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TOWARDS A NEW RELIGION: ANDY GOLDSWORTHY AS A SYMBOL OF
HOPE

by
Lucinda Bartley

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INTRODUCTION

Modern man, according to popular belief, is in a state of crisis never before experienced. Our intellectual superiority has allowed us to both mentally and physically rise above the world we live in as no other creature can, but in doing so we seem to have become like an astronaut who has become separated from his ship and floats helplessly in the infinite void of space on one end of a severed rope like a lost embryo. The 'giant leap for mankind' seems to have been an unforeseen stumble into a deep, dark hole that we dug for ourselves and are now trying desperately to find a way out of.

This catastrophe, as many would indeed see it, is reflected in two cultural phenomena which are both indications of man's attitude to his environment and his relationship with it and are also ways of understanding the mystery that is life; mainly religion and art, both windows to the soul of society that are currently reflecting the unease and uncertainty that permeates the Western world at this time. In our Western world, Christianity, which for reasons no-one can completely define, took root and flourished with no other serious rival for almost one thousand years, but this century and particularly the last thirty years or so has seen a persistent weakening of Christian faith that is undeniable. According to Philip Sherrard in his book The Sacred in Life and Art

'it is this losing contact with God, the source of holiness and wholeness, that is the crux of the fall of man; and our modern age exemplifies it as no other age ever has because it is the product of a state of mind which has lost the sense, not only of this fall, but also and correspondingly of every aspect of the sacred.' (37, p.36)

In this thesis I will discuss this statement and largely disagree with it - not with the fact of our falling so much as with his interpretation of the reason for it, and the extent of it. Of course 'God' can mean many things to different people. What I mean by 'God' and 'religion' is an expression of the transcendental: something which cannot be proven but is sensed beyond the realms of the physical or the psychological and is greater, more powerful than ourselves. I see religion as the way that different cultures attempt to explain the random occurrences of life - twists of fate - that affect us for

better or worse. It celebrates life and offers a consolation for death in the afterlife.

I don't think it is the rejection of the Judaeo-Christian style omnipotent father god that has brought about our fall, but the growing alienation of the human race from the natural world and from the myth of the Goddess which was the predominant belief among prehistoric peoples from as early on as 200,000 b.c. in which the earth was seen as a harmonious living unity in which life and death were part of a continuous cycle in which man participated. The history of the human race since then has been a history of gradual dominance over his fellow creatures. I am not saying that this is unnatural, because for some reason man was endowed with certain biological characteristics which enabled him to develop as he has into such a complex creature. The wrong lies in the arrogant belief - encouraged by western religion - that man is not an animal at all; in fact he has no inherent connection with Nature at all for he was created separately in God's own image and his given role was 'to replenish the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth' (Genesis 1:28). Along with the subjugation of nature came the subjugation of the feminine principle by the masculine. The Goddess in mythology loses the dominant position she held as a symbol of life, death and rebirth for many thousands of years until Babylonian mythology introduced the idea of opposing forces of spirit embodied in the masculine principle, or God; and chaotic Nature ie. the Goddess, as symbolized by the slaying of Tiamat by Marduk, her son-lover. However the Goddess didn't die, and our vision of the whole hasn't been lost, just obscured. This opinion is also being expressed by a growing number of writers and artists. If, as Sherrard says, there is nothing sacred in our society, then there is no sacred art, no spirituality. Certainly much of modern art reflects a cynical and bitter realism and a celebration of the mechanical over the natural but there are still those who have 'dreamed the Living Tree, an amalgam of life and the sacred.' (31, p.xi). The tree may have been cut down but the roots are immortal and will continue to send out new shoots that will thrive if they are protected and nourished.

Perhaps this is optimistic, but I find the evidence - the 'shoots' - in the type of art that is being created by a growing number of 'land artists' like the British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy

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whose work I will discuss. Even if you are not familiar with current artistic trends, the evidence is everywhere - in the new 'ecological awareness', 'save the trees' T-shirts, 'green' consumer goods. Many rural 'unspoilt' areas like West Cork, where I had the great fortune to grow up, are seeing a steady influx of people who are disillusioned with urban living and the quality of life it offers. The country has become 'chic'. In areas like West Cork, we are now experiencing the phenomena of 'New Agers' - the hippies of the nineties, who set up temporary communities in remote places. They are travellers, searching for something that society is failing to give them by opting out of the system. Whether they have found a better one is another question.

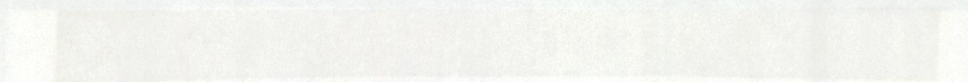
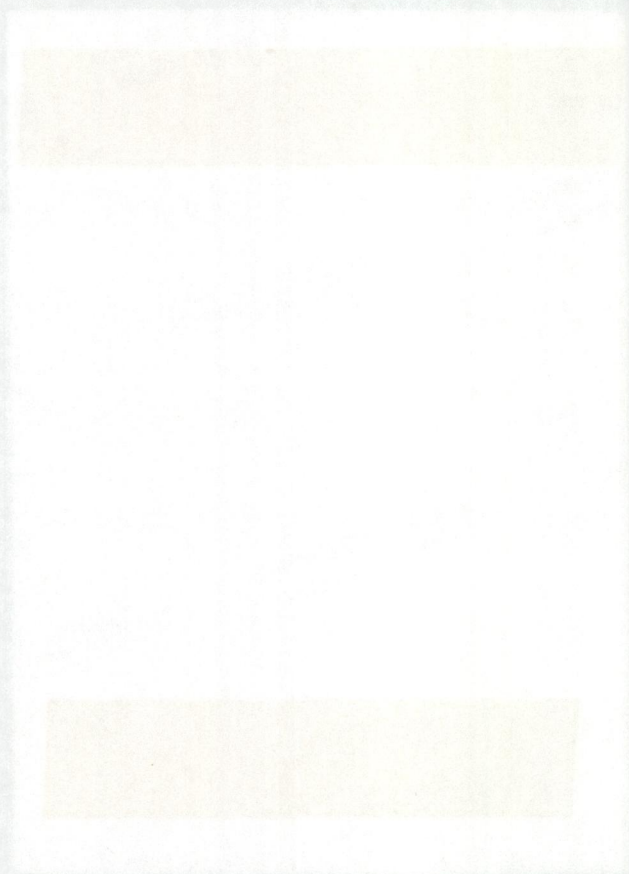
What is beyond question is that people are turning to the natural world to find answers that science couldn't give them, nor could Christianity. That doesn't mean they will be rejecting religion or the sacred but looking for its sources elsewhere - looking to the Eastern religions like Taoism and Buddhism, and seeking out the Goddess. I agree with David Pownall who states that 'there will be a new religion. Out of the destruction, waste and divisions of the twentieth century will come a resurgence of spiritual optimism... In the twenty-first century we will be adoring a God that we wounded - apologising, trying to compensate for our mistakes but, most of all, for our greed...' (33, p.144)

Religion and art have always been closely intertwined. The health of the arts in a particular culture is a good indication of its spiritual health. Gothic art, for example, is the supreme expression of the positive power of Christianity to enrich and uplift the spirit. So what kind of art is the 'new religion' of this New Age going to inspire? Artists have been responding to this holistic view of man and nature for many years and it is manifested in part in the work of the Romantic artists of the nineteenth century and the Neo-romantic movement of the second quarter of this century, as well as in the work of Van Gogh, Piet Mondrian, Joseph Beuys and Constantin Brancusi to name but a few. It is an art that will reflect the ideas that this religion embraces: the importance of seeing man as part of the natural environment being the main factor. It will use the symbols of the Goddess like water, moon, spiral and serpent; images of fertility and rebirth. All this I see in Goldsworthy's art - images made from leaves, twigs, stones, snow and the elements. Like the new religion

it involves the worship of nature and a ritual participation in its processes. It is an art of atonement, an art of impermanence. He said when asked about his religious affiliations 'I belong to no church' (21, p.161) but he is involved in 'an intensely spiritual affair' (21, p.164) with nature. Perhaps if we all indulge in a similar affair we might gain some insight into the truth of the human condition and find footholds with which to climb back up into the light.



Fig. 1 The Goddess of Laussel, Dordogne, c. 20,000 B.C.



CHAPTER 1: THE GODDESS.

Will you teach your children what we have taught our children? That the earth is our mother? What befalls the earth, befalls the all the sons of the earth. This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood which unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself." (Chief Seattle 1855)

We have since the dawn of man, learnt many things. From the discovery of how to make fire to the development of computers, we have undeniably come a very long way. There are many things our children learn to equip them for life in this modern world of ours but what of the type of schooling described by Chief Seattle? Does learning that the circumference of a circle = πR^2 teach them anything about the mystery of the great sphere upon which we live - mysteries that may have been understood better by some stone age child? Paleolithic man inhabiting the vast area of land we now know as Central and Eastern Europe saw the earth as a creative, harmonious, living being. He, like men ever since then, expressed his beliefs through religion - the cult of the Goddess, or Earth Mother, and made them more tangible through art. It was this impulse which gave rise to the creation of the figure of the goddess of Laussel (fig.1.) over 20,000 years ago in the Dordogne area of France. She is one among over one hundred carvings and statues of the goddess found between the Pyrenees and Siberia; images which emphasize the life-giving powers of the earth as symbolized by the female, and the connection between the cycles of the earth and of the heavens. The Goddess of Laussel is depicted with huge breasts and thighs, and a swollen belly - she is above all a mother. In her right hand she holds a crescent-shaped bison's horn which has thirteen notches on it representing the thirteen days of the waxing moon and the thirteen months of the lunar year. Together these two elements of the carving support Joseph Campbell's suggestion that 'the initial observation that gave birth in the mind of man to a mythology of one mystery informing earthly and celestial things was the recognition of an accord between these two 'time-factored' orders: the celestial order of the waxing moon and the earthly order of the

womb.' (4, p.7). Unlike us they made no distinction between spiritual and earthly matters. To them the earth itself and everything in it was sacred and powerful. This notion of the earth, and not a separate entity, as responsible for its own creation is mirrored in the creation myths of other primitive cultures that still exist (under threat) today: the aborigines believe that the world existed below the surface, and was created on the surface through the Ancestors - ancient beings who slept in the mud:

On the surface of the Earth, the only features were certain hollows which would, one day, be waterholes. There were no animals and no plants, yet clustered round the water holes there were pulpy masses of matter: lumps of primordial soup - soundless, sightless, unbreathing, unawake and unsleeping - each containing the essence of life, or the possibility of becoming human.

Beneath the earth's crust, however, the constellations glimmered, the Sun shone, the Moon waxed and waned, and all the forms of life lay sleeping: the scarlet of a desert-pea, the iridescence on a butterfly's wing, the twitching white whiskers of Old Man Kangaroo - dormant as seeds in the desert that must wait for a wandering shower.

Then the sun shone for the first time and

each drowsing ancestor felt the Sun's warmth pressing on his eyelids, and felt his body giving birth to children. The Snake Man felt snakes slithering out of his navel. The Cockatoo Man felt feathers.....Every one of the 'living things', each at its own separate birthplace, reached up for the light of day.....Then, like the baby's cry, each Ancestor opened his mouth and called out, 'I AM!' 'I am - Snake...Cockatoo...Honey Ant...Honeysuckle...' And this first 'I am!', this primordial act of naming, was held, then and forever after, as the most secret and sacred couplet of the Ancestor's song. (10, pp. 80-81)

So when did supernatural power become disassociated from the earth? In their book 'The Myth of the Goddess', Ann Baring and Jules Cashford suggest that along with the Goddess myth, but originally of secondary importance to it, existed the myth of the hunter, which was centered on the will of man to survive. (4, p.39) It is expressed in the cave paintings of Lascaux, only a few miles from where the Goddess of Laussel was discovered, where wounded animals and hunters are depicted. They also suggest that the Goddess myth included but could

not be included in, the hunter myth; if everything is seen as sacred and part of the whole, how could the taking of life be justified? As man developed into a more complex social animal, the survival impulse strengthened, and with the invasion in c.4500 BC of nomadic warrior tribes from the East, with their fierce sky-gods, the myth of the goddess lost its supremacy, and the feminine principle became subordinate to the male.

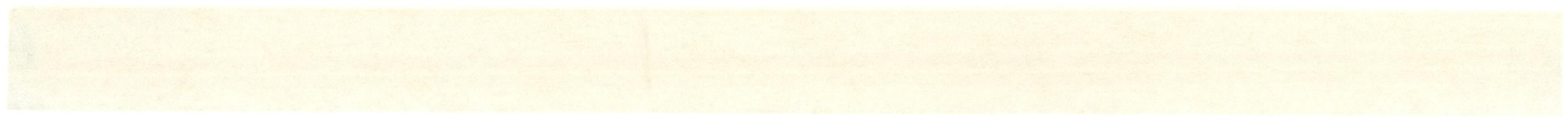
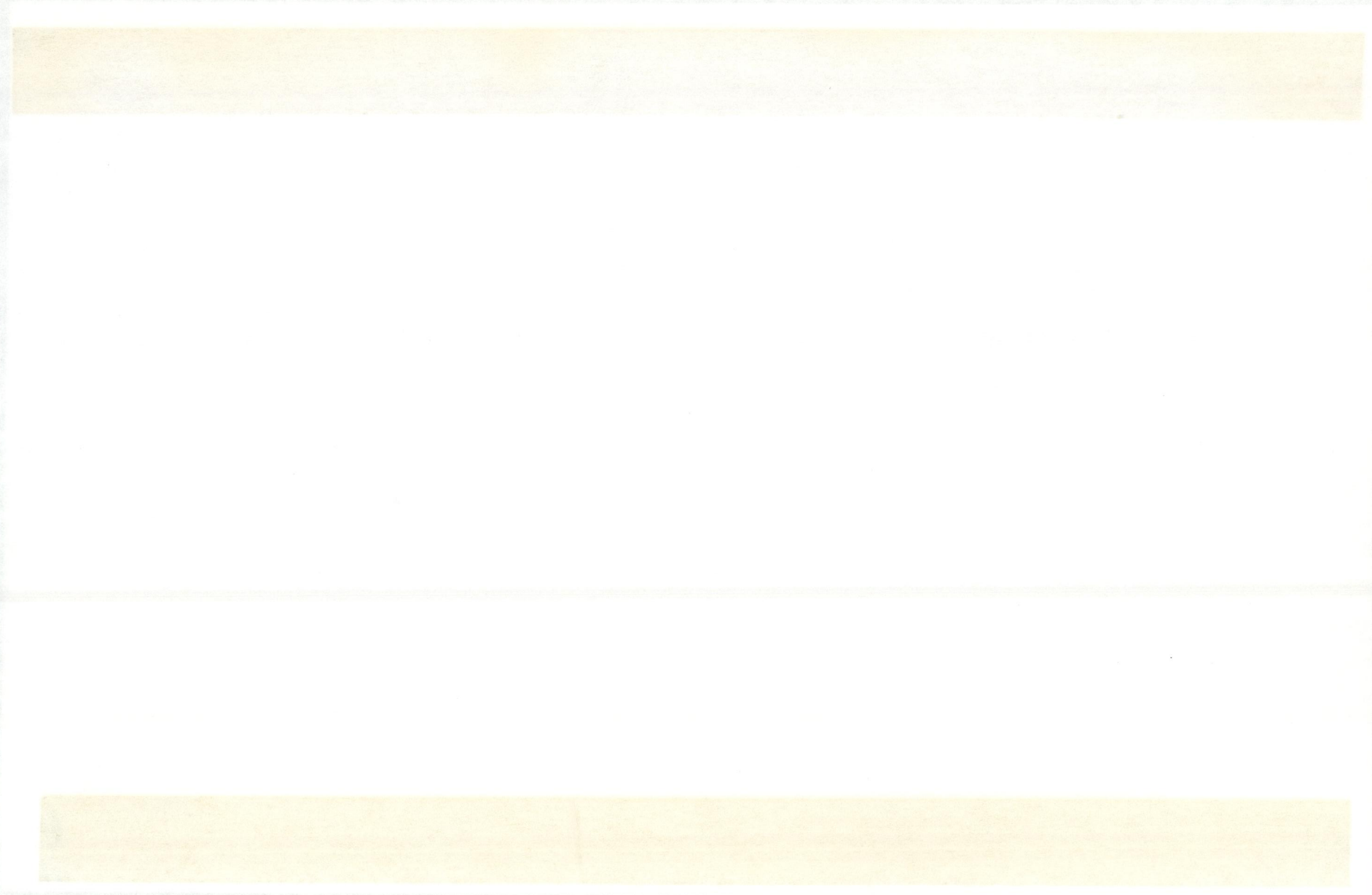
'All consciousness separates: but in dreams we put on the likeness of that more universal, truer, more eternal man dwelling in the darkness of primordial night. There he is still the whole, and the whole is in him, indistinguishable from nature and bare of all egohood.' (9, *passim*). The ego, or sense of self, is a controlling and civilising agent as opposed to the 'id' which expresses inner desires and urges - animal instincts which man has tried to subdue. The ego denies our links with nature and according to Freud, developed in reaction to a threatening environment. The Spirit, which represented the order and control required by the ego, was taken from nature and used to subdue both nature and the most 'natural' part of man - the 'id'. But as modern man finds himself with a new kind of chaos, man-made rather than natural, he has become interested in the idea of attempting to regain insight into the spiritual by transcending the ego, returning to the more instinctual aspects of his character to find the truth about himself.

Music and drugs have always been used to stimulate the 'id' part of our natures. They are still used today as ways to escape from reality, from the pressures and complexes imposed individually by our egos and as a whole by society, although they are not always recognized as primal instincts. But what is more primal than the modern rave, where music is reduced to an insistent, mind-numbing throb and the senses are heightened with the drug Ecstasy by dancers who seem to be oblivious to each other, and to reality. Where is the difference between this and the following description which is of a ritual dance performed by the Ohlone - Stone Age Indians who lived in California:

The beat never changed, but as time passed it seemed to grow more intense, coming not so much from the rattles or the clapping of hands as from the houses that surrounded the plaza, the trees around the village, the earth and the sky itself. In long rhythmic and repetitive sequences the dancers stamped flat-footed on the resonating earth of the plaza. The dance went on for hours,



Fig. 2 Andy Goldsworthy, Slits cut into frozen snow/stormy/strong
wind/weather and light rapidly changing, Blencathra Cumbria
1988.



sometimes for a whole day or even longer. The dancers stamped and stamped. They stamped out all thoughts of village life, even stamped out their own inner voices. Dancing hour after hour they stamped out the ordinary world, danced themselves past the gates of common perception into the realm of the spirit world, danced themselves towards the profound understanding of the universe that only a people can feel who have transcended the ordinary human condition and who find themselves moving in total synchronisation with everything around them. (31, p.25)

The increasing value being attributed to the intuitive and the instinctual reflects our desire to regain this synchronisation.

Modern art has many diverse characteristics, but one of its most obvious tendencies is towards the 'primitive'. Artists of this century have shown a deep interest in the art of primitive cultures, both prehistoric and contemporary, and the art of children together with a fascination with the subconscious. The Surrealists celebrated primitive instincts which have long been subdued by morals and manners. They described their work as 'psychic automatism' and 'exteriorizing' the subconscious. Paul Klee was fascinated by the same idea and desired to paint like 'children, madmen and savages' who he saw as being privy to an 'in-between world' which is denied to our 'civilised perception'. (25, p.200) He saw his art as the forces of the universe expressing themselves through him like the sap flowing through the trunk of a tree. His famous phrase 'a line taking a walk with itself' implies a certain independence from the artist's hand (and ego) and attributes creation to a deeper, indefinable impulse. Having said that, human creativity involves conscious decisions and a certain amount of discipline. Klee described the 'primitiveness' of his work as 'no more than economy; that is the ultimate professional awareness, which is to say, the opposite of real primitiveness.' (25, p.201) His honest approach is at once mystical and scientific, denying neither our natural impulses nor our intellectual capabilities.

Figure 2. shows the work of the British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy, who as I have already mentioned, is one among a growing number of 'land artists'. This group have largely disassociated themselves from the traditions of Western art and use nature as both inspiration and material. Their work is not generally to be found in galleries but in the landscape, and many leave no trace of their short existence except in a photographic record. Like Klee, they allow



Fig. 3 Andy Goldsworthy, Continuous grass stalk line, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, September 1983.



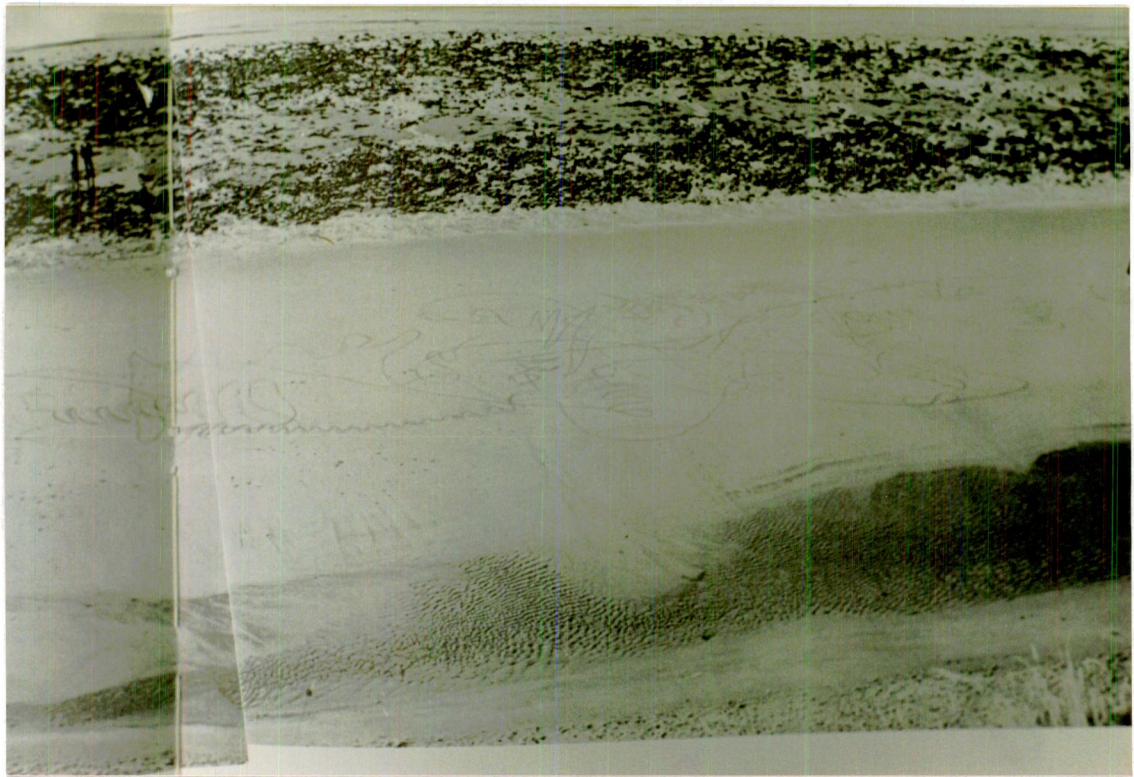
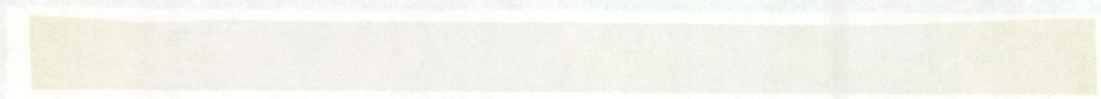
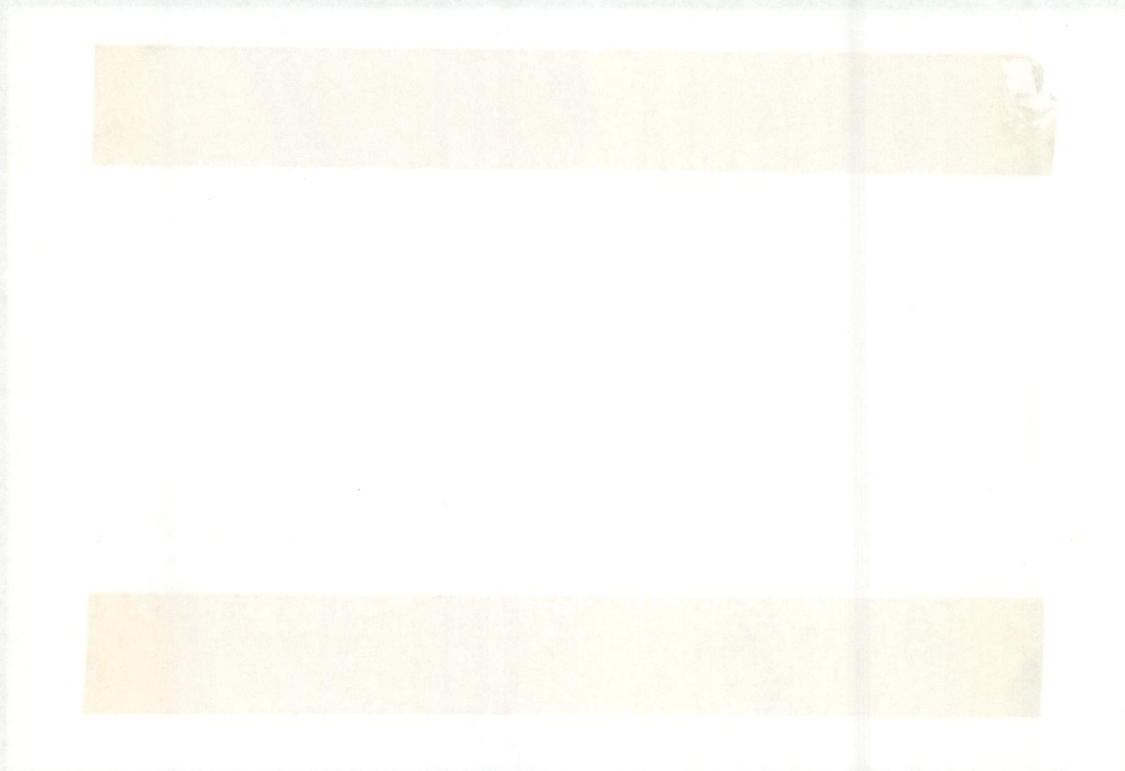


Fig. 4 Andy Goldsworthy, Line drawn in sand with stick, Abersoch
North Wales, August 1983.



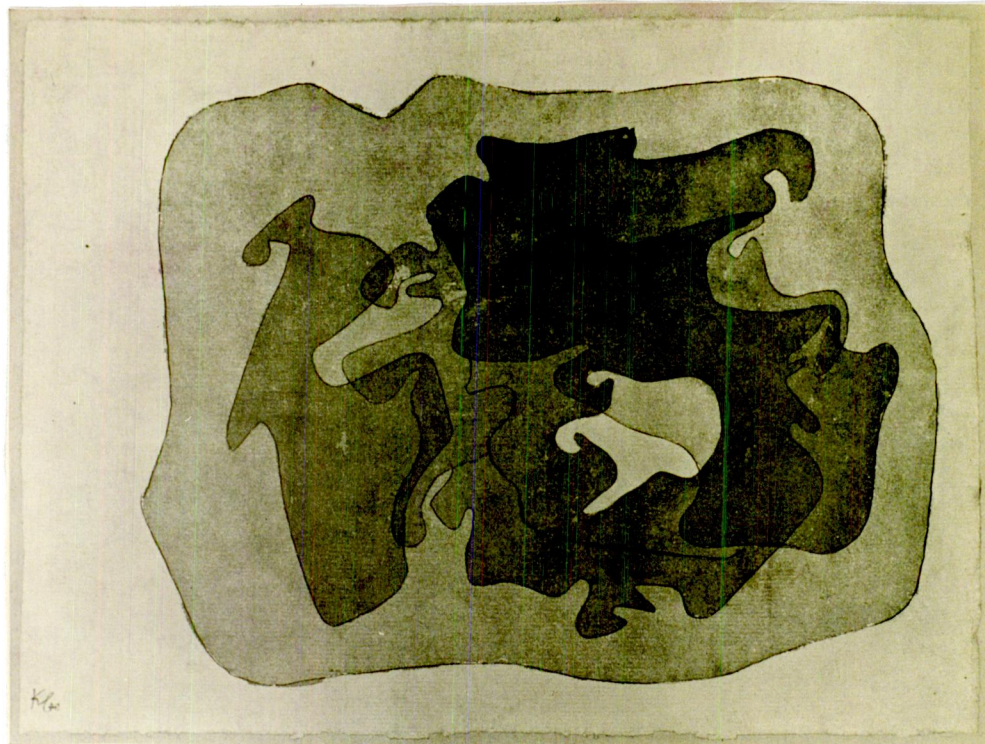


Fig. 5 Klee, Atmospheric Group in Motion, 1929.



Fig. 6 Andy Goldsworthy, Sycamore leaves and stalks/well ripened after a hot summer/held to the ground with thorns, Helbeck, Cumbria, November 1984.

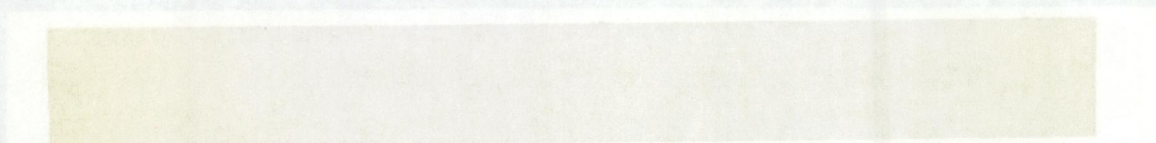
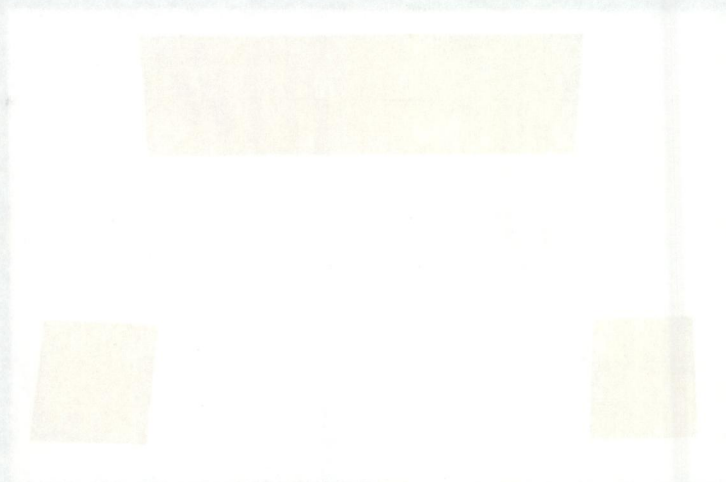
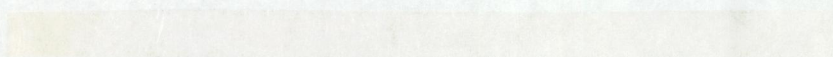
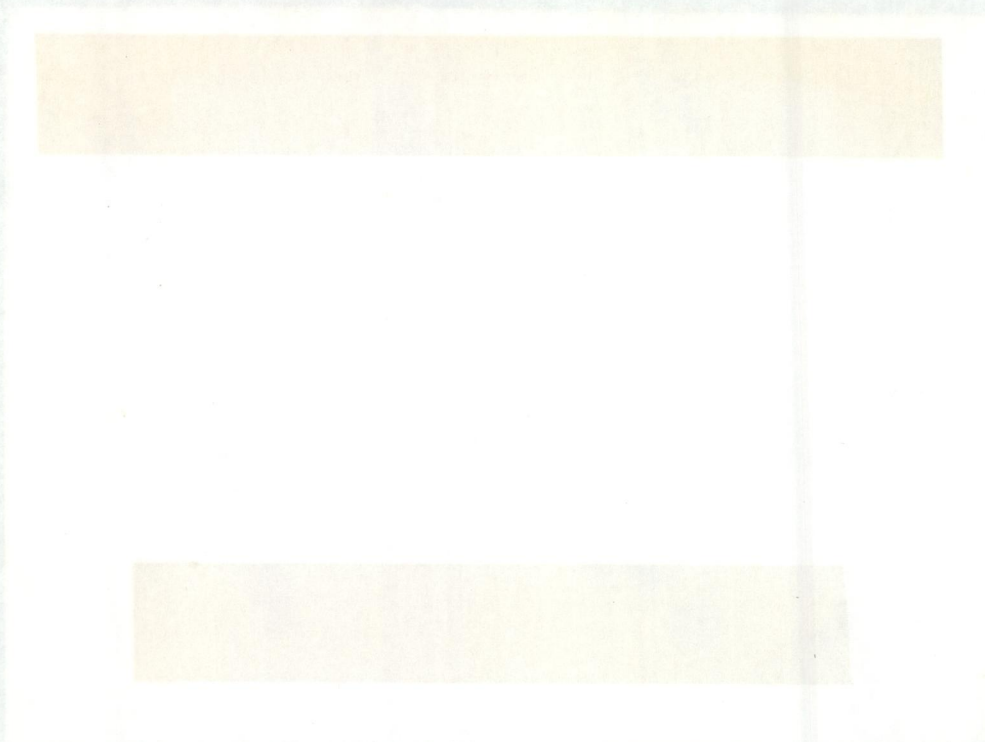




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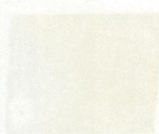
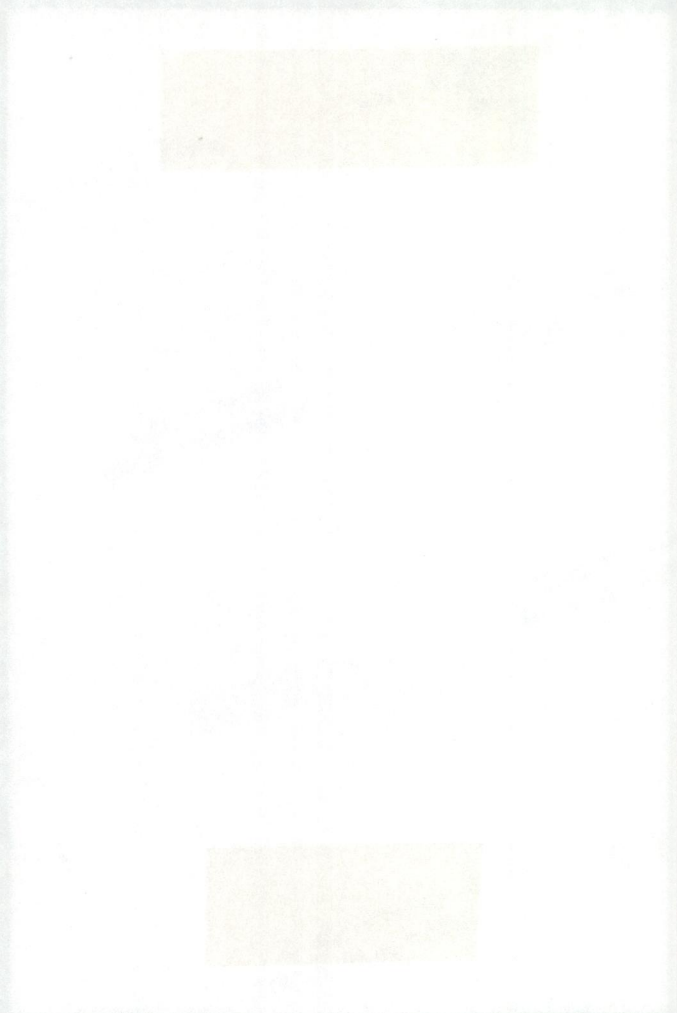




Fig. 8 Andy Goldsworthy, Cairn to follow colours in pebbles, St. Abbs, The Borders, 1 June 1985.

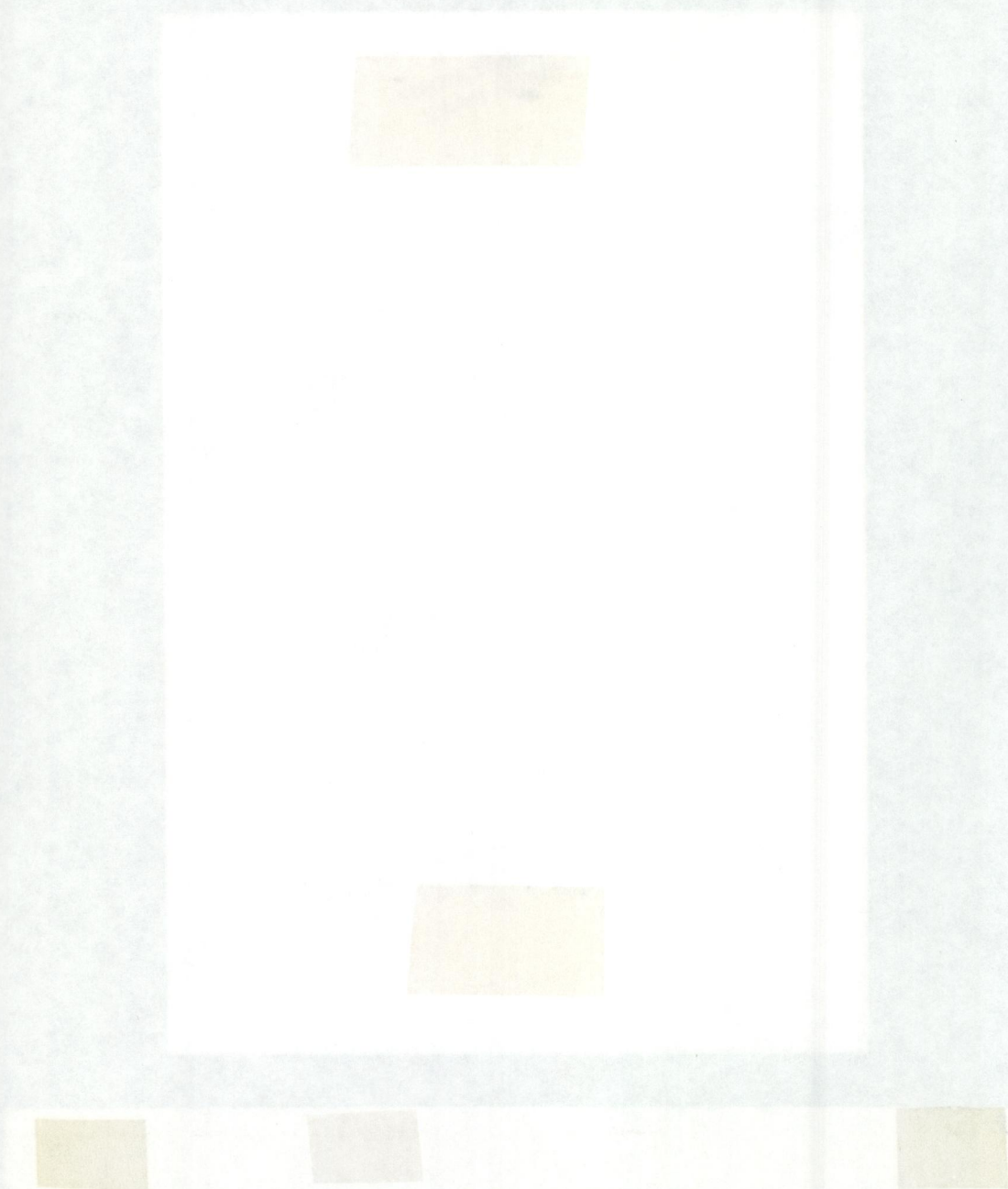
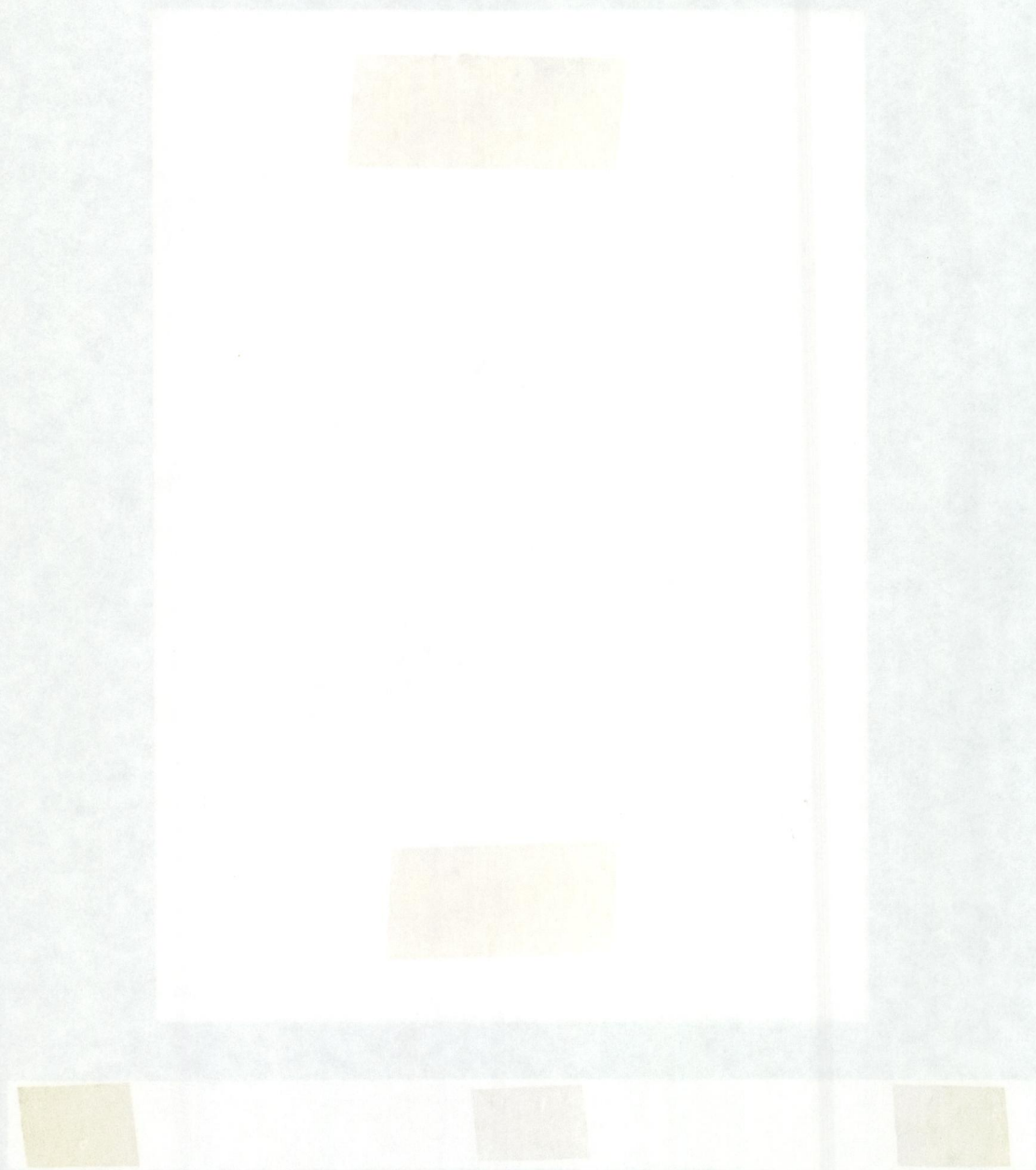




Fig. 9 Andy Goldsworthy, Wrapping poppy petals around a granite boulder, Sidobre, France, 6 June 1989.



nature to feed their creativity and at the same time use this creativity as a personal investigation into nature's processes. Klee's 'line taking a walk with itself' is echoed in Goldsworthy's 'Continuous grass stalk line' (fig. 3) which curves and zig-zags along the ground and up the trunk of a tree in a seemingly haphazard fashion, and again in his 'Line drawn in sand with a stick' at Abersoch, North Wales (fig. 4). Likewise, 'Atmospheric Group in Motion' (fig. 5) anticipates Goldsworthy's meandering lines of stalks, feathers and trenches which simultaneously express freedom and control (fig. 6). But to a far greater extent than Klee, Andy Goldsworthy sees himself as part of the environment, and as someone who shapes it by his actions in a way that doesn't have to be destructive. He puts himself in the landscape; allowing his senses to absorb everything around him he responds to this by creating forms out of the same objects that inspired him: leaves, twigs, stones, snow and ice. He said 'I see myself as a kind of object in the landscape, and an object that goes around affecting the landscape by touching. And when I put myself there I treat myself as an object, as part of the sculpture.' (35 , p.19) This is expressed in his ghostly silhouettes left when he lay down on the ground as it started raining or snowing (fig. 7), like ancient handprints left on rocky ledges by our prehistoric ancestors. He does not glorify himself as an artist, nor does his work glorify man. It often lasts only for a few seconds and seems to admit the frailty of man and the futility of his efforts at self-glorification in the face of the indomitable cycle of nature. On a beach at St. Abbs in 1985, he made a cairn of stones on the beach in a gradation of colours from grey at the bottom, gradually ebbing to white, then becoming suffused with a delicate pink which gets stronger and peaks at rust red at the top (fig. 8). It lasted only as long as the tide, which soon rearranged them into a haphazard medley on the shore. He also worked with poppy petals in Sidobre, France, wrapping them around a boulder and keeping them together with water (fig. 9). When they dried out and the wind blew, the petals fell off, their vibrant colour faded.

In the book I have already mentioned, The Myth of the Goddess, the authors concluded that this myth was re-emerging as a view of the universe and its inhabitants as a living whole. Proof of this is to be found in the arts:

Wherever we find the cave, the moon, the stone,
the serpent, bird and fish; the spiral, meander

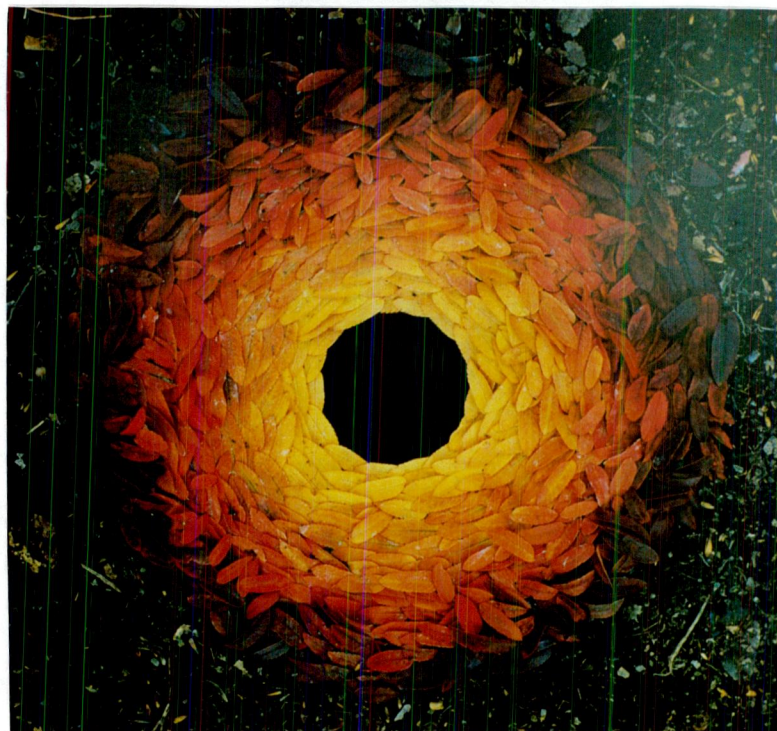


Fig. 10 Andy Goldsworthy, Rowan leaves laid around hole/collecting
the last few leaves/nearly finished/dog ran into hole/
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Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, 25 October 1987.

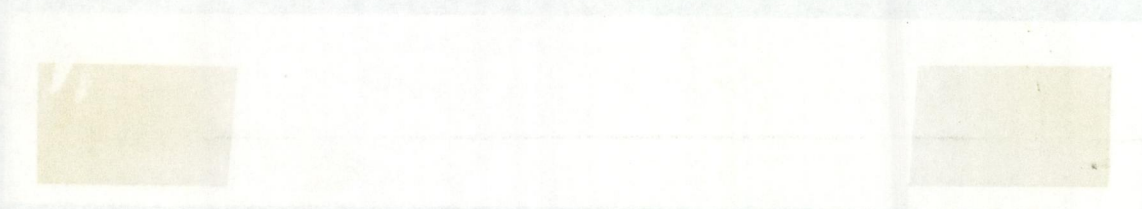




Fig. 11 Andy Goldsworthy, Sweet chestnut/autumn horn, Penpont,
Dumfriesshire, November 1986.



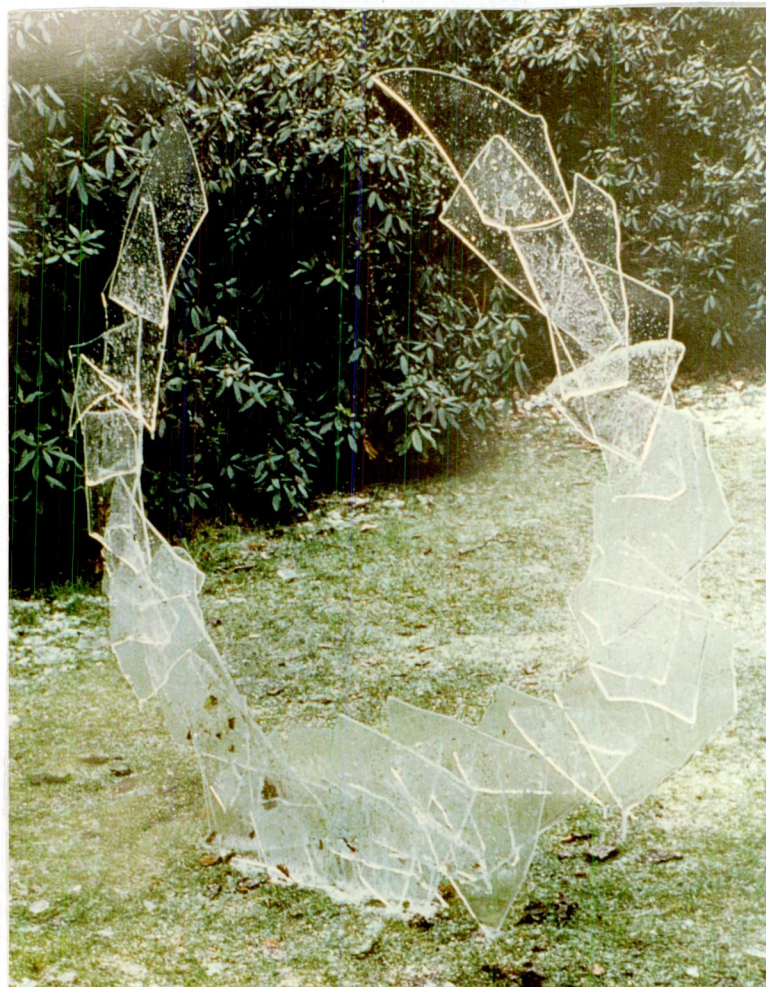


Fig. 12 Andy Goldsworthy, Worked through the night/working in the cold/only just below freezing/difficult to make ice stick/held each piece until frozen/pouring water over to make it more solid/occasionally letting go too soon/often causing several pieces to fall/work finished as dawn broke/no longer cold enough, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 17 February 1987.

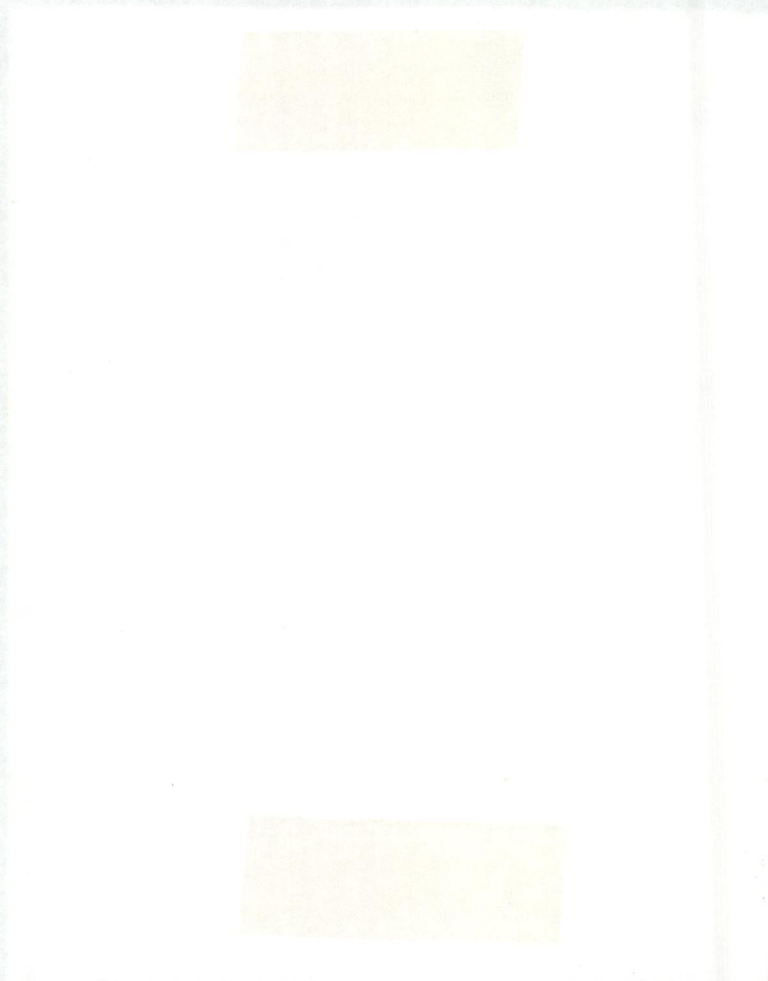




Fig. 13 Andy Goldsworthy, Sidewinder, Grizedale Forest, Cumbria 1985



and labyrinth; the wild animals - the lion, bull, bison, stag, goat and horse; rituals concerned with the fertility of the earth and of animals and human beings, and the journey of the soul to another dimension, then we are in the presence of the images that once enacted the original myth. (4, p.40)

The image of the cave, or opening into the earth is a preoccupation with Goldsworthy: 'Looking into a deep hole unnerves me. My concept of stability is questioned and I am made aware of the potent energies within the earth.' (23, p.5). He digs holes in the earth and places coloured leaves and stones, twigs and stalks around them in a way that draws the eye into the blackness (fig. 10). The crescent-shaped bison's horn in the hand of the Goddess of Laussel becomes a leafy horn made from sweet chestnut leaves (fig. 11) and a jagged crescent of sheet ice (fig. 12). The serpent form is another recurring image in his work. If you walk through Grizedale Forest in the Lake District you will find his 'Sidewinder' made from naturally curving pine trunks which undulates through the forest as if some invisible current is flowing through and sweeping the trees along with it (fig. 13). The meander and labyrinth are also much in evidence; Goldsworthy's largest piece to date is a maze at Leadgate in Co. Durham made from large banks of earth which form concentric circles and has a path twisting through it for pedestrians and cyclists.

Goldsworthy's art is directed towards a greater understanding of nature and its processes. Not a scientific understanding, more a 'sharpening perception'. Living in Scotland, he has always had the opportunity to work with snow and ice, but when he undertook the Touching North project at the North Pole in 1988, he had to learn much about the materials and the weather in this new environment before he could make a successful work. The following observation is from his diary, dated Wednesday 8th April:

snow is like sand, ice is like slate - snow is sand and ice is slate. I have always considered snow and ice to be one of the most ephemeral of materials that I have ever worked with, but here it has a feeling of permanence and it makes me realise how rhythms, cycles and seasons in nature are working at different speeds in different places. The earth as a whole is probably in these cycles going through different speeds and changing. Understanding those cycles is understanding the processes of nature. (24)

CHAPTER 2: THE CONTROL OF FEAR

All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death
But nearness to death no nearer to GOD.
Where is the life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us farther from GOD and nearer to the Dust.
(T.S. Eliot - Choruses from 'The Rock')

It is all very easy for most of us to wax lyrical about nature and primitivism, seeing it as a model of simplicity and harmony, but we are in the fortunate position of not, in the main, being dependant on its whims for our economic and personal security. At least, it is very difficult, nay impossible for us as part of a highly developed twentieth century culture to appreciate how totally powerless in the face of nature man used to feel, unless we have the unhappy experience to become shipwrecked on a desert island. In the following passage, an Eskimo gives the Danish explorer Rasmussen an insight into the element of fear which is part of man's original relationship with nature:

Even you cannot answer when we ask you why life is as it is. And so it must be. Our customs all come from life and are directed toward life; we cannot explain, we do not believe in this or that; but the answer lies in what I have just told you.

We fear!

We fear the elements with which we have to fight in their fury to wrest our food from land and sea.

We fear cold and famine in our snow huts.

We fear the sickness that is daily to be seen among us. Not death, but the suffering.

We fear the souls of the dead, of human and animal alike.

We fear the spirits of earth and air.

And therefore our fathers, taught by their fathers before them, guarded themselves about with all these old rules and customs, which are built upon the experience and knowledge of generations. We do not know how or why, but we obey them that we may be suffered to live in peace. And for all our angakoks* and their knowledge of hidden things, we yet know so little that we fear everything else." (34, p.55)

*shamans

So religion, to this Eskimo, is a way of alleviating fear through 'rules and customs'. But we in the Western World no longer have to fear the elements as we sit in our weatherproof, waterproof, heated dwellings. We are not in danger of starvation - in fact we are often unhealthily overfed. Advances in the field of medicine mean that most sicknesses can be cured and our life-expectancy has increased. Ghosts are scary, but we get a perverse enjoyment in being scared by them - we even pay money for the privilege in the cinema, and in books. This does not mean that we are braver, just that our ghosts are not as real.

Knowledge is an important factor in our lack of fear. Science has poked, prodded and perused until very few things remain a mystery. The microscope has allowed us to see beyond the surface of organisms into the cells of which all living things are made and witness the complex but harmonious workings of nature. The Renaissance saw the start of modern scientific thinking: In 1543 Copernicus put the sun in the centre of the planetary system; In 1609 Galileo invented the telescope and extended man's vision outward into the heavens. Of course, this did not go down well with the Catholic Church in Italy who were at that time mounting a determined Counter-Reformation against the 'heresies' of Martin Luther. Galileo was forced, under threat of torture, to withdraw his support for the Copernican World System which he had published in his book 'Dialogue on the Great World Systems' and admit the 'error' of his ways. But the wheels of knowledge had been set in motion, and men's insatiable curiosity was much too powerful for any church. The seventeenth century saw the birth of Isaac Newton and his death heralded the beginnings of the industrial revolution in England which led to the glory of the machine age.

Thus did nature become largely demystified. Although scientists and theologians were more often than not in opposition, as in the case of Galileo, they were actually trying to do the same thing - explaining, and controlling nature. In his book on primitive religion, Paul Radin suggests that the main role of religion since earliest times was to emphasize and preserve life-values, ie. success, happiness and a long life (34, pp.5-6). Science was certainly, after the Industrial Revolution, a social and economic enterprise which led to success, happiness and a longer life for those who were privileged enough to take advantage of it. However not everyone had the

education and intellect of Newton. In sixteenth and seventeenth century England, approximately 80% of people lived in the country and within this rural society there was a huge class distinction. At the same time that Shakespeare was creating his magnificent works, and Newton was formulating his laws of gravitation and refraction of light, at least half of the male population were illiterate. Although the English people lived in greater comfort than primitive man, their life was still fraught with hazards like disease and fire; the life expectancy of the average male of nobility was a mere 29.6 years. Their religious beliefs reflected this feeling of insecurity. Science did not yet offer methods of controlling their environment so they, like every culture before them, sought help in religion, and that oldest of arts - magic.

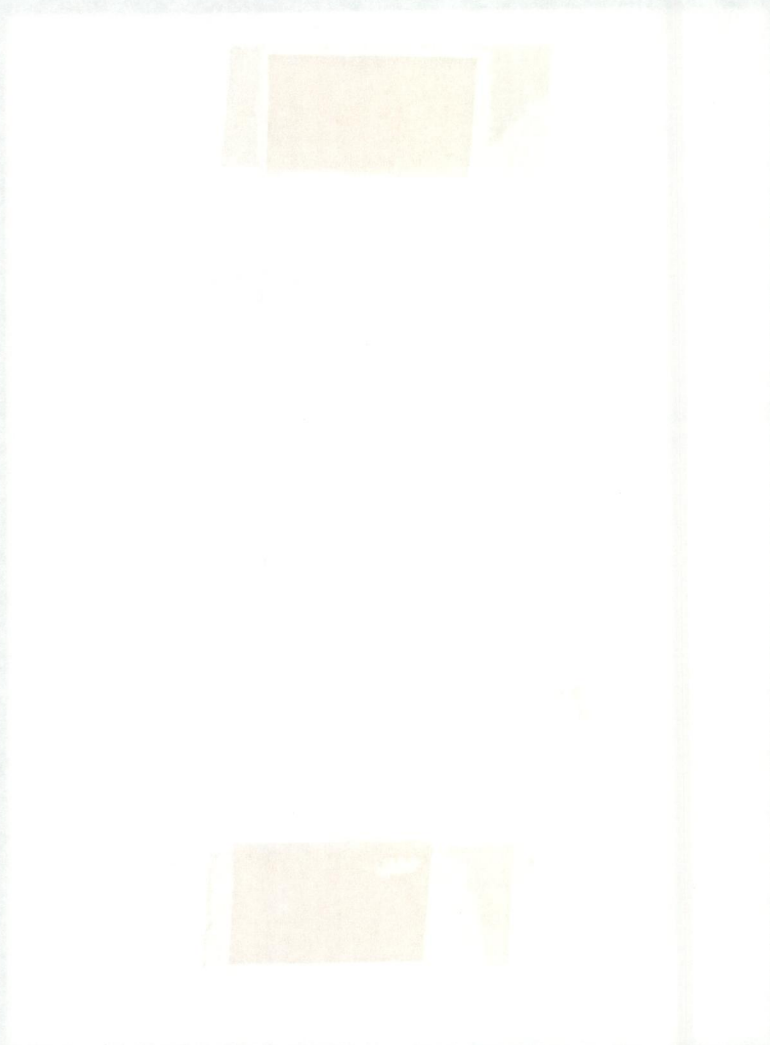
'Thus in the beginning, there was magic and magic was with God and God was magic.' (34, p.60). But what is magic? According to Paul Radin, it is the coercion of desirable objects in the interests of our own personal needs. In the Golden Bough, Sir James Frazer suggests that there are two kinds of magic: Homeopathic magic and Contagious magic (14, p.12). The former operates on the principle that like produces like, for example the making and maiming of effigies in order to hurt the person the effigy represents. The latter assumes that things which have been in contact still affect each other. An example of this would be the belief that magic may be worked on someone through his clothes, or severed parts of his body, like hair or nails. Medieval England was full of similar superstitions of pagan origin, many of which had been assimilated by the Christian church in its efforts to outdo paganism: thus the function of the heathen charms and rituals was transferred. The Miracles of the Saints were offered as more appropriate and efficient means of getting supernatural assistance than spells and herbal concoctions. Religious objects were endowed with similar miraculous properties, for example the Eucharistic bread was supposed to keep away the plague, and consecrated church bells had power against thunder, which the terrified populace accredited to demons. So the church originally kept the element of magic in order to help with earthly problems, as well as spiritual ones and thus became the controlling agent for supernatural power. However many ecclesiastical leaders did not like this view of religion. They wanted to get rid of the pagan, superstitious elements and make it much more of a spiritual doctrine.

During the Reformation, power was taken away from everything except God, and they denied the magical properties of religious objects such as relics, and Holy Water. Religion was to become more of a belief than a practice and what resulted was that religion was taken away from the common people and separated from Nature. God became an omnipotent, transcendent being in whose image man alone was created and this idea, together with the rationalisation of nature through science, led to its desacralization and domination.

So we felt in control. We had conquered the elements! And then suddenly we realised that not only had we conquered them, but we were in fact altering them. A hole appeared in the ozone layer which protects us from the harmful radiation of the sun. Scientists started talking about the 'greenhouse effect' and the threat of global warming. Our creative powers suddenly turned into a destructive power - the disappearance of the rain forests, pollution of rivers and seas with the by-products of our glorious technology, and the ultimate power of total global annihilation with the nuclear bomb.....
.....And for all our scientists and their knowledge of hidden things, we still fear!



Fig. 14 Francis Bacon, Figure with Meat, 1954.



CHAPTER 3: THE SPIRIT OF NATURE.

It is commonly held that people become religious in a crisis. It is also held that we are in the midst of a global crisis unparalleled in the history of man. Never before has the very existence of the entire human race, or indeed the planet we inhabit, been threatened. It should follow therefore that we are looking towards religion for solace. I suggest that we, or many of us, are. But it is not Christianity that we in the western, traditionally Christian, world are looking to. Indeed if Sherrard is to be believed, we have become completely irreligious, and lacking in any sense of the sacred. Christianity seems to have lost the ability to inspire us, or to offer us the answers we need. It certainly waned as a creative force after about 1725 and was almost totally rejected by intellectual society who were more enthralled by the amazing revelations of science. Since then, there has been no resurgence of a traditional, religious art. Only in artists like Blake, Rouault, and Chagall does it appear at all, as a very personal vision.

The first fifty years of the twentieth century saw the horror of two world wars which did little to encourage belief in the spirituality of man. W.B. Yeats wrote the following poem which describes the feeling of hopelessness and cynicism that pervaded the arts:

"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity"

It is also reflected in the existentialist movement in painting, and no-one paints a more dismal picture of soulless humanity than Francis Bacon to whom "we are all carcasses" and who portrays man as a diseased and mutilated lump of flesh, devoid of any spirituality who stares out at the viewer like a wounded and angry creature in a freak show (fig. 14). He denies any religious influence, but it is interesting that he uses forms associated with Christianity such as the triptych and the crucifixion. Perhaps the latter atrocity

mirrored the atrocities which were being committed during the Second World War and which had led many to wonder how a fair and benevolent God could exist at all. Man seemed to have betrayed the Classical vision of his nobility and prostituted his position at the top of the evolutionary scale. We failed Christianity as much as it failed us. It failed us in denying us our link with the rest of nature, and it failed us most of all in making us ritualists, who performed empty gestures without understanding of or commitment to what was being expressed. It became the jurisdiction of a patriarchal elite who used their position as the sole interpreters of a great mystery to keep the populace under their control.

Just as religion became elitist, so did its 'worthiest interpreter' - art. In medieval times there was no distinction between 'High and 'Low' art, or art and craft. The artists job was to demonstrate his skills in creating works which would glorify God. In fact, it was not until the nineteenth century that the notion of art as an expression of the artist's own personality occurred. 'The idea that the true purpose of art was to express personality could only gain ground when art had lost every other purpose.' (26, p.398) The public were no longer impressed by technical skills - man's craftsmanship was seen as inferior to that of the wonderful machine - nor did it have a healthy religion to inspire it.

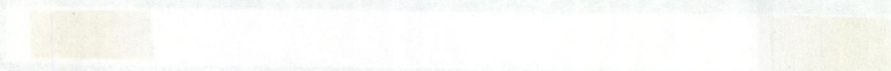
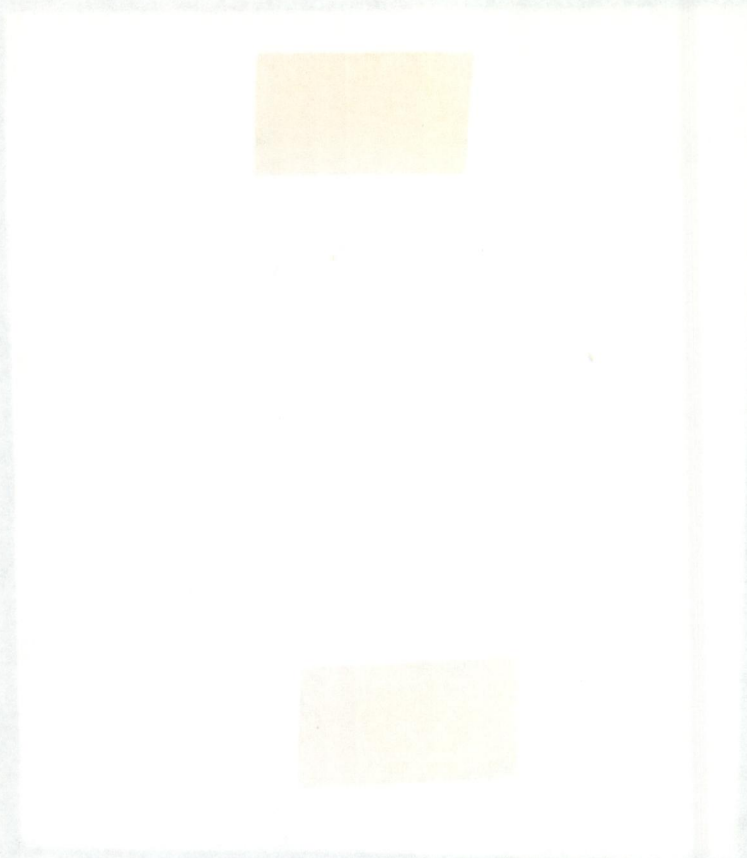
Andy Goldsworthy's art is not elitist. You do not have to go to an art gallery and face the intimidating stare of the curator which assesses the likelihood of your buying anything the minute you enter the hallowed halls, and treats you with a corresponding disdain mixed with pity as you struggle to interpret the work. This in itself is like being spoken to in Japanese when your knowledge of the language stops at 'Sayonara'. No - his gallery is the landscape, where anyone may happen upon his work. The uncultivated land around his home in Dumfriesshire in Scotland contains some of his work, but there is no admission fee or trespassing law. Participation of the public is important to him, and he often gets help with his projects from people who have the skills he lacks. For example, in the Touching North project he would not have succeeded without the aid and instruction of his Inuit guide, Looty. His family often assist him, as in the making of 18 giant snowballs which contained pebbles, fir cones, daffodils and twigs among other things, which were stored by Christian Salveson PLC until the summer when they were left to melt on display in the Old



Fig. 15 Andy Warhol, Do It Yourself (Flowers), 1962.



Fig. 16 Andy Goldsworthy, Japanese maple/leaves stitched together to make a floating chain/the next day it became a hole/ supported underneath by a woven briar ring, Ouchiya-mura Japan, 21-22 November 1987.



Museum of Transport in Glasgow, where the public could watch the bizarre spectacle of snow in the middle of summer. He says himself 'The social nature of these large works interests me. The people I need to work with are a strong element in the making.' (20, Introduction) Such an attitude is lauded by Robert Morris:

such work which has the feel and look of openness, extendibility, accessibility, publicness, repeatability, equanimity, directness, immediacy and has been formed by clear decision rather than groping craft would seem to have a few social implications, none of which are negative. Such work would undoubtedly be boring to those who long for access to an exclusive specialness, the experience of which reassures their superior perception (32, p.29).

His art expresses a very personal vision, and one which he does not force onto others against their will but will readily share with those who are interested..

But is this a spiritual vision? Sister Wendy Beckett describes spiritual art as that which 'summons divine energy, exposing us to beauty beyond our own comprehending' (5, p.112). There is a tendency among critics these days to use the term 'spiritual' rather indiscriminately. Even Andy Warhol was attributed with having created 'the icons of a new religion' (16, p.21). I have already defined religion as an expression of the transcendental, and I see nothing transcendental in Warhol - he himself states proudly 'just look at the surface: of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it' (16, p.21). He showed the same aesthetic appreciation of a can of soup as he did a bunch of flowers, as he demonstrates in his first flower painting entitled 'Do it yourself (Flowers)' (Fig. 15). There is certainly no incomprehensible beauty here. His bright colours pall beside the vivid radiance of Goldsworthy's autumn leaves (fig. 16) and red poppy petals. For Goldsworthy's art is all about life, whereas Warhols represents death...the death of feeling. There is something rather desperate in his insistence 'I've never been touched by a painting. I don't want to think. The world outside would be easier to live in if we were all machines' (16, p.20)

But if Warhol represents spiritual winter, then Goldsworthy is the spring which emerges to reassure us that the cycle of life is unending, and there is always hope. For his work is not just a



Fig. 17 Andy Goldsworthy, Sycamore leaves/stitched together with stalks/hung from a tree, Pollok Park, Glasgow 31 October 1986.

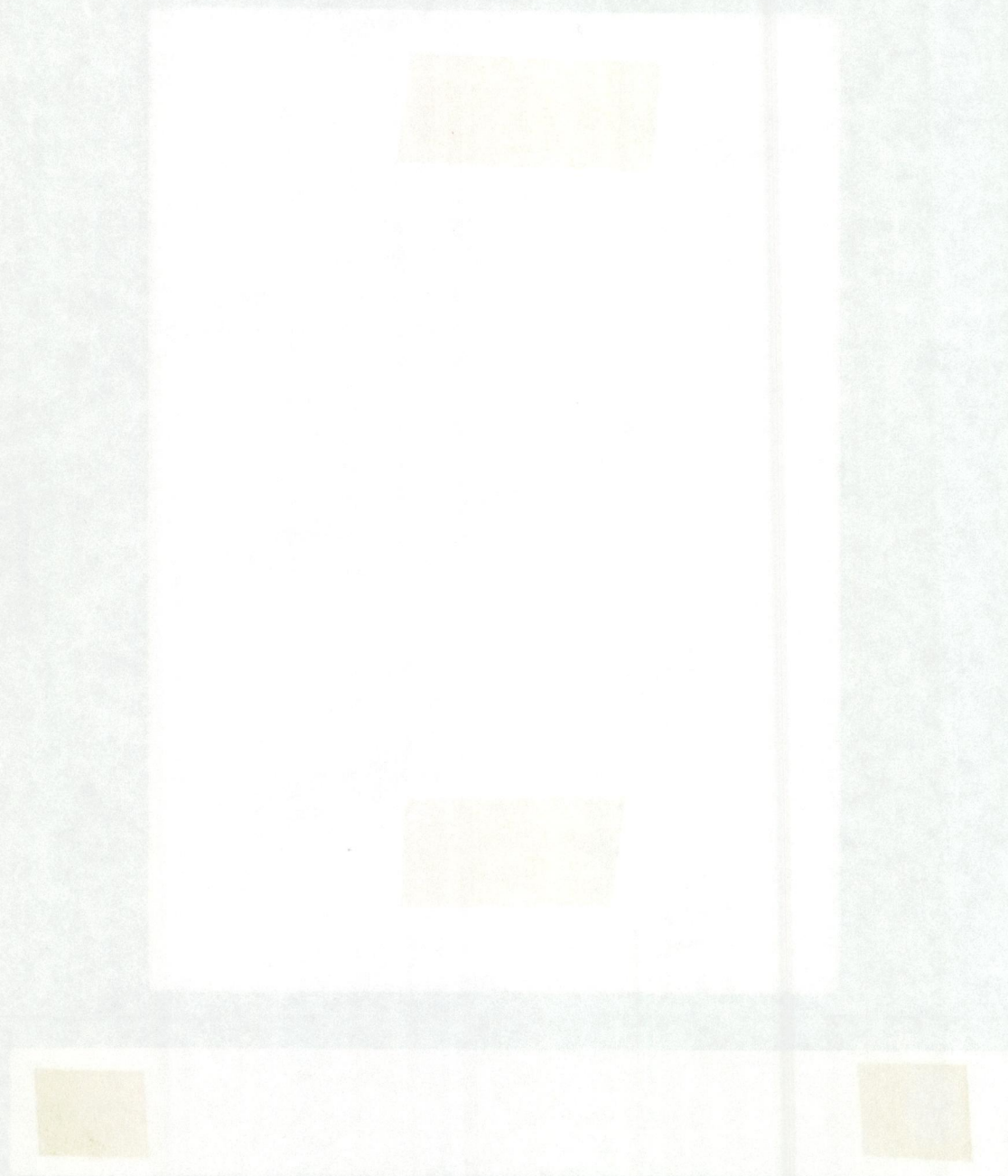
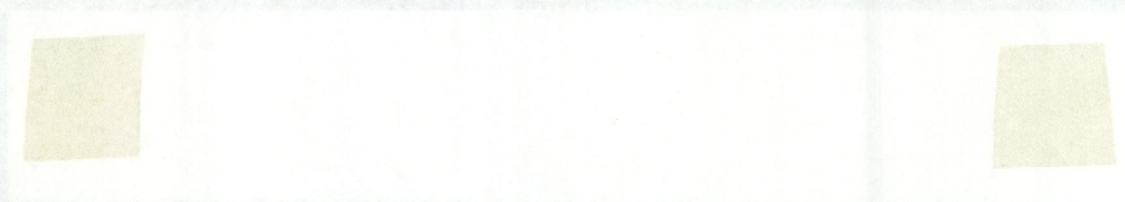




Fig. 18 Andy Goldsworthy, Broken icicle/reconstructed/spit welded
only able to work in the mornings when temperature below
freezing/stored overnight in a sheep shelter, Langholm,
Dumfriesshire, 22-23 February 1986.



reflection of our desire to 'get back to nature', but reflects the search for spirituality which is such an important element in this new obsession. Of course he and the other land artists - Long, Nash, etc. did not come unannounced. Nature has always been regarded by artists and poets as a source of spirituality - the goddess wasn't silenced, but whispering gently to those who still listened. When Christianity declined in the eighteenth century, something had to take its place and that was the belief in the divinity of nature. In 'Civilisation', Kenneth Clark describes this as a 'new belief' that seems 'irrational', though he concedes that it 'has added a good deal to our civilisation' (11, p.269). Of course it is not at all new. According to Robertson Smith 'primitive religious beliefs are practically indestructible... and thus we find that the new ideas of what I call pastoral religion overlaid the old notions, but did not extinguish them'. In the arts this revival inspired artists like Constable and Turner, and poets like Wordsworth and Gray, who when visiting the Alps, was moved to write the following in a letter: 'Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry' (11, p.271).

So the roots of this 'new' religion of nature which is expressed so clearly in Goldsworthy's work run deep, and to contemporary society, who have become so obsessed with ecology and green issues, it is not at all irrational, unless you are looking at it from the traditional, anthropocentric standpoint of Judaeo - Christianity. There are no rituals attached to it, which, perhaps, is why some would not regard it as a religion at all. It is more like the religion of the pygmies as described by Mary Douglas in her book, Natural Symbols: 'Their religion is one of internal feeling, not of external sign, The moods of the forest manifest the moods of the deity, and the forest can be humoured by the same means as the pygmies, by song and dance. Their religion is not concerned with their correct orientation with elaborate cosmic categories nor with acts of transgression, nor rules of purity; it is concerned with joy. It is a religion of faith, not works, to use an ancient slogan' (13, pp.33-34). Who could fail to be filled with joy at the sight of sunlight pouring through a screen of golden sycamore leaves (fig. 17) or the delicacy of an icy spiral which tapers to a needle-sharp point like a scorpion's tail (fig. 18). This is the art of Andy Goldsworthy. This is his religion.

Most religions have an individual or individuals at their head who act as intermediaries between the natural world and the supernatural. To such priests, shamans, medicine men etc. are usually attributed certain powers and understanding beyond the normal person. It has been suggested that, by the same token as art fulfills the same role as religion, the artist has in some respects taken over the role of priest/shaman in our more secular society. The word 'shaman' means 'he who knows' and his/her role as a mediator between the material and the spirit world has been in existence since Neolithic times. In order to contact the spirits the traditional shaman must go into a trance, either spontaneous or drug-induced. A bushman shaman describes the experience in the following passage:

The body feels stretched, elongated. The spirit soars out of the head towards the supernatural world. Here the shaman's spirit gains its energy from powerful creatures. He feels himself transformed into an animal. The source of his power is the eland....and the shaman uses this power to go into trance. (4, p.36)

Traditionally, the shaman is also endowed, through the spirits, with powers of healing. Dealing with an illness means not just curing the symptoms of the sick person, but also involves restoring cosmic balance and social harmony amongst the whole tribe. This holistic approach is similar to modern holistic medicine and homeopathy which more people are now recognizing as valuable alternatives to scientific medicine.

Joseph Beuys saw art and shamanism as having a similar function in reminding us of the need 'to come into intense physical and psychological contact with the material world, to understand and feel its energetic substance rather than skim the surface of experience' (40, p.35) Shamans often spend time in isolation in the wilderness as a precursor to performing their shamanic rites - it is interesting that many other religious figureheads like John the Baptist, Jesus and Buddha all spent time alone in natural environments before they returned to civilisation to preach their message. When Andy Goldsworthy started working with nature he too found it necessary to come into such contact with it: 'I splashed in water, covered myself in mud, went barefoot and woke with the dawn' (21, p.12). Like the shaman, he often undergoes physical and mental hardship in order to intensify the contact, for example when he went to the Arctic he had

to withstand very harsh conditions which he seemed willing to do in order to understand the processes at work:

The Arctic, when I arrived, was calm and I was very apprehensive about the wind. I knew how severely it could affect me: the cold, the wind-chill factor; and the first day we had a strong wind, I said to Looty "we will go and work where it is strongest." We went right out onto the ice. I didn't know what to do. I had no idea what I would make. I had no idea how to handle the wind but I had to come to terms with it in that way rather than try and find a sheltered spot.

(21, p.168)

Shamans of the West African Dogon tribe get their power from the bush. During certain funeral dances the shaman and other male dancers enter the village from the bush wearing masks which fulfil the important role of linking the two environments. Andy Goldsworthy performs a similar function: through his art he, too, brings the untamed power of the wilds into the civilised order of our culture in order to restore cosmic balance.



Fig. 19 Andy Goldsworthy, The wall/ Stonework - Joe Smith,
Stonewood, Dumfriesshire, 1988-89.

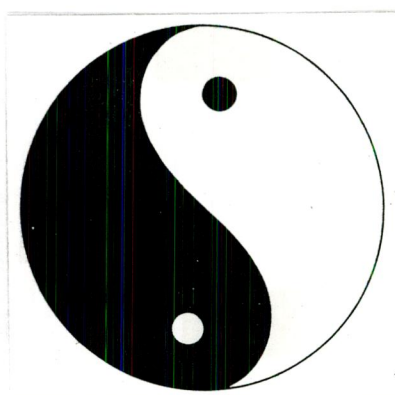
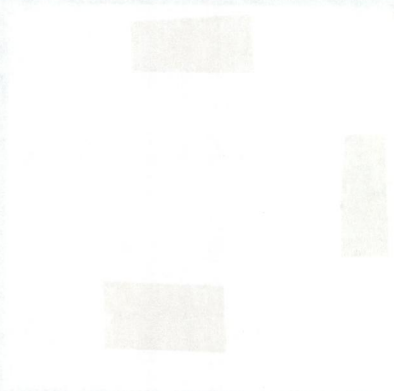


Fig. 20 Yin - Yang symbol.



CHAPTER 4: THE SPIRIT OF THE EAST

In 1987, Goldsworthy leased a two-and-a-half acre strip of land near his home in Dumfriesshire called Stonewood, in which he made a series of permanent outdoor sculptures. One of these was 'The Wall' built with an essentially practical purpose: to divide his property from that of the neighbouring farmer. Instead of building it in a straight line (the most obvious choice) he built it in an S-shape, with one loop of the S bringing part of his land into the farmer's, and the other creating an effective sheep pen which jutted into Goldsworthy's land (fig. 19). As soon as I saw a picture of this wall, its form and the concept behind it put me in mind of the Chinese Yin-Yang symbol (fig. 20) which expresses the Taoist concept of two opposite but complementary forces which make up one transcendent principle: Tao (The Way). Yin stands for the passive, female principle; Yang for the active, male principle. Yin is earth, Yang is light. Their representative colours are similarly contrasting - orange (Yin) and azure (Yang). This symbol expresses the idea of cyclical, rather than linear progress from becoming to dissolution and the interdependence of man and nature - both currently popular concerns.

It was to religions which espoused this type of holistic concept; Taoism and Buddhism in particular, that the Western world, especially its artists, musicians, writers and poets looked in order to find an alternative answer to that elusive 'meaning of life'. In 1950s America the Beat Generation was born, led by the chief 'Dharma Bum' Jack Kerouac:

then I really believed in the reality of charity and kindness and humility and zeal and neutral tranquility and wisdom and ecstasy, and I believed that I was an oldtime bhikku in modern clothes wandering the world (usually the immense triangular arc of New York to Mexico City to San Francisco) in order to turn the wheel of the True Meaning, or Dharma.... (29, p.6)

The Buddhist idea of moral guidance coming from within rather than 'God' or social laws appealed to a generation who were disillusioned

with the latter two which frowned on 'free love' whilst condoning human slaughter in war. Buddhism is 'a religion that has aided the evolution of gentle cultures' (1, p.95), which managed to spread rapidly throughout most of Asia from its origins in a garden at the foot of the Himalayas, without one single crusade. In the West its most popular form was Zen, an offshoot of Mahayana Buddhism which had none of the trappings of religion - no priests, no rituals, no scriptures, but was intensely poetic. The principle ideas that these artists and writers embraced were 'de-centering the sacred, rejection of absolute value judgements, acceptance of paradox, recognition of the Yin-Yang (relativism), a trust in chance or randomness and a notion of cyclical processes rather than a linear idea of progress' (18, p.15).

Is it not rather arrogant to assume that our God, ie. the God of Christianity be the sole source of divine power in the entire universe; not only that but to assume that we alone amongst all living things are 'in his likeness' (or that he is in ours)? This would be unthinkable to the Buddhist/Taoist mentality. Belief in God's omnipotence has, however, become little more than a fable to many. As Theodore Roszak wryly puts it

if God has at last died in our culture, he has not been buried. For the casually religious, he lingers on like a fond old relative who has been so expertly embalmed that we may prop him up in the corner of the living room and pretend the old fellow is still with us. We have even taken pains to bend his fallen mouth into a benign and permissive smile...and that is a comfort. It makes him so much easier to live with! (1, p.76)

His demise may bring a nostalgic tear to the eye but it may be necessary if we are to 're-enchant' the world and re-discover the sacred in every living thing. This is the Buddhist philosophy. The ultimate aim of a Buddhist is to reach personal enlightenment and thus gain entry into Nirvana. Among the Mahayana school many take the 'Bodhisattva vow' which requires them to defer entry into Nirvana and rejoin the life cycle as some other being to allow it, too, to reach enlightenment. This totally unselfish act earns them no personal

reward beyond admiration. Buddhism 'Sets up no deed/ Lays down no law' (The Way of Life According To Lao Tzu) and is a profoundly humanitarian creed. Christianity assumes not only a monopoly of divinity, but one of truth, and our modern dualistic scientific mentality makes an equally arrogant assumption that this truth must be absolute. In The Golden Bough, Sir James Frazer makes the following prophetic observation:

'as science has supplanted its predecessors, so it may hereafter be itself superseded by some more perfect hypothesis, perhaps by some totally different way of looking at the phenomena...of which we in this generation can form no idea' (14, p.826).

The truth according to science is now being seriously questioned and its inadequacies admitted. How can scientific tests performed in the laboratory under particular and wholly unnatural conditions possibly prove a universal truth? This is not to say that science is wrong, just incomplete. As Goldsworthy states: 'When a change comes, the idea must alter or it will, and often does, fail' (20, Introduction).

Buddhist art forces the mind beyond the surface of the work to a greater truth. Goldsworthy's work does this by suggestion; addressing our 'id' as well as our five senses, drawing us into the heart of a leaf or the trunk of a tree till we are like the sap that flows through its veins. Artists have always used symbols to suggest abstract ideas and Andy Goldsworthy is no different. However he makes a determined effort to avoid the conscious use of traditional iconography which can act as blinkers by virtue of their familiarity. For example, the serpent form is a common occurrence in his work (fig. 21), but he is quick to point out that these works

have qualities of snaking but are not snakes. The form is shaped through a similar response to environment. The snake has evolved through a need to move close to the ground, sometimes below and sometimes above, an expression of the space it occupies...it is the ridge of a mountain, the root of a tree, a river finding its way down a valley. (21, p.134)

We have all been brought up to accept certain 'truths' which help us to make sense of what we experience. However such assumptions



Fig. 21 Andy Goldsworthy, Bracken fronds stripped down one side/
pegged to the ground with thorns, Swindale Beck Wood,
 Cumbria, September 1982.

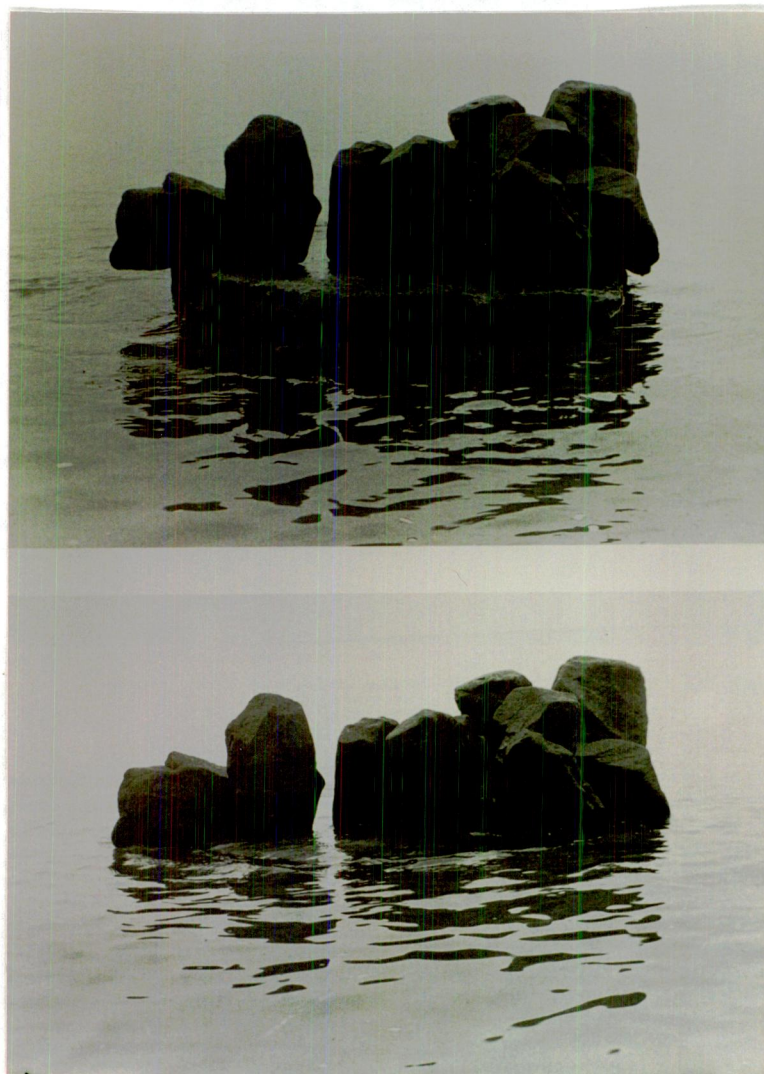
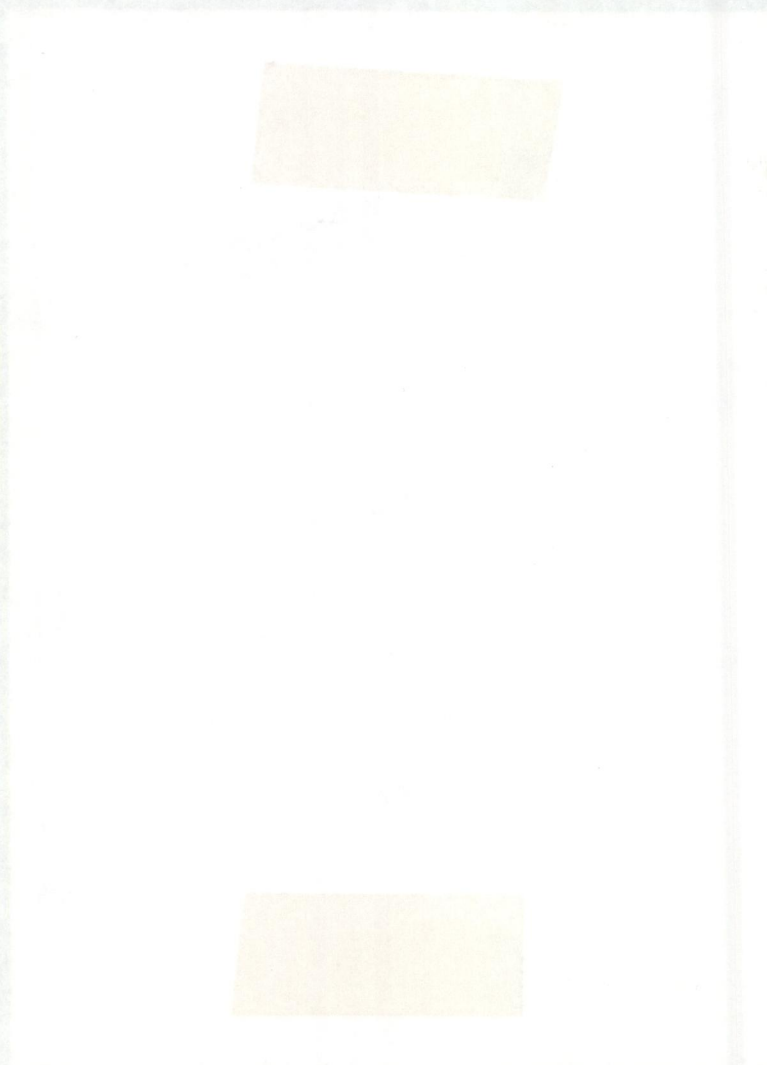
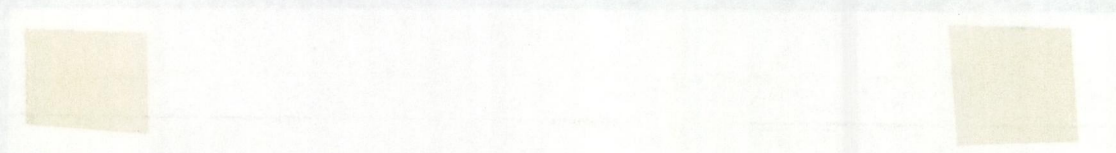


Fig. 22 Andy Goldsworthy, Floating rocks, Heysham Head, Lancashire
 March 1977.



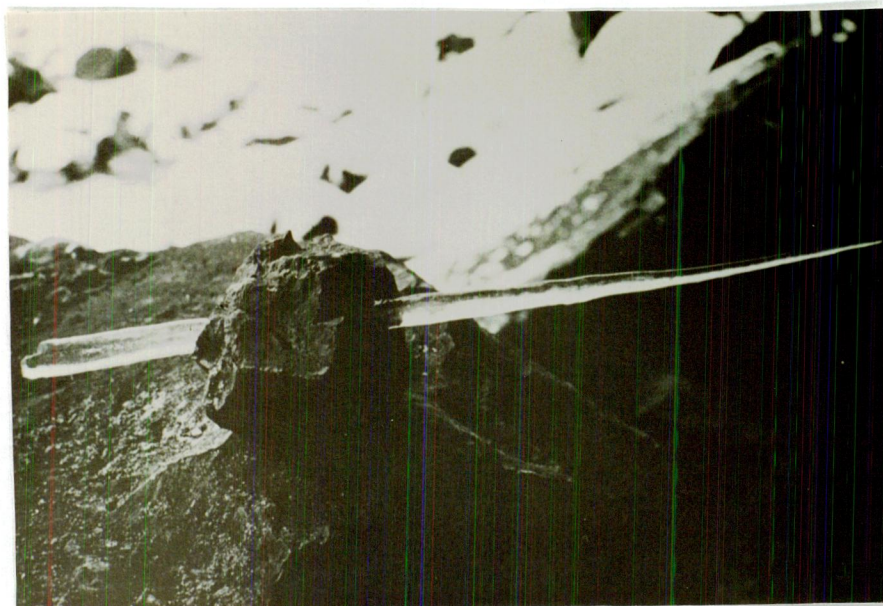
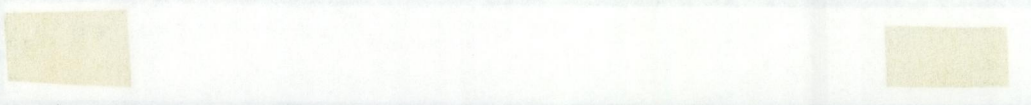
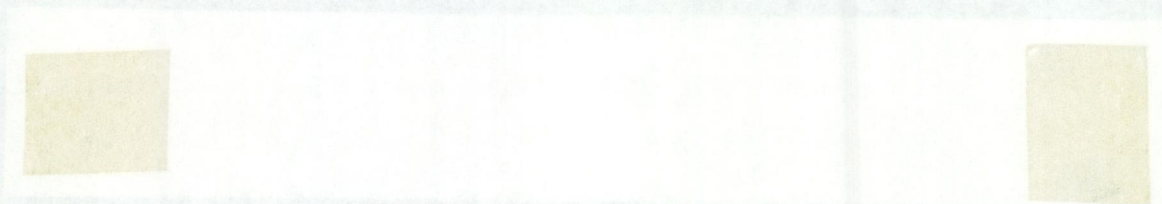


Fig. 23 Andy Goldsworthy, Icicle broken in two/frozen/welded to a rock with spit and sucked icicles/freezing cold day/made in shadow of a steep cliff face, Swindale Beck Wood, Cumbria, 14 January 1982.



Fig. 24 Andy Goldsworthy, Balanced rocks, Bow Fell, Cumbria, May 1977.



allow for a very limited view. In the East they are far less quick to rely on their five senses to see the truth - to them it can only be 'seen' by the unconscious. 'A phenomenon that exhibits some conflict with preconceived notions of what is reasonable or possible', ie. a paradox (according to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary) is far less threatening to the Eastern ethic than it is to the Western, rationalist one; they see it as instructive in getting beyond the surface. Goldsworthy uses this idea very early on in his work: at Heysham Head in Lancashire 1977 he arranged a group of boulders on top of a large rock at low tide and then photographed them at high tide, when they looked as if they were floating in the sea (fig. 22). Similarly confusing is his icicle 'piercing' a rock (fig. 23). He isn't trying to trick us, for the titles under his photographs are actually explanations of the process, he is simply stressing that appearances are deceptive. Many of his rock sculptures seem to occupy gravity-defying positions on the side of cliff faces (fig. 24). The idea of balance, albeit precarious, is very important in Goldsworthy's work as it reflects what he sees in nature. It also reflects what is missing in our society and what we are seeking to recover. Joseph Beuys, one of the prophets of the New Age, said of balance:

'it has to be searched for, although in reality it doesn't exist. Not even in today's society can you find any economic balance, whereas ecological balance still exists in nature. It is important therefore to take the latter form as a model' (3, pp.20-21).

Of course the fact is that now ecological balance is threatened and has in many areas been destroyed by man's intervention. There may be some consolation in the principle of Yin-Yang which recognizes the idea of balance in the continuous cycle of cosmic destruction and rehabilitation. The idea is that when one principle takes over, the other will eventually reassert itself to restore balance, rather like a see-saw. Yin-Yang implies dualism, but although Taoism and Buddhism are dualistic, they see it as a flaw which they try to overcome. It would be unrealistic to deny our dualistic tendencies for the fact is that it is hard not to agree with Eric Gill when he says that

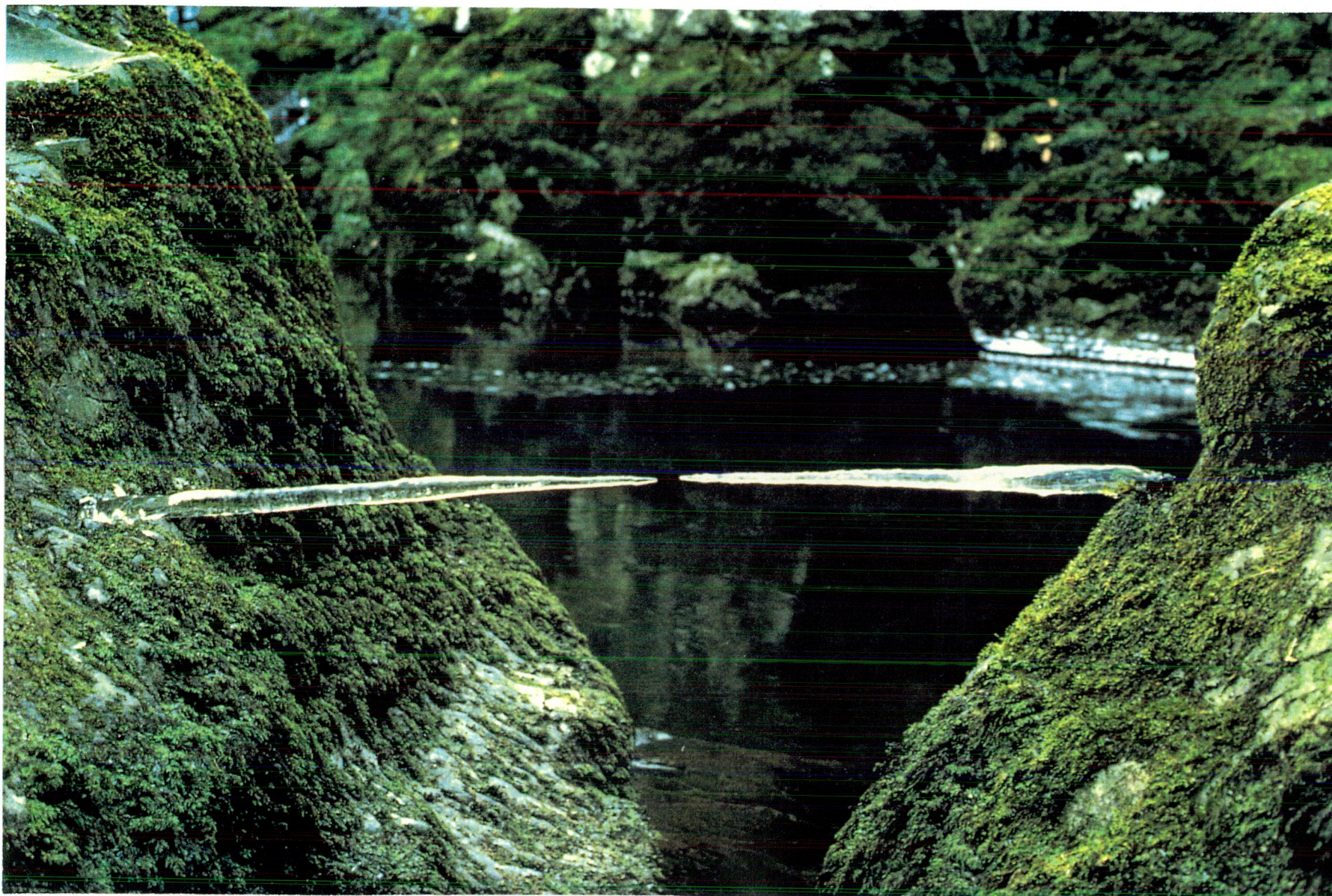


Fig. 25 Andy Goldsworthy, Ice and icicles/dipped in water/held
against rock and ice until frozen, Scaur Water, Penpont,
Dumfriesshire, 7-8 January 1987.





Fig. 26 Andy Goldsworthy, Dug trench/edged with clay/supported with sticks, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, 6-7 August 1987.

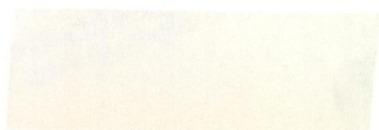
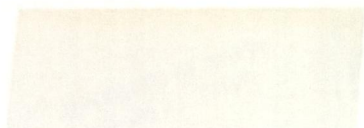
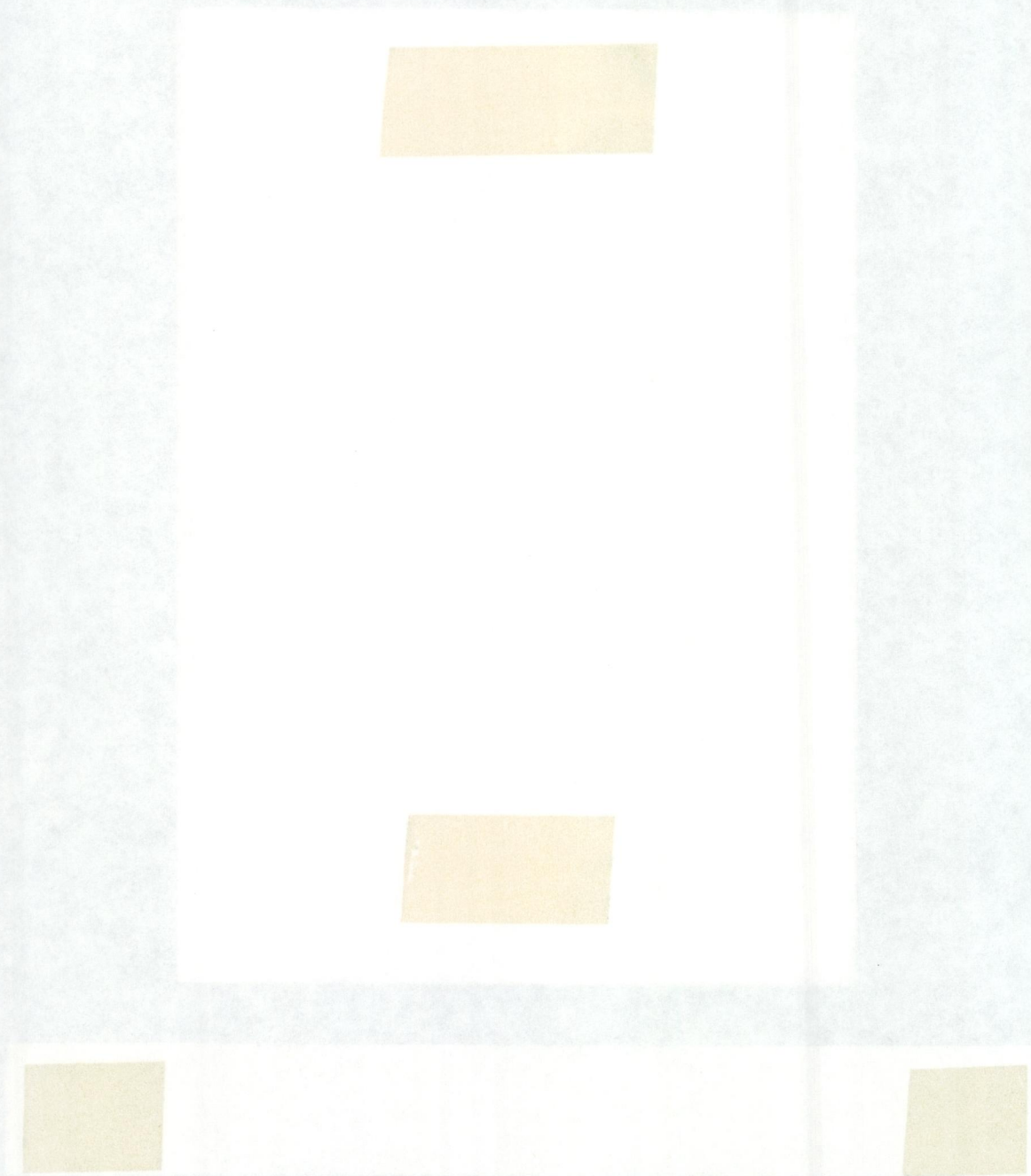




Fig. 27 Andy Goldsworthy, Early morning calm/knotweed stalks/pushed
into lake bottom/made complete by their own reflections.
Derwent Water, Cumbria, 20 February 1988.



The common verdict of man is that in spite of his material harmony with his surroundings, his sharing in the life of birds and grasses, his dependence on air and warmth, he also stands outside, above, beyond, independent and aloof. (28, p.44)

Perhaps we are destined to be like Goldsworthy's two icicles whose tips reach towards one another across a rocky gap but are destined never to touch. (fig. 25)

The idea that nature is entirely benevolent and purposive is a romantic and not quite realistic view; there is no denying that at times it can sometimes act in an apparently random fashion which has wholly negative (from our point of view) results eg. earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters. It is this element of chance, or randomness that terrifies the rational mind but is celebrated by the Eastern ethic and also by Goldsworthy who admits that chance plays a large part in the success of his work as well as everyday things like where he lives. The first 'hole' was an accident made when scraping through layers of sand which collapsed, and subsequently became a favourite theme. His work is very often dependent on the weather which he often points out in the 'explanations' that accompany the photographs, eg. 'Trench/ dug over two days/ earth brought to an edge/ clay supported with sticks/ cold, darkly overcast but no rain/ a hot day would have caused the clay to dry out/ a wet day would have washed the earth away' (fig. 26). He sees the elements as the energy and space around objects which play an active part in his work, as does the landscape behind (fig. 27); similar to the Japanese tradition of 'Shakkei' which incorporates the distant view into garden design.

The notion of life as a recurring cycle is central to Eastern philosophy just as it was to prehistoric cultures. One function of religion is to temper the fear of death with the promise of spiritual immortality. To Francis Bacon, who didn't believe in the spirit, let alone an afterlife, man's only hope was 'to beguile himself for a time, by prolonging his life, by buying a kind of immortality through the doctors' (31, p.69). The Eastern idea of the unity of all separate existences offers us the consolation that if we die as individuals, we go on living through others. One way in which man has tried to gain

immortality is through art - through the erection of elaborate monuments which will defy time. Goldsworthy's art on the other hand celebrates the ephemeral. His works often survive long enough to take a photograph, but that is all. They seem to ridicule man's desire to make his mark, for nature is subtle and in a constant state of flux. Birth is followed by death, destruction by re-creation. Even his more permanent sculptures like 'The Wall' suggest man's involvement with the environment rather than domination of it. Man's monumental creations - symbols of our exaggerated self-importance - are subject to the ravages of time, and many an inflated ego has been brought to humility in the face of its inexorable march, like Shelley's

Ozymandias:

And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my works ye mighty and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Goldsworthy's art does not attempt to be timeless. His work both exists in time and is changed by it. In attempting to mentally re-integrate ourselves into nature's cycle we may begin to see the relevance of our own personal lives as part of the whole and begin to see the real importance of our actions not just to ourselves or the time in which we live, but to future generations.

CONCLUSION

In our own eyes we have fallen. But is it really a fall and to what extent are we to blame? In our own eyes we have sinned and must atone. But sin requires free will, the knowledge that what one is doing is amoral and does harm to others. At its simplest, our situation is an inevitable result of the development of our egos, a natural development which has not occurred in any other living species on this planet. In blaming ourselves, we are in a way admitting full control over our actions, but we are not in control, we have not learnt all there is to know and we must realise that the ascent of man is yet in its early stages. The search for a new religion is a manifestation of this knowledge. We have climbed far and the speed and glory of the last few feet, metaphorically speaking, has made us forget what a vast distance has yet to be covered; we forget the wrong paths we took and are bound to take again. Where the blame would lie would be if we, having realised our errors, did nothing to correct them.

We must reconstruct our relationship with the rest of the natural world from which we have become distanced for various reasons, the main ones being the domination of the survival instinct (which is the basic instinct at the heart of every living thing) over the nurturing instinct; of the ego over the id, and the imbalance between the male and female principles. The Judaeo-Christian tradition has supported and entrenched these imbalances into our Western culture, so a move towards secularization or rejection of the sacred as Sherrard would see it would seem to be a necessary and healthy step in the reevaluation process, as these traditions separated man and nature and contributed to the desacralization of nature. It does not mean that we are rejecting religion, full stop, for that would seem to be impossible, like rejecting part of ourselves. We need religion to convince ourselves that we are not, as Bacon saw us, 'completely futile beings' (15, p.67).

There is no doubt that the green movement is much more than another trend. It encompasses every part of our culture - politics, education, media, fashion, the arts, as well as day-to-

day living. Though ostensibly a moral concern, it is essentially also a religious one. In his essay Faith and Community in an Ecological Age by Steven Rockefeller he offers the following advice:

A religious concern is one that is a matter of fundamental controlling interest to a person... If the earth is to be saved, there must be a new faith in a vision of the good that includes environmental ethics, a faith that is religious in nature in this broad sense (36, p.145).

He goes on to insist that 'the experience of the sacred is of critical importance in the transformation of human attitudes toward nature and the awakening of a new moral faith'.

We are rediscovering the sacred - the art of Andy Goldsworthy testifies to that. Cynics would say that he offers no more than a consoling illusion of a golden age that never existed and even if it had, is irretrievable. But we should not be trying to go back in time to a world such as that inhabited by our paleolithic predecessors, nor does Goldsworthy encourage this. He embraces technology - the photograph is an inevitable part of his work; 'marking the moment when the work is most alive' (21, p.9), nor does he have anything against man-made materials as long as they have the capacity to change with time and weather. The fact is that we are in an entirely different situation than ever before and, as with any species in a changed environment, will have to adapt if we are to survive. Art, religion and science must work together in a 'search for enlightenment, a deliberate confrontation with mysteries'.

A sign that the world religions are recognising the need for them to adapt was the International symposium held at Middlebury College, U.S.A. in the Autumn of 1990. During the four day meeting, essays were delivered representing Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Native American and liberal democratic traditions. There seemed to be a consensus of opinion that the attitudes to nature within the more anthropocentric religions should be reassessed, while the speakers from these religions ie. Christianity, Judaism and Islam were at pains to point out the more 'ecologically sound' messages which have always existed within their traditions. Two key phrases which were discussed were 'sustainable development' and 'intergenerational responsibility'. The first suggests that conservation and

development must work together, but this will only happen if we adopt intergenerational responsibility 'almost as a religious belief' (36, p.8).

I see the arts as not only signalling a change but as instrumental in its success. They have always been effective in spreading propaganda, especially amongst the young. Musicians, artists and poets are the politicians of the street and musicians in particular have a huge influence on the young which they can and do use positively. Art could have the same power if it, like Goldsworthy, comes off its pedestal and speaks to the public in a language they understand. Its main task should be to teach us, perhaps to chastise us, but above all to give us hope: in the words of Cecil Collins to be

the eternal virginity of spirit, which in the dark winter of the world, continually proclaims the existence of a new life, gives faithful promise of the spring of an invisible kingdom and the coming of light (31, p.130).

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