

and intellectualisms of our time which virtually transform daily activity into a code apart from normal human living, there is no method of release into the realm of actual function that is comparable to movement. Merely to repeat the movement patterns in which simpler and more natural people have objectified their moods of conviviality and exuberance is to get by contagion something of their freedom and their essential humanity.

Actually, to be sure, when the urban sophisticate touches the folk arts he commits a desecration of sorts; on that score there can be no argument. They are not his natural means of expression and, no matter how much he may respect them, the moment he attempts to put them into practice he more or less overpowers them with his alien enthusiasm. What is to do about them, then? Leave them in books and records as sacred and unapproachable data for ethnologists and historians? It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the scholarly approach to the folk arts, but a little well-directed vandalism for the immediate good will perhaps not jeopardize too seriously the ultimate treasures of scholarship.

It was in the closing decades of the last century that folk arts were first recognized as important enough to collect and cherish. This awakening was not an isolated phenomenon, but bears a close relation to other movements in those years and the early years of the new century which have had a great bearing on all the arts and their relation to life. The period was one in which all the prophets of progress recognized the necessity for a return to nature for guidance and a rejection of traditional formalisms as a basis for experience.