning, we have no meaning.

This usually leads to over emphasis or manipulative structure.

61 – We see the same in modern music. It is all texture, like John Cage.

62 – The morality of music is faithfulness to the immutable laws of musical gravity (the laws by which melody tends to fall and progressions sink to resolution and rest) and faithfulness to the particular work’s emotional energy.

Honest feeling has been replaced by needless screaming, pompous foolishness, self-centered repetitiousness, misuse of vocabulary.

63 – Fidelity is why Bach is equally successful played on an organ or by an orchestra or in a new key.

64 – Noise is not bad, but noise without structural justification is. Music that just rambles, poking around and hoping something will turn up.

65 – In great art, process-imitation is always primary. As nature creates, the composer creates.

In literature we should have structure working towards understanding and assertion; some meticulously qualified belief. But we see mostly dramatization without belief or opinion untested by honest drama.

66 – Literature telling new stories is exhausted. Lit telling archetypal stories aimed at once again understanding their wisdom in a new setting is never exhausted.

67 – All language comes from things: True comes from tree, meaning deeply rooted.

68 – Rather than be humble to the story, Gass, he complains, does word games and argues theory in his art.

69 – He actually tells us that his characters are only words. Fiction as pure language is in!

This suggests indifference to the needs and wishes of the reader. We hope we'll be moved by fiction, find characters we can sympathize with, not find academic opacity.

70 – The writing is beautiful, but there is no there there.

72 – Like the God of the Calvinists, the modern author loves only his ideas.

CHAPTER FIVE

73 - Dante hates that which opposes what he loves.

To the extent that we don't care about the characters, we can work up no interest in the issues.

75 – Critics routinely praise those who undermine values as 'deep'. Paul is hit by a truck and no one helps. He dies being insulted as an insult to Jesus.

76 – People get a perverse pleasure from attacks on Christendom.

77 – Rather than morals, writers think social causes are their function. This is not ipso facto bad, but creates unbelievable characters.

78 – And social justice art must lose force with the passing of time.

81 – Whereas Montaigne or Wordsworth's meditation on the self aimed at knowledge of humanity in general, whereas Pascal thought the self hateful because it interferes with communion with God, the minor Romantic is an egoist. He claims that, as miserable as he is, he is a worthy of imitation. He dreams up no goals for humanity because he is so interested in his own peculiarities. Mostly they show their weakness.

82 – Romantic individualism should make one fight for Greek freedom as there can be no truly moral art that isn't social.

The artist so debilitated by self-doubt and guilt that he cannot be certain real virtues exist, is doomed to be second rate.

Freud, Sartre and Wittgenstein are the causes of debilitating guilt. Freud's determinism, Sartre's pessimism and Wittgenstein's logical and linguistic cautiousness.

83 – Concern is not enough, great art celebrates life's potential offering a vision unmistakably and unsentimentally rooted in love, (love being another of those embarrassing words, like morality).

Misused by porno and greeting cards, love has a firm hard-headed sense, without which great art cannot exist.

84 – It is for pleasure of exercising our capacity to love that we pick up a book at all. We love characters as real people. We affirm what is good for the characters and for humanity in general.

85 – Much modern art has no compassion or deep love for its subjects. We just get clever language and cynical jokes. (Mailer, Vonnegut and Heller) whose messages are only loosely related to the characters.

87 – Vonnegut is just one liners and tone, which is the same throughout. He is warmhearted but lacks commitment or concern for his characters, and so is slight.

91 – Heller is always ready to step into his story to give a message to make it more important. But, “The morality of art is, as I’ve said, far less a matter of doctrine than of process.” “Art is the means by which an artist comes to see; it is his peculiar, highly sophisticated and extremely demanding technique of discovery.” It is not just a plaything for one’s ego and abstract ideas.

92 – We don’t mind if a character attacks a person we admire, but if the author does it via the character, it is death.

93 – Bellow’s novels come off as sprawling works of advice, not art.

97 – Our more fashionable writers feel, as Chekhov and Tolstoy did not, that their art is unimportant – and they’re correct.

One should care about their characters and their readers.

99 – Religion’s chief value is its conservatism; it keeps us in touch with what at least on section of humanity has believed for centuries. Art’s chief value is that it takes nothing for granted.

100 – “True art clarifies life, establishes models of human action, casts nets towards to future, carefully judges our right and wrong directions, celebrates and mourns. It does not rant. It does not giggle in the face of death.”

“We need to stop excusing mediocre and downright pernicious art . . . our television programs, our schools thrown up like barricades in the way of young minds, our brainless fat religion, our poisonous air, our incredible cult of sports, and our ritual fornicating with all.” We would not put up with a debauched king, but in a democracy all of us are kings, and we praise debauchery as pluralism.”

101 – Not to condemn pluralism, but true art claims on good authority, that some things are healthy for individuals and society and some things are not.” Artists don’t force values, but light up darkness and protects his friends the Gods.

PART TWO

PRINCIPLES OF ART CRITICISM

105 – The nature of long lasting art proves art is moral, sans argument. Shakespeare, Tolstoy and Homer, exert their civilizing influence century after century.

106 – Tolstoy said the highest purpose of art is to make people good by choice. But our appreciation of good arts is not wholly instinctive. If it were, we'd have fewer bad books.

Art is powerful. A brilliant novel about a rapist or murderer can teach more than a thousand academic studies. But, such novels are only marginally art.

107 – After on the waterfront and entire generation began mumbling, slumping and turning up its collar with a dangling cigarette.

Macbeth's bad image doesn't tell us directly what to do, it tells us what not to do. Writers communicate ideas. Melville shows us how the quality of life is affected by the proposition of an indifferent universe.

108 – There are morality tales, but in true moral fiction, the "art" is not merely ornamental: it controls the argument and gives it rigor.

Tolstoy's drafts for his books have different outcomes. He learns as he goes.

109 – It's not just a good person against a bad person. That's okay, but it doesn't search thought. The writer makes no discoveries while writing it.

The writer makes discoveries by wondering what a person would really say or what might really happen.

110 – To learn about reality by mimicking it, the writer must never cheat.

111 – Arbitrary plot changes undermine believability. Aristotle hated ending by divine machinery for the same reason.

112 – The problem with theory is that words have associations. They have emotional charges.

114 – The key to a god mimic is for the author to duplicate our own mental processes. To purposely extend suspense is to treat the reader like a donkey.

115 – Does the delay make the point more philosophically significant? Rather than theories of human motivation, one must use their own experience.

116 – "The writing of fiction is a mode of thought because by imitating we come to understand the thing we imitate. Fiction is thus a convincing and honest, but unverifiable science, (in the old sense, knowledge)."

117 - For Aristotle, imitation was the primary way in which the writer of a fiction makes discoveries.

120 – A writer should be able to guess how a character's living room is decorated. What is the moral value? To feel for the character or feel ourselves superior to them. In the first case, we can be uplifted and seek to imitate them. If we just feel superior to a slob, well, that is petty.

121 – We can get a story and populate it with concrete images, possibly with poetic suggestions until the draft is complete. Not stopping there, you can read it over and over to see if motifs appear. We must search for them, why is this here?

122 – We may not know, we may need to search until the meaning of the story starts to appear. This is a matter of growing with your story. This is not just a device for the moral writer, it is a way of approaching art.

123 – We see this method in the rewrites of great writers.
One last check on fiction's honesty is tradition.

124 – A writer should also be aware of the literary tradition that they know. A change of style is a change of subject.

125 – His example is his rewriting of Medea.

He feels his methods apply to all the arts.

126 – He does not always hate mediocre art. But, he does object to the 'cult of sex and violence, and more strongly yet to the cult of cynicism and despair. He is also against censorship as he believes good art, once promoted, will easily beat out bad art.

He also believes the scarcity of good art has contributed to making society sick. We have accepted the cruelest, ugliest thing we can say is likely to be the truest. Not so.

"Real art creates myths a society can live instead of die by, and clearly our society is in need of such myths." And, these are the product of careful and disciplined thought. Working at art is a moral act; a work of art is a moral example, and false art can be seen by remembering the rules for creation.

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MORAL CRITICISM

128 – Most critics would probably agree that an important work of art is 1) aesthetically interesting, 2) technically accomplished and 3) intellectually massive. And, it seems a work cannot be intellectually massive if it is patently wrong, asserting what is false or immoral.

What aside from whim makes something aesthetic? These are not agreed upon.

129 – But you cannot look at each new piece of art as if it were the first piece of art you have ever seen. So what is the simplest formula we can have?

We have the evasion of the New Criticism, which avoids the universe outside of the work of art, and the 19th century, that kept looking at the author's biography. Some schools are too theoretical and some too neat too 'scientific' to deal with messy art.

131 – If you only use one rubric you're off from the start.

Frye as New Critics in only looking at the coherence and form of the piece, cannot compare one to another, greats to mediocres.

132 – All artists hope their work is noble.

“A good book is one that, for its time, is wise, sane, and magical, one that clarifies life and tends to improve it.”

133 – Moral criticism may speak of technique and sometimes ought to, but its ultimate concern is with ends. They require a belief in the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. These do not exist as llamas do, but as values that exist when embodied and are recognized as embodied.

They are values by definition, and by inspection not relative values but relative absolute values, like health. The term ‘relative absolute’ is not double – talk. An 80 year old with decent health has relatively good health, relative to an ideal.

134 – Tomorrow relative good health for an 80 year old may be better. It is the highest mental health possible, given the circumstances.

The good for a man cannot be divorced for what is good for his society and environment. Morality is the engine of the Good. The Good is form; morality is function; and form cannot exist independent of function.

Morality describes psychological preparations for actions. But the number of actions is unlimited.

135 – Morality is too complex to be knowable, and far too complex to be reduced to a code. But this doesn't mean it is out of reach, but only beyond the strictly analytic process which leads to knowing.

Thus the healthy society has diversity, but not plurality wherein one interferes with others. But, pluralism ‘tends to undermine man's ability to believe in true morality, to go out in defiance of mere positive law.’”

Morality is easier to see in our dealings with children. We can see when they come from healthy or unhealthy families. Just because there are no exact rules for childrearing doesn't mean we cannot tell good from bad.

136 – There are also ideal patterns of behavior between adults. Sympathy and trust. Understood this way, the Good is the essential subject of all literature.

137 – Some say the good gets sappy. But, one writer's incompetence does not justify ruling out the value of the Good in literature.

138 – We are disappointed when we don't see the good in literature. This is physiological.

139 – Knowledge may or may not lead to belief; understanding always does. And, we come to understand characters. We want happiness and moral satisfaction for them, not shame.

140 – Good is a relative absolute that we cannot approach except by experiencing numbers of situations. Truth is that which can be known for certain. Truth is the lowest concern of fiction. Accurate imitation give pleasure.

141 – But accuracy gives weight and authority to the author. But there is no truth to the setting of Beowulf and no one cares.

144 – Beauty is the truth of feeling. Beauty has, in itself, nothing to do with either the True or the Good. Truth, Goodness, and Beauty are thus, in varying degrees, the fundamental concerns of art and therefore ought to be the fundamental concerns of criticism.

145 - The critics first question should be ‘is the artist correct?’ Beauty is a matter of technique, but also of emotional honesty as well. And, true criticism is, at least some of the time, morally judgmental.

146 – When the work goes awry and is ugly, it should be pointed out.

A writer should seek to find out what he can honestly maintain, with all his nature.

CHAPTER THREE – PART TWO

THE ARTIST AS CRITIC

147 – The artist ought not to be too civilized, too meekly tolerant.

149 – The bad artist is only an artist because he claims he is and has gotten at least one person to believe them. How to challenge him? Like a gunfighter.

Artists have been shooting at artists for centuries. Forcing them to articulate a position can make them better. And a stupid defense can help show they are fraudulent.

150 – You may get away with putting a doll in a museum and calling it art. But, literature is made of words and harder to fake. It is a sane expression of consciousness. It is rational. Psychotic speech frightens the sane.

152 – Bad art is always basically creepy.

154 – Philosophy is a system, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t real. It chases an intuition.

155 – Science too cannot account for all as a system. But, scientist want to expose the magician’s trick and continue searching for the wires that have got to control all.

156 – We too needn’t see all in a story as true or even hunt it. It is the metaphorical expression of a philosophical idea.

Beauty too is an intuition.

157 – The art is dead movement could only work so long as it denied its nihilistic premises. The artist can approach beauty in many ways. As a priest he tells what God loves and hates; as a poet he drops divine metaphors and stands, himself, as a lawgiver.

160 – A museum director may say Art is a business, it is what people come to look at to see if its art. This is smarter than it sounds. Because when people stop coming to see it, it is not art.

162 – Art is an affirmation of what ought to be and what, is.

163 – That means we cannot safely treat the work of art in isolation from its background: the tradition behind the work and the time and place of its appearance.

166 – A preacher approaches truth via preaching, an artist via creation.

168 – Now days, art seems to comment bitterly on the present. “Of course the less the artist knows about tradition – the greater his ignorance or stupidity – the greater the power of the moment.”

169 – Yet, if he panders to tradition, paying no mind to the howls and whimpers of his age, he is a self-righteous pedant and nostalgia monger, an impediment to civilized progress.

170 – The artist too may be out of his time, like Blake.

171 – Great art like great philosophy is metaphysical, but emotionally metaphysical. It frames a cohesive coherent convincing system of ideas by which our experience is illuminated.

172 – Here he cites anthropology to show that art in one culture is not appreciated by another. Yet, they can tell if another culture’s art is good or bad.

173 – Art shows the ultimate rightness of things which it does not pretend to understand in the philosopher’s way.

174 – But while the normal person makes room in his world for the trivial, the unintentional, or accidental or fraudulent, this is a luxury no good artist can afford.

At its worst, bad art is an obstruction to the light, a competitor against good, a filth and a pestilence that must be driven out.

That is why, if he sees the ugliness of his time, the artist might be self-destructive, like an angel trapped in hell.

CHAPTER FOUR

ART AND INSANITY

176 - The view of artist as insane is very old. The chief quality that distinguishes great art, everyone knows, is its sanity, the good sense and efficient energy with which it goes after what is really there and feels significant.

Really there? Right attitude or belief

177 - Efficient? Cut out irrelevancies.

Energy does not mean insanity. It means the work must be about something powerful and energetically pursued.

178 - The insanity is controlled because, as much as writing is like dreaming, it is lucid dreaming.

179 – But, the dream must be about something of value. He cannot assert art is to be moral without asserting this. So, though it is not open to proofs, he still knows there is good and bad taste.

Bad art supports death and slavery, good art, life and freedom.

People cut off from what is normally healthy are bad people to eat dinner with or fall in love with. “The true artist’s purpose, and the purpose of the critic after him, is to show what is healthy, in other (180) words sane, in human seeing, thinking, and feeling, and to point out what is not.”

He may deal with morality in manners, in which case his work is minor. We need gusto. But, Socrates gusto, not Manson.

181 - Creativity begins with obsession born of a wound, and the universality of the woundedness makes the work significant. It is a wound to personality or self-confidence that must be overcome to be healthy.

182 – The notion of artist as better than other people is irritating.

183 – But the true artist is the enemy of all that is shoddy or false. They have filled their heart with an idea of the good, that is more attractive than the filth around them.

184 – Art possesses him, establishing norms that are not the world’s norms; so he is saner and seen as mad.

If you want to be an artist, you must head to the city. It is often that we then see this mad vision, coupled with hometown common sense. Chaucer and Shakespeare had this.

185 – The artist usually has many wounds to deal with.

However, ‘crazy’, the artist may appear, they must communicate to people.

187 – There must be a distance between the artist and his characters. If an artist too artificially takes on a high style and avoids their own identity, it is strained. Writers must know their identity, for all to ring true.

188 – But, an artist that knowingly takes on the high style, with consciousness that they're trying, is honest. This is sane.

189 – You must find out who you are, not just go on some pious rant.

190 – Anne Sexton was at her best when she knew she was in trouble and looked at her depression from a distance. It was her aid.

191 - Art's gift for playing roles helped her. It was her sanity amidst madness.

191 – Artists who do gibberish seem mad. Shakespeare was good at this, in Lear and Hamlet.

192 – But, clearly there is nothing mad in this.

Borrough's novels teach the threat to humanity is being destroyed by our own accidental nature, if we make no choice between accidents.

193 – Borrough's speaks of people's mindless and machinelike repetition of old opinions and prejudices.

We must remember, in good art the writer speaks, first, to clarify his own mind what he thinks and feels, and secondly to communicate that on the assumption that the reader has felt the same.

194 – You must understand where you are in the world to be cured. So must the artist who does not just wish to spin their wheels.

Tolkien's ring trilogy speaks to the darkness of total war.

195 – Social context is more important for those who write on social evils. But to be good, it must be an honest personal voice and to be great it must life to metaphysics, not just today's issues.

196 – Finally, art must communicate. Even if you write stuff too complex for the masses, you must write so that complex people will understand. You must communicate, coherently.

198 – Hollowness in poetry or fiction shows itself mainly in the writer's exaggerated interest in the trimmings of his drama, in constant elaborate description. Symbolism must add to the dramatic conflict.

We also get neurotic repetition of the same ideas, without growth, is a bad sign: D H Lawrence is an example. Neurosis.

200 – Consciousness must rise via conflicts. Consciousness comes, Collingwood and James teach us, via seeing patterns, "Aha! I've seen that before," it resides in naming one's mental processes, reasoning about the names, and then naming the connections.

201 – Feeling, herein, means idea as well as raw emotion; the name of the feeling, articulated retains emotional charge.

203- The artist can wake up. The insane person cannot.

Here, he wants to admit, his observation that great art is sanity, is a half-truth. Art's essential method verges on the psychotic; the artist creates by the energy of his mind, he imagines a dream world, surrenders to it, is passionate.

The deeper the trance the more his divorce from ordinary reality.

204 – The artist is likely to be furious in company of cheapness or compromise. He may be indifferent to his own well-being like an Old Testament prophet. But, this rabidity is not enough, it must be divine madness shot through with love; love of the good, attractive good.

205 – “The business of civilization is to pay attention, remembering what is central, remembering that we live or die by the artist's vision, sane or cracked.