

writing. It brings us to a consideration of the esthetic power of a writer's material. The writer's material? Is it words filed as clean of all their connotations and ideational meanings as a curve or a spread of color is? Or is it precisely those connotations and meanings, those idea-emotions, that are the writer's material? The sign or the things for which the sign stands? Tzara is headed towards a sign esthetic. His poetry is a challenge to further research in the esthetic nature of words. My tentative belief, however, is that there are very restricted walls for an art based on signs and that the proper materials are those things which they symbolize. Abstract painting does all the essential things that representative painting, if it is of value, does. Both are good for the same reason. But abstract literature, to date, falls short of representative literature because it has not yet conquered a literary third dimension, cannot expand very far into an interior organization. That is, I conceive the psychological, social, idea-emotional, interpretative, etc., values of an organized piece of writing to be the only means a novelist, let us say, has to give a feeling of documentary solidity. They can be detached from his design, but, if he uses them as an artist, they serve to weight and energize his scheme. Let us note, then, that there are certain grandly serious elements of life and certain very trivial constituents. This means that the power of subject matter varies and leads to another tentative conclusion. The more documentary solidity a writer can give his work provided he can control surfaces proportioned to this interior development, the deeper and fuller response he can create.

With more certainty it may be said that there is a shifting importance attached to the multitudinous subjects which writers use and that there come periods when even the grandly serious things are of less importance for literary production than the minor facets of life. This is, in part, due to the operation of a law of fatigue upon esthetic emotion. Certain subject matter, let us say doubt, melancholy, speculation upon insolubles, exploited again and again in an era, gradually loses its potency and calls forth weaker and weaker replies. It is necessary to turn to other materials, courage and