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A ROLE FOR ART IN THE COMMUNITY

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## INTRODUCTION.

In this paper I am going to question the notion that Irish art has contributed greatly to the quality of Irish life and then try to discover the areas in which, if treated properly, it has a more direct and immediate role to play within Irish life.

A brief history of Art in Ireland and its general trend, from its early period to the present day, is necessary in order to establish the role it has played. <sup>Then</sup> ~~Before~~ I can begin to discuss any alternative to, or extension of, that role within Irish life.

I will start by discussing early Irish art and how it flourished until the arrival of the Normans in Ireland. The Normans, I believe, represented the most important turning point in the direction of Irish art. On the pure and unique art form of the Irish other methods were imposed which were a jumbled second rate version of styles from other cultures and periods of time. This conquest represented a total annihilation of the traditional arts in Ireland. As time went on a tradition of imitating art from other countries, established itself more and more in Ireland. We arrive at a situation today where the old Irish art, having ceased to develop past the Norman invasion, has stopped being of any relevance other than an historical one. And the art we do have, reflecting other cultures and other experiences, is completely alien to the majority of Irish people. With an ever widening media this art in the future can only develop in the direction of international trends and hence alienate itself even more from the more immediate social needs.

While I will not be trying to deny the superb quality of a great deal of this work, I will be trying to point out that the real value of the work in a more overall way was completely stunted by a clique of artists and patrons which had established itself. This clique, consisting of a small group of intellectually elite who could financially afford the leisure time to support these activities and dictate their trends,



kept these activities solely as the reserve of a small and indifferent section of the community.

It is at this point that I will try to make a reappraisal of the direction art has been taking and see in what areas, although limited they might be, art could apply itself more directly on a functional level.

With the on going development of a social order, where class barriers are slowly being broken down and there is increasing cooperation at all levels of the community, the artist may no longer remain private and isolated. The highly personal involvements, although extremely necessary for his own development and the quality and standard of his skills, should be brought to terms with the areas in which those skills can be more usefully applied. This may mean that the artist must extract himself completely from the classical and intellectual role he has been understood to have and place himself in the role of the craftsman or tradesman who performs a very ordinary but still very valuable job within the community.



## Part 1.

### IRISH ART AND ITS CELTIC ORIGINS.

To a pagan Ireland, a country mainly populated by an aboriginal race of people whose roots stemmed from the lands around the Mediterranean, at about the middle of the 4th century B.C., came an immigration of Celtic people. This Celtic race of people, which had its origins in Central Europe, was having a great deal of influence all over Europe. Their immensely rich culture caused a great deal of change within the life of the times in Ireland and was to have a far reaching effect on its traditions over the next 1500 years. Although much of the reason for their initial success lay in their superior weaponry, the reason for their long lasting influence lay in their relative ability to adjust quickly to the life they had won.

Their craftsmen, mainly iron-smiths, being very strongly influenced by their own traditions, availed of traditions already existing in Ireland to produce a uniquely Irish but predominantly Celtic style of art.<sup>1</sup> A completely abstract form of interlacing spirals, its earliest examples being of pre-Celtic ritualistic Pagan origin, was the basic ingredient for the design and ornamentation of all objects found of that particular period. But this ornamentation was probably in far more abundance within the wooden implements, the form of dress and all the more pliable objects of everyday life of which all examples have long since perished.

The society consisted of small communities existing on a tribal basis and had a monarchical system of government. In this way there were distinct divisions of social standing: starting at the top with a king or ruler, secondly would come the nobility or members of the ruling class and at the bottom would be the ordinary people or working members of the community. Within this primitively organized set-up the artist had a very high and influential social standing and, situated between the ordinary people and the nobility, his work was generally for the higher classes.

But this social system being at a very primitive stage of development, although practicing the sometimes inhuman ritualistic ceremonies, was very often a great deal more human than many of our modern social systems. And the artist would have



had a strong influence over, and a good communication with the ordinary people within its small communities. Out of this rapport evolved a visual dialogue for which all ornamentation and artistic development fell in line with a certain visual understanding. (This type of visual dialogue will become a very important ingredient within the later stages of this paper.)

The monarchical system of government also provided for competent armed forces which served to protect the community from invasion and very often made themselves the subject for invasion. In this way when the Roman Empire, having conquered and destroyed most of the Celtic civilizations in Europe, extended itself as far as Britain in the early part of the first century A.D. Ireland remained outside the bounds of its conquests.<sup>2</sup> And, as a result of the Irish plundering the Roman occupied territories, the only Roman influences to come to Ireland were adopted voluntarily and very successfully integrated into the culture. So Ireland, being without any strong imposing Roman influences, became the last surviving purely Celtic civilization and the only area in which its culture could develop to its full potential.

By the time Christianity began to come to Ireland around the 4th century A.D. the cultural traditions were well and truly established of which there was a very strong visual tradition. This Christian invasion was an effortless and peaceful one. With the policy of allowing the continuation of old rituals and providing them with a new meaning the Christians missionaries merged easily into Irish life.<sup>3</sup> Their values and their teachings were quickly accepted by the people and, combined with the long established culture and traditions, they began to produce some of the finest art the world has known. Francoise Henry speaks of it in her book "Irish Art in the Early Christian Period" - "To try to grasp its real significance, one has to keep in mind the fact, that it still embodies in the Early Middle Ages a persistent prehistoric tradition. It is a Christian art, with a strong pre-Christian background, and an Early Medieval art, to which the points of view of the Iron Age are still familiar. Enriching its borrowings from Oriental or Germanic patterns, it went on using principles of composition and methods of drawing which



went back to its early past and so evolved one of the most successful abstract arts which the world has ever known." The centres of culture shifted from the kings' surroundings to the monasteries which were the centres of Christian practice and teaching. It was in this setting that the Celtic traditions flourished to produce their finest examples of art: the great High Crosses, the beautifully ornamented objects and the superbly executed illuminated manuscripts. Over a four hundred year period of relative peace these monasteries became international centres for education and classical learning.

But this long period of peace diminished the apparent need for protection against any invaders and made Ireland with her wealth of riches an excellent picking-ground for Scandinavian plunderers. The Viking raids began in the later part of the 8th century and, although initially they had very little detrimental effect, it was the consistency of the raids over the next 200 years that slowly broke down the strength of culture and morale of the people in Ireland. Despite the fact that the Vikings were routed from Ireland in 1014 they had already spelt the beginning of the end of the last and the greatest of the Celtic civilizations. It was in 1172 with the arrival of the Normans that the knell of change was eventually sounded. Under "Irish Archaeology" in the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" it describes the effect of the Norman invasion: "In 1172 came the Anglo-Norman invasion, which completely overturned the traditional life of the country. From that date onwards foreign methods and ideas impressed themselves with increasing intensity. The immediate result of the invasion was the total extinction of the traditional arts."



## Part 11.

### AFTER THE NORMANS.

It was in the 16th century during the reign of Henry VIII that the final deathblow was dealt to the old Celtic traditions. Considering himself "Supreme Head of the Church" in England and in Ireland, Henry authorised the sacking of the monasteries, which were the surviving mainstay for Irish education and life, and the confiscation of their property, which was their immense wealth of art and culture.

The way was now clear for foreign influences to infiltrate an artistically deadened community. The influences initially came from England and were in direct opposition to whatever art still existed in the country. Ironically one of the first examples of the oppressing influences was a series of illustrations showing the conqueror in the process of conquering. These were wood-cuts - "Images of Ireland" by John Derrick, depicting the campaigns of the Queen's deputy Sir Henry Sidney which culminated in a pitched battle and the overthrow of Conn O'Neil.

In 1637, by royal decree of Charles I, the Dublin Goldsmiths' Company was established. The craftsmen were mainly Dutch and French Huguenots, who came to Ireland originally with William of Orange and fought at the Battle of the Boyne for the possession of Ireland. The Huguenots were Protestant victims of Catholic oppression in France, under King Louis XIV, who settled in Ireland where the religious roles were reversed. This was to set a precedent for the direction art in Ireland was to take from then on. The Huguenots with their artisan traditions became a very strong force within Irish art and culture, introducing their own art and influences. By the very nature of their previous experiences in France they did not associate with the Catholic population, who were forbidden by the Penal Laws to take part in all cultural activities. At this point Art became the property of the Protestant minority and did not concern itself at all with the Catholic majority, who made up nine tenths of the Irish population.

At the beginning of the 18th century the society which had established itself was not yet a very stable one and consequently Irish artists, with no real tradition to fall back on, relied greatly on London for inspiration. Since portraiture was the



current trend in the English School, whose influences in an aristocratic ideal came from Van Dyke and Sir Peter Lely, it was inevitable that these influences were extended to Dublin. It is clear at this stage that as art developed in England it was followed carefully in Dublin. With a view to strengthening this London/Dublin liason the Dublin Society was founded in 1820. Later to become known as the Royal Dublin Society, it was directly based on the Royal Society in London. By encouraging, educating and aiding artists, the R.D.S. became a very important centre for culture in Ireland and a place to which artists would look for directive from London.

Throughout the 18th century the ascendancy class in Ireland was becoming resentful of their economic subjection to England. It had little or no say in the ruling of the country and it did not reap the benefits of the prosperity that was being enjoyed in England. Irish subjection was a very important factor in the English economy so steps had to be taken to maintain the status quo. With economic progress in Ireland, a great deal of money was available and given over towards beautifying Dublin and building up the countryside. Within the next fifty years, from about 1770 to 1820, a time of great prosperity sculptors and architects were brought over from England and the Continent to build up the architectural Dublin as we know it today. Among others James Gandon came to Ireland and with sculptors and craftsmen designed and built some of the finest examples of Georgian architecture to be seen anywhere. But they executed this work with little or no help from native craftsmen and only emulated the work they had already done in England or on the Continent. As a result the ordinary Irish people never fully associated with the work. And, in later years, for these Irish people the architectural achievements of many of these buildings were completely overshadowed by historical events, which occurred in or around the buildings and which very often ended in their destruction.

During all this time, these Irish people existed in a forced exile from any form of cultural involvement, with little or no basic human right and even less understanding for the culture. These people made up an Ireland which was described by Madden, an eminent writer, as a "paralytic

*Irish*



body where one half of it is dead or just dragged about by the other." With their artistic traditions completely wiped out they continued to live a life which was completely separate from that of the ruling class. And with strong sentiments about the future and the overthrow of their oppressors they developed their own Literary and musical culture, half underground, within Gaelic speaking peasant communities. Daniel Corkery in "The Hidden Ireland" talks of this culture and says it "had its strongholds in sterile tracts that were not worth tilling". In the remotest parts West Cork Kerry Waterford Clare Connemara and Donegal "in such places only was the Gael at liberty to live in his own way. In them he was not put upon. Big houses were few or none. Travellers were rare; officials stopped short at the very aspect of the landscape; coaches found no fares; the native being home keeping to a fault".

Well above ground, in 1756, Edmund Burke a philosopher of the day published an essay which was "A philosophical enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful".<sup>5</sup> With its ideals of posterity for the "Sublime and Beautiful", it became a very influential piece of writing within its contemporary art circles and was to have a far reaching effect amongst artists, right up to the present day. It was probably within this climate, that Francis Wheatley, at a time of political unrest and of human strife, could conceive of and paint nymphs bathing at the Salmon Leap at Leixlip.

In the footsteps of Gainsborough and Wilson landscape painting began to establish itself more and more among artists in Ireland. But it still maintained that certain aristocratic dignity which was so prominent in portraiture. It provided a suitable setting for the portrait of the aristocrat whose lands were a very important part of his image within society.

As a result of the Royal Dublin Society changing premises and closing down their exhibition area, the artists in Ireland came together and formed the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1823. The R.H.A. was to become the most important source of influence in Irish art for the next century. It emulated the annual exhibitions of the Royal Academy in London and the developing trends within an English leisurely class.

England had given birth to the great landscape painter.



In Constable and Turner a whole new approach to the painted canvas was adopted and this energy was also felt in Ireland, through James Arthur O'Connor and William Sadler. One belief was, that the landscape should be pure and unimposed upon, coming from the freedom of the first sketch and capturing all the true aspects of a rural environment right down to the buildings and the individuals who make it. But the need to capture a picture of the true Irish landscape managed to ignore or overlook the famine stricken earth and the plague ridden people of the 1840's and the sacked cottages and victims of eviction, which were all a very real part of the rural landscape in the 19th century. There was a certain Victorian elegance maintained in the artist's practice of depicting the more pleasant sides of life in spite of all its less than pleasant aspects, for the interests of a leisurely pursuit, a pastime afforded to the privileged few. It is probably coincidental that, within a lot of the landscapes painted around this time, the eyelevel was unusually low, putting more emphasis on what was in the air than on what was on the ground.

These leisurely pursuits of this Victorian Dublin provided for a greater sympathy for the artist as a creative person. At this time more than ever before, the artist was free to pursue his work in the way he saw fit and had greater control over what he painted. In the second half of the 19th century genre painting came more into vogue in which the artist, combining the two traditions portrait painting and landscape painting, moved in on the ordinary people and tried to record them in their everyday situations. Although the focus for inspiration was still in London, a great deal of the Irish artists of this period studied on the continent and allowed a wider range of influences to seep into Ireland. Of these, one of the most important was Walter Osborn, who with a group of other Irish artists studied in Antwerp and painted in Brittany and Holland before returning to Ireland to become a very strong force in Irish Art. So with the artist following a more personal line and a greater emphasis being put on style and technique, the truthfulness of the subject-matter suffered to become more in tune with the strong influences from abroad. Hence the ordinary life depicted was as far removed from the truth as the subject-matter was from the source of influence. By the end of the 19th century, the



the tradition most firmly established, within Irish Art, was one of total dependence upon external directives and the only inherited quality being the slow transitions from old ideas to new.

Into such a setting came Jack Butler Yeats, who was undoubtedly Ireland's greatest painter. But, having spent most of his early life abroad, Yeats did little or nothing to change the on-going artistic situation in Ireland and the very private nature of his pursuits limited greatly the real influence he did have. The actual influences in Ireland at this stage came from Paris of the late 19th century. In Paris in 1863 a revolution in art had occurred in the form of Impressionism, the first signs of which had appeared in Ireland through Roderick O'Connor and Walter Osborn.

There was a cultural revolution of a different sort occurring in Ireland at this time. With the "Land Purchasing Act" of 1885 granting more rights to Catholics and a growing call for Home Rule, the ordinary people were becoming a very strong force within Irish society. Their particular brand of dialect and literature influenced greatly a certain Anglo-Irish section of the community who, amidst the rising temperature of nationalistic fervour, founded the Abbey Theatre in 1904. Heading this movement were among others William Butler Yeats and George Russell whose plays and literature achieved great critical acclaim. But they also sowed the seeds for the ideals of a Gaelic revival which was partly romantic and partly mythical and of which the ordinary people of Ireland were the heroic subject.

This heroic image, thrown up by the Gaelic revival, was of the Irishman and his country who, through 200 years of oppression, maintained his own unique and uninhibited form of culture. It provided a very suitable implement with which the artist also could be part of the revival and still follow his own particular influences. As a result the unsuspecting peasant was exalted into a role which was certainly not of his own making. And within many of the paintings of the time, he awkwardly fitted into a setting, with which artists in Paris in the 1860's might have been more acquainted. So still the link between the artist and his subject was not yet made and was not going to be made within the close ensuing years.



Part 3.

## THE CONTINUATION OF IMPERIALISTIC INFLUENCES.

The only significance the Rebellion of 1916 and the setting up of a Free State in 1921 had, within Art, was to provide it with a new kind of patronage. Within this Free state of capitalist ideals the cultural circles, which had always been predominantly Anglo-Irish and Aristocratic, welcomed a new kind of affluent Irish Catholic to its ranks. But, getting the taste of privilege, his inexperience at this level of society made him relatively ineffectual in the development of its trends. So artistic trends developed more or less uninterrupted by political events. External influences continued to be the strongest force behind the artist of which France was by now the most apparent.

It was inevitable then, as Impressionism had had such a strong influence on Irish art, that its succeeding developments; Fauvism, Cubism and all the resulting modern movements, would have a similar impact. So Irish modern art was no exception to the dependent traditions. And, in the hands of Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone and Louis Le Broquy, it was kept in close accord with the established rules of modernism. During these years the R.H.A. continued its alliance with the Royal Academy in London and followed their academic pursuits, with as little variation from the traditions of the 19th century as possible. Within the very construction of the name of the academy, the retention of the word "Royal" would suggest that they were members of an unaltering section of the community.

The ever changing pursuits of the modernists in contrast to the unaltering pursuits of the R.H.A. caused a pretty definite split of interests among the artists working in Dublin at the time. This prompted the founding of the Living Art Exhibition in 1943 as a reaction against the exclusiveness of the R.H.A. The Living Art represented a new era into which Irish art was heading. But it only really reflected the dedication with which the artists were committing themselves to their respective schools, none of which paid much attention to a real situation in Ireland. The most dominant feature within art during the 40's and 50's was the growing division between the R.H.A. and the Living Art, both of whose influences were too dated to take



into account the post-war depression which was occurring at the time.

The 1960's heralded a new age of economic expansion which brought with it an inflow of all sorts of foreign development. These were the days, after the depression of the 50's, of relative affluence. These were the days in which the American type office blocks grew up and all the regalia of Western capitalism was being enjoyed. This newfound prosperity, coupled with all the aspects of contemporary life abroad, created a business class who symbolized all forms of new enterprise and change.

The pursuits of the modernists, in art, served to become an emblem for this change, which was effecting Irish life, and reflected all the progressive ideals of its advocates. For this new generation of go-ahead people, upon which the country's economic well-being was so dependent, art had become an integral part of their environment and their social standing. Art adorned the walls of their offices and banks and decorated the interiors of their modern homes, so much so that a government tax exemption was granted to those whose sole purpose was to produce art.

Business was booming all around not least of all among the art dealers. Like so many other middle-men of the day, through whose hands money was passing, it was in their interests to gain a complete monopoly of the distribution of art. The small private galleries became the centres to which the population of, few, art lovers and, many, pretenders to that name would flock, to meet socially in the surrounds of their art. And occasionally, in the purchase of a piece, display their money, a sizeable amount of which would remain with the art dealer. To combat this situation to, to make art more readily available in a real social sense the Project Arts Centre was set up with the intentions of creating a greater flow of communication between the artist and the public. But, trends having been set and the market being where it was, the Project could do little more than make more tolerable for the artist a society, which in general had not been taught to understand him anymore than he had learnt to understand it.

This brings us up to the present day, when the fruits of prosperity within the 60's have all but disappeared and the growing reality of the dole queue has become more a fact of



life. At all levels of the community life has had to adjust itself to come in line with the downward trend of living standards.

But art remains undisturbed and, with an ever faithful following of socially elite, continues along the mediocre path of well exhausted art forms. The academicians of the R.H.A. still hold firm to the antiquated ideals of a classical purity and the modernists are equally as adamant in their devotion to international trends, of which Anglo-American art of the 60's has become a very strong influence. Whatever the nature of these influences, whether they be of contemporary developments or of an academic following, the most significant characteristic within Irish art today is the continued tradition of feeding off other cultures in which a local directive has no place. For a small but influential section of the Irish population this represents an adequate visual heritage, which is so important within a country's makeup, and for this reason alone the art institutes in Ireland are maintained. But for Irish people in general art represents little or nothing.<sup>6</sup>

With an ever widening media, through which our lives are being bombarded by all sorts of information unqualified by experience, our immediate and more personal relationships have become less clear. For the Irish artist in the future, with little or no domestic stimulus to draw from, he can only continue along the lines of his predecessors and ultimately become less and less relevant to a growing population of Irish people.

This brief outline is far too general, one-sided and lacking in detail to give an adequate account of an Irish art history, in which there have been many good and positive aspects. But, not having been the rule, they do not lend themselves to the point being made. That point is suitably dealt with in the sentiments of Bruce Arnold in his "Concise History of Irish Art". In its introduction he says "...my first concern has been with the idea of an Irish art developing, changing and enriching itself in spite of history rather than because of it". In these words he has pointed to an art which has hardly been affected by the quality of Irish life, moreover an art which has had little or no effect upon that quality of Irish life. But in saying that, he has done even



more, he has lifted art up to an exalted position, which it must be aspired to, and makes it more precious than the people around which and from which it has come.



Part 4.

## A VISUAL ILLITERACY IN IRELAND.

We find ourselves, on the other hand, in a situation today, in which the high level of communication, brought about by the combined media, has caused us to examine all the aspects of our culture and weigh them very carefully in relation to our social set-up.<sup>7</sup> Within this developing social order, so dependent upon greater cooperation at all levels of the community, art has not played a very definite part, for which reason the function of art has come very much into question. The highly specialized nature of its involvements has not been sufficient to justify art completely and, along with its restricted audience of intellectually elite, it has obscured the very real value of art.

This true value of art has long been recognised by specialized concerns. Within a highly competitive commercial world, it has been recognised and exploited to a very high degree for the manipulation of human beings. It has also been recognised by, frequently less than sure, governments, in whose interests it has been to gain control of it through its institutes and by censorship.

In an age when human ability has reached a very high level of accomplishment it is noticeable that, since a part of our lives is spent listening, most of us have learned to express ourselves verbally and, since a much smaller part of our lives is spent reading, most of us have learned to express ourselves literally. But, while by far the greatest part of our lives is spent looking, very few of us have learned to express ourselves visually and even less of us have learned to see. In this light, the greatest value within art is its unequalled means of social expression and communication through a visual dialogue, if such a thing could be realized. But it is not.

Some people might argue that this situation is universal and that the problems stem from a far more complex source than can be seen within an Irish context. But within this paper, it is not possible to deal with the situation at such a level. Ireland still remains unique in that, in the absence of a strong visual culture, it is also without many of the restrictive elements that have evolved within other more visual cultures. So, with very few established artistic



values, as Joseph Beuys observed with a view to the founding of an "International University for Creativity", Ireland being a small country with a small and reachable community is very suitable for the investigation of new and wider areas in which art might be applied.<sup>8</sup>

Having already seen that art has had relatively little effect on the quality of Irish life and also having tried to point out that there is a great deal more it can do, the problems then arise as to how and in what areas the artist can apply himself in a more useful but realistic manner. These areas are not immediately apparent and are obscured more by the alienating social characteristics art has assumed over the years.

In order to tackle this problem it is necessary to take art right out of any social context and examine the areas for which it still has a justifiable function. Then in turn examine the reasons for which these functions have failed on a proper social level. For this purpose, there are three areas in which the function of art has a suitable philosophy. They are:- (1) Art as a personal expression, (2) Art as an educational medium, and (3) Art as a social comment. With each one, in turn, I will take a look at its function and then try to see why it has failed.

1. Art as a personal expression:- Although it was Kandinsky's theories on an "Art of internal necessity" made him prime advocate of this philosophy, Moholy Nagy, of the Bauhaus, in his book "Vision in Motion" gives a very good description of the function. He says "Art is the most complex vitalizing and civilizing of human actions. Thus it is of biological necessity. Art sensitizes man to the best that is imminent in him through an intense expression involving many layers of experience.... Today lacking the patterning and refinement of emotional impulses through the arts uncontrolled inarticulate and brutally destructive ways of release have become commonplace. Unused energies subconscious frustrations create the psychopathic borderline cases of neurosis. Art as an expression of the individual can be a remedy by sublimation of aggressive faculties and revitalizes the creative abilities. In this way art is rehabilitation therapy through which confidence in one's creative power can be restored". In this context the social value of art is inestimable.



But it fails in that there is no visual social climate in which it can be appreciated. In this way it remains a privilege, afforded only to those of rare talent and artistic skill.<sup>9</sup>

2. Art as an educational medium:- In Russia the educational psychologists consider art to have a very important role to play within education. In the book "The Arts and the Soviet Child" by Miriam Morton it says "Normally art in all its forms it is believed affords the young child a more rounded development. It has a many faceted impact on his intellectual growth giving him knowledge widening his horizons training him better to see and understand actuality. Furthermore aesthetic experience has the unique ability to awaken creative imagination and fantasy and to stimulate initiative."

But an educational system which is geared towards a highly competitive society within the West places far too much emphasis on its examination system and dictates the direction and standards along which its scholars must develop. This destroys any educational value art might have, by placing it in a position to which it must be aspired and allowing no scope for personal inquiry.<sup>10</sup>

2. Art as a social comment:- This is a very much recognised area with which artists, from many different periods of time, have associated themselves. It comes from a need on the artists part, at times of social upheaval, to try to change or to reject that particular society, by reflecting all its inhuman characteristics. Max Beckmann was a great exponent of this idea, as one of the leading Expressionists in Germany at a time, during and after the first World War, of great social disorder. In "Expressionism. A Generation in Revolt" Bernard Myers says of him: "...he remained humanistic in his outlook and expression..." and his works "...were neither escapist nor occasional, they were a constant and powerful reaction against cruelty, stupidity, and tyranny, sometimes poetic in mood, sometimes brutal, but always filled with psychological meaning and form". This serves as a constant reminder of the failings within any social order.

But the artist's objective nature separates him from the community for which he is then no longer qualified to be the most valid commentator and with which he has not established a real communication.<sup>11</sup> His art is eventually accepted into



the established art circles to perform the full function of their social conscience and finally rendered harmless by being branded a work of art.

Ultimately these three philosophies mean the same thing, with merely greater emphasis put on different aspects, and in turn the reason for their failing to be realized, on a greater social scale, also are as one. That reason being that the people, from whatever aspect they approach these activities, have maintained a one way flow of communication from artist to viewer in which the level of participation hence appreciation is kept to a minimum.<sup>12</sup> That is to say that the artist and his viewer, with their singular objectives, make the art an end and not a means which only allows for and then depends upon a spectator whose only interest is to spectate. For most ordinary people, who will expect something more, the relatively inert surrounds of the art world are boring and as long as this situation prevails no more support can be expected or is likely to be got from them.<sup>13</sup>



Part 5.

## ART IN POLAND. IT'S RELATION TO IRELAND.

It might now be suitable to look at another country for which art has a far greater social standing and, with Ireland in view, try to see how that situation came about. Poland is one such country which has developed a strong visual culture which involves all sections of the community, despite a history not unsimilar to that of Ireland but in the form of constant invasion and partitioning. This on going political situation at the hands of the Russians, Austrians and Prussians frequently found Poland under the dominant influences of the oppressor from which there was very little respite. But a very strong artistic tradition continued to develop in spite of everything, very much in the way the literary traditions survived in Ireland and with much the same strength of optimism. These traditions acquired a great unifying force among Polish people, in 1791, when Poland, during one of her breaks from subjection, constituted a democratic monarchy which included the breaking down of many social and class distinctions. This constitution of May 3rd 1791 was short lived but the extent to which it unified the people provided for a great strength of tradition and nationalism during the subsequent years of disruption.<sup>14</sup> Poland also had an artistocratic class, originating from its monarchical system, for which all the trappings of a European classical art existed. But by far the greatest force within Polish culture came from its folk traditions, of which the visual traditions were the most dominant. They were reflected in the buildings, furniture, styles of dress and utensils of the people. As this culture developed a dialogue evolved. And, with established traditions kept in sight, new ground was broken which always remained within the comprehension of, and very often came, from the ordinary people. This traditional culture quite effortlessly blended in with the modernist ideals which were developing in the early part of the 20th century, particularly among the German Expressionists. The atrocities experienced by Poland during this century do not need to be related but her artists, using all their modern developments, looked to the people and their established traditions for directive in relating and reflecting that society in which they were. Of



it Szymon Bojko in the "Penrose Graphic Arts International Annual" says "The value originated from the cultural traditions of the Polish people which the professional artists have absorbed adopted and developed have helped to prevent Polish art from being dispersed among other influential cultures and also from being shut away in an out of the way locale. Extremely susceptible and eager for innovation Polish art goes to meet the whole human culture and is open to the world. It possesses two elements which overlap: tradition representing cultural continuity and Polish attitudes of mind and modern artistic consciousness". And in particular "In its most ambitious work graphic design manifested the nation's spiritual sovereignty by mere fact of its accessibility to all, its presentation to the public, almost apart from the textual content of the works". Today the visual arts in Poland remain an integral part of, and not separate from, other aspects of the culture such as theatre, literature, music etc. And it assumes its natural place as the most important form of expression, communication and social dialogue.

How this culture originated and evolved is next to impossible to determine, no more than with other countries whose traditional roots are so far back that no accurate assessment of them can be made. What is certain, however, is that, at a very early stage when people began to recognise the real value of a visual form of expression, artists and craftsmen became available and quickly became the means by which it was channelled.<sup>15</sup> By reflecting all the needs within the community, through their ornamentation and decoration, they became very important members of that community. This tradition developed through, and was perhaps preserved by, the very restrictive nature of a strong feudal system in Poland and, with the close involvement of the people with its development, it has flourished to the present day.

That this visual quality springs from the inherent characteristics of one particular race and not from another, does not fully hold true for Ireland, whose visual traditions at one stage were of a very high if not the highest order. But these traditions, having long since been wiped out and forgotten, leave Ireland completely barren, without even the semblance of a visual culture. This is not to say that there are no artists in Ireland today producing work of quality. But the work



these artists produce does not represent a visual culture in the Polish sense. Without trying to sound sickly poetic about it, a precious stone is a precious stone whether at the bottom of a stream or not but, at the bottom of a stream, a precious stone is of no human value whatsoever. In the same way the work of quality, that is being produced in the absence of any general visual understanding, is of little or no human values.<sup>16</sup> This dilemma between art and understanding only serves to heighten the urgency with which something must be done to change the situation.<sup>17</sup>

The urgency, which is greater today than ever before, supercedes whatever importance is attached to maintaining or raising the quality of art. This quality of art is contained in the most refined subtleties of human experience but only comes to light through technical skills available which are totally separate and develop differently to that quality. Clement Greenburg says of it in his book "Art and Culture": - "Art is a matter strictly of experience not of principles and what counts first and last in art is quality, all other things are secondary. No one has yet been able to demonstrate, that the representational, as such, either adds or takes away from the merit of a picture or statue. The presence or absence of a recognisable image has no more to do with value in painting or sculpture, than the presence or absence of a libretto has to do with the value in music. Taken by itself no single one of its parts or aspects decides the quality of art as a whole. In painting and sculpture, this holds just as true, for the aspects of representation as it does for those of scale, colour, paint, quality, design, etc., etc.,". But, these skills, being so essential to the presentation of the quality, that quality must take second preference to the making available of the skills. The quality within art can last forever but the quality of life needs constant attention. What may result from this type of directive might be something far outside the bounds of historically recognised art.

The use of Polish art may sound a bit farfetched and ambitious in its relevance to art in Ireland. An artistic culture of such a high degree, which has evolved out of centuries of development, would seem completely irrelevant to a culture of lost traditions and little or no subsequent development. But a situation, even vaguely similar to that



in Poland, is of utmost importance if the quality of art is to have any sort of standing at all.<sup>18</sup> And this situation should no longer be avoided especially since the seeds for which it evolved in Poland still exist today in Ireland. Those seeds are: (1) The craftsmen:- There are artists and craftsmen in Ireland today whose skills, although not exactly the same as those of the past, have as great a part to play in ordinary life as they did at any time. Those crafts being - film-making, television, architecture, design, poster-making, sculpture and even the much belated easel painting, a peculiarity completely unique to our Western civilization. There is also a useful part to play for the traditional crafts of which ceramics and weaving have had a long and fruitful existence in Ireland. And (2) The less than good aspects of a feudal type system:- There remains a vast community of people, from both middle class and working class backgrounds, who exist in a cultural exile, sometimes without even the benefits of a basic education, whose intellectual development is just as great but, without the proper channelling of expression, occasionally results in the more brutal aspects of our community.



Part 6.

## A ROLE FOR ART WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

So now the task confronting the artist, if he is to follow this line of thought, becomes a great deal more apparent although by no means less complicated. Having already established that a wider acceptance and appreciation of art cannot be realized without a greater participation for all concerned, such a situation must be carefully fostered and encouraged. The greatest danger in its encouragement being that the artist, whether his views be political, artistic or personal, would, under the misguided principle of bringing art to the masses, impose his values on people whose own values are very much established. This approach, being nothing more than trying to teach people to be more civilized from the artists point of view, would only serve to alienate the people more from himself and his art. In order to avoid such a dilemma the artist or craftsman must present his art or craft simply as a service in its purest possible form. This service would initially be dependent upon an already existing market. But the artist, applying his talents in their most direct manner with as few of the imposing aspects of commercial concern as is possible in such circumstances ~~he~~, would demonstrate a very useful facility within the community. By allowing the freest possible flow of ideas through his medium from those availing of it the artist would enable people to see a more genuine and accessible means of reflecting their community. In this way he would encourage more people to avail of the service. It is only from this level of participation and appreciation, at which it is at its most basic and unsophisticated stage, that art can ever hope to take a more positive direction. The more that people would avail of these facilities the more versed they would become in their use. The gradual development of this type of situation could provide for the most natural evolution of a visual dialogue on the widest possible social level.

This process would by no means be straight forward and, even at the outset, problems would present themselves. Firstly; for such a situation to be achieved the initial process would be long and tedious and its artistic returns would be rare and not very great. But for the artist, who would also



be involved in his own artistic development, this problem should be a great deal less than for the majority of people whose daily activities are just as tedious and yield no personal return whatsoever. Secondly, the reality of these services from a financial point of view is very poor. Such a service would be dependent upon a market which is already in existence. It should eventually become self-sufficient, by making its facilities available at a reasonable fee, but its initial establishment would need some outside financial assistance. There are funds available from organizations such as the Arts Council and the Corporation, of which a great deal has been given to artists involved in far less adventurous and less valuable projects.

Finally, most of the crafts mentioned earlier would not immediately be applicable to this type of activity for the very reason that they are inaccessible to ordinary people, due to their complete control by commercial and other less immediate concerns. It is not until a situation can be developed, to create a far wider recognition and understanding of the true value of the crafts, that they can even begin to be applied properly. Of the crafts mentioned, the one that presents itself as being most applicable is poster-making through the medium of screen-print. The screen-print process, being the cheapest and least cumbersome means of graphical reproductions, becomes an obvious choice as a serviceable craft accessible to all. In the form of a community poster-making work-shop, it would provide a very useful and workable service within the community. Through the concerned community organizations clubs and associations initially, the work-shop could begin to reflect the needs within the community and, in this way, take the first steps towards providing a true visual form of expression on a wider social scale. In such a setting, as the master-craftsman applies his skills, unimposedly and with a high degree of professionalism, to the work of a, more visual but less specially skilled, artist so too can such skills be applied to the ideas of the, sufficiently visual but totally unskilled, ordinary people.

The organizations concerned such as art institutes and colleges, in order to justify their existences, should give a great deal more support towards activities of this sort. If for no other reason than, that they can no longer afford to



ignore the fact that so many specially skilled people, who come out of colleges every year, can find no place for themselves or their skills within our modern society.



## Part 7.

## CONCLUSION.

These kind of activities, given the right sort of chance to develop and become more widespread, would create a very rich social climate in which the cultural life of the community would become closely involved with the working life of the community. A greater cooperation between all aspects of that cultural life, such as theatre literature music as well as art, would provide for a most integrated development in which each aspect would benefit from the others and so be of benefit to the community as a whole. <sup>19. AND 20.</sup>

It might be argued that, within such a climate, the quality of art might suffer and the need for the creative artistic individual would no longer exist. But if such a climate were allowed to develop to its full potential, although the quality of art could not be guaranteed, the role of the individual artist, within a society which had acquired a proper visual dialogue, would be as great as the role is of the writer, within a society which does have a proper literary dialogue. In terms of the quality of art; it is quite possible, if such a climate existed in Ireland to-day, that many of the artists we know and accept as having produced art of quality could be outshone by the unknown artist who might produce art of a far higher quality.

preserve to the Middle Ages, a prehistoric fluidity of mind. She was to be spared the violent clashes of opposed notions, the difficult adjustments which resulted in the Celtic-Roman and Pict-Roman civilisations. Unlike and other Celts, the Irish of the Roman period were not to be made ashamed of an old culture, they were not awkwardly to bend their minds to foreign ways of thinking, they were not to be the debased people among even the worst aspects of a well-organized, well-fed, industrialized and matter of fact civilisation. ... Isolated from these conditions and catastrophes, barely conscious of them, the Irish developed slowly to their ultimate possibilities a culture extinct everywhere else in Europe. It was and remained a typical North European culture, foreign to Mediterranean concepts and Latin disciplines.

3. Christianity: It had become established without any



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1. "Irish Art in the Early Christian Period" by Francoise Henry.

"A remarkable continuity is one of the most striking aspects of Irish art. For centuries, during the Early Middle Ages, Irish artists were nearly always satisfied to combine abstract patterns according to very strict elaborate rules. Influence from outside gave new impulses from time to time but never altered very deeply the appearance and fundamental spirit of Irish decoration. Only if we realize that a long Pagan tradition supplied the first elements and the essential decorative principles of art which flourished in the monasteries after the fifth century will we see the reason for this persistence of outlook".

P. 4  
L. 15

2. "As we have just seen, the picture we are able to draw, from the very scanty documents at our disposal, of the Ireland, of the first four centuries of our era, is that of a country, living in a strange seclusion, on the fringe of the Roman Empire, but outside its grip, free to foster and develop the age-old prehistoric traditions, which had been handed down to her. She did not have the Roman conceptions, of law, state and organization, stamped on her mind, nor the cold rectitude of Latin thought. She was to preserve to the Middle Ages, a prehistoric fluidity of mind. She was to be spared the violent clashes of opposed outlooks, the difficult adjustments which resulted in the Gallo-Roman and Britto-Roman civilizations. Unlike the other Celts, the Irish of the Roman period were not to be made ashamed of an old culture, they were not awkwardly to bend their minds to foreign ways of thinking, they were not to be the colonized people aping even the worst aspects of a well-organized, well-fed, industrialized and matter of fact civilization..... Secluded from these conflicts and catastrophies, hardly conscious of them, the Irish developed slowly to their ultimate possibilities a culture extinct everywhere else in Europe. It was and remained a typical North European culture, foreign to Mediterranean concepts and Latin discipline".

P. 4  
L. 20

3. Christianity: It had become established without any



violent disturbance. Legends of Saint Patrick's contests with the druids and of his destruction of the idol Crom Cruach suggests that the religious system of which the early sculptures were a manifestation was still alive. But it yielded surprisingly quickly. There were no martyrs, no persecutions. The Irish seem to have accepted the new faith impulsively, which Saint Patrick and his followers showed no undue intolerance, accepting and adapting what could be kept of old beliefs and secular customs. His policy seems to have been the same as that which Pope Gregory the Great outlined two centuries later to Mellitus, when sending him to preach to the Saxons: keep the old and, after destroying the idols they contain turn them into churches. Keep the festivals and allow the people to kill oxen as usual, but dedicate the feast to the Holy Martyrs whose relics are in the church. The result was a happy compromise between the old Celtic traditions, which was not asked to die a violent death, and the new faith, the new ideal, the new organization which in a short period changed the life of the country so deeply and gave it a new orientation.

P. 5  
L. 32

4. "Irish Archaeology. Encyclopaedia Britannica".

Typical of the resultant chaos is the strange product, Irish Gothic Architecture. There is nothing like it anywhere else. It is a curious jumble of styles and periods; and mouldings which in English Gothic architecture afford an infallible guide to chronology in ambiguous cases, are either totally absent, or else share in the general eccentricity. The Romanesque style had been voluntarily and had a healthy natural growth in the country: the Gothic style was violently forced on the country from without, and was never assimilated.

More prominent and characteristic remains of medieval Ireland are the numberless castles. At first wooden towers erected on earth mounds, these developed along lines parallel to those followed by castles in England. They are thus hardly monuments of Irish archaeology pure and simple, but of the archaeology of an extension of England.

P. 8  
L. 19

5. "A Concise History of Irish Art" Bruce Arnold.

"At a meeting of "The Club" in May 1747, Edmund Burke



said: "That there are three arts called generally by way of eminence. polite poetry, painting and music, that painting is in many things not inferior to poetry, and doubtless superior to music, that it gives us all the beauties of nature with the additional pleasure that the mind takes in comparing them and finding their resemblance with the original, that it greatly tends to the furtherance and improvement of virtue by putting before our eyes the most lively example of the reward of it or the punishment of the contrary. Like St. Paul preaching at Athens (a piece of Raphael) it convinces some, astonishes and pleases all. Portraiture particularly useful by showing our ancestors who have done well, we may be incited to follow their example for which ends the Romans kept the statues of their ancestors in their houses."

p.13  
L.20

6. "The Visual Dialogue. An introduction to the appreciation of art" Nathan Knobler.

"In our time the arts and particularly the visual arts produced by contemporary artists, seem isolated from a large portion of society. Yet museum attendance is booming, the scale of paintings has reached impressive figures, and the space devoted to the arts in magazines indicates that editors are aware of unprecedented reader interest in artists and their work. Meanwhile, ironically, many artists find few among the lay public who seem to understand the concepts basic to the arts, few who can recognize the historical ties between present day art and arts of the past. To the practising there appears to be a widespread visual illiteracy, a public generally incapable of "reading" the current visual languages of painting and sculpture and often extremely limited in its ability to read the visual languages of the past".

p.15  
L.5

7. "Understanding Media" Marshal McLuhan.

"This is the Age of Anxiety for the reason of the electric implosion that compels commitment and participation quite regardless of any "point of view". The partial and specialized character of the view point, however noble, will not serve at all in the electric age.

The aspiration of our time for wholeness empathy and depth of awareness is a natural adjustment of electric technology. The age of mechanical industry that preceded us found vehement assertion of private outlook the natural mode



of expression. Every culture and every age has its favourite model of perception and knowledge that it is inclined to prescribe for everybody and everything. The mark of our time is its revulsion against imposed patterns. We are suddenly to have things and people declare their beings totally. There is a deep faith to be found in this new attitude - a faith that concerns the ultimate harmony of all beings".

P.16  
L.5

8. "Report to the European Economic Community on the feasibility of founding a "Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research" in Dublin" by Caroline Tisdall.

"General reasons for locating the Free University in Ireland" "A basic and obvious point: Ireland is a small country, and in the context of the Free University this is a positive factor. It means in effect that the community is small enough for the effect and contribution of a model like the Free University to be felt within the community. Dublin, by extension, has the dual advantage of human scale and capital city amenities".

P.17  
L.4

9. "Art and Visual Perception" Rudolph Arnheim.

"Shafer Simmerman has already continuingly illustrated his belief that the capacity to deal with life artistically is not the privilege of a few gifted experts but belongs to the equipment of every sane person whom nature has favoured with a pair of eyes. To the psychologist this means that the study is an indispensable part of the study of man".

P.17  
L.21

10. "After Hornsey" David Warren Piper.

"Is the need of society and therefore the aim of education to teach the discipline of enquiry the maximum of factual knowledge or should the aim be to cultivate the ability to apply constructively to any problem that may be met in life? Certainly much of the present system of education is geared to learning facts in order to pass examinations - despite the vast and increasing range of jobs and parenthood, and the unknown problems of a changing society. So great is the pressure of learning facts, that there is little time or incentive for using for constructive thinking, or in formulating individual judgements; such a system in its basic un-



reality results in stress and tension, unhappiness and most ominously a hatred of work. If this is preparation for living, who can blame the child who feels unprepared for and afraid of the future".

P. 17  
L. 41

11. "Social Radicalism and the Arts" Donald D. Egbert.  
"We have been dealing, of course, with artists dissatisfied with the dominant society around them, whether because of what they have regarded as general social injustices or because of injustices specifically to the artist. Such dissatisfaction in its more extreme versions becomes alienation.... We have seen also that while some alienated artists have sought to widen and deepen that their breach with society, others have sought to change society, believing that only after its radical reorganization can the fullest development of the individual human being, including individual artists be accomplished".

P. 18  
L. 11

12. "The Visual Dialogue" Nathan Knobler.  
"Initially the aesthetic experience is the result of an interaction between an art object and an observer. This interaction cannot take place unless the conditions for its occurrence are present. These conditions are the ability of the observer to perceive and comprehend those aspects of the object or experience which to aesthetic satisfaction and receptive attitude on the part of the observer".

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L. 18

13. "Watercolours, Drawings and Writings" Wassily Kandinsky.  
"...In every painting a whole life is mysteriously enclosed, a whole life of torture, doubts, of hours of enthusiasm and inspiration. What is the direction of that life? What is the cry of the artists soul, if the soul was involved in the creation? "To send light into the darkness of men's hearts - such is the obligation of the artist" said Schumann. "A painter is a man who can draw and paint everything," said Tolstoy.

Of these two we must choose the second, if we think of the exhibition. With more or less skill, virtuosity and vigour, objects are created on a canvas, "painted" either roughly or smoothly. To bring the whole into harmony on the canvas is what lends to a work of art. With cold eye



and indifferent mind the public regards the work. Connoisseurs admire "technique", as one might admire a tightrope walker, or enjoy the "painting quality", as one might enjoy a cake. But hungry souls go hungry away.

The public ambles through the rooms, saying "nice" or "interesting". Those who could speak have said nothing. This condition is called "art for art's sake". This annihilation of internal vibrations that constitutes the life of the colours, this dwindling away of artistic force is called "art for art's sake".

The artist seeks material for his facility, inventiveness and sensitivity. His purpose becomes the satisfaction of ambition and greediness. In place of an intensive cooperation among artists, there is a battle for goods. There is excessive competition and over-production. Hatred, partisanship, cliques, jealousy, intrigues are the natural consequences of an aimless materialist art!

p. 19  
L. 21

#### 14. "Polish Art" Jerzy Zanecky.

"It is very interesting to consider the relation of Polish nineteenth century art to the conditions then prevalent in the country. According to the theory which makes development of art dependent on economic and political prosperity of a country, Polish art should have ceased to exist or at any rate, have sunk to the level of popular art because this period was one of foreign domination, oppression and misery. Nothing however could be further from the truth. Neither in architecture nor in sculpture was the level below that of other parts of Europe.

With the change in political conditions, the social structure of the nineteenth century saw the growth of a new social class, the intelligentsia recruited not only from the gentry but also from the burgers and peasants. This class was animated by the democratic spirit of the Constitution of May 3rd 1791, an ardent patriotism and a spirit of opposition to the occupying powers. From artistic as well as other aspects this class became both creator and audience".

p. 20  
L. 28

#### 15. "Folk Art in Poland" Irena Czarnecka.

".....genuine folk art may well be proud of its achievements. Splendid examples of it existed already in the Middle Ages.



Colourful striped fabrics of the epoch, unearthed in Gdansk, decorative items, parts of costumes, wooden or earthenware products of distinguished design and rich though never excessively decorative motifs - found in practically every mediaeval settlement - are living testimony of the artistic level of the beginnings of folk art in its evolution towards further and ever higher attainment".

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L.8

16. "Art and Society" Adolpho Sanchez Vasquez.  
"A true artist is capable of creating a new language where ordinary language fails. The object he creates cannot be an end in itself on the contrary, it is a means of reaching people. True art reveals essential aspects of human existence in such a way that they may be shared. An uncommunicative art is therefore a negation of an essential aspect of art."

p.21  
L.10

17. "Art and Society"  
Having cut its ties with an abstract bourgeois universe which harassed its creative essence, modern art must find new links with people. This search should be mutual, because the public must also seek out art, and must therefore meet art halfway. Thus, while the artist searches for a means of expression to make communication possible, the public must search out true art and reject the pseudo-art of a reified and debased world.

p.22  
L.2

18. "Art and Revolution" John Berger.  
"Kandinsky in 1910 said 'The correlative separation of one art from another, and furthermore of 'art' from folk art and children's art from 'ethnography', the firmly established walls between what I consider to be related or even identical manifestations, in a word, the synthetic relationships, gave me no peace'".

p.26  
L.20

19. "Understanding Media" Marshal McLuhan.  
"At the extreme of speeded up movement, specialism of space and subject disappear once more. With automation, it is not only jobs that disappear, and complex roles that reappear. Centuries of specialist stress in pedagogy and in the arrangement of data now end with instantaneous retrieval of inform-



ation and it not only ends jobs in the world of work, it ends subjects in the world of learning. It does not end the world of learning. The future of work consists of earning a living in the automation age. This is a familiar pattern in electric technology in general. It ends the old dichotomies between culture and technology, between art and commerce, and between work and leisure. Whereas in the mechanical age of fragmentation leisure had been the absence of work or mere idleness, the reverse is true in the electric age. As the age of information demands the simultaneous use of all our faculties, we discover that we are most at leisure when we are most intensely involved very much as with the artists in all ages".

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L. 20

## 20. "Art and Culture" Clement Greenberg.

"The difficulty of carrying on a leisure orientated tradition in a work orientated society is enough in itself to keep the present crisis in our culture unresolved. This should give pause to those of us who look to socialism as a way out. Efficient work remains indispensable to industrialism, and industrialism remains indispensable to socialism. Nothing in the perspective of socialism indicates that it will easily dissipate anxiety about efficiency and anxiety about work no matter how much the working day is shortened or how automation takes over. Nothing in fact in the whole perspective of an industrialized world - a perspective that contains the possibility if both good and bad alternatives to socialism - affords any clue as to how work under industrialism can be displaced from the central position in life it now holds.

The only solution for culture that I can conceive of under these conditions is to shift its centre of gravity away from leisure and place it squarely in the middle of work. Am I suggesting something whose outcome could no longer be called culture, since it would not depend upon leisure? I am suggesting something whose outcome I cannot imagine. Even so there is the glimpse of a precedent; a very uncertain glimpse it is true, but a glimpse nevertheless. Once again it lies in the remoter pre-urban past or in the part of it which survives in the present.

In societies below a certain level of economic development



everybody works; and where this is so, work and culture tend to be fused in a single cultural complex. Art lore and religion then barely become distinguishable in either intension or in practice, from the techniques of production, healing and even war. Rite, magic, myth, decoration, image, music, dance and oral literature are at one and the same time religion, art, lore, defence, work and science. Five thousand years of civilisation have separated these areas of activity from one another and specialized them in terms of their verifiable results, so that we now have culture and are for their own sake, religion for the sake of things unknowable (or like art for the sake of states of mind) and work for the sake of practical ends. It would seem that these things have now become separated from one another forever. Yet we discover that industrialism is bringing about a state of affairs in which, once again everybody will work. We are coming full circle (as Marx predicted, though not quite in the way he hoped), and if we are coming full circle in one respect may we not be doing so in another? With work becoming universal once more may it not become necessary - and because necessary, feasible to repair the estrangement between interested and disinterested ends that began when work first became less than universal? And how else could this be done but through culture in its highest and most authentic sense?



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