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Carlo Maria Mariani and the Return to Representation

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By Alan Bolzano

Chapter One. Outline of Mariani's work

Chapter Two. Will describe his practice in relation to the
Transavantgarde, Fascism and identity.

Chapter Three. Will discuss the work in relation to postmodernism

Chapter Four. Will describe Mariani's practice through architectural postmodernism

LIST OF PLATES

Monsier Salloum, Jean paul Gaultier, 1998 oil on canvas 64 in x 48in
Monsier Salloum, Kenzo, 1998 oil on canvas 70 in x 52 in
Monsier Salloum, Paco Rabanne, 1998 oil on canvas 54 in x 48 in
Carlo Maria Mariani, Poseidon, 1984 oil on canvas, 27 ½ x 29 ½ in
Carlo Maria Mariani,Rape of Ganymedes,1981,oil on canvas 23 ½ x 20 1/2 in
Carlo Maria Mariani, The School of Rome Costellazine del Leone
 (La scuda di Rome) 1980-1, oil on canvas,133 1/4 x 177 9/19 in
 Carlo Maria Mariani, *Li* Mano Ubbidisce all'Intelleto,1983, oil on canvas,781/2 x 69 in
 Rene Magritte, Red Model, oil on canvas, 183 cm x 136cm

INTRODUCTION

Charles Jencks describes Carlo Maria Mariani's work as existing within the terms of metaphysical classicism. Further to this, his practice can be read as utilising neoclassical allegory. Mariani's practice revolves around neo-classical appropriation, and its utilisation of a return to representation, because of its pluralistic qualities which convey, according to Charles Jenck s, an emphasis upon communication. The object of this thesis is to suggest that such a return to both representation and pluralism within a neoconservative model of postmodernism contains implications which are detrimental to art practice and culture alike.

Neoconservative postmodernism and poststructuralist postmodernism will be used to transcribe this argument. It is important to reflect upon both forms of postmodernism, for an understanding of Mariani's work through a singular perspective would render a superficial view of Mariani's work and postmodernism. Both positions, however do converge on a reflection of a return to representation.

Chapter one will basically outline the procedures within Mariani's practice and will point directly to illustrations of his paintings to establish his use of myth, pastiche, and double coding, as described by Charles Jenck s. However, the most obvious question revolves around Mariani's return to representation.

The background to such a return will be examined in chapter two. This chapter will reflect upon the economic and cultural conditions which support such returns to representation. Its context will be realised through an understanding of the transavantgarde and why this movement sought to establish its position both within a European and International context. It also aims to demonstrate how representation can be symptomatic of such a return especially with the escalation of authoritarianism within this postmodern era. Such arguments will realise that this return to representation and historical reference revolves around identity. Chapter three will describe how Mariani's practice can be argued through Charles Jencks' theories of double coding Such arguments will realise that this return to representation and historical reference revolves around identity. Chapter four aims to discuss alternative readings of Mariani's practice, understood through postmodern architecture, and how this can become problematic. This argument will continue and use Hal Foster's criticism and use of deconstructionist theories to form explanations for such returns to representation. He himself does not offer an alternative to postmodernism as explained by Charles Jenck s, through architecture and double coding. However, to conceive Mariani's work through a model of postmodern architecture reveals elements of an art practice that could be considered conventional.

Chapter 1

The use of mythology is prevalent within Marianis work which he calls 'la pittura Cloita' (Jencks,1987,page 52), a term that he uses to describe a painting which includes certain aspects and uses of a classical style. This can be seen in Mariani's paintings though the inclusion of ideal bodies, typified by their use in paintings such as *Poseidon* (fig 1), and *The Rape of Ganymede* (fig 2). In addition to this are the historical references such as those in *il Mano Ubbidisce all inteletto* (Jencks,1987,page51) *The Hand Submits To The Intellect* (fig 3) , which certainly points towards Greek legend explaining the origination of drawing and painting. Mariani's painting is based upon Anton Raphael Mengs reworking of Raphaels *Pernassus*   in which his use of mythology and remythification is dominant. Some space is left for further motifs and 'readings' to exist, or to be inserted and we could also include irony as a motivating factor within the images. Charles Jenck's stresses that the picture is composed by placing and accumulating mythological texts together, and that this accumulation happens as much today as it did in the past.

Postmodernist classicism, which definitely includes Mariani's work with-in its matrix, can be seen to appropriate a classical motif which is then mixed with present-day elements, the inclusion of artists within the painting *The School of Rome (Costellazione del Leone la scuola di Roma).*

1

Jenck's justifies Mariani's use of classicism and states that it is not totalistic, although he does see it as a necessary communicational device. This he believes is important in re-establishing the public realm and is read by him as an "impersonal tradition"(Jencks,1987,page 52). The inclusion of classicism helps to set up objective standards, which allows certain aspects of post-modernist work to be evaluated. The combination of myth and classicism within the one work can be read as eclectic, a term which can be seen as existing in close conjunction with the definitions of post-modern theory. This eclectic value to a large extent helped to destabilise high art and modernism, which relied heavily upon stable categories such as formalist purity.

Jenck's states further to this, that the attitude of a pluralistic era tries to avoid making judgements of relative worth.

Pluralism and its acceptance by Jenck's should include the use of objective standards from past art practice, such forms of representation manifest in the form of postmodernist classicism which can be read as forming a recognisable value system conveyed by the clarity of its subject matter, usually figuration.

This principle could then be used within his double coded theories, which combine modernism with one other code, this code is usually used in the form of historical reference (which will be explained in detail in chapter three) to gauge the values of

present postmodern practice. This use of pluralism Superseded categories of art, of which the rationale was to promote absolute values as suggested above.

Jenck's advances the objectives and readings of postmodernism by defining postmodernist classicism, as not a series of oppositions towards moderism, but rather as carrying on particular impasses that modernism could not extend itself, such as its detachment from art history. This occurs through double coding. This can be seen as an objective of Carlo Maria Mariani's by the inclusion in the painting *The Hand Submits to the Intellect*(fig 3) of the modernist theme of self-reflection, which is also aligned with classicism and the Greek myth or legend of the origination of drawing and painting.

Jenck's cites remythification as one of the ideals practiced by Mariani, but he does predict certain problems.
Jenck's sees that art is in danger of becoming a social mythology and that a problem surfaces which involves artists becoming engaged with two myths; myth itself and the myth of art history. He could site remythification as one of the ideals practiced by Mariani. A further concern might be that Mariani's practice will reduce its meaning by merely illustrating a set of values, and on the other hand it might lapse into a melancholic stance.

Mariani's work might fall into a set of values Hal Foster considered conventional, a term used to describe work that did not apply itself to a proper evaluation of the

3

political economy of the commodity sign. Jean Baudrillard suggested that the commodity consisted of two functions, use and exchange value. When the sign assumed values closely related to exchange value, its use value was rendered conventional and it aligned itself too closely with capitalism. It could be suggested that Mariani's work is not totally conventional because of his use of myth.

Myth as explained by Roland Barthe's contains two properties. The first is considered ideological because of its dependency within history, "for it is human history which converts reality into speech and it alone rules the life and the death of mythical language,"(Barthe's,1957,page 118) and also because of its dependency within semiology which returns it back to a science. So myth as explained, can be both ideological and scientific. In addition to this, consideration towards other terms which are in operation in Mariani's work should be taken into account. These are allegory, cynicism, the appropriation of classical imagery and remythification, which Buchloh cites as containing the potential to interrogate the, "splintering of the commodity sign"(Foster,1996,page 93). This splintering occured when art practice was commodified. It assumed the functions of exchange value and it became conventional, its use value was lost.

One conclusion can be drawn here, and this is Mariani's use of allegory, which disrupts and exceeds the symbolic mode of modernism. Buchloh's reading of allegory can also be considered "contemplative and critical"(Foster,1996, page 91). But it is also reflective on readings of institutional critical art, a process

which Mariani's work seems to approach in its re-reading of contemporary art practice specifically through the use of painting, by the depictions of his peers within the painting *The School Of Rome*. Buchloh placed a further emphasis on "appropriation and depletion juxtaposition of fragments and separation of signifier and signified"(Foster,1996,page 91). He stressed, also, a condition that art and the power of the sign had rarely addressed. This was the "commodification of culture"(Foster,1996,page 91) .

This happened when art and criticism became marginalised and eroded, because of art's dispersion into spectacle and entertainment.

Mariani's work can also be seen to ask questions about "the making of meaning and value, identity and privilege, in dominant artistic representations and cultural discourses"(Foster,1996,page 93). This outline has done nothing more than describe some of the attributes inherent in Mariani's work. It is important to note that this practice is also historically grounded in art and cultural movements such as the transavantgarde.

Chapter 2

The Italian transavantgarde emerged in conjunction with the German neoexpressionist group towards the end of the 1970s.

The transavantgarde established a reaction against American minimalism, post minimalism, Italian arte povera and fluxus art in Germany, all of which had been to the fore of avant-garde art of the 70's.

The transavantgarde believed in a fresh humanist content, and the European critics championed this painting style, by inventing stereotypes of American and European art and by pitting them against one another. This assessment had happened with Achille Banito Olivas' conclusion and definition of the transavantgarde. He claimed that "European art possessed an idealistic vision and that American art was fixed on facts that referred mainly to itself "(Sandler,1996,page 283) it was, "formalist art as art"(Sandler,1996,page 283). The Europeans were concerned with craft and tradition, such as Mariani's use of oil painting, which was rooted in earlier twentieth century avant-garde art. Oliva stressed that Europeans were critical of existing society, and wanted in some way to change it. He pointed out also, that the American counterparts aligned themselves too closely with capitalism. European art was seen as humanistic "and addressed the problems of its rich culture"(Sandler,1996,page 284). American art ultilised mechanical forms of art production and the media.

Pop and conceptualism reflect the pivotal role of the media in postwar American society. In other words, it dealt exclusively with contemporary culture, but also reflected a consumer society, which was object-orientated.

Europe was rebuilt after World War 11, and the American culture with which Europe was so enamoured, due mainly to its suggestive ideals of progress and freedom, was beginning to lose its grip on a Europe that sought to re-centre its

6

fractured identity, through its many traditions and diverse cultures. Exhibitions

such as 'Bilderstreit,'(Sandler,1996,page 451) were set up to assure the aesthetic

and artistic supremacy of western Germany and its European counterparts, Austria,

The Netherlands, and Italy. This was considered a nationalist bid to control the art

market. European painters began to reassess their own traditions, mythologies, and

their past art. This examination succeeded. It did, however, appear to break with

the progressive formalistic values that had informed American art. One aspect of

this practice was that internationalism was abruptly brought to a halt. Artists,

within the   neo-expressionistic genre, and the Italian transavantgarde,

appropriated imagery which was historically informed, regional, peripheral, or

nationalist in tradition, helping to instill values which were eclectic, and

hetrogeneous.

Oliva, whose critical skills applied mainly towards the Italian arte povere

movement, became closely involved with the emerging Italian painters. He coined

the term transavantgarde, to tighten, strengthen, and even consolidate their practice

on an international level. This group did not include Carlo Maria Mariani, but it

did include Sandro Chia, Francesco Clemente, Enzo Cucchi, Nicola de Maria, and

Mimmo Paladino. Oliva concluded that Italian-art had been dominated by the art

povera, or conceptual abstractionists, who used installations of ready-mades, that

distanced the "artist's hand as the sign of subjectivity"(Sandler,1996,page,450).

The conclusion drawn here is that painting was excluded, to a large degree

because of its inherent value as a sign of subjectivity; or it was seen as receding to

past values, such as originality, the return of the author and the heroic figure, as artist or architect. Arte povera, to a large degree, could be closely aligned with the North American emphasis on textuality, while the artists of the transavantgarde could also be aligned with Julian Schnabel, David Salle, and Gary Stephens. The transavantgarde was seen as revivalist.

However, Carlo Maria Mariani was not treated as transavantgarde. He, himself coined the phrase ,'la pittura colta',(cultural painting), he was closely affiliated with another satellite group, called 'anacronisti'. Eleanor Heartney makes a close association between both the anacronisti and the transavantgarde, by stating that these groups have chosen to ,"suppress their individuality in the service of period style"(Heartney,1986,page 89).

Oliva did have rivals, one of which designated arte povera as the only credible art form to represent Italian culture. Germano Celant understood the new form of painting to be reactionary, consisting of an angst-ridden return to the past. Neoconservatism's associations with fascism were also moulded, especially through the appropriation of fascist styles of representation in the thirties, and the triumphant assessment of its Roman past. Celant pointed out that this new assessment of painting was, first of all, non-political, non-conceptual, and in favour of a style which "beefed up the role of the artist by exalting the wonders of beautiful painting [which are] recognisable to the mass media as, real"(Sandler,1996,page 288). Benjamin Buchloh implied that this appropriation

of traditional style had intractable problems, that could be read in unison with the-not-too distant past, such as the return to representation by the Futurists, and Cubists within the mid 20's and 30's. Buchloh points to the demise of the progressive avant-garde, and states that while this enclave remains disempowered it is reciprocated by a rise of, "reactionary nationalism"(Heartney,1986,page,89). When extended further, this allowed fascism to gain currency in Germany and Italy. He stated that the problem with postmodernism, especially when aligned with a return to representation through painting, asks?, "is there a simple casual connection, a mechanical reaction, by which growing political oppression necessarily and universally generates traditional representation"?(Heartney,1986,page 91). This question was asked against a background of escalating authoritarinism within this postmodern period.

Celent's claims were rebutted by Oliva, he stressed the importance of cultural memory and showed the possibilities of painting as, above all, just reflecting its own materiality, as in the way it reflected on poorly-conceived and often transient conceptual art, which had been in ascendance for the previous decade. Oliva considered the transavantgarde to be, nationalistic in outlook, and arte povera to be internationalist, "thereby losing and alienating the deepest cultural and anthropological roots"(Sandler,1996,page 289). By positioning or opening up this space, Oliva could argue, and justify the position held by the transavantgarde. It is important to note, that at this time the Italian economy was perhaps one of the

healthiest in Europe, and with this new flourish of wealth came the need for saleable art.

What can be deduced from the points made in this chapter so far is that they represent the transavantgarde as emerging during a period of growing authoritarianism and the emergence of a healthy Italian economy, are these conditions necessary for a return to representation ?

What does this return to representation claim to convey?, it does reflect easily identifiable standards through its central subject, usually figuration. This return to figuration looks familiar because it can placed in a historical context, it is easily understood and it appeals to a broad cross section of the public. This familiarity with representation can be placed within specific moments of past European history, when the body was portrayed as whole. This return to representation will be assessed presently, and will directly reflect on Mariani's practice.

Hannah Arendt, who wrote the work, *The Origin of Totalitarianism*, suggests that it is not legitimate to more-or-less appropriate from our past, what we consider to be favorable to us in the present. This could be described in short, as a peripheral romanticised construction of our heritage, which would be detrimental to a proper reflection and consideration of our identities, specifically within western history. She sees this constructed history as being questioned so that the,"dignity of our tradition"(Arendt,1958,page464), can be properly evaluated. It is Europe's fascist

past which informs this discourse. Fabrications have to be understood for what they are and do. Arendt understands nostalgia to be one of those particular edifices, or fabrications, which prevent us from accurately assessing the past, thus inhibiting a proper questioning of the present. To an extent, we are inexcusably involved or implicated within its making; therefore, meaning in relation to the past and present, becomes fundamental. It becomes important to conserve the subjectivity of the individual in relation to totalitarianism, which resides in nationalist ideology, and its power and ability to manipulate our very notions of identity. This understanding could be seen to play an important part in Mariani's assessment or meditations upon history, because his work does envelop, and imply, a definite response towards meaning, and its importance to a proper evaluation of both past and present. The argument will transpire that identity, reflected through Mariani's form of representation, reveals a subject that is whole and unified .

There is a possibility, that Mariani is investigating our very knowledge of what specifically is our identity, and how it is defined. For postmodernism was said to have profound effects upon the subject and its identity.

Identity became dependent on a number of factors relating to the separation of the social sciences. Psychology reflected upon mental processes, thus rendering the individual as its centre of study. This examination is one of the defining factors of the modern subject, in that it studied the interaction between two different systems, the internal referential self and external society, in which institutions play

a significant part. However, with the rise of modernism, new questions of the interaction between self and society were beginning to surface.

The de-centering of the subject can be seen as a way in which specific knowledge derived from social theory, and the human sciences influenced the very conception of identity in late modernity. The re-reading of Marxist theory showed that the notion of history and tradition provided pre-established conventions from previous historical conditions to men, and allowed them to keep re-inventing the present, but within the parameters that were already laid down before them, of which a question of authorship was clearly at the centre. Louis Althusser suggested that Marxist thinking had portrayed man as not central, and not independent, but linked to the social world. This shaved away any notion of independence, autonomy or purity, which was embedded into the core of the self, and which defined the essence of man. It displaced key philosophical hypotheses, which were regarded as modern. Firstly, " that there is a universal essence of man," and secondly, "that this essence is the attribute of each single individual who is its real subject"(Hall,1993,page 286). Freud's devotion to the complexity of the unconscious, plays an important interactive role within the makeup of identity. Stuart Hall states, that this hypothesis agitates the theory of the "knowing and the rationale subject with a fixed and unified identity"(Hall,1993 page,286). Jacques Lacan, like many other psychoanalytic theorists, has taken many aspects of Freud's findings, and elaborated on the state of the unconscious. However, it is important to rememeber that the notion of the unconscious, as a stable mooring for a debate

between it and logical reason, is not easy to define. For logical reason, by its very framework in a coherent social world is easier to define than a system, that in the main part, relies on speculative thought. Lacan elaborates on the very moment when the identity becomes definable, and it centers on a theme of recognition in the mirror phase, where according to Lacan, the concept of identity is formed in early childhood and this identity is also formed in relation to the parental figure. The central theme here, is Lacan and Freud agree that the conception of identity forms in relation to the other , and is not something that grows within the core. Freud pointed out, that identity is formed in relation to the child's conception of the parental figures, as fantasised through the subconscious or psyche.

Lacan framed this in the infant's interactivity with learning systems, which the child gradually recognises as outside the self, and determines its entry into the sphere of symbolic representation, which is made up of many different parts (culture, language, gender), that the child gradually negates to form a concept of 'the whole person' (Hall,1993,page 288). However, the very concept of a whole person, or a unified one, is fleeting. The polarities experienced during the emergence into the field of symbolic representation leave the subject's formation of identity fractured through out life. This discussion is elaborated on by Hal Foster in his 'Vicissitudes of the subject' (Foster,1996,page 209)in which he discusses Lacan's understanding of the formation of our identity, and the fantasy of the chaotic body, Foster states that our ego is pitted against the return of this chaotic body. The ego is seen here to take on the qualities of an armour, that reacts

13

against the inside and the outside, especially against all others who seem to represent chaos. Lacan states here, that this subject is modern and can be paranoid and fascist. Foster asks, has this fascism returned?, or did it ever go away?, and he explains what happened during the 1960's when the death of the humanist subject was proclaimed. Cultural activity is recoded as language, and this linguistic recoding allows Barthes to declare the death of the author. He further states that the subject under attack here is not only the "author, artist of humanist-modernist traditions it is also the authoritarian personality of fascist structures"(Foster,1996,page 211).

Foster suggests that artists resist the intrusion of the armoured ego, e.g. fascist structures, with abject forms of representation which signify the chaotic or fantasised body. This form of representation directly confronts, and wards off the fascist subject, by revealing to it what it once was, as stated earlier through Jaques Lacans' explanation of the formation of identity. This explanation offers the opportunity to directly examine Mariani's painting. The question here is not, whether Mariani is a fascist , but whether his paintings reflect some sort of allegiance with fascist representation, which is ideal, whole, and unified, in contrast to a subject that is abject, fragmented and chaotic. The answer to this question is to be found in his work, where there appears to be no trace of abjection.

Chapter 3

Mariani allows his neoclassical appropriations to contain aspects of irony and pastiche, which jar slightly with the original pseudo purity of neoclassicism, which was an elaboration of earlier classical art. The pastiche encountered within Mariani's work is visibly strong, as Charles Jencks points out, in comparison with the weak pastiche of the past. This use of pastiche or eclecticism is a very important aspect of postmodernism, and there are many views on the values it retains. Jean Francois Lyotard states that it is typical of an "anything goes"(Rose,1991,page 60) formulation of post modernism. Both he, and Fredric Jameson closely relate this principal to a capitalist value structure which supports it. Lyotard, in his Postmodern Condition of 1979, describes capitalism as retaining the true value structure for postmodernism because of their interdependence. Furthermore, he describes eclecticism as the "degree zero of contemporary general culture"(Rose,1991,page 27). This is formulated to describe some of the conditions that pastiche offers when working in conjunction with postmodernism. What specifically can be seen in Mariani's work? The postmodern aspect of his work will be explained through Charles Jenck's double coded theories, as suggested in chapter 1.

Jameson expresses the use of pastiche as a fundamental part of consumer culture. However, Margaret Rose suggests that Jameson criticises postmodern pastiche

through Jean Baudrillard's descriptions of parody and its use within modern art. When a concept such as modern parody is used to value postmodern pastiche, it becomes an improper benchmark for meaning or value to be derived from. It forms an inaccurate assessment of a structure such as postmodern pastiche, for, modern parody imports within its structure a set of values and associations bound specifically to its formulation within modern art eg. modernity and its capitalist structure. Rose states that this form of parody cannot be implicated within the postmodern use of pastiche, because it does not realise the use value of double coding as defined earlier on by Jenck's, and its use of pastiche within double coding. The two are set up to explain the difference in attitude towards the compilation of a modernist work and a postmodern one. His addition to Fosters PostModern Culture 1983 in some way describes what Margaret Rose would later call a category error. Jameson concludes that pastiche is in fact, a "normless or blank form of parody"(Rose,1991,page 28), this form of argument is peculiar to Jameson as he suggests that parody is specifically modern, and pastiche post-modern. Furthermore, he implies that pastiche does not convey any particular message or function, e.g. irony "pastiche is blank parody it has lost its sense of humor"(Rose,1991,page 69). Jameson signals a reflection on Jean Baudrillards contemporary capitalist world, more so than a consideration of pastiche, as utilized through the theory of postmodernist architecture explained by Jencks. Baudrillard explains his reflection on contemporary capitalism by citing such statements as "a kind of non intentional parody hovers over everything,"(Rose,1991,page 69) this statement was enforced by stressing that

critical transcendence had dispersed or disappeared "because reality itself, entirely impregnated by an aesthetic which is inseparable from its own structure, has been confused with its own image"(Rose,1991,page 69). Jameson uses the term blank parody to describe postmodern pastiche as dealing with concerns that revolve around modernity and its capitalist elements, which are specific to modern art as defined by Margaret Rose. He has in fact taken the associative conditions of these terms such as modernity and its implications with capitalism, and applied them also to a condition that was initially described as postmodern pastiche. She points out that both parody and pastiche have been used for centuries, and are nothing more than 'devices' (Rose,1991,page 72). In doing so, she further points out that neither of these devices are unique to either the modern or postmodern periods. However, it is their intended purpose which makes both parody and pastiche either modern or postmodern. This can be understood by looking at Mariani's work and his utilization of pastiche in the form of Jenck's double coded theories, which make Mariani's use of pastiche specifically postmodern.

The pastiche that could be read in neoclassicism differs from the pastiche we can see in Mariani's work, because basically neoclassicism involves a compilation of motifs, where as it did not, and could not utilise the double coding of the classical with modern, as seen in Mariani's pastiche. So the point should be made that Mariani himself appropriated neoclassicism, a style that can be defined by the appropriation of classical imagery, or a compilation of motifs. If one thing is established it is an understanding of how these codes have become more

pronounced or strong. Jenck's attributes the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

century as containing weak elements of pastiche in comparison to that of the

postmodern e.g. Mariani's use of pastiche. A work which is attributed to Mariani,

The School of Rome 1980-1981 (fig.4), in which Rose suggests there may be found

many examples of pastiche and satire. For example, the way Mariani is satirical

towards his fellow artists by having them dressed in classic cut costume, and also

by exposing their pretensions, Rose further exposes the level of pastiche by

suggesting that Mariani's painting is, in fact partly based upon Raphael's *school of*

Athens 1510 and of its reworkings through 1751 the 1820's and 1830's by Sir

Joshua Reynolds and the German Nazarene artist, Peter Cornelius. A certain

tradition of appropriation and pastiche can be noted here.

Is the objective of Mariani's practice to render a copy or fake of past styles as

suggested by Jameson through his definition of pastiche.

Jenck's states that it is the pastiche in Mariani's work which intervenes in our final

conception of Mariani's painting as just a fake or copy of neoclassical art. This

question, can be anwsered through his compilation of motifs and pastiche of

neoclassical imagery, and its integration and combination with motifs from the

modern period. For instance, Margaret Rose points out ,the marble or plaster feet

in the picture, *The School of Rome* (which appears just left of center fig.5) evoke a

dualistic appearance of representing a pair of classically sculpted feet, while also

echoing Rène Magritte's red model(fig.6). This closeness to both models destroys

the illusion of fake. Rose states that Jameson had described the word pastiche as

fake, or even more explicitly, called it a forgery while its correct or technical term

would have been 'pasticcio analogen' a term which depicts exactly what is happening in the work ie. "a compilation of motifs"(Rose,1991,page 31). It is this discrepancy between the classical and the modern that we notice. If it was a fake or forgery, this gap between the classical and the modern would be greatly reduced. In some way Mariani seems to be concerned with our associations and interpretations of the past and present understandings. Neither parody or pastiche can be regarded as particularly postmodern, they can be used specifically to call attention to the postmodern nature of something, in other words, it is their use that renders them postmodern or not, and also what they are used in combination with eg. double coding that enables them to become an active part of the postmodern. In reference to postmodernism in general they may not be used at all, however it would seem impossible to describe Mariani's work, which is double coded, without their input.

Pastiche, according to Jencks, particularly when it is used in conjunction with double coding, has the potential to speak "to a variety of publics"(Rose,1991,page 34). In light of modernism's linear projection through formalism, it seems that pastiche offers modernism the capibility to merge with the more human aspects of past history, which does, more often than not, require specialised learning to understand it. By reading it through modern analogies the meaning becomes more accessible by the equivalences that can be drawn between the past and present.

Jencks claims that further to this there is the possibility of the practitioner fixing their own values onto work, which allows the practitioner to express and experience forms of self-reflexivity. Charles Jenck's states another function of art within this postmodernism as being the "importance of communication"(Rose,1991,page 35) between artist and public, something that modernism refused to assess because of its continued reverence for the author, and not towards the viewers in constituting a work.

Ronald Barthes in '*The Death of the Author*', questioned artistic authorship. He argued the point, that an "author could not- or could no longer - claim to be the unique source of the meaning and/or value of the work of art". Mariani and his practice have more than a loose aquaintance with such relevant theoretical subject matter. In works like *The Hand Submits To The Intellect* (1983) we can see a questioning of the process of painting, typically equated with modernism through the postmodern interest in art history. An attempt is being made here to reflect the meaning of art through the realisation of its history, which of course late modernism neglected by focusing exclusively on the work of art and its creator. It repressed questions of its reception through the arbitrary importance of the sign, and also towards the beneficiaries of cultural production. These questions realised the importance of the work, the location in which it was encountered, and also "the social nature of artistic production and reception"(Cornell,1987,page 208). To some extent they challenged the independence of painting. These resolutions deal with the frame, something Mariani does not question within his work. In some ways he conforms to Barthe's modernist solutions towards the disappearance of

20

the author, he stated that, this empty space should be replaced by the viewer "who is responsible for the meaning of the work"(Buchloh,1987,page 208) and also that "a texts unity"...."lies not in its origin but in its destination"(Buchloh,1987,page 208). His second proposal was that language which is composed of codes and conventions, makes up "literary and artistic production"(Buchloh,1987,page 208). In other words, it was language and its constraints which spoke, and not the author. Neither of Barthe's models is sufficient to form a definitive break with modernist practice according to Benjamin Buchloh. Michel Foucault also observed that Barthe's proposals had worked to contain the likelihood of "genuine change"(Buchloh,1987,page 208). However, Mariani's work seems to reside in Barthe's first principle. Jencks writes that again it is the viewer who supplies the possible interpretations which lead back to himself or herself, the implication of this statement is that Mariani's practice, which is termed postmodernist by Jencks, would appear to be modernist in its use of Barthe's theories. This could be seen as a further extension of modernism, through postmodernism.

Rose states that prior to Jencks 1986 text, *what is Post -Modernism?* the interest involved in placing modernism in a historical context was the fact that postmodernism could extend its aspects of modernism, and reflect upon it in ways that modernism could not. By using Mariani's, *The Hand Conforms to the Intellect* , in which a modernist vantage point, ie. self-reflection, is combined with the "language of classicism" and also the Greek story of the origination of painting.

21

Post modernism is presented by Jencks as being attached to modernism by double coding. This is justified by extending the modernist interest in self-reflection, which at best was vague, because of its lack of attachment to art history. Prior to this, Oliva's *Transavantgarde International* of 1992 had portrayed postmodernism as overpowering the modernist notion of progress. It supported the representation of the artist or architect as heroic figure. For, in a number of paintings, portions of this statement by Barthes can be seen to be under study especially in his portraits of contemporary artists from 1986/1987 including that of Gerhard Merz, Andy Warhol, Francesco Clemente, Julian Schnabel and Jasper Johns. Each candidate is depicted in Greek,Roman, or neoclassical style of dress. Further to this, there are specific elements in each painting which refer to aspects or aspirations of their particular practices, eg. Warhol is kitted out in the royal ermine and crimson costume of Napoleon, he also holds a guilded laurel wreath which symbolises the glory of the artist. Merz is exemplified by an overly scientific emblem, the snail shell, placed upon a background of saplings, reflecting Fibonacci and his discovery of the relationships between combinations and sequences of numbers within nature, and God's proximity to mathematics. All of his subjects here are artists that have received world status and are in positions of privilege and power, this power is added to by Mariani's further admiration of them. By depicting them as gods and heroes, he attempts to immortalize them, an award that art seems to credit its creators with. Hal Foster sees the neoconservative form of postmodernism as bringing about the "death of the subject"(Rose,1991,page 148) for it uses as what he describes as a "normless and uncritical form of pastiche"(Rose,1991,page 148)

22

which in turn brings about "the death of the subject"(Rose,1991,page149). This

pastiche, which loosely draws upon a neoclassical set of references is seen by

Foster as elitist, instead of its intentional audience which is both popular and

elitist. Whatever repercussions Barthe's text had on the "death of the author",

Jencks disagrees with the significance, although initially related to the idea of, the

death of the humanist subject and its associations with postmodern architecture.

Both themes can be seen as late modern. Jenck's stated that the "Death of The

author"(Rose,1991,page 149) tried to "overemphasize the role played by traditions

and to dissolve the synthesizing power of the individual"(Rose,1991,page 149). He

can be seen here as trying to return some value to the absent centre.

 Double coding according to Jenck's means "both elite/popular and

new/old"(Rose,1991,page76), painting has to make a definite break, according to

Jenck's, by not just relapsing into revivalism or traditionalism. Postmodern artists

on the other hand can use traditional techniques of narrative and representation, he

explains that postmodernists retain part of a modern sensibility some part that

distinguishes them not just sheer revivalist.

Jenck's theories can be read as alternative to the deconstructionist theories,

however an important point made by the deconstructionists is that even though

postmodernism points to problems created by an increasing modernisation of

culture in modernism, it still had not provided an alternative to modernism. Jurgen

Habermas believes that postmodernism tries to reject the project of modernity. The

distinctions of high and mass culture drew on the term postmodern, to define them

because the esotericism of high modern art was beginning to fuse with mass culture. It seems here that Habermas , suggests a break with modernism because of postmodernisms regection of the avant-garde.

Jencks noticed, during the years 1975-1976, the word postmodern began to appear more frequently. It was used to define literary criticism and was understood and equated with ultramodernism and also a "philosophy of nihilism and anti convention"(Rose,1991,page 101) Jencks used the term, however, in an opposite way. To counteract these proposals, his meanings were the termination of avantgarde extremism and a return to the possibility of making work that was in some way, communicable with public as opposed to its modernist counterpart, which failed to offer any such possibilities. The language which was chosen to reflect such a possibility had to include elements that were likely to be local, traditional, symbolic and could be applicable to architecture. Jencks stated that if work was made in order to communicate within culture, it should also have to include, not a break with modernism, but, a continuation of it. Some would see this as a compromise on postmodernism's behalf, and may, or may not be seen as a revision, a break, or a continuation of modernism.

We have seen to some extent the possibilities that postmodernism has contained. Jencks has pointed out that such a movement does not have to be antimodern as suggested by Frederick Jameson, and also that within such a structure as postmodernism there is a possibility of making or forming practices which are more communicable through the use of double coding and a return to

representation. These qualities are regarded by Charles Jencks as postmodern. This postmodernism relies upon concepts of pluralism. While such a proposition may seen altruistic, others would regard neoconservative forms of postmodernism as containing negative effects in its enthusiasm to portray itself as pluralistic. These negative repercussions will be examined in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

Hal Foster believes the political in contemporary art to be informed by changes in social formation and political theory. The implication here is a "new moment for modernism and mass culture"(Foster,1985,page 12), and a need for redefinition of the avant-garde, in forming a resistance more than a transgression within culture. In other words, does neoconservatism retreat from the political situation of its own time by placing a strong emphasis upon the appropriation of historical references and a return to representation?

Pluralism as defined by Foster is reliant on two factors: (i) the art market and (ii) the school or institution. Foster cites the term pluralism as not exactly defining any particular art, he states "we have cults instead of culture",(Foster,1985,page15) because of its non-specificity. Or at best it leads to "a new conformity, pluralism as an institution",(Foster,1985,page 15) this does not just happen in art but in politics. This, he claims, falls right into the free market which represents cultures and art as spectacle or entertainment. Foster points out that for pluralism to flourish, there is a need to diminish the accomplishments of the avant garde within modernism, and to retreat or regress to the use of myth and figuration in place of a progressive notion of the avant garde. This declaration or return empowers pluralism to a certain degree to gain credence by suggesting that everything else has failed. Foster sees neoconservative postmodernism as conventional. This has serious implications because it portrays art as non-political and non-historically specific to a certain period. When this happens such a practice, e.g. painting, becomes independent of meaning, for it portrays itself as neglecting the political present. Mariani's work does not seem
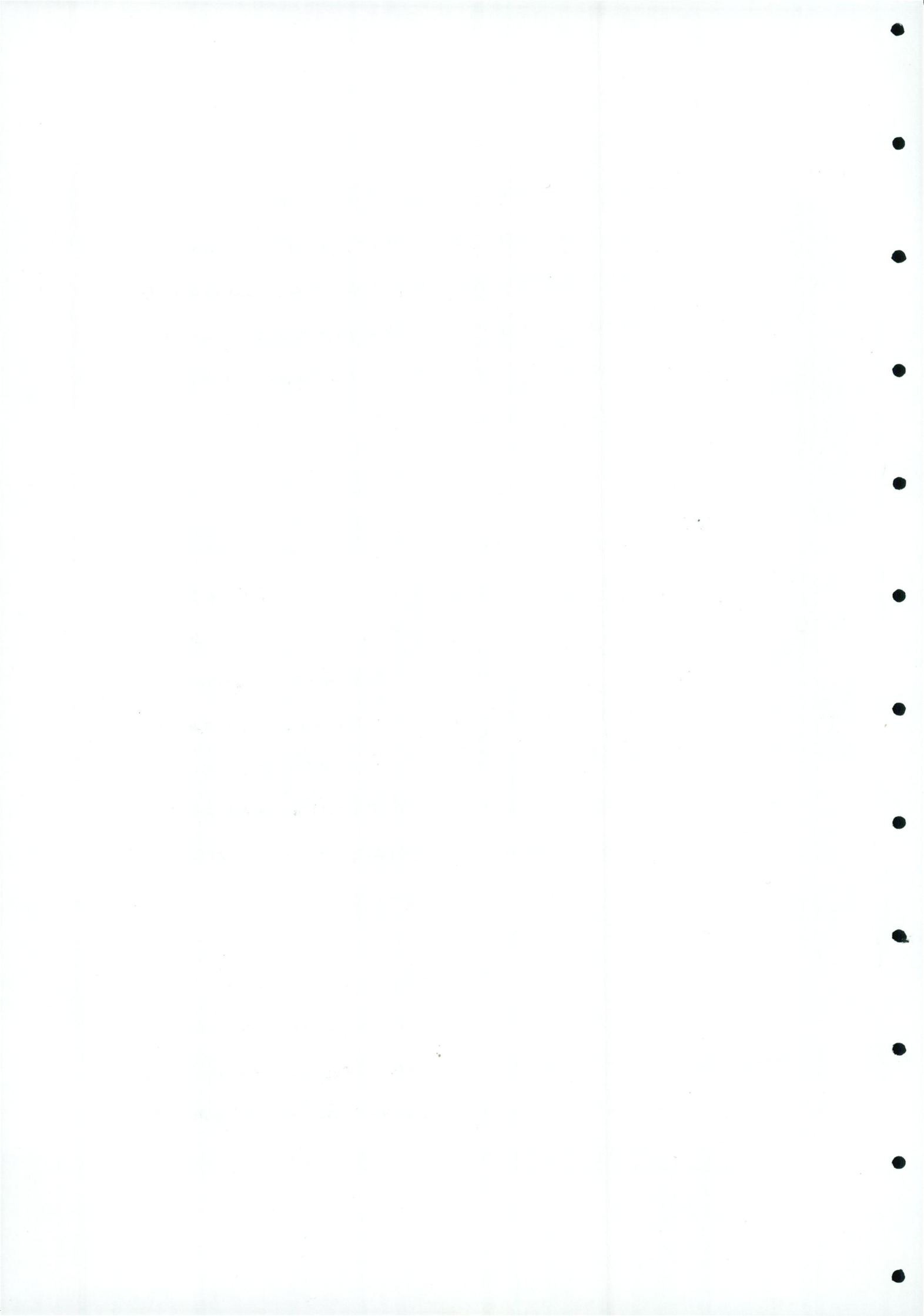
entirely out of context, as might be suggested by Foster, but it can appear as condoning aesthetic pleasure as false consciousness.

Foster states that art forms or styles are specific in relation to periods and their meanings are anything but relative. Does the appropriation of neo-classical imagery within Mariani's work appear out of context? However, Foster would conflict entirely with Mariani's use of such appropriation because of Mariani's closeness to both past and present. Foster would regard this as a "narcissistic enterprise"(Foster,1985,page,39) because of Mariani's use of historical representation to reflect the present.

It could be suggested that such a retreat to the appropriation of classical imagery, in fact could become a style or fashion. This can be seen in the illustrations provided (figs 7,8,9). These paintings were hung in the Louvre first of all and then went on a tour in 1998. This form of appropriation is explicit in its elevation of cultural icons from the fashion industry to the status of immortalisation of cultures patron class as suggested in chapter three. The solutions that style and fashion offers, particularly within a neoconservative structure, offer little realisation of true social or political mobility.

Pluralism offers the possibility of change while rejecting the notion of valid criticism. It does not challenge such conventions as 'original artist', and authentic masterworks which are symptomatic of the market place. Pluralism is without criteria of its own as suggested by Foster. He states that style is "that old bourgeois substitute for historical
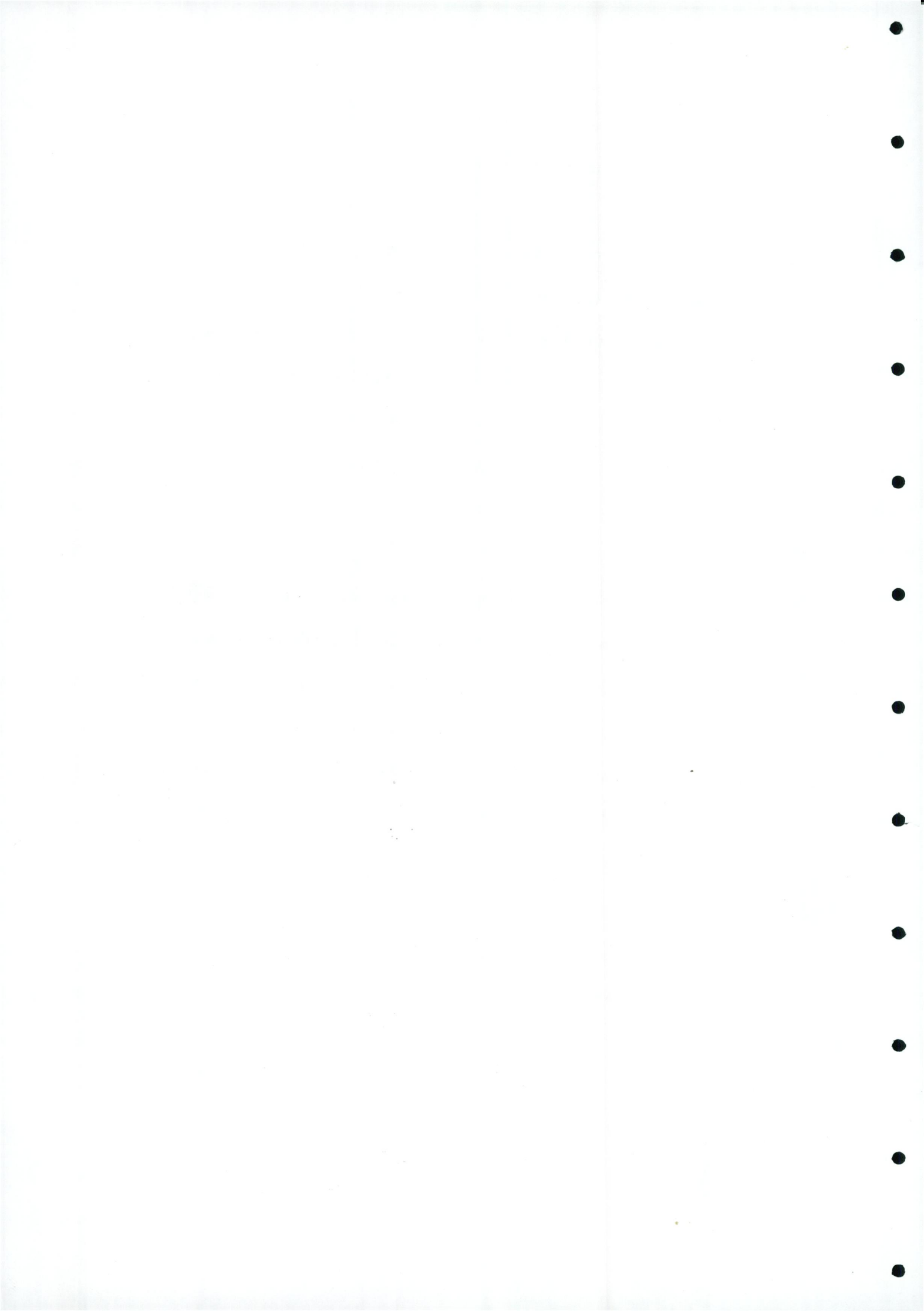
thought"(Foster,1985,page 17). Foster means by style, specifically the persona of the artist and the aura of the art work.

Foster writes that neoconservatism has to be aware of the present state of its "institutional antagonist"(Foster,1985,page19), and the tradition of its own anti aesthetic. Foster points out that Roland Barthes explores the condition of "cliched styles"(Foster,1985,page 20), and prescriptive codes as brought about by an improper analysis of such stylistic references. With a lack of such an analysis the result is that the past is cited solely for publicity, as suggested by the couturiers elevation through the use of classical appropriation as seen in (figs 7,8,9).

An important point here would be to realise that the avant garde assumed a posture closely related to political idealism, which did suppress these returns and references to past practices. This political idealism assumed and realised the conventionality of a practice (neoconservative), which openly selects historical styles and periods as its subject.

The pastiche in architecture, especially those forms which assume historical references contain certain assumptions, its compilation of historical forms, is said to be more communicable to a wider public, or egalitarian in outlook. Remember, Jencks explains his theories in conjunction with power-based structures, e.g. banks, hotels and libraries, all of which are surely symptomatic of late capitalism. The structures that are neglected are hospitals, public housing, factories, etc. If Jenck's theories are explained in terms of structures, which are more or less extensions of the late capitalist environment, then he describes art as being complicit with such
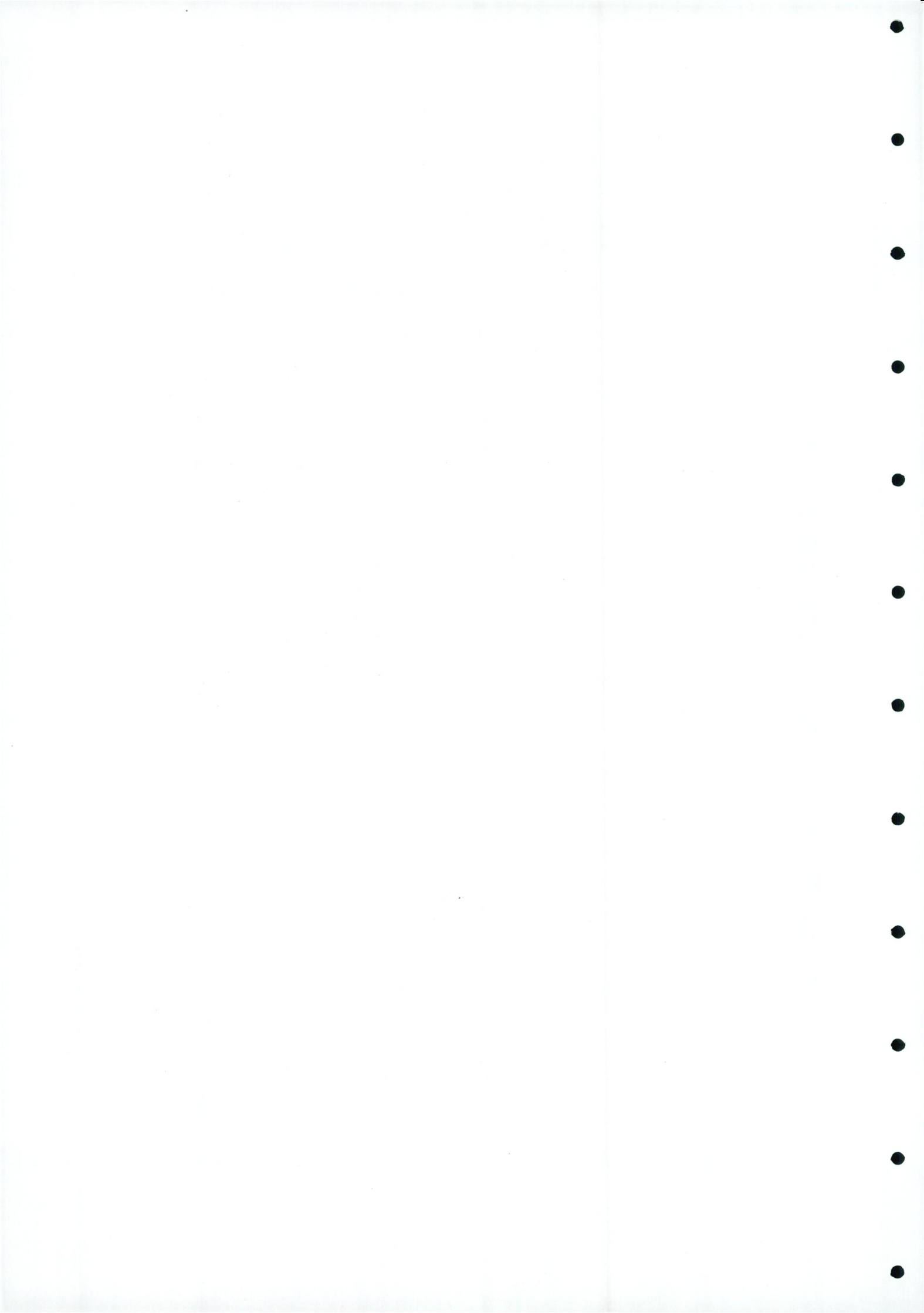
infrastructures. He has neglected the very marginalised public he wishs his

formulation of art and architecture to address through pluralism.

The question here does this rationale reflect popular opinion or is it used to justify a

pastiche, which is anything but popular and seems to be just a symptom of late

capitalism ? Foster states the classical often returns as pop, and art historical

reference as kitsch. Both pop and kitsch as we know are late modern forms. This

form of art or architecture offers little more than a realignment with the market. In

what way do such returns reflect a present political evaluation of culture? They, in

ways, offer a postmodernism which wishes to extend modernism, but on reflection

circumvents the very possibility.

The use of pastiche culminates in a procession of historical superiority that denies the

infiltration of styles seen as deviant or other. This appropriation of historical   styles

as seen through the eyes of the nation state, does prescribe to be the official and

definitive authority upon the subject.

The neoconservative condition, or position, has suggested that modernism has

corroded society, and that the only logical way forward is for categories such as

eclecticism and pastiche to be advanced in order to redress the lack of coherent or

communicable art practice which can be seen in certain styles and criticism within

cultural modernism. A typical aspect of neoconservatism or a strategy used, is to

disassociate modernism from culture and its economic structures. This confusion of

categories is important, in that economic and cultural elements of modernity are

related to modernism, particularly to any of the reactionary principles that were

inherent in modernism, e.g. autonomous art, forms of self referentality. A

postmodernism which can be seen to transgress any negative social effects is presented as a solution to this. It is advanced as containing pluralistic and communication abilities which were not associated with modernism. The discrepancies which occurred within modernism can be seen here to offer a recuperation with modernism, and to restore a sense of cultural synthesis through the use, or inclusion of historical forms within neoconservative postmodernism.

Modernism was against historicism, in that is sought to place it within its context. It could be seen to place or fix a proper meaning to envelop the present. This anxiety could be seen in the fabrication of modern architectural utopias. These infrastructures served both society in social planning and capitalist development. These utopias collapsed during late modernism; because of their inability to function properly they did not transform society. The deduction here is that architectural modernism was a failure because of its fragmentary effect on late capitalist urban life. Postmodernist architecture would be seen to offer a reconciliation to this form of architectural modernism, in the form of super structures, as opposed to the utopian monument equated with modernism. This postmodernism can be seen to offer up the image of the historical city (out of context), and to compromise treatment of the political in regard to society. The political is glossed over by the substitution of functional libraries and museums . The fact remains that urban renewal is offered up in place of the fragmentary nature of late capitalist urban life. The result within this framework is a return to eclectic historicism, which would wish to harness a return to history, through style and pastiche, elements which this neoconservative postmodernism presents as integral to its structure. What in fact do these elements represent? It can be assumed that pastiche is in fact such a significant factor of this postmodernism, that

it is its official style. However, pastiche can have negative effects on individual style, in that it extinguishes the possibility of a singular style elevated above others, or emphasises an individual's capabilities that are specific to a period, which enables it to be read historically. Hal Foster suggests that this eclecticism results in the implosion of style, or perhaps a culmination of style, and a collapse of history. This pastiche was utilised so that it would offer a greater coherence between art and the public. In essence, it would become pluralistic or communicate more effectivly with its users, but does this form of postmodernism instead offer an incoherence to fix any specific period or style to its own time? It is, perhaps, more suggestive of the collapse of the author's ability to fix meaning, as suggested by Roland Barthes. This is a theme specifically concerned with modernism and its emphasis upon meaning derived from the origin, the centre, the author. Instead, these forms of postmodernism relate more directly to the "Death Of The Author"(Foster,1996,page,50). An obvious example would be how this form of postmodernism fractured or splintered the subject, to the point where knowledge and authority are no longer autonomous. In postmodernism, an example would be the proximity of architecture to art, in its explanation or interdependence through double coding as proposed by Charles Jencks. Here, painting is specifically non-autonomous, for its understanding is portrayed through architecture, a related field, but different in structure.

The two postmodernisms differ but they assume automatically a fragmentation of history and the "dispersal of the subject". Both postmodernisms, however, differ in their oppositions to modernism, the neoconservative because it treats modernism as a cul de sac, as bound to itself with no prospect of continuation because of formalism. The post-structuralist position or opposition to modernism is brought about because of

its recuperation and assimilation by the museum. The two also differ in strategy, the neoconservative in its return to representation and style, and post-structuralism version is concerned with the ideology contained in such returns to representation within modernist systems, e.g. formalist innovation, itself a critique of representation.

Neoconservatism is read by post-structuralist theory, as not realising the full implications of a return to representation through style or history. Post-structuralism understands that style is not a sign of free expression, but is understood through cultural codes, and that history is not a given, but consists of narratives to construct. Further to this is the neoconservatives closeness to representation, while post-structuralism relies on criticism, and understanding of representation. It questions its viability through its derived meaning, therefore the two forms, neoconservative and post-structural, are both involved with representation. One form takes these historical styles for granted to be manipulated, without any understanding of context, the other form is a critique of representation itself. A similar model appeared beforehand in modernism, i.e. self-criticism. The connection between the two, is the status of the subject, its language of history and its representation. Both postmodernisms reflect one another. They are almost interdependent. These associations, or interdependencies, were first realised by Charles Baudelaire at the beginning of modernism, "the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable"(Foster,1996,page 88).

Clement Greenberg pledged to keep the "high quality of past art in current production"(Foster,1986,page 162).This was organised to entrench art more firmly, "in its area of competence". In order to keep culture moving, it resisted a debasement to

kitsch. This signalled a withdrawal from popular culture, and postmodernism at this time is posed against such an entrenchment, because of modernism's self referentiality and its official autonomy. Postmodernism's objective can be seen here to disentrench itself, through its non-bracketing of the referent. Separate areas of competence are assessed here, specifically those areas relating to decentring of the subject and also of "both artist and audience"(Foster,1986,page 171). Has architectural postmodernism or neoconservativism questioned or challenged its own representation within postmodernism? Foster states, "the sign fragmented, fetishised and exhibited is resolved in a signature look"(Foster,1986,page 131). Post-structuralism, on the other hand, tried to decentralise the masculine subject, for which such representation was intrinsic. The effort was also made to pluralise the social self, "to render cultural meanings ambiguous, indeterminate"(Foster,1986,page 131).

Both forms of postmodernism decentralise the subject, and representation is released from the constraints of modernism, as discussed earlier, and the sense of historical reference problematised in both forms. However, these practices form in some way a critique of representation and its fragmentation. So pastiche and textuality can be seen simultaneously to explain or reveal the fragmentation and collapse of the subject.

Conclusion

To conclude, perhaps a reflection upon Charles Baudelaire and his criticism; but is it as applicable to Mariani's work as Mariani's appropriation of neoclassical imagery to his present moment within history? In the Painter of Modern Life, Baudelaire suggests that it is the painter's responsibility to "distil the eternal from the transitory"(Mayne,1964,page 23). This, as he points out, is the object of successful art, a proper reflection upon modernity, brought about by Baudelaire's assessment of the state of art in his time, and the reliance upon using furnishing and costumes of the Renaissance, in which to render their subjects aesthetically. This presented itself as a dichotomy to Baudelaire. Why should such a practice take place? Their subjects, after all, were explicitly modern, not from earlier times, e.g. the middle ages. Baudelaire entertained the notion of an accurate assessment of the present, in other words an emphasis on modernity, a word which carried great importance for him. He poignantly describes it, "I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable"(Mayne,1964,page 24).

Baudelaire considers, and reflects upon, the possibility of discovering what it is that makes an accurate depiction of the modern difficult. Mariani's depictions of his peers within his painting *The School of Rome* after all, could be seen to represent the same concerns of the painters that Baudelaire uses to construct his argument. Mariani, however, does depict an accurate reflection of his subjects, as fractured or confused, in relation to a proper understanding of their identity within postmodernism. Baudelaire further suggests the probability of representing an inaccurate translation of that present moment through such forms of representation. He believes that the
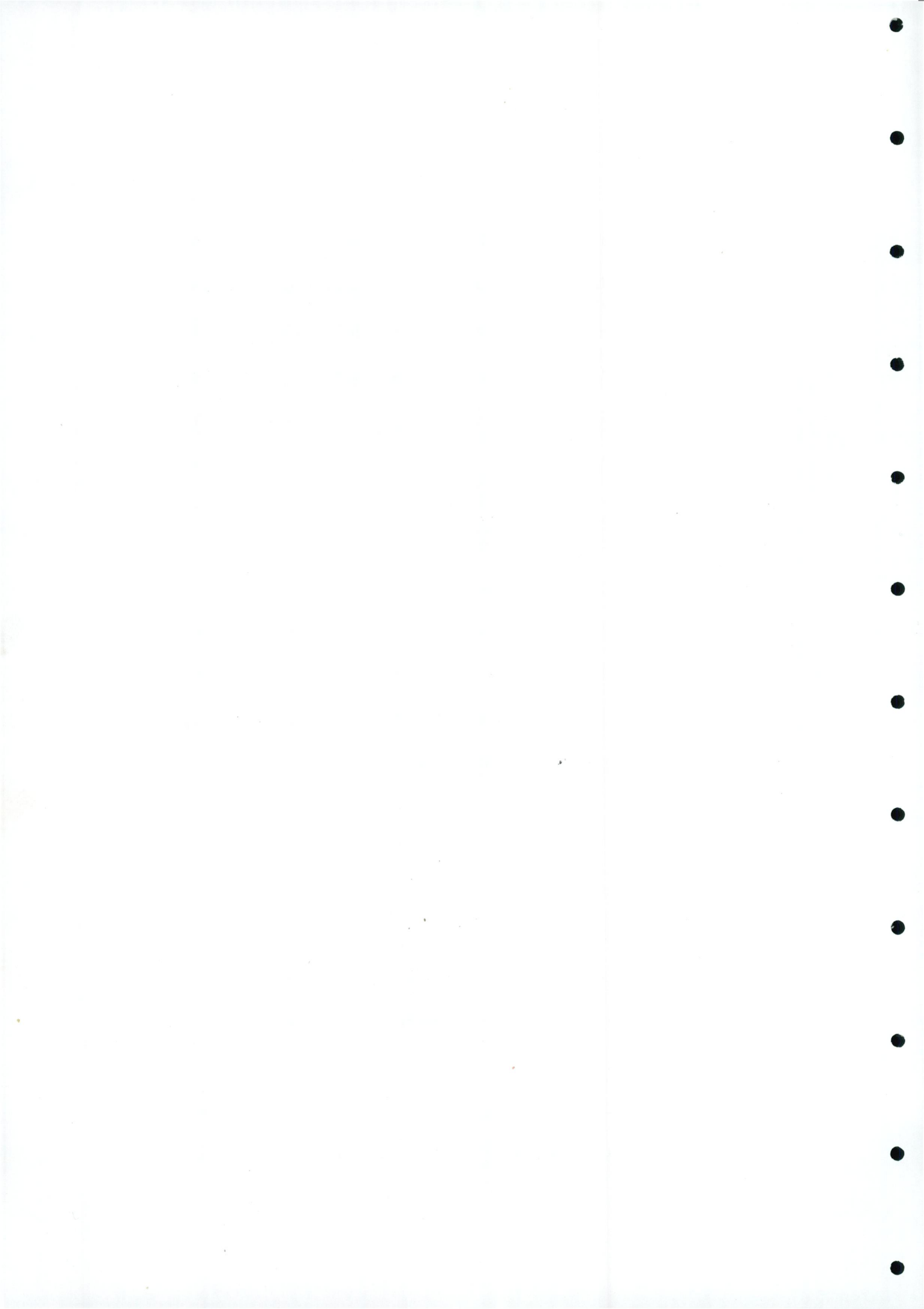
accomplishment of the old masters definitely should be appraised, but here the exercise stops if the painter's desire is to render that "special nature of present day beauty"(Mayne,1964,page24) which Carlo Maria Mariani and his practice, through painting, is specifically bound.

Whatever the intentions of pastiche and its use with architectural postmodernism, the instrumental fabrication of such structures reveals not so much what architecture could, or should be in relation to its designated public, but instead a form of compromise between its capitalist-based dynamic, and its public. Pastiche here works like a shield, It protects its architectural facade by charging it with pluralistic concepts that rationalise its erection, not through its political understanding or motivation, but through its aesthetic accomplishment. This form of speculation seems to be partially neglected in a proper understanding and consideration of architectural practice. If this is the case, what prospect or rationale is there for an art form, like painting, to be explained through such a structure as postmodernist architecture? Does it, itself, consider its own capitalist base and manipulation in cultural industry? Surely concepts of pluralism, especially when understood through painting, and its potential to render works of art more communicable, is admirable. However, this was never the only constraint with which such neoconservative forms had to engage .

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Fig 1.

Fig 2.

Fig 3.
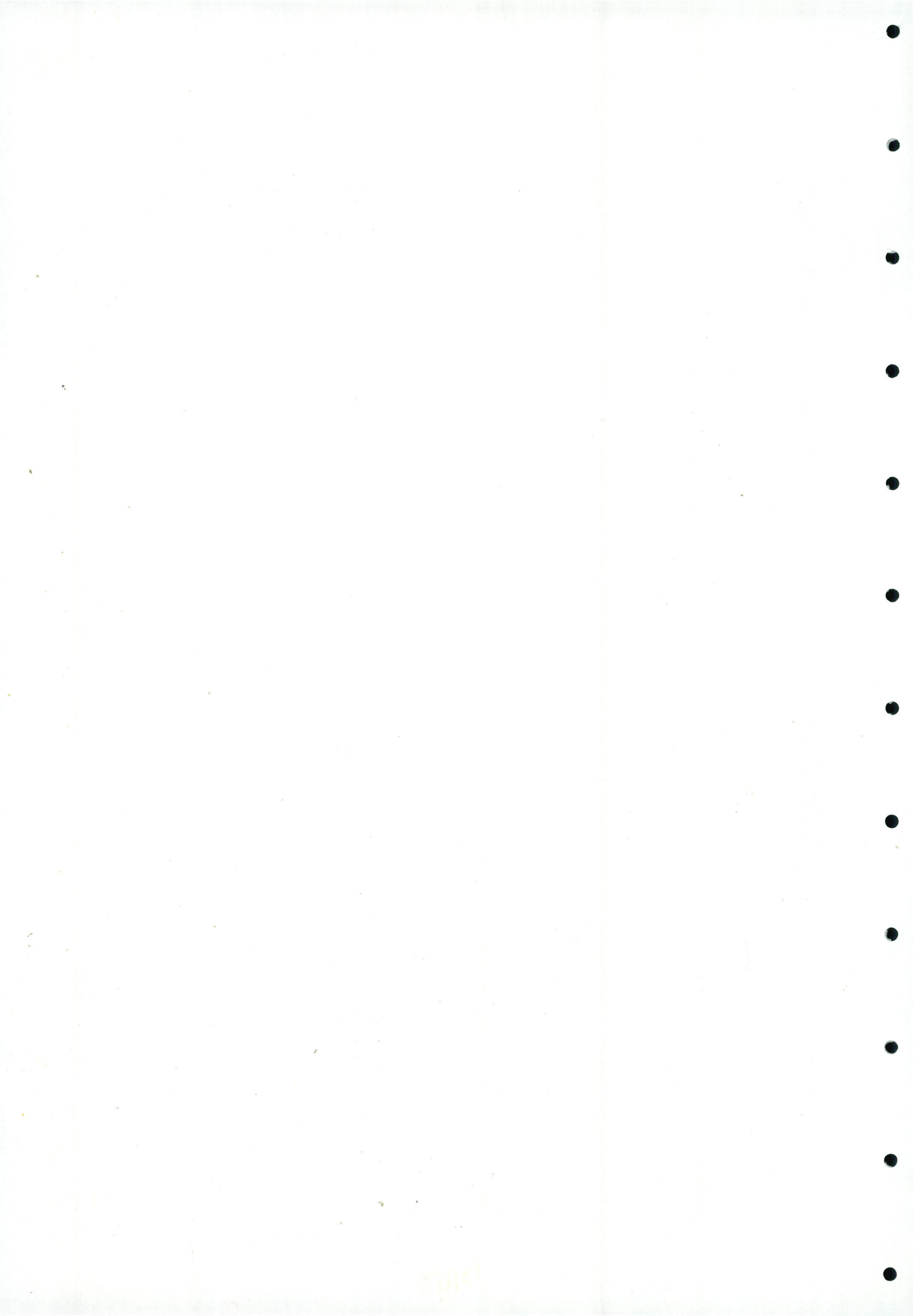
Fig 4.

Fig 6.
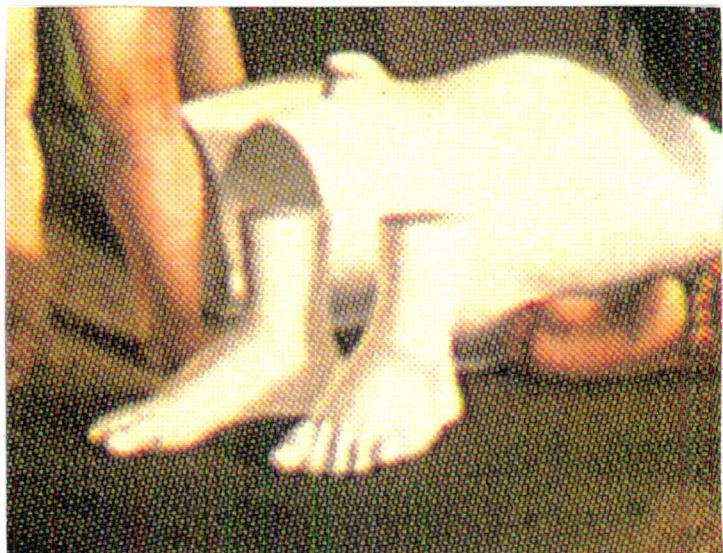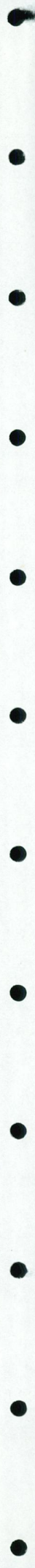

Fig 5.

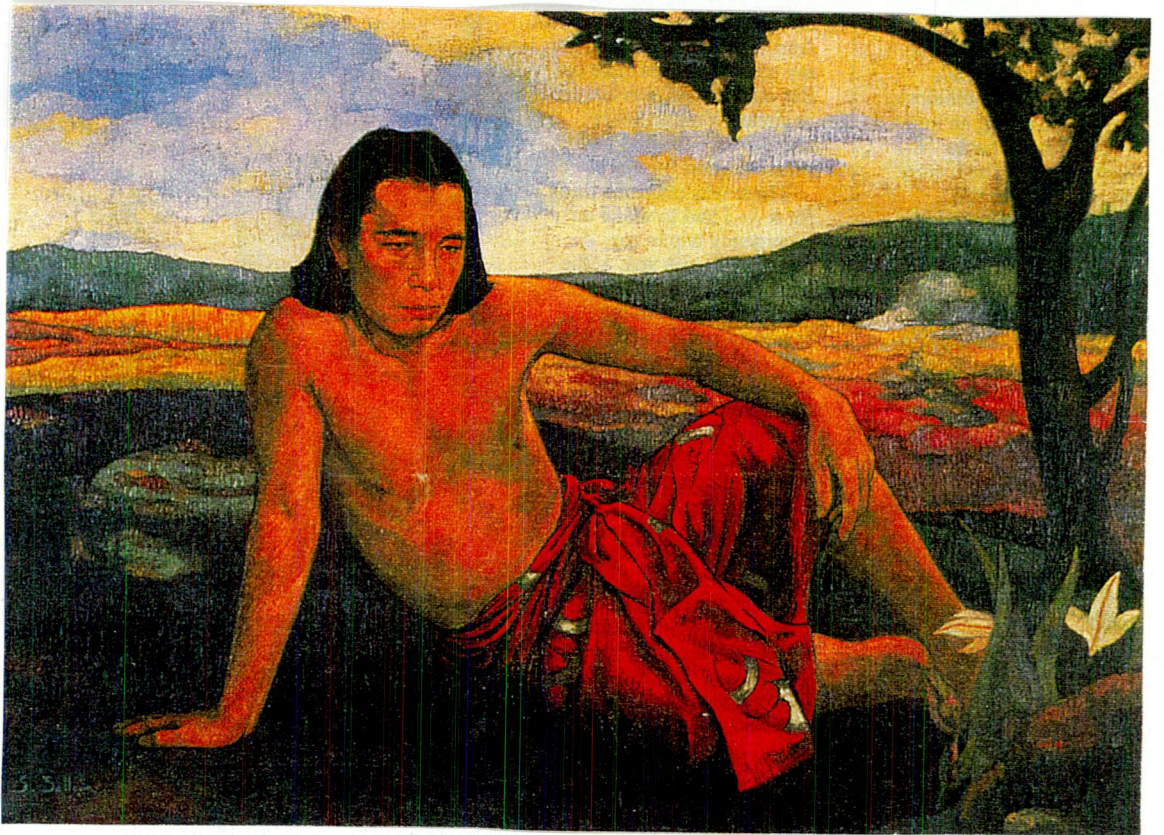Rising star: Jean Paul Gaultier, above, after Botticelli's Birth of Venus, right

Fig 7.

Fig 8.

Seminaked ambition: popular couturier Kenzo, above, d'après Paul Gauguin, left

Fig 9.

Paint it black: Paco Rabanne, right, in the style of Diego Velazquez, above