T 52

RELIGION AND ART

THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to understand art in its relation to religion. It is therefore a history, an exploration and a compendium of facts.

As a history it concentrates for the most part on European art and leaves out the art of such peoples as the Aztecs, Mixtecs, Zapotecs and Mayas while avoiding any thorough analysis of Chinese art. All that would have been beyond my scope. Likewise although I go back as far as I can I finish up at Cezanne because at that point I realised that there was nothing to be gained by picking through the modern movements for either evidence of a religious element in the sense ~~for~~ of a belief in God or of evidence of a pantheism or an extension of the mysticism of Cezanne. It is enough for me to have established to my own satisfaction that God these days is a private pursuit of the artist.

As an exploration it has brought to my attention information that throws light on the origin and purpose of art and its association with philosophy and religion. At its most dominant, religion has had a crucial effect on art as we see in Islamic and Byzantine and art is better off to have been freed from this sort of authoritarianism. And yet the paradoxical thing is that when we think of religious art at its purest and most moving we think of Byzantium or Islam or early Christian. Perhaps there is a nostalgia in this for the old days when all our answers were cut and dried and we had only to follow the doctrines of our faith like everybody else. The fact that this thesis is an exploration also explains its general character and unavoidable length. It was not possible for me to let go anything I had begun to investigate without having extracted from it whatever titbits of information I deemed to be interesting in themselves or useful for future reference.

And indeed although the nature of the work is exploratory its essence is pure fact or as pure as I have been able to keep it while keeping my sense of humour in check. Now I realised from the start that it would have been impossible for me in a work of this breadth to take all the facts of the various religions and creeds and try to knit them into a general history of art. Instead I have set out all the religious ideas-systems at the beginning of the work and used them as a frame of reference to which I could refer later on. The result may not be more readable but it is from my own point of view more successful. Lastly the hidden theme of the thesis is the emergence of the Self into art; and if I have started in

the prehistoric age with the great migrations of primitive tribes it is only to arrive at Van Gogh trekking Gauguin through the streets of Arles with an open razor in his hand.

Typing errors alas proliferate and I can only hope they do not infuriate the reader as much as they infuriate me. The Medium, as they say, is The Mess - Age.

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RELIGION

Archaeological evidence shows that before the agricultural settlement communities in Egypt and Mesopotamia man lived entirely by hunting. His existence was very precarious and his religion had as its core fertility rites, hunting magic and magic born of his concern with life after death. Given the lack of evidence it is an open question whether or not other elements subsisted such as a belief in reincarnation which in India goes back to prehistoric times or a belief in some sort of Creator-God. We do not even know if there existed some form of shared myth that may have helped bind the tribe together. At any rate, the remains of ritual burials some ten thousand years old indicate a strong belief in the afterlife.

After some two million years of hunting the change to food production was decisive. The accumulation of grain and other basic necessities spelt the end of the tribal group with its respected chief. The farmer spread his dominions over the hunting territory of the old tribes and with the help of hungry brigands established his sway and laid the first foundations of the city-state. Fortified settlements like Jericho appeared in Turkey and Mesopotamia before 6,000 B.C. The hierarchical settlement became the pattern for Africa, Asia and later America. The ruling class was made up of the ruler and his warriors and the scribes who constituted the corporation. The scribes were also astrologers and priests. Below these were the farmers craftsmen and slaves. The fortified farming village was soon to grow into the urban state with its brick built houses streets and temple or ziggurat. All this had taken place by about 3,000 B.C. In fact, civilization can be said to have begun early in the fourth millennium with the invention of writing by the Mesopotamians. Their laws and codes written in cuneiform on the stone tablets of Sumer, Babylonia and Assyria has revealed much about the changes that resulted from the urban revolution. It is seen, for example, that magic had still a strong grip on the community. To understand this it is first of all necessary to take a look at primitive customs and beliefs.

It was Immanuel Kant who saw in the doctrines and beliefs of religion an answer to the question - What can I hope? This highlights a facet of primitive religions which might tend to be underestimated - the practical aspect. Mankinds first problem after all was survival in a hostile world. The

cave paintings at Lascaux and Altamira show the evocation of magic as an aid in the pursuit of game. Besides bison and deer depicted there is most significant of all a shaman with owl eyes wolf ears, antlers, paws and a horse tail. This indicates the relative sophistication of very primitve society. In fact from the evidence of pebble-art and tool-carving, necklaces, beads, and pendants carved from bone and ivory, there is revealed a continuous preoccupation with art for arts sake. They also show that the origin of figurative art lay in imitation. The disguise of the shaman seems to have been made up of the actual remains of the animals he hunted and his dance was intended to show his power over his quarry. The dance too was thought to confer even greater power over the coveted animal. Yellow, black and red crayons have been found indicating a widespread practise of body decoration. Red indeed seems to have been of particular significance. Its association with blood and fire may explain why red ochre as well as being used in mural paintings was also strewn over graves. It seems to have been accredited with life giving properties. Equally important are the Stone Age Venuses of ivory and stone that have been found in an area that includes France, Italy and southern Russia. They are most prevalent in Austria and Czechoslovakia. They were connected with fertility rites and were no doubt forerunners of the oculus goddess of the Aegean and the middle east. The role of the male in the reproductive process seems to have been ignored or misunderstood. Nevertheless from the quality of the paintings and other artefacts notably the statuettes and engravings it is clear that ancient man had a profound knowledge of the visible world as well as a deep identification with it. He also had a highly developed aesthetic sense and a sense of the awesome and the sacred.

In various parts of the world there are peoples whose level of social development may roughly be classed as Stone Age. They live mainly by hunting and food gathering, a way of life that was antecedent to the settled agricultural communities of the fourth millennium B.C. Examples are the Australian Aborigines, the Ainu of Japan, the Congo pygmies and the Hottentots of South Africa. The North American Indians and the Zulus and the natives of the Pacific Islands have a more developed way of life. Nevertheless similarities in their beliefs throw some light on the answers that first sprang into the mind of man when confronted by the problems forced on him by the nature of existence. These problems could be summarised as - Why do we have to die? What can we do about it? and What happens to us afterwards?

Tribal peoples for example believe they are surrounded by

invisible powers. These range from Mana the unseen spirit that pervades all, especially the accidental and the uncanny, to Gods and demons. The idea of Mana (A Melanesian word) has close links with three aspects of the primitive outlook.

Firstly Mana is an aspect of belief in magic - the conviction that certain words and actions can give a man control over the powers that be. Objects endowed with Mana such as amulets and works of art can be used to cure make fertile or destroy. The latter use is considered taboo by most tribes. Magic and its practise are considered to be for the benefit of the tribe and in times of war for its defence.

Secondly the awe that is aroused by Mana is closely related to the experience of the numinous - an awareness of divine presence. Through this experience a man can get in touch with the unseen forces in and around the world. Where these forces are differentiated and named they are worshipped as Gods.

Thirdly, Mana reinforces social custom and respect. Chiefs and magicians and in some instances artists are considered hosts to Mana and therefore sacred.

The sacred therefore is very real for the primitive much moreso than it is for us. It permeates his whole life and is woven into the very structure of his day to day existence. One example of this fact is Totemism. Among the Australian Aborigines for instance different clans ally themselves with various plants and animals which they are forbidden to eat except on ritual occasions. This has the effect of protecting the species and promoting its fertility. Totemism shows how ritual custom and the organization of the food supply are co-ordinated in primitive societies and it is an example of the complex connections between the sacred and the secular.

These primitive beliefs have elements in common with the worlds major religions. The sense of the numinous for example is common as is the concept of sacrifice and more important the idea that moral rules spring from forces superordinate to the community. This being the case scholars have attempted to establish an evolutionary development in mans religious consciousness from the earliest belief in Mana to a cult of spirits or animism, to polytheism and finally monotheism. This may or may not be true but what is certain is that mans beliefs have become centred away from magic and polytheism and towards several world-views in which the quality of the sacred has become identified with either a Personal God as in Christianity, an Absolute as in Hinduism and Buddhism or mankind himself

as in Humanism. Why men should have a sense of the sacred at all is one that threatens to remain unanswered. The primitive need however to ~~answ~~ deal with the vast ontological problems of life by myth ritual and magic goes far to explain the rise and fall of ancient civilizations.

The first of these and in many ways the most spectacular is the Egyptian. When Upper and Lower Egypt were united under the ruler Menes about 32000 B.C. the pattern of society was established for the next three thousand years. Three important features emerged in their religion. first was an elaborate cult of the dead. Secondly their myths and rituals gave preeminence to their pharaohs as sons or incarnations of the gods. Thirdly the sun-god became predominant largely because it is the sun that rules life in the valley and delta of the Nile. The kingship as well as being the centre of the complex was the intermediary between heaven and earth.

Because the religion was sun-centred it already had in embryo a genuine monotheism. The falcon-god Horus assumed the attributes of a solar deity and eventually became son of Re another version of the sun-god. Re in turn was identified with Atum the Egyptian Zeus creator of the gods. Both AmenhotepIV and Ikhnaton ~~be~~ tried unsuccessfully to establish the worship of a single god Aton, symbolized by the solar disk. It was the priests who raised the strongest opposition to Aton because the old tradition was that the cosmic order depended on the pharaoh and the priestly cult of Amon-Re.

The pyramids are evidence of the enormity of the life-and-death cult of the king. The process of mummification was so expensive that it wasn't until the second millennium B.C. that the ordinary corpse could afford it. The cult was the key to social order and fertility in a society that depended entirely on organized agriculture. The pharaohs immortality became connected with the cult of Osiris, god of vegetation, who had power over the seasonal cycle of the harvests. Since mummification implied continuing existence in this world Osiris came to be thought of as ruler of the dead in another realm. Although it was necessary therefore to distinguish between body and soul the Egyptians could not conceive of an afterlife without a soul that was in some way vivified. The individual disembodied ego therefore came to known as the ka and the animating principle the ba. In a ceremony known as Opening Of the Mouth the life-soul was breathed back into the body. This commemorated the myth that Osiris after the god Seth had killed and dismembered him was brought back to life in the same way by Horus

his son. Thus the ~~brat~~ breathing ceremony served to unite ba and ka on the other side. It is to be noted here that the idea of spirit as wind or anima is a very ancient one probably because the wind is the nearest equivalent of a mysterious invisible moving or animating power.

Egyptian mythology in general is exceedingly complex due largely to the additions and variations of centres such as Thebes, Memphis and Heliopolis. In the end, however, the annexations of Egypt by the Persians in the sixth century B.C. by Alexander the Great 322B.C. and ~~in~~ by the Romans in the first century B.C. destroyed the social order that sustained the Egyptian religion.

The religion ~~b~~ of the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates known as Mesopotamia began among the Sumerians. However the Semitic influence of northern Mesopotamia was so strong in the south that when the Semites eventually penetrated Sumer in the middle of the third millennium B.C the effect on religious tradition was relatively small.

Three gods dominated the Sumerian pantheon: Anu, the sky-god Enlil the wind-god and Enki or Ea the water-god. These ruled the three divisions of the cosmos. Enlil executive of Anu had the greatest influence in human affairs. As with Egypt so in Mesopotamia each city had a principle god and subsidiary ones or evil spirits serving to torment the dead neglected by their descendants. There are nevertheless fundamental differences between the two religions. In Mesapotamia the king was not the One incarnate but merely the surrogate nominated by him. Also there was no heaven -only a sort of limbo of darkness where the dead were doomed to go hungry unless the living brought them offerings. The Egyptians could not only animate the dead by breathing the name but likewise all their earthly belongings depicted in the burial chamber.

This was enough to create a profound schism between the two races. Whereas the Egyptian could feel sure and unafraid of the future especially with the pharaoh watching over him the Mesopotamian had little to look forward too.

Every year at the spring festival in Babylon priests and people re-enacted the creation myth in which Marduk overcomes the chaos - dragon Tiamat and becomes king of the gods thereby usurping Enlil. From clay and the blood of Tiamat he creates man. As with Osiris Marduk symbolized the renewal of nature in the spring and the myth of death and the resurrection. Other myths

especially those of Adapa and Gilgamesh both of whom forfeit immortality helped reconcile the Mesopotamians to a bodily death and an afterlife that was merely an extension of life on earth with none of its advantages.

When the Persians captured Babylon in A.D. 539 the old religion passed into history. One assumes it didn't put up much of a struggle.

Two major figures dominate the early religions of the Eastern Mediterranean and ancient Western Asia - the mother-goddess who was connected with fertility rites and the sky god. A sky god was the forerunner to the Egyptian sun-god. In the Sumerian pantheon Anu and Enlil were both sky gods of a kind. Yahweh the patriarchal god of the Jews had attributes of the sky god. He descends from his cleestial abode to encounter his chosen ones and to present his laws to Moses on the holy mountain amid thunder and smoke.

The rôles of the mother-goddess were diverse and her forms many. As the well spring of new life she is associated with the agricultural cycle and wild life. Symbolically her son or spouse undergoes death and resurrection - Ishtar and Tammuz in Mesopotamia for instance and Isis and Osiris in Egypt. Artemis in one of her roles was patroness of wild beasts. As mistress of the underworld she is prominent in the cult of the dead. In her cults of Cybele, Bellona, Demeter and Isis she had a profound influence in the Western Asian and Graeco-Roman world.

The worship of Zeus as god of thunder and lightning began in Crete and later spread throughout Greece. As father of gods and men and origin of the moral order he was chief god of the Olympic pantheon. However around the second millennium B.C. the religion of Crete and Mycenae was centred around the mother-goddess. Then about IIOO B.C. the cult was supplanted by the Dorians who came from central Greece bringing with them their myths of Zeus and Olympus. By the time of Homer (ninth century B.C.) the form Greek religion was to hold for six centuries was firmly established.

The Greeks themselves had a unique relationship with their gods. They never thought of Zeus as creator but rather as ruler and one even whose supremacy was qualified by the fact that other gods were autonomous and independent. Most notable among them were - Apollo who governed music medecine the care of animals and the Delphic oracle - Hera, Zeus's consort and guardian of marriage - Poseidon, god of the sea and bringer of earthquakes - Athene, patroness of Athens and the arts - Aphrodite, goddess of love - and Dionysus

vegetation deity and later focus of ecstatic cults. Athene and Aphrodite were probably survivals of the mother-goddess cult.

The cult of the hero or the patron deity of the city promoted the concept of the state as an extension of the family unit. Public worship was regulated by the community rather than by a priestly caste. As religion grew formal and dignified the numerous festivals - as many as 70 a year in Athens - became occasions for official acts. These civic ceremonies however did not satisfy everyone and constitutes one reason why the ecstatic cults such as orphism and the mysteries of Eleusis took hold. Later on the general realisation that the gods reflected the attributes not altogether virtuous of the ruling aristocracy meant a loss of credibility for the pantheon which, in the classical age, was to come under the critical scrutiny of the philosophers notably Plato. By the end of the fourth century B.C. the influence of the old religion on the educated Greek was on the wane. Its place was taken by the mystery cults that offered personal involvement and excitement and the logical creeds of the philosophers. The process became more marked with the conquest of Greece by the young Alexander the Great, and Stoicism and Epicureanism came to have a strong appeal. These philosophies were concomitant to the psychological fragmentation of the state where citizens no longer sought fulfilment in engaging in the affairs of the polis but in pursuing his own separate ends with his own separate values. Epicurus, in brief, preached the avoidance of conflict and the goodness of pleasure. To achieve this one must 'drop out' and live a private life from which all extraneous influence was barred. To answer the ever present problems of death and the after life Epicurus, the atomist, suggested that such fears as they brought with them were irrational. The tiny particles that constituted the body and held it together also constituted the soul so that when one disintegrated the other went with it into nothingness. Aristotle held a similar view. Death therefore could not be experienced because there would be nothing left to experience it with. The theory in essence is looked on as a theory of decadence since its avowal leads necessarily to the destruction of the state. Socrates was condemned to death for less.

The Stoic system dominant in Hellenistic times (from the fourth to the first century B.C.) gives a strictly materialistic account of creation. However it was relevant to the new emerging ~~socail~~ social order and later to that of

Imperial Rome. Its founder was Zeno the Cypriot (320 - 250 B.C.) who taught under the stoa or porch in Athens. His doctrine owes much to Socrates and Heraclitus who held that all is flux. Zeno held that the world is pervaded by God. He constituted all things including the deities. Each man had his share of him in the form of reason or soul. At death his reason returned to the general collectivity of reason that is God. To live in harmony with the macrocosm it was necessary to use ones reason and the Stoics were very practically minded. All men as possessors of reason were brothers and were to be respected as such. The way of life was the middle way of moderation in all things and adversity was to be faced with detachment or equanimity. The creed's strong socialist element explains its popularity and it was embraced throughout the Greek speaking world and later the Roman Empire. It is near certain that Jesus of Nazareth was acquainted with it and made it part of his teaching.

Although in the end the Olympic gods failed to have much significance for the educated Greek the anthropomorphism of Homer's myths gave inspiration to Greek art and gave rise in the age of Pericles to works of unequalled splendour in sculpture and architecture.

The Latin tribes of the ~~ewst~~ west coast of Italy believed in a great many impersonal spirits and numina. They used many magical rites to ward off their malevolent intentions and to promote their good ones. With the growth of Rome in the sixth century B.C. these forces became differentiated into gods and a polytheism was established. The chief of them was the sky-god Jupiter attended on by Mars originally a god of vegetation now a god of war. Jupiter's consort Juno looked after the affairs of women; and Minerva, of Etruscan origin sponsored arts and crafts and was also the female counterpart of Mars. In Rome itself the arts of divination prospered and no major enterprise was undertaken without first consulting bird-cries, lightning, dreams, animal-entrails, oracles and so on. They also had priests who were entrusted with this task while in the rural regions the old animistic cults still flourished.

By the end of the third century B.C. another influence came into play. The Romans conquered southern Italy where the Greeks had colonies and thereby assimilated the Greek pantheon. Jupiter became equated with Zeus, Poseidon with Neptune, Hermes with Mercury and so on. Julius Caesar, when

conquering Gaul found no difficulty in equating the Celtic gods with his own.

The Romans at this time cultivated two main trends in their character - religio, the awe experienced in the presence of the numinous - and pietas the dutifulness that should be shown to gods and state. They emphasised the rituals and forms of worship because these helped to tie family and state together. It wasn't until the first century B.C. that Greek speculative thinking made its impact on the Romans. When it did it was to Stoicism they looked because it squared fairly well with their own pietas. Furthermore, they could employ it while being engaged in the affairs of state the res publici and not out of them.

Nevertheless, as time went on other influences came there way. First to make their mark in the second and first centuries B.C. were the cults of the Phrygian goddess Cybele, the Great Mother or Magna Mater and of the Cappadocian goddess Ma (who came to be identified with Bellona). The cults of Mithras and Isis also became widespread. The Roman religion more or less followed the Greek pattern culminating in a loss of credibility and a widespread trend towards occultism where the individual could feel personally involved. The old religion was finally displaced by Christianity which became the official faith in the fourth century A.D.

The cult of Mithras with that of Isis proved an important rival to Christianity in the old world. Mithraism was we confined to men while Isis was worshipped by both sexes.

Mithra was the eye of Ahura Mazda the good principle that rules the cosmos. Thus he was a sun-god. He brought victory in the struggle between good and evil partly through the sacrifice of a bull, the first creature that Ahura Mazda created. Through the death of the bull nature is made fertile. Here again is the theme of death and resurrection with the singular and important exception that the god himself does not die. Roman beliefs had become accustomed to the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul. As sol invictus Mithras symbolized the courage and confidence of the hardened soldier and this explains its popularity which grew somewhat when Roman emperors, adopting the title invictus, patronized the cult in the second century A.D. The myth is in fact Persian and contains elements of Zoroaster's creed of a renewal of the dead at the Last JUdgment and a punishment of the evil which

were incorporated into Christianity.

The initiate to the rite was first baptized in the blood of the sacrificed bull and then given the sacramental meal of bread and wine which were to give him the strength and will to fight for the good. The cult inspired the Roman legions with a bond of brotherhood.

Isis was part of a triad that included Osiris her brother and Horus her son. Later she assumed central importance largely because she was a mother-goddess with whom the other goddesses could be identified. Osiris was judge of the dead while his sister was the shining saviour of the living and symbol of the Egyptian solar disk. Out of darkness meaning ignorance and bestiality the initiate was led into divine illumination and an assurance of immortal blessedness. The moral summons in the myth is to subdue ones animal nature if one wishes for enlightenment. The mystery-religion is described in The Golden Ass by Lucius Apuleius (second century A.D.). Pompeii was one of the centres for this cult which was particularly popular among women. It spread throughout the Hellenistic world and was officially recognised by Caligula (37-41A.D).

Thus we come to the great religions of Asia and the move away from polytheism. Among the Jews monotheism emerged decisively and the teaching of the prophets formed the foundation on which both Christianity and Islam were built. In India the Upanishads were composed which reflected the teaching of the Vedic Hymns and propounded the doctrine of reincarnation so planting the seeds of Hinduism. All this happened between 800 and 500 B.C.

The Upanishads (secret knowledge) were written mainly to clarify the inner meaning of sacrifice. They centred on the idea of Brahman the sacred power within the sacrificial act.

Brahman was thought of as the power that sustained the universe. On the other hand the Atman or soul became also to be identified with Brahman. The Atman was doomed to eternal reincarnation unless an inner experience of the soul brought freedom from the cycle. This was the urgent summons to everyone and remains so to this day. The soul thus liberated returns into Brahman. In short the Upanishads stated that the meaning of the sacrifice is to be found in the oneness of the power that sustains the universe and the self. Thus the teaching was monistic. The contradictions between books like the Chandogya and the Katha however are problematic for the Hindu since he is left with a choice either to believe in an Impersonal Absolute or a Personal God or even a host of eternal

souls. However each believes in the truth of the original Vedic revelation irrespective of the differences in religious and caste duties.

The period that followed the composition of the classical Upanishads saw the growth of cults surrounding two major gods - Shiva and Vishnu. These came to be seen as different aspects of Brahma. While Brahma creates, Vishnu preserves, and Shiva destroys. The greatest expression of the cult of Vishnu is the Bhagavad-Gita (Song of the Lord). Written three centuries before Jesus it forms one book of the vast epic poem Mahabharata. Arjuna, the hero warrior, wishes to know the way out of the cycle of rebirth and Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu, comes disguised as his charioteer to tell him that it is possible only through faith and service to the Lord.

Shankara the great religious mystic of the eighth century taught that spiritual liberation was achieved through realisation of oneness with the Absolute. The illusion of duality between ourselves and the world and Brahman was the root of our ignorance. The universe from the point of view of mystical insight is a total illusion. However doomed as we are to eek out our karmas at lower levels of consciousness we can feel free to take the world as experientially valid and conduct our lives in it accordingly. In this way Shankara endorsed the value of the complex rituals and forms of worship the Hindu faith is comprised of. He stressed however that one must pass beyond this faith to an ever higher level. It is perhaps for this reason that organised Hinduism has never felt the need or desire to reject the varied cults of gods and spirits of popular worship. Furthermore, the Hindus, fully aware of their plight argue that the Christian belief of an imminent and transcendental God which is also common to Judaism and Islam is not inconsistent with their own monism. Given the reality of maya they even choose to view Buddha as but another incarnation of Vishnu.

At the end of the sixth century B.C. there arose a number of people who rejected the Vedic tradition. One of these was Siddharta Gautama the son of a local prince. Born into luxury in 563B.C. he led a charmed but sheltered existence until one day he came face to face with disease, old age and death and at the age of 29 he set off to find an answer. After six years of wandering and austerity he found enlightenment while meditating under the famous bo tree. He set about founding a ministry and his mission accomplished he died

at the age of eighty not far from his birthplace.

His teaching established the Middle Way or the Eightfold Path as the road to Nirvana or release from the affliction of reincarnation. Self-indulgence was eschewed as was severe austerity. The Path is not one of moral endeavour per se but self awareness and the techniques of meditation found almost everywhere as for instance in the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. Curiously enough Buddha did not believe in a Creator. The attainment of Nirvana is tantamount to the extinction of individuality so it is futile to worship the Buddha who exists and does not exist at one and the same time. Worship itself is of no benefit neither is sacrifice or prayers to the gods who suffer the same afflictions as ourselves. The principle obstacle in the upward path is craving, born of ignorance. The individual is not an eternal soul but a sequence of physical and mental states a view which many modern day behaviourist psychologists like F. Skinner would endorse. If the individual remains in the grip of craving his death merely initiates a further sequence of states. The doctrine of rebirth according to Buddha does not mean that it is an eternal soul that transmigrates. The continuing individual soul is one of the illusions of the pysical and mental sequence. Morality is primarily a means of uprooting craving. Only by following the five precepts - not to kill - not to take drugs- not to steal - not to have wrong sexual relations and not to use speech wrongly can a man hope to be cured of the disease of spiritual ignorance.

In the course of its diffusion Buddhism gradually divided into two streams so that by the middle of the third century B.C. there existed the Lesser and Greater Vehicles (Vehicle is a means to salvation). The former, the Hinayana, is found in Ceylon Burma and Southeast Asia. The latter, the Mahayana, is found in China, Korea and Japan. Tibetan Buddhism is sometimes regarded as the Third Vehicle. The basic difference between the two is that the Hinayana preserves the essential pattern of the early doctrine while the Mahayana frowns on too rigid a concern for personal Buddhahood to the detriment of ones compassion for others. The Mahayana too claims it is the historical development of the original doctrines which the Lesser (hence the name) Vehicle represents.

The shape of religion in China was deeply affected by two great religious thinkers: Confucius and Lao-tzu. Confucius however did not found a new religion. His genius lay in bringing moral and social clarity to what already existed in the old traditions. Firstly he accepted the cult of ancestors which scarcely any race has avoided. Secondly he held that right ~~beg~~ behaviour was in accord with the will of Heaven, a semi-personal deity who presides over the cosmos. Later on Confucius himself (551 - 479B.C.) became a semi-divine figure in the state religion.

The bulwark of his teaching comprised reciprocity, benevolence and filial piety. Reciprocity means that you should treat others as you would like them to treat you. Nevertheless you should affirm five important human relationships - ruler and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger, man and wife, friend and friend. In all cases seniority takes sovereignity. He believed that the troubles of his day were due to an erosion of these relationships and a loss of good conventions. His view was that man was essentially good.

In contrast were the views of Lao-tzu (604 - 517 B.C.). Like Socrates his existence is contested. Nevertheless the poem the Tao-te-ching remains to his credit. The Tao is the way in the Christian sense. It is the law of the universe, the principle on which it operates and to which it owes its existence. The Tao originates things without volition because that is its nature. It acts by not acting. The highest virtue therefore is spontaneity and effortlessness. This is the way through which a man will attain passivity, the conditio sine qua non for the attainment of enlightenment. Its weakness as a doctrine lay in its conflict with Confucianism. Its strong point was later on to be the priesthood that grew up around it. Elements of astrology, alchemy and beliefs in demons and gods were also assimilated by it.

The arrival of Mahayana Buddhism in the first century A.D. brought with it a worked out system of metaphysics as well as the hope of paradise both of which had a strong appeal for every class of Chinese. Partly as a reaction Neo)Confucianism emerged in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Its main tenet was that the life of the cosmos consists in a tension between two opposites, the Yang and the Yin, which represent the male and female forces respectively. The ~~Ynag~~ Yang is the spiritual power and the Yin the corporeal

passivity. It is the Yang therefore who guides the evolution of the universe. It is also identified with the ethical laws that govern both nature and human conduct.

The people kept all three religions alive. For help in material problems they went to Taoism; for social teaching to Confucius and for personal comfort to Buddhism.

Partly under the influence of Taoism Buddhist mediation changed during the seventh century A.D. in China. The result was the Zen school of meditation and especially the Rinzai wing of it which seeks to bring about satori or sudden illumination by methods peculiar to itself. Illumination is the result of a direct communication between pupil and master. Besides yoga Zen employs the techniques of mondo in which the master tests his pupils insights by asking sudden questions and the koans which are illogical questions designed to circumvent the thinking and reasoning habits of the mind. Its master idea is that there is no distinction between nirvana and ordinary experience. Thus one is free to engage in ordinary concerns. This was one reason for its popularity with medieval Japanese knights whose aim was to perform their skills of swordplay and archery with the infallibility of the Tao.

All Zen has this idea of passive total mastery in which one is in harmony with the universe. Long rigorous training must eventually be transcended in intuition and spontaneity. Illumination in the end must be effortless. This doctrine had a profound effect on Chinese and Japanese art.

Mohammed (Highly Praised) was born about 570 A.D. in Mecca Arabia. Before his death in 632 he had established a monotheism that still flourishes fourteen centuries later. He also helped unite the scattered peoples of the Arabian peninsula thereby laying the foundations of one of the great empires of history.

The traditional religions of these peoples seems to have been primitive forms of animism though many recognised Allah as the chief. Mecca was always a traditional centre of pilgrimage where people came to worship at the Kaaba (Cube) or shrine believed to be the home of the gods.

It was some time after Mohammed settled down to married life with the rich widow Khadijah, by whom he had several children, that he began to fall into prophetic trances. At first he thought he was possessed but after

an attempted suicide and a long period of reflection he came to the conclusion that Allah was the supreme god and that Mohammed was his prophet. He soon began to incur the displeasure of the merchants of Mecca by attacking the idolatry of the Kaaba thereby threatening the tourist trade. However, after initial persecution he and his small band of followers managed to convince a group of people from Medina, a town 280 miles north-east of Mecca. In 622 therefore Mohammed went to Medina. This flight, the Hegira, marked the beginning of the Mohammedan era.

He made Friday the sabbath after a quarrel with the Jews who honoured Saturday and established the Ramadan or month of strict fasting. The Koran (recitation) containing his teachings shows a strong influence of Jewish and Christian teachings. It asserts that Jesus was a prophet like Abraham and Mohammed and any divine claim for these men is blasphemous. Idols are to be destroyed as an insult to God. Allah, being omnipotent, it follows that every thing and event in the world is determined and it behoves one to humbly submit to this. This is Islam and its followers are known as Moslems (submissive ones). On the last day there will be a general resurrection and a judgment. Those who have not heeded the prophets words will be tortured and those who have will be granted the ecstacy of a sensuous Paradise.

Mohammed soon discovered that the sword was more persuasive than the word, so in 630 he set out with an army and captured Mecca destroying its idols and reestablishing its sanctity on the basis that it was his birthplace. Thereafter a Moslem was expected to make at least one journey to Mecca in his lifetime.

The other duties of the Kalima or statement of belief are - the recitation of prayers five times daily in the Mosque or at home facing Mecca - fasting during the Ramadan - almsgiving. The moral requirements are less severe ~~polyg~~ - polygamy is permitted but pork and strong drink are not.

Before his death in 632 the tribes of Arabia were united under Mohammed's rule and beliefs. During the first century after his death Islam spread from the Himalayas to the Pyrenees.

The reason for this is its stark simplicity which appealed to many for whom Christianity had become excessively complicated. Moreover a bitter distrust among the Arab Christians of the Byzantine empire engendered a belief

in Moslem arms. This grew with the progressive weakening of the empires of Persia and Byzantium. When eventually Constantinople fell to the might of the Moslem Turks in 1453 Europe was rocked to its foundations.

So we come to the end of our short survey of the ideas-systems of religions past and present. Some of them indeed are not as present as they used to be. Christianity with which I will be dealing in the next chapter has been making substantial progress over the last four and a half centuries and can now boast more adherents than any other religion. Marxism -Leninism is the political faith that has largely taken the place of traditional religion in Russia, Eastern Europe and China.

Christianity is a case apart because the history of it is the history of our own civilization. It also gave rise to art forms that for us as Europeans are without parallel. Its tenets are the functional core of our society so much so that Karl Marx who considered it the opium of the people understood quite rightly that a fundamental change in society was not possible unless Christianity was overthrown. This he thought to bring about by raising the proletariat or workers to a new level of awareness which considers the entire Christian edifice as but a tool in the hands of the ruling classes. The worker is born as an agent in the historical evolution of society. His purpose as embodying the will of the class into which he was born is to overthrow his oppressors to whom, as the servant of life and not its exploiter, he is morally superior. As an ideas-system therefore Marxism is hostile to the main bulk of Christian dogma and more particularly its socially accepted institutions. The ideological conflicts between these two systems are raging all around us and within us and have had their effects on the evolution of western art.

I will deal with Christianity therefore in much the same way as before. However, in order to explain its powerful grip on the western mind I will call on the writings of Erich Fromm the German psycho - analyst

The Jews were thoroughly Hellenized by the time the New Testament came along which explains why it was written in Greek and not Aramaic, the vernacular spoken by Jesus and his disciples. Many of them at that time were Stoics and Epicureans or devotees of the mystery cults. For over a century and a half they had been ~~uder~~ under Hellenistic rule first under the Ptolemies of Egypt and then the Seleucid monarchs of Syria. The colonisation of the known world by Alexander had been so vast and thorough that by 200 B.C. a man could hear Greek from the Gates of Hercules to the Ganges.

The celebrated revolt of Judas Maccabeus and continued after his death by his brothers Simon and Jonathan led to the founding of an independent state in141 B.C. This lasted until 63B.C. when the country was annexed by the Romans under Pompey. Reactions to this were varied, the main sects of the Sadducees Zealots Pharisees and Essenes all holding different views on the matter. Their various positions in fact reveal a familiar pattern but to understand them further it is necessary to d~~i~~ delineate the history of Judaism.

During the second millennium B.C. a small group of Semitic (The Semites and the Indo - Europeans were the two main groups of Western Asians at that time) tribes left Mesopotamia for the land of the Philistines (Palestine) Some travelled on to Egypt where they were held as slaves until the 13th century B.C. The twelve tribes were eventually led out of captivity by Moses who after a profound experience on Mount Sinai laid down the basis of the Jewish faith insisting that Yahweh was the one god and that the children of Israel were his chosen ones. He would protect them providing they accepted him which is the meaning of the covenant. If they didn't then they had better look out because Yahweh is a stern and jealous god who punishes. From the archaeological evidence however the Jews seemed to have been undeterred because they worshipped many more gods than Yahweh. The Prophets trying hard to persuade them of their error were later to interpret the history of the race as a struggle between pride and obedience.

The conquest of Palestine about 1200 B.C. and with it the change from a nomadic existence to an agricultural one brought religious changes. The cult of Baal emerged, centred around the agricultural gods while at the other extreme the Nazarites condemned agriculture as evil.

After the death of Solomon (10th century B.C.) who had established the temple as the centre of worship the kingdom was split in two with Israel in the north and Judah in the south. In 722B.C. the northern kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians and the ten lost tribes that comprised it were deported. The Jewish tradition carried on in the south under continual attack from the Assyrians. Things got no better for the Jews when the Babylonians captured Nineveh in 606B.C. and put an end to the Assyrian empire. The Babylonian king Nebuchadrezzar promptly set about the conquest of Judah taking Jerusalem in 586, burning the temple, and taking large numbers of Jews into slavery in Babylon. Not until the year after Cyrus, the Persian king, had taken Babylon some fifty years later was the Jewish exile ended and they were allowed to go back to Palestine. The experience hardened their dogma and the national character of their religion. It had always been monolatrous in any case confined to the race and never at any time aspiring to universality.

The Prophets had emerged before the exile. Considering themselves the mouthpiece of God they endeavoured to keep the ~~the~~ Jews unified principally by attacking polytheism and idolatry. They could foresee the destruction of the kingdom. Jeremiah reviewing the meaning of the covenant looked forward to a time when inner virtue rather than outword cult would form the basis of the Jews relationship with Yahweh. As far back as the eighth century B.C. Isaiah had attacked the practice of animal sacrifice in the Temple which owed its survival to the notion that, by means of a blood-offering, sins can be atoned for and the divine wrath averted. This was inconsistent with the growing realisation of the goodness and righteousness of Yahweh. The new idea of atonement through suffering and contrition was launched which was to have far-reaching effects right down through the Middle Ages. In Isaiah too there emerged the idea that a Servant (Saga) of the Lord would come to atone for the wrongs of the people. He would also be a light onto the Gentiles. After the exile therefore during which the Jews had to dispense with the rite of animal sacrifice the idea that Yahweh was the Creator and God of all mankind and that the Jews were to be the medium for its salvation took strong hold. However, it soon became clear that private virtue was not as successful as it should have been in averting the wrath of Yahweh and so there came the idea of a reward in a life after death. The events of the Maccabean rebellion did much to fire the belief which joined with the widespread expectation of a Redeemer to give rise to individual and

collective hopes of an Apocalypse in which all would be made well in terms of heaven and hell and divine rule be established on the earth. However during the first century B.C. Hellenistic influences had taken root and there followed a more sober movement whose teachings foreshadowed the ethics of Jesus.

~~Ath~~ At the time of the Roman occupation ritual animal sacrifices were still performed in the sanctuary of the temple which was still under construction. It was the third of its kind to have been built having been begun by Herod who died in 4B.C. the year of J~~eus~~ Jesus's birth. Although synagogues abounded for the ordinary Jew the temple was still the place for nationalist propaganda, pilgrimage and prayer as well as profiteering.

The Pharisees, who were against pagan practices, wanted above all to protect Judaism from alien influences by meticulous attention to the Law and the rituals. They held that the oral traditions and writings of the scribes explained the Law as propounded in the Torah, that the dead were resurrected, that angels existed, and that God was at work in history.

The Sadducees, also devotees of the Torah, didn't care much for these beliefs which they regarded as innovations and were more inclined towards a compromise with Graeco-Roman culture. The Romans allowed them to take control of the temple and see to its completion as well as collecting the taxes all of which gave them great power within the community.

The Zealots were the hard-liners dedicated to protection of the Law and violent resistance to the Romans.

The Essenes were an ascetic group who i~~ved~~ lived near the shores of the Dead Sea where the famous scrolls were found in 1947. The written Torah was the basis of their daily life a feature of which was the group study of the scriptures.

When Jesus came into Galilee, therefore, preaching the Kingdom, for many it meant the overthrow of Roman rule, for others the end of the world, and for others a new way of life based on brotherly love and acceptance.

His story is familiar to all so there is no need to repeat it here. His ministry lasted no more than three years and probably less and he perished at the hands of the Sanhedrin, the watchdogs of orthodox Judaism. The belief that he appeared to his disciples after his death led to the cult of Christianity under the leadership of Paul of Tarsus who claimed to have seen him on his way to Damascus. Bertrand Russell calls ~~h~~ Paul the 'inventor of Christianity.'

There is certainly some truth in this because Paul had his own ideas about what Jesus was about. There is no doubt that he believed that the end of the world would occur in his own lifetime which goes far to explain the urgency and energy he put into his work. It was Paul who insisted that Jesus had come to fulfil the scriptures and that the gospel was for Gentile as well as Jew. These measures and others like them were not easily adopted and Paul made three exhaustive journeys throughout Asia Minor, Greece, Cyprus, Sicily and so on in his attempts at persuasion. He was eventually arrested in Jerusalem and taken to Rome to face charges of subversion. He was executed there in 65 A.D. in the persecutions of Nero. It was the Jews themseves however who had initiated the persecution of Christians driving them from Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen(in which Paul gave a hand)to Samaria and Judaea.

Pauls letters to the churches he founded reveal the character of the man. He was tough, intelligent and steeped in orthodox Judaism which he expected converts to accept. His epistles were to have a lasting effect on later social and religious thinking. In an authoritarian sense he was the first Pope.

After his death Christianity spread throughout the civilized world. It was first and foremost a reform within Judaism just as Protestantism was much later to be a reform movement within Catholicism. Stephen after all had been stoned because he was enough of a Hellenist to declare that the old traditons were no longer valid or applicable. Right from the begining therefore Neoplatonism and Stoicism were making inroads into the old Law with its elaborate complicated rituals, circumcision and food stipulations. Thus from the beginning there grew up within the cult the Gnostic movement. The Gnostics' difficulties were intellectual which was to become the pattern of conflict from hereon in. They could not accept that the Supreme Being could be at all involved in a world so blatantly evil and sordid. The Incarnation therefore was an impossibility because God could not contradict his perfect nature in this way. The argument was pursued by Marcion (about 150 A.D.) who got over the difficulty by asserting that Jesus only appeared to be human. But the real problem for less imaginative thinkers was - if Jeus was God then there were obviously two gods. Praxeas countered this by saying that the Father too was nailed to the cross. Finally Tertullian (160-230) hit on the idea of the Trinity.

Tertullian, however, believed in total non resistance to violence and alarmed at the Church's involvement in worldly affairs bailed out and joined the Montanists an heretical sect that preached detachment. Meanwhile Clement of Alexandria (150-220) argued on Greek lines that ignorance rather than sin was the cause of man's misery. Origen (185-254) in turn preached contemplation of the visible world as the path to God. He also held a belief in reincarnation with souls becoming progressively demonic or angelic. However, in the end all would be well with the Devil himself being saved. One can only regret that Origen never prevailed. Still it was by contesting these theories that the early Christian philosophers defined the orthodoxy of the growing Church.

The conversion of Constantine in 312 was of supreme importance. To settle religious disputes he convened the first universal council of the Church at Nicaea in 325. Here the Nicene creed was decided upon, which, in answer to Arianism, declared the ~~sa~~ divine substance of Father and Son to be identical and the doctrine of the Trinity achieved its final form.

In the fourth and fifth centuries Augustine emerged to hold intellectual sway. With him came the doctrine of original sin, predestination, and the certain damnation of unbaptized infants, and the dependence of salvation on God's grace.

In 324 the emperor moved to Constantinople the new Rome built on the site of Byzantium a Greek city. By the end of the fifth century the empire of the West ceased to exist. The Church however did not. The Romans had taken it up by the end of the fourth century under Theodosius who made it the offical religion. There grew up therefore two churches one Latin and one Greek. The gulf between them widened year by year helped on by the presence of the invading Moslems in the Mediterranean. In 1054 a dispute between Pope LeoIX and the Patriarch of Constantinople over the powers of the papacy led to the final break. Later the Church of Rome assumed the title Catholic and the Eastern took the name Orthodox.

In the East there flourished monasticism. The movement had begun with St Anthony of Egypt towards the end of the third century. In the West it was taken up by Benedict of Nursia (480-543) who determined on a fixed location for the settlement and emphasized the virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience which still hold. His monks at Monte Cassino became the guardians of the traditional values of civilization. There followed in 910 the famous order

at Cluny characterized by their ritual and rigor; in 1084 the Carthusians noted for the law of silence, and the Cistercians, founded in 1098, who restored manual labour to its original dignified place in the Benedictine order.

The Irish monasteries were to have particular significance, not only because of their culture and learning, but for their missionaries who journeyed throughout Europe during the dark Middle Ages. The Viking invasions drove many of them to seek shelter in France and England.

By this time the Church had wandered somewhat from the tenets of the Sermon on the Mount. So there arose two orders that were temporarily at least to help restore the balance. St Dominic (1170 - 1221) and most important from the point of view of art St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) took vows of poverty and endeavoured to help the poor. However, their followers did not burden themselves for long with these notions and against the precepts of their founders they set about the pursuit of learning. When the Inquisition came along therefore it became their business to conduct the proceedings. Aquinas (1225-1274) was a Dominican while Duns Scotus and Roger Bacon were Franciscans. The philosophies of these man made a valuable contribution to the culture of the period. By their approach to the problem of faith and reason they hastened the breakdown of the Middle Ages. Their efforts had liberated reason from faith allowing each to go their separate ways. This paved the way for the emergence of scientific specu~~a~~lation and the beginning ~~og~~ of the ~~R~~ Renaissance.

What was the world like in the Middle Ages? Well, from an economic point of view it was growing fast. Trade routes and market fairs were being established, cathedrals and churches being built like Cluny abbey and Chartres, magnificent structures that testified to the might of the Church. Society had adopted an hierarchical structure with the Church at the head and not only at the head but at every major turning point in the life of the people, both individually and collectively. Marriage was invalid without the ~~offo~~ sanction of the Church neither was birth and death; and confession established in the ~~ifi~~ fifth century ~~w~~ became an effective way to keep a grip on mens minds. Few there were who questioned the teaching of the Church or its commands. Bishops elected by the local magnates took initiatives in running the churches. Men's ideas were still relatively simple; though, among the learned, Aristotle was of considerable importance. Among the ordinary people attendance at Sunday Mass was the core of ~~his~~ their religious life and the major influence on ~~his~~ their minds. So

deep was this influence indeed that even kings trembled at the thought of excommunication. Authority, in fact, was the big issue with secular and Church authority contesting one another until John Wycliffe (1320-84) boldly declared that no man had a right to rule in Church or state without divine grace.

The ideas-system or beliefs that lay behind feudalist society were as follows. Man was a sinful being. In his character was a fatal flaw that could be traced back to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. Throughout history God intervenes in the affairs of men as for example with Noah and the covenant with the Jews until finally he incarnates his full divinity in Jesus of Nazareth who by his victory over death has made possible a return for each man to that former state of bliss from which by his own pride he exiled himself. All who avoid sin are in with a chance otherwise they go to Purgatory for expiation of their crimes or more probably to Hell where they are fried for all eternity. Life itself was a drama between the forces of good and evil. The Devil was always ready to lead off the weak, and madness was diabolic possession. Such victims as well as witches and warlocks and heretics were to be severely punished for their own good. The prelates of the Church and the angels and saints could be relied upon for help in this cosmic struggle. And cosmic it was because the earth was believed to be the centre of the universe which of course gave the existence of Hell at the centre of the earth an absolute existence for everyone. Nothing in this universe happened by chance -all was determined and therefore meaningful. All things were composed of earth air fire and water. These ideas lead to a widespread superstition and belief in the occult powers of magic. The feudalistic set-up of life on earth mirrored the heavenly kingdom with its spheres of angels and archangels and saints. Thus the social system was given permanent validity with divine sanction that inspired the crusades against the infidel. Altogether this story was anything but an allegory to medieval man. If they believed it at all they believed it body and soul.

The Middle Ages too saw the rise of Mary as the Mother of God and the saints. In popular practice saints were virtually worshipped and great value was placed on pilgrimage and the miraculous powers of relics. People found no difficulty either in believing in dragons and demons that inhabited foreign lands. The doctrine of transubstantiation conferred godlike powers on the humble priest who performed his service in the chancel screened from the public eye. Meanwhile the monk, as Chaucer describes, lived off the fat of the land.

During the fourteenth century papal power declined rapidly. The medieval outlook began to change under the influence of the universities and the revolutionary views of people like William Occam and the mystics such as Meister Eckhart, Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh of St. Victor and his brother Richard as well as the most influential of them all the Irish Scotus Erigena. It was increasingly clear to all that the Church had failed to keep the standards it insisted on for others and corruption was widespread. Furthermore the invention of gunpowder meant that the old chivalrous values so dear to the Knights who protected the faith were no longer applicable. A fine calf and a long arm had no advantages in an explosion. Furthermore the structure of society became unstable through the rise of a powerful class of merchants who could use their wealth in common causes with the monarchs. New inventions too, like the fuller's mill and the treadle loom, lead to the speeding up of commerce and the expansion of the wool trade in which England had a monopoly. This period too saw the growth of the banking system which was to flourish in Florence and Venice. All these forces together spelt the liberation of free thought and enquiry and a change of focus from God to Man and the birth of Humanism.

(It is difficult to evaluate the tenets of the various religious systems. The world views that they embody do certainly have their source in some form of subliminal experience which have proved difficult if not impossible to communicate via the written word and even more difficult via oral traditions which are apt to change radically within a short space of time. It is clear however that from the history of the Church's doctrines various points have been removed and others added in an effort to simultaneously explain the central creed of the religion and set matters right with those already converted and those about to be. The Logical Positivists of the 1930's declared all metaphysical assertions as meaningless gibberish a view which is still held by Kantians and transcendentalists who believe that no statement about the infinite can be made from a finite premiss. A statement like God is the Good for example is plainly a piece of childish anthropomorphism that would have no validity even if God did exist which cannot be proven one way or the other. This sort of speculation has left us with a simple choice between blind faith and empiricism guided by logic. It is a personal choice.)

Individualism had of course been growing steadily since the Greeks but its adoption as a way of life did not get under way until the advent of that declaration of independence known as Protestantism.

The causes that brought about this reform within the Roman Catholic Church are many and varied. Wycliffe had already denounced the Pope as the Anti-Christ and Occam had maintained that the Church could function well enough without the lordship of Rome. Add to this the corruption of the clergy and the monasteries which owned vast tracts of land and the general profiteering within the cloisters and it is clear why a reform was called for. And it was precisely with the idea of reform in mind that the fiery Martin Luther (1483-1546) dramatically pinned his ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg. This was in 1517 at a time when a major political grievance in Germany was the massive conribution of German money to Rome. The invention of printing by Johann Gutenberg in the mid fifteenth century meant that the basis of what we call nationalism was already laid. When Luther was excommunicated therefore in 1520 and showed his defiance by publicly burning the official bull the matter was no longer one of religious reform. The German princes were already taking sides and the reformation became in essence a political revolt of the Germans against the power of Rome.

After hiding for ~~tenth~~ ten months Luther produced a translation of the New Testament into his mother tongue. This meant that the unsophisticated who could read neither Greek or Latin could read for themselves the enormous discrepancies between the Church as it was intended to be and as it actually was. The Bible declared Luther was the sole authority and the Peasants Revolt of 1524 drew its strength from it. Luther also counseled that no man could save himself by his own efforts, that acknowledgment of sin and faith in God were essential and that no institution should come between a man and his creator. What dismayed him however was the political storm his ideas engendered especially the brutal ~~curshing~~ crushing of the peasants revolt. However, the new relgion spread rapidly thanks to the printing press despite the fact that Luther had been under the ban of the empire since the Diet of Worms in 1529. The emperor was finally to ~~capitulate~~ capitulate only three years later by giving reluctant guarantees to the new movement in the exercise of its new found freedom.

John Calvin, born in France in 1509, defined more accurately the Protestant position. He was already spiritual leader of the movement in

France and the Netherlands and in 1536 he settled in Geneva. His views however contrasted strongly with Luthers. Man he insisted was evil from birth and his fate already determined. These doctrines which owe much to Augustine were set forth in his book the Institutes of the Christian Religion 1536. These insane notions appealed to the puritanical Swiss who under the influence of Zwingli (1484-1531) could already boast the most radical form of Pretestantism then in Europe.

By 1555 the movement had spread so far that the Church was forced to take counter - measures known as the Counter-Reformation. That is not to say that it had hitherto been unaware of its short comings. Men like ~~Savano~~ Savonarola and Thomas More and Erasmus had already sounded the alarm and Spain had taken its own reforms under the persuasion of Cardinal Jimenez (1437-1517). By this time too the Jesuits founded in 1534 were regaining converts largely through their erudition and reputation as confessors. In Rome itself an Inquisition was got under way on the model of the Spanish effort of 1480. Among other things it drew up an Index of prohibited books to which additions are still being made. Above all it was decided to call a general Council in an attempt to retrieve lost prestige and redefine dogma. Accordingly, the Council of Trent convened in 1545 and lasted with long interruptions eighteen years. Here the Italian majority ensured a strengthening of Roman rule and a definitive return to orthodxy. Protestantism and all its works was condemned and a Latin Bible confirmed, despite the fact that Dante had elevated the common vernacular to a degree of eminence in his Divine Comedy. Seven sacraments were recognised and instituted - baptism, confirmation the eucharist, penance, extreme-unction holy orders and matrimony. The role of the priests was protected and strengthened by a unanimous support for the doctrine of Transubstantiation or the Real Presence and seminaries and colleges were set up for the training of new recruits. The doctrine of Infallibility did not arrive until 1870. Nevertheless, the Church had to reconcile itself to the fact its camp was split and its power driven away to a large extent from the secular realm. This did not mean that it relaxed its worldly grip but with the collapse of the old medieval outlook and the rise of individualism due largely to economic changes that undermined feudalism the Church's function for most men came to be defined as the welfare of mens souls. The popes during the Renaissance were to become great patrons of the arts.

The final separation of Church and state came after the French Revolution of 1789. By that time science politics philosophy and history had become firmly established as independent branches of study and throughout the nineteenth century the relation of religion to them all was to change gradually. Kant and Scheiermacher rejected metaphysics while Hegel held the Absolute as knowable and built an elaborate system around it. Schopenhauer, his arch enemy, turned to Eastern mysticism for solace while D.F.Strauss (1808-74) an important thinker from Marx's point of view raised a rumpus by asserting that the life of Jesus was a myth. Baur and his disciples denied that the New Testament was reliable history. Old Testament ideas were falling like ninepins under the weight of archaeological evidence. Finally, Darwin (1800-1882) arrived with his Origin of the Species and it seemed that soul had been banished from the universe. Sigmund Freud added still more fuel to the fire when he began his scientific analysis of the psyche. 'Man was the victim of his Unconsious repressions.' The age of anxiety had begun that was to lead to hihilism and existentialism.

By this time Karl Marx(1818-83) had written and published his revolutionary work Das Kapital that was to help change the world. His theory of dialectical materialism was to usurp religion by putting communism in its place. Being atheistic it is still the main threat to Christianity.

Hegel, declared Marx, only made sense if you took his idealism and stood it on its head. The truth lay not in man's developing consciousness effecting changes of society but in economic and social changes effecting the development of consciousness. The world was an evolving organism whose birth-pangs could be seen in the class-conflicts that made up society. The history of the civilized world had been nothing but the history of class interests. Religion itself was an opiate that sustained people in their false notions of the nature of reality. The growth and accumulation of capital in the hands of the ruling classes had their own inherent laws and momentum which those classes would promote and protect in their own self-interest by declaring them to be eternal laws of the universe over which noone least of all the proletariat had any control. Capitalism is the cause and effect of human misery, alienating man from the world, man from society, man from his kind and man from himself. Money was the unacknowledged god of the race and the medium of human relationships. In support of this particular idea Marx quotes extensively from Shakespeare of whom he was very fond. Nor was he blind to the achievements of capitalism: -

'The bourgeoisie during its rule of scarce one hundred years has created more colossal productive forces than have all the preceding generations together.' It therefore behoved the rising working classes to overthrow existing society in such a way that the methods of production were held intact. From a moral point of view it is imperative that they undertake this action as soon as the circumstances allow so as to put an end as soon as possible to the continuing misery on which the system depends.

Marxism is a philosophy and it may seem strange that I give it so much space in a discussion on religion. Nevertheless it can be shown to have grown out of the rational criticism of the postulates of religion. By dethroning God as did Nietzsche he simply put Man in His place. The Germans were anything but slow to respond to the lure of the Superman and had no difficulty in seeing themselves as the pedigree womb of his coming. This relationship of man to his god is of crucial importance because at the core of it is the relationship of man to himself.

Marx himself apparently had no need of God or inspiration in the working out of his ideas-system. The physical world of the senses is the sole reality and, whats more, the objective reality. The Buddhist conviction that it is all illusion therefore has no validity in this schema. If you ask where the universe came from Marx would deny the causal premiss of your argument. The subjective-objective worlds continually modify eachother throughout evolution. The universe itself emerges as the process of spontaneous generation which is empirically verifiable. The actual process is dialectical comprising thesis - antithesis - synthesis. All physical and social phenomena could be explained by this method and Marx and Engels believed adamantly that they had unearthed the laws of the universe.

This is best exemplified in their view of capitalist society ~~as the~~ as the struggle between the thesis capitalists and the antithesis workers that would inevitably lead to a new synthesis, socialist man in a socialist society, which in turn would eventually wither away to bring absolute freedom born of a true brotherhood of man. Communism as an ideal, therefore, goes back to the gospel of St.John. However, Marx disclaimed the label of Utopian and insisted that his doctrine be called scientific socialism or historical materialism. Religion itself is explained away as follows.

Consciousness is nothing more than conscious being. Human beings begin to distinguish themselves as just that when they begin to produce in their own special way their means of subsistence a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. In actually producing their means of subsistence they are indirectly creating the form of their own life. The way in which men produce their subsistence depends first and foremost on the actual means they find available to them. The definite form of activity of this production amounts to a definite mode of life on the individuals part. As individuals express their life so they are. What they are therefore coincides with what they produce and how they produce it. The nature of individuals therefore depends on the material circumstances governing their production. An Isaac Newton would be unthinkable in Nero's Rome for example.

The fact is then that definite individuals that are productively active in a special sort of way enter into definite social and political relations. As consciousness is nothing more than conscious existence it follows that ideas, conceptions and so forth were at first the direct efflux of mens material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in laws, morality, religion and metaphysics of any given people. Men are the producers of their ideas and concepts not Allah or Yahweh. Morality, religion and all other ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness are bound to material premises and have no separate history or development. Men, caught in whatever stage of material production, are forced to alter with this their real objective existence their thinking and the products thereof. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but on the contrary it is their social existence that determines their consciousness. The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social political and spiritual processes of life.

This forms a pertinent and useful prelude to the ideas of Erich Fromm on the evolution of mans concept of his God and his relation to him.

In the first stage of this evolution he says God is visualized as an absolute ruler. He ~~is~~ has made nature and man and if he is not pleased with them he can destroy what he has created. Yet this absolute power of God over man is counterbalanced by the idea that man is God's potential rival. It is thus that man is able to challenge the supreme authority of his creator

Man himself carries potential godhood within him. If he could but achieve Gods wisdom and inexhaustible life force by eating of the tree of knowledge and the tree of life he would have Godhead as conceived as immortality and infinite wisdom. Mans first act therefore is rebellion for which he is punished by a god who wants above all to preserve his supremacy.
Now this is patently born of the Jewish experience of slavery in Egypt. In Marxist jargon their social mode of production was servility and abject servility at that ~~punish~~ from which any digression was severely punished. They could have conceived of God in no other way given the circumstances in which they lived. Their crisis was one of consciousness - of self awareness. Man at this point experiences intensely the schism within the human condition. He experiences himself as a stranger in the world bound by a tyranny he must ~~accept~~ accept, worshipping idols on a foreign soil, alienated from himself and nature. He transcends the world by being in it while he is also the custodian of a potentially divine nature. This is why the Old Testament from the Pentateuch to Isaiah and Jeremiah is devoted basically to the war against idolatry. It is imperative that man accept and experience the split in his nature as both subject and object as the very condition for overcoming this split. Therefore god can say - I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob - an answer that indicates that no two people have the same god, that God is essentially an individual experience for each man and one moreover born of his powerlessness and alienation as the Book of Job shows.

The Jews must move forward because the goal of completion and wholeness is ahead of them. The flight from Egypt highlights the Jewish dilemma. It is a specifically human dilemma. Robbed of their well-regulated and set existence even though it had been slavery and robbed too of king, overseers and idols before whom they could bow, they were faced with freedom and it terrified them.

The concept of an intimate relation with God emerges with a change in the concept of God Himself as One who loves truth and justice but whose love is even greater than his justice. Man must continue further towards his goal of becoming fully human. And it was the prophets who kept alive this vision and warred incessantly against the dangers of idolatry and pride.

Marx maintains that the more a man places his being and the value of his being in the thing he produces the less of his being he retains in himself. The Russian disaster is precisely owed to this where the members of the State freely abrogate their powers to the State and thereby lose their essential humanity. This

phenomenon is closely akin to idolatry. It is a sobering thought that the prophets had understood the problem in its entirety a thousand years before the advent of Jesus. Fromm begins here with idolatry in his psychological and historical interpretation of worship.

'Man projects his own powers and skills into the things he makes and thus in an alienated fashion worships his prowess, his possessions. At a still later stage man gives his gods the form of human beings. It seems that this can happen only when he has become still more aware of himself, when he has discovered man as the highest and most dignified thing in the world. In this phase of anthropomorphic god-worship we find a development in two dimensions. The one refers to the female or male nature of the gods, the other to the degree of maturity which man has achieved and which determines the nature of his gods and the nature of his love of them.'

The matriarchal phase precedes the patriarchal phase of religion. The mother is worshipped as goddess and recognised as the final authority in family and society. All men are equal because they come from a mother and come too from mother earth. Her love is protective and unconditional and so all - enveloping that to be in it is to have bliss and to be out of it despair. This is why the church is referred to as mother church. Her love can also be controlled and acquired.

Of the patriarchal stage we have thorough knowledge. Here the mother is dethroned and father becomes the Supreme Being. In the near East the tribal chief the king and finally "God" became the supreme concept of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam which were rooted in the social structures of that area. The nature of fatherly love is of immense importance - It makes demands establishes principles and laws and his love for his son depends on his obedience to these commands. He likes best the son who resembles him closest, who is most obedient, therefore, and best fitted to become his successor and inheritor of his possessions. As a consequence the equality of the brothers gives way to competition and strife which is the myth of Cain and Abel. Whether it be Indian, Egyptian, Greek, Islamic, Jewish or Christian we are in the middle of patriarchy with its paternal chief-god ruling the pantheon or where all other gods have been eliminated and the One remains. Mother-god is not eradicated, merely pushed into the background, emerging in mysticism as the Virgin Mary and in the Lutheran doctrine of grace which declares that Gods love cannot be acquired.

In these circumstances all one has left is faith or to transform oneself into the helpless lost powerless child. Intense doubt, hope against hope for unconditional love by father has therefore been a paramount feature of Protestantism. In this phase I love god like a father and I therefore assume him to be just and strict and that he punishes and rewards; and that eventually if I play my cards right he will elect me as his favourite son and I will get to sit by his right hand. The Jewish people in this way considered themselves the elect of God and their religion was for a long time monolatrous.

In the matriarchal aspect I worship god as an all-embracing mother, believing that nomatter whether I am poor and powerless and nomatter what sins I have committed she will still love me and see to my salvation.

The patriarchal aspect of god itself undergoes changes. In the beginning we find a despotic jealous god who considers man his property. Lest man become like him he drives him out of paradise. Then he decides to destroy the human race by flood because it does not please him with the exception of his favourite son Noah. He makes an agreement with Noah that he wont ever again destroy the human race, which capitulation indicates that man considers himself god's equal if not his superior. Thus god, bound by his own promises and principles, must yield to Abraham's demand to spare Sodom if he can find ten just men in it. Abraham had after all been prepared to kill his only son to demonstrate his own obedience.

The development goes further to the point where god sheds his fatherhood and becomes introjected in the mind as a symbol of his virtues - Truth, Love, Justice. No longer a figure in any sense it becomes prohibited to make any image of him or even to pronounce his name because only people and things have names. This is the final liberation. God is I inasmuch as I attain these virtues - inasmuch as I become fully human.

Fromm points out that for many God is still a father figure. If I have not yet acquired the objectivity to realise my limitations as a human being that is my ignorance, social dependency, helplessness, fragility and so on; I am a child in the world whose meaning rests elsewhere than in myself - in a father-god who rescues me watches me constantly and who is affected deeply by my behaviour.

In the dominant Western systems of religion God is essentially a thought experience. In the Eastern He is an intense feeling esperience of

Oneness. This is an important distinction much stressed by Carl Jung the eminent Swiss psychologist. The story is summarised as follows.

The child starts out as being helplessly attached to his mother as the ground of all being. He needs his mother's love. As he grows the father becomes the new centre of the childs affection because father is the power of thought and direction as well as autonomy. It becomes vital to him to avoid father's displeasure and win his praise. In the next stage he has altogether found his own autonomy by introjecting both father and mother principles and thereby freeing himself from their objective rule over him. He is now himself both his own mother and his own father. In the history of mans relgions we find the exact same development beginning as worship in the form of a child's helpless attachment to a Supreme Mother or goddess to an obedient and insecure attachment to a Supreme Father and finally to an introjection of the deity where he ceases to be an objective outside figure. At this point man has become one with him and incorporates his principles of love justice and truth. God is henceforth the Nameless One or the Absolute Nothing and is to be spoken of only symbolically.

Mans experience of his own powers therefore and his understanding of them within the context of the world he finds himself faced with is embodied forth in the world he builds around himself. The development is from the Marxist standpoint one from the outside to the inside. It is the changes in society effected by the actual real contributions of its members in the process of producing their means of subsistence that force into existence new concepts political interpersonal and religious which remain valid and applicable until yet further developments of the material conditions effect further changes in mental life. The subjective world is determined by the objective. The concepts of God therefore are in fact historically conditioned ones arising from the development of society at a given point and man's growing awareness of the powers within him. Combined with this is his yearning from the start to overcome the split between himself and the objective world of which he is a part and to attain that unity which is his birthright - to be all and in all which is the yearning that drives him forwards. Furthermore if the social structure he creates for himself is one of submission to authority (Patriarchy) whether it be overt brute authority or the anonymous authority of the market and public opinion his concept of God must needs be infantile and far from the mature concept inherent in monotheism.

It is precisely to those who are aware of the patriarchal nature of modern society that the religious element in Marx's prophecies appeal. The classless society that is the goal of human evolution for Marx is the Parousia of St.Paul the Christians' kingdom of heaven and the brotherhood of man. To the revolutionary this goal is to be attained by human means preferably political but failing that by violence perpetrated by man on man. This is believed to have been the principal method of all social transformation. But although historical materialism denies the validity of all religious systems and metaphysics it is if we agree with Fromm indebted too and springs from the idealism born of a developed monotheism. It is because the divine ideals of love justice and truth have been withdrawn from the concept of God and taken up by man himself as his own essence that he is able to see just how far the social structures he has created negate and contradict him. Only by living with his own negation can a man affirm it so that he is willing to believe the false to be true, the unjust to be just and violence in all its forms to be love explicit. And so we come at the end of our survey of Christianity to the psychology of the individual with which I will be dealing later on.

By individual I am from the point of view of this thesis thinking almost exclusively of the artist. By tracing his role in the development of those civilizations whose religions I have already touched upon I hope to get a broader view of his activities and of his contribution to the cultural evolution of human society. As far as psychology is concerned I feel it cannot be left out no more than it can be left out in any serious discussion on religion. But first the indispensable facts of art history.

ANCIENT ART

(I) PREHISTORIC AND PRIMITIVE

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It was perhaps twenty thousand years before Christ that the first drawings and paintings which we can definitely classify as art were born. They were the work of Old Stone Age man.

His most important predecessor was Neanderthal man who was still fairly close to the animal but, despite his handicaps, he was around for three or four times as long as the present species. There is no doubt he practised ritual-burial and probably body decoration both of which could be called art if your definition is that liberal. However he did not possess instruments designed specifically for the execution of what we call works of art. Such subtlety was literally beyond his grasp because his thumb had not the mobility or dexterity of the subsequent group Homo Sapiens. Nevertheless he did have axes, scrapers and picks. He went the way of Heidelberg man his ancestor with the coming of the Fourth and most extreme Ice Age.

Hereafter, the temperature became progressively warmer and the stage was set for Man Proper to emerge. There is considerable evidence to suggest that he came from Southern Asia North Africa and those regions which today lie under the Mediterranean. For we must remember that the world then was vastly different from the one we are familiar with. The North Sea and the Irish Sea were merely rivers and nearly all of Britain and Scandinavia were under ice. The Caspian extended much further northwards as a vast inland sea. Europe was in fact a peninsula attached to the north-west of the prehistoric world and as the ice advanced from the north the routes between it and central Asia were smothered. Nevertheless the Palaeolithics in there continual search for game arrived in Europe from Africa and Asia Minor via the southern and south-eastern routes respectively.

They chose to live in the Franco-Cantabrian region to the north and south of the Pyrenees - a district which then offered an abundance of game and vegetation as well as caves and natural hiding places. As the weather became more agreeable he stayed there all year round though contact with the south was maintained. In fact trade already existed in the Upper Palaeolithic consisting of the export over long distances of marine and fossil shells and the raw materials used to make tools. During the winter he had to make do with the

provisions he had accumulated. Fire (introduced about 300,000 years ago) was already in wide use and skin clothes such as wraps, skirts and trousers were being tailored. The main diet was of course meat while the women and children gathered berries, roots and snails. The wooden spear tipped with flint and made more effective with the aid of a wooden handle that ensured grip and accuracy was probably the most effective hunting device before the introduction of the bow at he the end of the last glaciation (75,000 years ago). Knives and scissors came with the use of bone and antlers in the period known as the Magdalenian epoque (between I5,000 and 8? 000 B.C.).

However, it is in the Aurignacian cultural epoque (dated 30,000 - I0,000 B.C.) that cave art is developed. Works of art have been discovered in more than five hundred different places. Some of them contain as many as 300 paintings sculptures drawings and ornaments. Their sophistication is little short of astonishing given the circumstances which surrounded them. At first they are merely scratched or etched on the rock surface then outlines are drawn and finally the areas are coloured with fine white chalk, yellow ochre, brown and red hematite, red ochre and black oxide of manganese. These were mixed with animal fat and applied in the manner of oil paint. The best wall-paintings are found in the famous caves of Altamira, Combarelles, Font-de-Gaume, La Mouthe, Marsoulas, Niaux, Lascaux and Les Trois Freres.

Altamira is the cave which has been longest known. Bison are the most frequently depicted ~~painting~~ animals but horses deer wolf and boar also occur. It is difficult to see the main series of paintings together adequately since they stretch as much as 45 feet across the very low ceiling of the great hall. The Magdalenians were probably responsible for the works.

Lascaux was discovered as recently as I940. The animal pictures are large and abundant - mainly aurochs horse and deer. An unknown animal sometimes called a unicorn is also depicted. The unusual group of bison rhinoceros and man found in a shaft is the nearest thing to a composite picture known. The animals have spears in or on them.

Les Trois Fréres includes the painting of a man dressed in animal disguise possibly a sorcerer - which seems to confirm the notion of hunting magic as do the speared horse from Le Portel and the speared bear found in nearby caves. Another sorcerer may be intended in the large panel of engravings.

Engraved or carved bones and the mural decorations of caves and

shelters apart from their great artistic merit pose many other problems concerning the magical and perhaps religious aim of this earliest art. Strangely enough the sexual symbols and opulent women of the Aurignacian give way later to the animal art already in the course of development. The deliberate alteration of the essential features of certain animals indicate taboos and the presence of human figures in masks evoke the dancing and initiation ceremonies of living primitive peoples or may in fact represent the gods of the Upper Palaeolithic. Or it may mean simply that disguise was the means primitive man used in order to stalk his prey more successfully. However, the weight is with the former because this cave art was clearly intended for purposes other than the recording of mere history. Furthermore, these paintings were enacted in the depths and obscure places of the cave indicating that they had a mysterious significance or were intended to be seen only at special times.

This art at any rate experienced an extraordinary flowering in western Europe. Its unfolding was almost identical in places considerable distances away from eachother: from the Yonne to the straits of Gibraltar and from Sicily to the Gulf of Gascony. That there was contact between Europe and north Africa is more than probable.

Throughout the Sahara from Hoggar to the Fezzan and in Libya rock paintings and engravings are numerous. Animals such as elephants giraffes and buffaloes are depicted and the Neolithic signs of domestic animals such as sheep and long horned cattle. Shown too are sorcerers disguised with horns feathers and a tail. The analogies between this art and that of the Spanish Levant group are of great importance. For it would appear that similar analogies exist between these and the prehistoric art of south Africa all of which indicates that all the various depictions have their roots in a common tradition. When the Europeans arrived in south Africa in the 19th century they found the Neolithic traditions still alive and well in the art of the Bushmen.

Possibly the most fascinating and informative of all art of prehistoric times is that of the Mediterranean provinces of Spain. The art of Castellon Albacete and Teruel though thought to derive from the Magdalenian is in character quite different. We see composite pictures of animals and humans as well as silhouettes painted in red and black. These pictures are uniquely informative on weaponry and clothes and include scenes of war dances and what

appears to be an execution. The Cogul woman frieze is one of the best known and a definite resemblance to African rock art is visible.

This ancient culture referred to as Caspian is considered to be at a more advanced stage than its Franco-Cantabrian relative. Apart from the characteristics already mentioned it is to be noted that the paintings are no longer confined to the walls and roof of the cave but are to be found also in the open on rocks and cliffs standing out as silhouettes. Its influence was to extend from southern and central Spain to the Atlas mountains and the whole of the north African littoral and even as far as Upper Egypt where rock paintings of the same kind in red and black have been found.

Those who produced this art were still a hunting people but they stood at the parting of the ways. They heralded the age when the first flocks were put out to pasture and the first furrows were ploughed and the potter's craft was brought to south-west Europe by semi-civilized invaders. It has to be admitted however that there were already existing pastoral and agricultural Neolithic men in Africa and Asia Minor at the time when Europe's Upper Palaeolithic was at its zenith. Contributing to the extinction of the old Magdalenian culture was the efflux of the Capsian to central Europe, the arrival of the Campignian culture from Italy and a Nordic culture based on the use of bone. This transitional phase speeded up the shift from the figurative to the stylized which already existed throughout the Upper Palaeolithic in the form of pebble painting. It is the Azilian culture which affords the best example of this.

The caves of Castillo and Niaux enable us to observe that at an earlier epoque certain artists already possessed a large repertory of conventional signs from which the Azilian figures were derived. The painted motifs are most frequently dots or bars in different groupings, crosses with one or two arms, barred circles, rectangles with two diagonals, circles with a central dot and a few rare alphabetiform signs such as E and F etc. The double or triple chevron comes close to a seated man judging from less stylized Spanish rock figures. The single or two-armed cross and the ladder- shaped sign with a single vertical running through a large number of rungs recall an upright man. This schematic art form spread to Ireland Scotland and Scandinavia where it rejoined another branch coming from central Asia. It very soon radiated throughout the old world endowing various groups with a complete vocabulary of signs which they could elaborate in their own ways. The process of elaborating them into ideographic

script was left to the tribes of China Chaldea Egypt and North India. The phonetic alphabet was on the way. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion at this point that without art there would have been no civilization. Without art as the only true means of his self expression it is extremely doubtful if he would have lived at all beyond his first appearance. That man is essentially a creative being is the first condition for any understanding of him. Just what is art therefore and where did it come from?

It is born of the objective appraisal of the world - the profound schism born of consciousness or self-awareness which places man outside of creation and implants in him the yearning and need to be reconciled with it. It is precisely this too we saw that is at the heart of all religious systems. That art from the beginning therefore was imbued with some sort of magical significance cannot be seriously doubted. It was primarily a means for man to attaching himself to the external world, lessening the natural difference which alienated him from it and minimising the terror which he experienced when confronted with it. Even the earliest examples of art show two aspects - in one, man attempts to project himself on the universe to make his mark on it to put his name on it - in the other, to annex it to himself to make it his own. In both cases there is a struggle for possession because he wants either to confirm his impress on the universe or to secure it in the form of an image a carbon copy over which he has power.

The mark of possession is both the mark of ownership like the hatchings on bone implements and the symbolic reassurance like the hand prints we see at Gargas for example. The two coexist in the reproduction, the duplicate, the identikit which must bear such a close parallel with the real thing as to be the real thing. That is why the cave bison for example is in fact the synthesis in pictorial form of all the attributes of bison of which primitive man had an encyclopaedic knowledge. It is a simplification, an absolute, perhaps even a god. To fix it with your spear or arrow is to be vouchafed victory over it in much the same way as practisers of Voodoo believe they can injure a man by piercing a wax duplicate of him with pins. Likewise the ancient Egyptiams believed that a true facsimile of an article would reconstitute itself on the other side as the real thing which the deceased could then avail himself of. The practice goes on in modern day Taiwan where paper reproductions are burnt as offerings to ancestors.

Thus by a kind of tranference the image whether in clay or paint embodied the power which it represented. One of the most important of these powers was fertility. So the oldest known human figure is the female absolute or Venus.

The Aurignacian Venuses already exhibit in their generalisation that trend which is already inherent in the simplification process and which invariably follows on the heels of realism - stylization. These figures were the work of a civilization that extended along the edge of the northern glaciers from the Gulf of Gascony to the heart of Siberia. The appearance of these figures had been enormously modified by application of the laws which had emerged in simple decoration. The artist developed everything which suggested regularity symmetry and even geometry. The Venus is doubly symmetrical both vertically and horizontally. The need to simplify, condense, prune to the bare essentials, which process we now call 'abstraction' is the impulse within stylization. It leads inevitably to the substitution of the geometric design for the realistic image. This conceptualisation was undoubtedly to the detriment of sensuous naturalism but it did lead to the alphabet, geometry architecture and mathematics. The pebbles from the Mas d'Azil are the best examples of this process showing as they do schematicized figures that are abbreviated to the point that they resemble letters.

Next comes the Neolithic age an entirely new era of civilisation. With it comes the beginning of architecture, coastal navigation and trading along river valleys. Here too we see the beginning of robbery and warfare. And connected with all of them is the accumulation of collective ~~capiat~~ capital in the form of crops and herds. Also, to make their appearance were weaving and pottery which were to grow in stature as trading commodities. Superimposed on this age was the Megalithic. The dolmen civilisation which remains its major monument seems likely to have spread from India to Ireland by sea routes. Artistic motifs are assimilated by groups of quite different characters and are modified by them.

In its simplest form the standing stone or menhir is the first monument. It was probably intended to provide a permanent home for the dead. In Madagascar it still serves this purpose. It represents the collaboration between art and religion. It is the symbol where the dead and the forces of nature reside and receptacle too of man's magic power to confer meaning. The dolmen idol often stylized into the face of an owl as well as the rotunda constructions

with an entrance corridor such as the passage graves or tholoi can be recognised however deformed from one end of the Mediterranean to the other. These monuments together with cairns and barrows are not peculiar to the Nordic groups but extend too along the Atlantic coast through Southern France and Portugal to North Africa Palestine Asia Minor and India as well as Malta. Some of the best examples are to be found in Ireland notably New Grange thought to have been put there by Viking invaders. The alignments at Carnac, Gavrinis and elsewhere point to the probability that this cult of the dead was in some way connected with the movement of the stars particularly the sun. This is certainly true of Stone Henge which is also thought to be a primitive observatory. In any case considerable mystery surrounds them. The fact that they exist so profusely and so far and wide and morse, the fact that they all seem to follow the same basic pattern has led to some interesting theories. Their point of origin is believed to lie in the Danish islands especially Zealand where the number of prehistoric monuments is said to exceed 3,000. In any case this is a profoundly religious art connected with worship and based on eternal values rather than on human transitory values.

In much the same way no doubt the agricultural people of Egypt in the early stages of their civilization conceived the Pyramid a structure having nothing to do with Nature but which in its rigid and definite form uprears itself as a monstrous triangle. Even in the Bronze age the triangle appearing together with the circle and the spiral exerted a strong appeal as an absolute form. Amazingly while Stonehenge was being built around 1500 B.C. the Egyptians had already been building their pyramids for over a thousand years.

All this was the consequence of the changeover from hunting to the sedentary culture of the farmer. The beginning of the accumulation of food capital over and above the immediate needs of the tribe foreshadowed the city with its treasury. To collect administer and protect this treasure a more highly developed hierarchical organisation was needed. The worker and the craftsman were placed at the chief's disposal and a supply of manpower was made available to the farmer. These changes in production evoked new cosmic beliefs. The old totems become modified to the new cosmic beliefs. In Egypt the sun moon and rain take over the place once exclusively occupied by animals. The bull in turn was to become lunar and the lion solar.

It was inevitable that the menhir, then the dolmen and the cromlech should have been developed at that time in response to the new cult. They owe their existence to those laws of creativity such as rhythm, regularity,

symmetry, centricity and so on which were already present in the first art. Now art has, as it were, attained self-consciousness and man has realised the magic inherent in his own powers which he invests on the stones he finds in nature and in the making of fire. That fire ceremonies took place in connection with gallery graves is commonly held and that fire itself was sacred and connected with ceremonials of the dead is beyond dispute. The making of fire by bow and stick is believed to be the origin of the double spiral used at this time universally in stone-work and pottery. The single spiral itself may go back to the method Palaeolithic people had of making a continuous string important for lassoes etc by cutting hide in a spiral fashion. All this of course is rather speculative and in a sense does not do justice to ancient man who was already fully human. The spiral exists abundantly in nature in sea shells, thumbprints, rock formations, pebbles and the like so it is probable that the form was well known long before it was made use of. This is all the more probable when you accept that very early man had a developed aesthetic sense as we know from the natural oddities such as fossilized shells, fragments of lead and iron ore and ammonites that are found in the caves of the Upper Palaeolithic. But that the spiral had special and even graat significance for ancient man is certain. Its decorative role in pottery is immense.

Pottery was widely held to have developed side by side with agriculture. But this is not so. It seems that Denmark had coarse pottery before it was familiar with crop growing. Inversely the farming settlement at Jericho dating from around 5,000 B.C. had no knowledge of it. As a key to dating however its value is inestimable. For example - A particular type of pottery with an incised decoration of lozenges and chequer patterns was at its zenith at the end of the Neolithic in France and Italy. Cord-pottery decorated with the impress of cords on the virgin clay appeared a little later with the advent of copper.

After the Neolithic came the age of metals beginning with the Bronze considered to be from about 1600 to 800 B.C. About 1200 B.C. occurred the migration of the Dorians to Greece, the conquest of Troy, the devastation of Crete and the threatened invasion of Egypt by the maritime peoples. Not very much later the Etruscans landed in Italy from Asia Minor.

The introduction of bronze heralded the classic age of utility. Metal ornament, weaponry, pendant jars, brooches, rivets and casting all make their appearance. The art spreads rapidly from Mesopotamia where it has been in existence

from the fifth millennia B.C. It comes by way of Troy, Cyprus, the Danube valley and the Elbe showing the immense importance of the early trade routes.

Among the objects found in the Germanic region the bronze ceremonial chariot of Trundholm is particularly informative. It is usually described as a chariot of the sun yet it bears lunar numbers and since the bronze disc is overlaid with gold on one side the other side is evidently to be regarded as the dark moon. Prehistoric religion was pre-eminently under the influence of the moon and Odin's Ring or Donar's Wheel with its four spokes signifies the four phases of the moon and the four quarters of heaven. No other star or planet is quartered in this way and none is so closely connected with night and therefore with the cult of the dead. The moon was also important as a measure of time so that all cultic ceremonies were held at night.

The bronze car of Strettweg takes us into the Iron Age and tells us of the practice of sacrificing deer especially in the regions settled by Celts. The stag incidentally was much loved by the cave dweller and it tells us something about him. Its courage, nobility of carriage and magnificent adornment to some degree mirrored his own image. In any case the pagan Sun-Deer is the origin of the later sun-worship and the mythology that surrounds it. As the old Nordic poems tell us it was believed to wear a radiant pair of antlers that rose into the heavens. In its artistic development the antlers become transformed into a crown which can still be seen on crests and the like.

However the really important thing about bronze was the impetus it gave to the export business. Ireland became the first to export gold as well as bronze axes. Irish gold lunulae are to be found in western France and even in Hanover in Germany. Central Germany in fact with Bavaria, Bohemia and Hungary were thriving centres of the industry which gradually spread to Italy, Transylvania, Brittany and Britain. This increase in trade brought with it cultural changes due mainly to contact with the Creto-Mycenaean world.

Thus with the advent of the Iron Age the exact time of which is uncertain we find the emergence of the first coherent Celtic culture. The first period known as the Hallstatt extends from southern Germany to central France before reaching the Mediterranean. Its art works and bronze fibulae are characterised by lavish geometrism and embossed dots. By the time of the La Tene civilisation (400 - 100 B.C.) the Celts are minting their own coins based on Greek versions and the first two-headed Hermeses and full-faced busts appear.

By this time the major civilisations of the world have firmly gelled. But before we go on to an examination of their art and the influences behind it some mention must be made of primitive art by way of rounding off our foray into the prehistoric world.

When we come to an examination of the word primitive we realise that the art cultures of Africa and Polynesia although they appear naieve to us did in fact undergo considerable development albeit in isolation. Only the Bushmen, the Australian Aborigines, the Fuegians on the tip of south America and possibly the Eskimos can be truly seen in the context of prehistoric art. Apart from these the child holding in his unconscious the entire sequence of man's artistic development is the best reference point.

The Fuegians alas are almost exinct but what knowledge we have of them shows very little development in plastic representation. The mask comes to them as a rather late addition.

The Eskimos have a much richer contribution to make. Like the Lappa, the Yakuts, and the Greenlanders they maintain their ancient connection between north America and Asia. Their environment which can reach 36°C below zero is still very much Ice Age. For wood they rely on flotsam washed up on the shores of the Arctic region of North America and Greenland. Their way of life was fostered in the absence of pottery metals flocks and harvests. And their artefacts are usually made of ivory carvings often of the human figure and drawings done on leather of hunting, sledging, fishing etc. There is little inclination to decoration. Nevertheless they have an elaborate social life consisting of ceremonies for the initiation of their youth into the rights and duties of adults and the tradition and beliefs of the tribe. They have hunting magic too for the capture of the bigger animals and incantations to exhort the souls of the slain animals to re-incarnate to ensure a future supply. These customs may very well offer the nearest living analogy to the tribal life of man in the Upper Palaeolithic. The carved bones found in caves for example are similar to the hunting charms of the Eskimo.

The Eskimo is a hunter like the Red Indian and the Bushmen. The latter now almost extinct seemed to have wandered over the whole of South Africa in their search for game. Until the nineteenth century they slept in caves or holes in the ground, killed their quarry with bow and arrow and lived too on fruit and edible fungi. Their culture was Old Stone Age and they knew nothing of

metals. They are about four feet seven in height and have very narrow limbs and spirally curled hair. Homer, Herodotus and Aristotle seem to allude to them. As well as drawings incised with sharp stones they also have polychrome paintings coloured with minerals mixed with animal fat. These works show animals that wandered from north Africa after the Ice Age -like the rhinoceros and the giraffe. Together with the Pygmies of central Africa these men can be taken to be the most ancient racial group in Africa.

The art of the Plains Indians of Nevada Arizona and New Mexico provide further information because this group had reached the agricultural stage of human development when the white man came on the scene waving his bible. Here we find numerous picture-writings the pigments again being ground in the fat got from beavers tails and antelope-hooves. They also had weaving, pottery and sculpture in wood, bone, horn and stone. The Haida Indians of the north-west inhabiting the region from south Alaska to Oregon are vastly different from these. Here we have a very ~~sphi~~ ~~sp~~ sophisticated culture with a ritual religion based on magic and totemism. Their art is an individual one expressed in drawings, intricate patterns, architecture and realistic sculptures. The ancestral totem pole is their emblem. They had a thorough knowledge of silver and copper and their style of painting involving the interior structure of the figure is characteristic of all Indian art. It has to be pointed out that the art of these peoples as it now exists under the influence of the white market is radically different from the authentic art forms that existed a hundred years ago.

At the end of the 15th century when the Portugese navigators set foot in Africa the majority of the kingdoms the Yoruba, Benin, Loango, Congo, Lunda and Luba to mention only a few were at their height. Unfortunately, they could not withstand the pressure of the Europeans who exploited them as slaves for nearly four hundred years afterwards. Of all the arts of these peoples the sculptures of the Benin people, an agricultural tribe, rank supreme. They were cast to the utmost degree of perfection by the cire perdue process which the Benin had learnt from the Ife people between the 12th and 15th centuries. The Benin had lived in hiding from the white invader until a British commissioner found them on January 3, 1897. The commissioner and his two hundred strong escort were wiped out. Those captured were dealt with in an orgy of human sacrifice. Forty six days later the Benins were massacred by the English marines. Their capital was razed and their

plaques, sculptures and carved tusks were carried off. In the royal palace were discovered works of considerable antiquity. Portrayed were their gods - the ram, the catfish, the snake, the lizard - as well as representations of the European in the bas-reliefs.

With the exception of the sculptures of Melanesia the art of Oceania is from the point of view of prehistoric art of little interest. It is largely integral to the mythology of the islands and invariably on a small scale, their three dimensional work being largely in the nature of dolls made of feathers and tapa rather than statues. The singular exception is Easter Island which is something of an anachronism in world art let alone Polynesian.

There are no less than five hundred effigies on the island ranging from nine feet to forty-eight. The islanders still know how to make and erect them. The busts, virtually all head, and thought to represent ancestors have arms in bas-relief just above the navel. Wooden statuettes symbolizing the dead or spirits and ones too of bearded old men are indigenous. Birds play an important part in their mythology as indeed they do throughout the whole of Polynesian culture. The god Tane Make Make is ornamented with the beak of an albatross. The story goes that every year besides the king there was alected a captain or war-lord. He was known as Tangata-Manu or Bird-Man. To secure the fittest man for this post it was to custom for a swimming race to be held. The winner was he who could negotiate the dangerous currents to the crag where the lucky bird the sea swallow had its nest and snatch therefrom an egg which he was to bring back to the shore unbroken. Statues still commemorating this and the bird Manu-Tara are to be seen on the island. It is certain then, that a unique hero-worship cult was conducted on Easter Island.

Lastly before looking at the mask we turn our attention to the Australian Aborigine commonly regarded as the most primitive people of them all. They seem to have wandered from India and found themselves stranded on the continent when the ocean swallowed up the land bridge which then existed. Like the Eskimos they knew nothing of pottery or metals and the best they could do by way of shelter apart from the caves of New South Wales was a simple hut that was little more than a wind-break. Nevertheless under terrible conditions an art grew up that in many ways resembles that of the European Neolithic. It hovers between naturalism and stylization. The figures are often only faintly outlined with fine red streaks on the body. In the Warramunga district of Central Australia were found ancient rock paintings consisting merely of circles and straight lines in white and brown on a red background.

All these decorations had their meaning: the concentric rings indicate resting places and the connecting lines tracks.

The European presence as the Dutch explorers found was readily assimilated by the Aborigine who is curiously equipped with an unerring ability to capture a likeness, a feat which gives us an idea of the dexterity and accomplishmeant behind the prehistoric paintings of the Franco-Cantabrian. Their art also is not without humour, a quality which is sometimes misunderstood in primitive art especially African. The Blackfellows will draw readily on anything that is available. Slabs of smoked bark are sometimes used with the thumbnail used as a pencil. They depict birds, lizards, beetles, crabs and fish as well as men.

The Aborigine however reveres his art. For him it is at the centre of the life process and his religious ritual is focused on it. The incantation begins with the group seated in a circle. A rhythm is established by the movements of the body as well as interjections. At a certain point in the unfolding of the narrative the reciter begins to draw spirals in the sand with the tip of the finger each spiral representing the beginning and end of a sentence. Then, still in continuous rhythm he joins the spirals with straight lines so that the last stroke merges with the end of the recital. The creative act becomes the gesture of the totality of the personality for one and all. Small plaques engraved with the same group of spirals are also connected with the ceremony. Aside from the ceremony they have no importance for the Aborigine which is an important point. The thing as an art object is merely the extension of the figurative drama: it is not anything in itself merely the 'medium-through-which'. Its function takes precedence over its aesthetic value. This is an element that is common to most primitive art. Here too we have confirmed the immense importance of the spiral for ancient man.

Equally important if not moreso is the mask. An entire book could be devoted to this topic alone. But we must make do with a sketch of its socio-religious function. In Africa this function is extensive.

Generally it has to do with some part of the myth of creation. The relation of the wearer to it changes: sometimes he himself as the masked one is the divinity or deity sometimes the mask itself is the power and he is merely the conveyor. Often the mask is carried on a pole and as such it is understood to have preceded the statue as a form of artistic expression. They usually serve in

the enactment of myth or ritual.

The cultural region of West Africa coincides with an ancient matriarchal culture founded on agriculture and carried on without the aid of those things we normally associate with agriculture such as the plough and draught-animals. Its religion is a pronounced ancestor-worship. Masks and images of the dead play a major role in this cult of death. Here as with the Aborigine we must judge their artefacts along functional - religious lines rather than aesthetic. The masks are used in combination with the dance to promote fertility or to frighten off the enemy. The signs and constructions on these masks have definite and important meanings for the initiate.

Four Sudanese groups of varying sizes had at their disposal and still have a litany of signs. These are the Dogon, Bozo, Mandingo and Bambara. The latter have two hundred and sixty four signs of stature while the Dogon possess a complicated system of 22 families of I2 elements each of them covering a series of 22 pairs of signs. The women use a different system. These signs are not only a means of expression they each have a value of their own that preceded the use to which they were eventually put. Together the system narrates a myth of creation. The 22 series reflect the 22 categories of things and beings as well as the various phases of the organization of the cosmos. The mask relating to this is a complicated affair shaped like the Cross of Lorraine with an arm at top and bottom representing the upper and lower worlds. The central shaft is the atmosphere. It also stands for the descent to earth of an ark for the reorganisation of the world; the face of the mask is the ark. Again it symbolises the remains of the first dead human being in the world as well as other events of the creation.

Besides this type of mask there are others to do with animals and men. Each of them with the help of its accessories - the dances, songs, chants of the audience translates an episode in the dramas of agriculture and social order.

The Bambara and Bozo on the banks of the Niger have similar masks and ceremonies. The rhythms of the drums are the actual rhythms of the creation danced by the demiurge. Their sound is the apotheosis of his voice which at the beginning was an inaudible vibration. The characters who first appear on the stage are the beings who prevailed at the first vibration a period of darkness and disorder. The wearers have simple face masks of undyed cloths and rags symbolising the absence of technical knowledge that comes with order. Their

whirling dances express the development of the creative vibration and the spread of agriculture. Finally the demiurge himself appears followed by two figures wearing long robes representing rain and masks of female faces. These are the two daughters of the demiurge who preside over the two stars of the cosmic order. This drama is pregnant with energy and meaning for the primitive because it is superordinate to his separate existence. Here emotions and labour are collectively transported to another realm where every gesture has a cosmic religious and metaphysical significance. The drama is all the more meaningful because the participants believe in it body and soul. The extent of our own estrangement from real communal worship is to be measured by this. It is to be noted too perhaps with more envy that the West African the cult is even more ubiquitous and all - powerful than their masked rituals indicate. Practically every household article as well as the house itself and the human body bear these symbols and images some of them totemistic symbols of animals.

Visible identity entails invisible identity. Art is seen therefore to be the material means of reaching and demonstrating spiritual forces and of even introducing them into the world of the senses. It serves to establish a connection between the two realities which split man in two - the physical reality which the body fringes and the immaterial reality in which the soul resides. At the magical stage this imperceptible reality is composed of spirits, souls of the dead animistic forces like mana as well as desires and needs and at the religious stage, usually polytheistic, an entire cosmogony is arrived at which Negro art reveals. The outward form changes much more radically than the inner meaning. For example the standing stone or menhir was believed by Neolithic man to be the habitat of the disembodied soul. In Africa, Oceania and America the belief remains even though the stone has now become the ancestral statue. Primitive man therefore prolongs the supernatural aspect of art together with the beliefs of prehistoric man. He finds it difficult to take the religious or magical image however stylized or remote from its original form at its face value. If it exists for him at all it exists as the custodian of an invisible power existing in it, for it and by it and is therefore an object worthy of his veneration. Idolatry in fact is still prevalent in south America, India and Africa which disturbs the Christian churches as it once disturbed Moses. The Brahmins who profess adherence to the Vedic doctrines are among the greatest idolators in the world so it would be a mistake to think that the phenomenon implies an inferior development of culture.

(2) THE ART OF EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA

THE ART OF EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA

The emergence of the city-state laid the foundations of the great agrarian empires of the Indus, Egypt and Mesopotamia. Excavations have shown that the ancient cities between the Tigris and Euphrates had their origins around 3,000 B.C. in neolithic farming villages made up of reed huts. This part of the world was particularly favourable to this development because of the constant floods which left a rich diluvial deposit on the plains. Add to this the discovery of metals and the potters wheel and the consequent creation of new classes and the city with its hierarchical class system becomes an inevitable result. Given too the continual warring between the growing cities of the Semitic north and the Sumerian south it was perhaps inevitable also that the city structure should have been supported at the bottom by slave labour which was cheaper than donkey or camel and could be relied upon to renew itself.

While magic dominated the lives of the early hunters, fertility and the mysterious turning of the seasons dominated the urban people. Thus with the personification of the nebulous forces as gods there came into existence a class of priests with their attendants to act as mediaries between the gods and the community. Their function too was to deal with the water supplies on the fertile Mesopotamian plain while the tribal chief had taken on his new duties of planner, law-giver governor and general. The new aristocracy or amelu was headed by the priest-king supposedly appointed by god. The mushkenu or middle class was made up of craftsmen, farmers and merchants while the ardu consisted of slaves mostly prisoners of war but also some who had sold themselves for debt. In fact this is an important revolution that capitalism brought with it. The old talion of an eye for an eye was giving way to the idea that some crimes could be restituted by money. Offences against the state were also beginning to be seen in a new and different light but offences against the king or the palace were met with death. There were harsh laws dealing with theft but in the main the ruler strove to maintain a functional state guided by very far-sighted moral principles. For example the Babylonian king Hammurabi (1728-1686) states that it is his purpose to 'make justice appear in the land, to destroy the evil and the wicked in order that the strong might not oppress the weak'. Clearly people thought of the city gods as guardians of morality and the king appointed by Marduk to be the divine instrument by which the law of social order was to be carried out. The word for justice literally meant

straight. Here too we have the beginning of the contract a very important concept that has psychological co-relates as well as economic. The first covenant of the Jews was in fact a contract which is basically proof positive that a bond however obscure exists between the giver and receiver that is binding from a moral point of view. Behind it is the notion of individual freedom if not its actuality. A marriage for example was not valid unless it was ratified by a sealed contract and witnessed. If a man deposited goods with another man he could not by law demand its return unless he could show a receipt that was signed and witnessed. These innovations are still very much with us four thousand years later.

The Sumerians considered the first civilized people of Mesopotamia are the first to reveal a definitive art. Their figures are always in profile and the eye occupies the greater part of the face. The upper part of the body is bare and the lower part is clad in a bell-shaped tunic. The male had close shaven hair and beard and the nude is not represented. Sumerian art reaches its zenith in the early period with the destruction of Lagash which begins the age of Gudea. The latter seems to have been a priest which is not surprising because the priestly cast was a dangerous political element in any city. Splendour is brought for the first time with the use of gold for making vessels, helmets, (the famous helmet of the king of Ur) jewellry and the queens headdress. Gudea is depicted himself holding a plan and a measuring rod showing the increasing importance of architecture. Indeed the aft of this district including Egypt is famous for its architecture than for anything else. Much of our knowledge of the earliest period comes from inscriptions on buildings and statues. From a rudimentary script which shows connections with the Indus valley the Sumerians evolved a cuneiform writing which presently became predominant in the Near East and was used for several languages.

Further to the north Semitic forms emerge under the rule of the kings of Sumer and Akkad. The bald Sumerians are replaced by long bearded figures with thick curly hair. In addition to bas-reliefs, cylindrical seals were found only an inch or two long and evidently meant to be worn around the neck as adornment. Depicted on them are the heroic deeds of Gilgamesh in his encounters with dragons, lions and bulls. Sometimes he holds out to the lunar bull the vessel which is the source of the Tigris and the Euphrates. The art work of high order shows elaborate treatment of the muscles and the realistic movements of animals. In the Naram -Sin stele in the Louvre this fresh realism reaches a new height vis a vis the former

stiffness. It depicts the victory of the king over his enemy.

Hammurabi was to unite the whole of Mesopotamia into a single Semitic empire with Babylon as its centre. He also overthrew the old gods and established a monotheism based on Bel or Marduk. This inaugurated the golden age of Mesopotamian civilization with trade, law, agriculture and the arts all flourishing. However it did not last long. It was eventually destroyed by internal revolts and incursions by the mountain dwellers. The same fate awaited the Assyrian empire which emerged in the first millennium and had its capitals successively at Assur, Nimrod and Ninevah. Nabopolassar took Nineveh in 612 with the help of the mountain dwellers, the Medes of Indo-European stock. However their art forms had reached a level of technical achievement that is on a par with the Egyptian.

Most of the reliefs discovered are now in the British Museum. From these one can get a good idea of the characteristics of the Assyrian style. Gods as well as kings and dignitaries are shown with full beards and long hair while servants and eunuchs are beardless - though unlike the figures depicted in Sumerian art their hair too is long. Women are very seldom represented and when they are it is lamenting in trains of prisoners or standing on the walls of fortresses. Most cities and villages at that time were fortified strongly with ramparts, reinforced by quadrangular towers and pierced by strongly fortified gates as at Khorsabad. In the rare cases where the figures of slain soldiers appear quite naked there is little sense of organic structure although details are often accurately observed. Besides this there are other innovations like the winged bulls that were to decorate the angles of walls all over Assyria. Some of these are colossal with five legs so that they can be seen as a whole from front or side. These first made their appearance at the gates of the North-Western palace built by Assurnasipal(884-860) at Nineveh.

His son Salmanassar II continued his fathers work of building temples and erected the so-called Central Palace at Nimrod. On all four sides of the great Black Obelisk the most significant work of this period we see scenes in which the kings tributary vassals with their elephants and camels bring him treasure from all points of the compass.

Plant motifs and patterns are abundant in Assyrian art. As well as the rosette the palm-leaf is seen in a new form that of a fan of outspread leaves not found in Babylonian art. Very often too the palm is used to represent the tree of

life above which we see the god Assur with the symbol of the life-giving sun whose function it is to ripen the food of the earth while in other representations we see winged genii stroke the flower-tuft of the date-palm that it might bear abundant fruit. Rites and gestures associated with this desire for a good harvest occur constantly.

The palm tree ~~of~~ was of special significance because it was used extensively as a roof support between long ~~anrrow~~ narrow walls characteristic of Mesopotamian buildings. The house which might include an upper storey was built around a square or court. The palaces were built on the same plan but were considerably bigger and included several courts. They had hundreds of rooms and chapels remains of which have been found at Tell Asmar and Khorsabad . Next to the temple rose the Ziggurat a precursor of the pyramid built basically on the same principle and composed of a number of square buildings made to form a tower and culminating in a chapel at the top. Remains of these have been found at Borsippa Warka and Ur.

Decorative painting much employed on palace walls has scarcely survived owing to its extreme fragility. On a coat of lime it was fashioned of flat tints of blues, reds and blacks presiding. Perspective and shading were not used. The best collection comes from the palace at Mari with its geometrical motifs and large compositions. One of them has been reconstructed in the Louvre: it shows the king of Mari (2nd millennium) before the goddess Ishtar as well as animals plants and djinns. Besides these there were terra-cotta statuettes of women with bound feet and dancers musicians and so on. Some of these are of gold and silver. Quite a large number of bronze amulet-statuettes exist as well as bronze facings for columns ~~imiat~~ imitating the bark and leaves of palm-trees.

The alliance of Babylonia and Persia in 606B.C. put an end to the Assyrian rule and Nineveh, Nimrud, Dur-Sarrukin and Assur were razed to the ground.

Mesopotamia was severely hampered by its material conditions. Sun-dried clay bricks were its chief building material. The nature of this rather unaesthetic component meant that buildings had to be heavy and squat in order to offer any resistance to weather and foe alike. Furthermore, there was little possibility of any ornamentation other than panels of the same material applied to the walls. Openings too had to be reduced to a minimum for fear of collapse although this to some degree suited the climate. The ziggurats too, including the legendary tower of Babel, were composed of nothing but earth. The

result was that buildings throughout Mesopotamia were in a constant state of repair.

These consideration did not worry the Egyptians who were able from the beginning to work in stone of which there was an abundance in Egypt as well as the faithful Nile on which to transport it. For this reason they could make extensive use of the column which was not available to the Mesopotamians. However, the scarcity of wood particularly pine for the roofs led the Egyptians to multipy the stone supports to which the weight of the roof gave an exaggerated importance. Excellent limestone came from the edge of the Libyan desert while in Upper Egypt there was a compact sandstone and in the extreme south near Assouan reddish granite was found.

The pyramid itself spans three dynasties the first step-pyramid being built by the architect Imhotep under the instructions of king Zoser. It seems that Imhotep too invented the solar calendar. This terraced tomb was followed by the kneed pyramid of Dahshur where the final form of pyramid was erected by king Snofru. It rose to a height of 320 feet which may have encouraged his son and successor Cheops to lay the foundations of the greatest pyramids on earth at Gizeh. He was followed by Chephren who continued the tradition with his own tomb and introduced the Sphinx - the crouching lion with the kings face which gazed towards the rising sun. It was carved out of a natural ridge of rock 200 feet long. Chephren also left behind him numerous statues of himself all over life-size. They express a vitality and freedom as well as a shift towards realism which may owe something to the influence of the Mesopotamians who were of course making forays into Egypt at this time. The ideas at any rate embodied in these statues must have influenced the whole of Egyptian life. They, in fact, seem to have been nothing less than potential spare bodies in case they were needed beyond the grave. At any rate the maxims of the sages of the third millennium such as Ptahhotep exhort the people to worship the god-king in whatever form he takes -'...whether he be made of bronze or precious stones'. These sages who can be compared with the Old Prophets in that they were not always on the side of the establishment also urge the populace to 'shun envy' and 'console him who weeps', which reveals something of the moral and intellectual climate of the era which indeed is hard to reconcile with the practice of slavery conducted then on a colossal scale.

When about 2550.B.C. the fifth of the thirty dynasties that comprise the 3000 years of Egyptian civilization ascended the throne a fundamental change took place in their religious ideology. The cult of earthly majesty withdrew

before that of the sun-god Ra and the great obelisks of Abusir and Heliopolis were erected and the pyramids shrunk to more humble proportions. Such limestone statues such as those of the scribes or the Magistrate in the Cairo museum are evident attempts at verisimilitude.

At this time commercial and warlike relations with Syria increased and timber was imported via Byblos - mainly Lebanese timber, pine far more than cedar. The expeditions of the pharaohs chiefly against the invading nomads from the east were commemorated on the faces of the rocks at Sinai and other places. Expeditions against the land of Punt (Somaliland) procured perfume, oil, incense and ivory.

The next Dynasty lapsed into feudalism and then anarchy. The kings moved their throne to Sakkara where several pyramids were built. This period is famous for its hieroglyphic records of which there were many. From them one can detect the spiritual atmosphere ~~the~~ born of the new individualism which was to bring to a close the monumental art and spiritual unity of the Old Kingdom.

In many ways the art of the Middle Kingdom was not as luxurious or dynamic as the Old. However its changes were of crucial importance to the flowering of the New Kingdom. One of these was the elaboration of the ~~sim~~ simple square column into the many sided construction. In Beni-Hasan we already find the sixteen-sided column which is already the basic form of the Doric column of the Greeks. Before long there were lotus-bud capitals, round pedestals and experiments in tapering the column which the Greeks were to perfect so magnificently. This was followed in Egypt by the Hathor-headed column the capital of which showed the head of the goddess under the models of the house of Horus. In sculpture two styles emerged that of Thebes and Memphis. The latter was to remain academic while the former was charged with an extreme realism. Thebes was now in any case the centre of the Empire and a wealthy middle class resided there supported by Amenemhat who founded the XII Dynasty shortly after 2,000 B.C. In the art world African and Babylonian influences were being felt while trade increased with Crete Nubia and Arabia. In relief sculpture receding foreheads and wider mouths contributed to a general appearance of voluptuousness which ~~Amen~~ Amenemhet III was to abolish in favour of more dignified forms. Luxury in clothing showed the influence of Asia - embroidered cloths, jewellery, as well as finely pleated garments of transparent linen. All this was well nigh undone when Amenhotep IV appeared. He decreed a total realism, warts and all, which resulted in caricature. The resistance of the artists themselves to his ideas meant that art soon reverted after

his death to the time-honoured traditions. This led in sculpture to the Saite period with its elongation of the figure and its archaic smile.

In Beni-Hasan instead of painted relief actual wall paintings appeared for the first time. They were temperas, the colours being mixed with gum tragacanth and water - a method that is still used. It is also believed that glass-blowing began about this time.

During the period of the great migrations the people known as the Hyksos or shepherd kings invaded and conquered Egypt and under the oppressive government of foreign rulers Egyptian art stifled for nearly two hundred years. In 1580 Amasis founded the XVIII Dynasty and the New Kingdom. The barbarians were driven towards Palestine. Nubia, Syria, Babylonia and Crete were brought into the orbit of international trade. By the time of Amenhotep III Memphis was receiving ships coming from Greece, Arabia, Phoenica, Crete as well as the Black Sea and the Adriatic. During this time the priests of Amon Ra gained even greater wealth and power

Then, around 1360 B.C. Amenophis IV in a spectacular and unprecedented move changed his name to Akhnaton and declared the worship of any other god but the solar disc Aton to be heresy. Monotheism had been slumbering in the Egyptian lap for some time but the king made matters worse by transfering his residence to Tel - El - Amarna where he laid the foundations of a temple thereby, unwittingly perhaps, establishing Thebes as the centre of the old religion devoted to Amon and to a lesser extent Osiris. This was the first crack that was to lead to the total fragmentation of the Empire.

Simultaneously Akhnaton initiated an artistic revolution which can still be seen at Tel-El-Amarna. The bust of his wife Nofretete ranks beside the Mona Lisa as a work of classical accomplishment. However, neither the religious or cultural revolution had any effect. His successor and son-in-law Tutankhaton was prevailed upon by the priests to return to Thebes, which he did, changing his name to Tutankhamen. The religion of Amon was re-established while the boy king looked on. His tomb was found intact in 1922 giving him that immortality which had eluded his father-in-law.

As an architect Rameses II was second only to the builders of the pyramids. In the royal temple of Amon at Karnak founded by Amenemhet I and added too by his successors he finished the colonnaded hall on a scale vaster than anything previously attempted. 4,550 feet long and 1,820 feet wide it is the greatest monument of Egyptian religious art. He also built a vast sepulchral temple

on the left bank of the Nile as well as temples at Tanis and Bubastis. A great avenue of sphinxes leads up to the temple at Es-Sebua and in the temple at Bet-el-Wali proto-Doric columns still support the transept. At Abu-Simbel the temple itself is hewn out of the hill. Egypt was never to see the like of this again. The priests in the south assumed such authority that towards 1090 the high-priest Herihor ruled the delta as pharaoh in everything but name. Local dynasties sprang up with Libya and Ethiopia succeeding one another until in 671 the Assyrians invaded the land. There followed the Persians and then Alexander the Great in 332.

Whatever could be done in art without the benefit of the Greek intellect was done by the Egyptians in an area smaller than Switzerland. They had never reached the point where objects could be rendered in their true perspective. In fact in a way quite reminiscent of the Italian Renaissance it withered away in the constant repetition of canons that had been established almost from the beginning. Even the final innovation of book illustration and papyrus paintings relied on the old symbolism attitudes profiles without which there was nothing. What inspired it was the drudgery of life on one hand and a collective obsession with the afterlife and the inevitability of death.

The formal differences between Mesopotamian art and Egyptian is the measure of the difference in their religious beliefs. The Egyptians could always show a somewhat braver face to the world especially during the Middle Kingdom when the pleasures of the after-life were within the reach of every man and mummification was no longer the privilege of the rich elite. Furthermore the pharaoh was divine and his works did more than say so. He was the centre of a cult of veneration that had its impulse in hope and even optimism from which spring the charm and elegance of late Egyptian art. The Mesopotamian on the other hand had no such consolations. His king was not divine merely his surrogate or beloved nominee whose royal titles were merely 'beloved of the gods' or simply 'chosen.' Their after-life too was so ill defined and suppressed that it could only have inspired terror and dread. The severity of Babylonian and Assyrian art is to be understood from this point of view and so too is their innate conservatism. The Egyptian artist enjoyed some creative freedom; the Mesopotamian had to design by the book 'not one thumb more not one thumb less.' Then of course there were the material differences between the two territories which we have already mentioned. Lastly, there are the ethnic differences which are harder to judge. It would seem at any rate that the Egyptian was naturally endowed with a taste

for beauty that was more subtle and refined than that of the Mesopotamians.

However, in its beginnings Mesopotamian art like that of Egypt was dominated by magico-religious considerations. In fact there is a thin line indeed between myth as it exists in its own right and myth used as a boost to the prestige of state, king or some other figure, legendary or real. In one such myth for example Sargon of Akkad, founder of the Assyrian empire, is described as the son of a priestess abandoned as a baby in a reed basket and brought up by a gardener. Similarly in the book of Exodus we hear of how the pharaoh's daughter discovered the abandoned Moses in a basket of ~~bue~~ bulruhses and of how Moses was brought up in the splendour of the royal court where he became 'learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians'. Then of course there was the myth of Romulus and Remus who were suckled by mother nature herself in the form of a she wolf. Elijah the Hebrew prophet could call down fire from the heavens to where he eventually disappeared in a flaming chariot thought by some cranks in our day to have been a spaceship. This function of myth to raise the ordinary into the extraordinary cannot be under-estimated. The Jews, given their conviction that they were the chosen race, relied on it heavily and it is held by some scholars that the miracles of Jesus do indeed fall into this category. Often, objects like hills rocks trees wells and so on become part of the prestige myth. The Old Testament tells of the Seers oak and the 'Well of the Living One who sees me' as well as the burning bush indicating that these places and things had not been divested of their mana content.

There is no doubt that Egyptian and Mesopotamian art was permeated ~~wi~~ with this need to glorify king and state. Assyrian bas-reliefs notably the victory stele of Naram-Sin (Sumerian) show the king as huge and his enemy as minute. This device was later adopted as a canon of European religious art. However it would be a gross error to think that prestige was the primary concern in the art of the two countries. Above all, it was in the service of the gods for their glorification and intended for the protection of the faithful. Were this not so, the differences between the two arts may not have been as vast as they were. Egypt, from the nature of its terrain, used tombs, caves, or stone coverings for its burial places. Where and how one was buried was of prime importance to them. It adorned them with figures glorifying the gods and with the purpose of safeguarding the dead. The painted facsimiles which represented an object already endowed it with potential resurrection. This was completed by the 'breathing on of its name' ceremony because the Egyptians believed that to possess the name of a thing was to possess its raison d'etre or its life-force. This is why when the Jewish Yahweh finally recedes from objectivity he

necessarily becomes the Nameless One. In any case this Egyptian practice of covering the walls of tombs with everything the deceased could hope for in the hereafter did much, we can be sure, to abate its terror. The Mesopotamians alas could only hope that their children would not neglect the customary votive offerings of food and drink.

It was not Christianity but Hellenism that finally gave the death-blow to Egyptian art. After the conquest of Alexandria in which the Egyptians at first could see only liberation from the hated domination of the Persians the Nile valley became Hellenised in its everyday life at an increasing pace which is not so much shown by the religious monuments of the period as by the necropolises such as that of Tunah El Jebel near Hermopolis. On this point, we can be certain that the Egyptians did not take kindly to domination by any race. There are no remains of Hyksos monuments for example in Egypt. It may be that they did not build any. But it is more likely that the Egyptians themselves devastated anything they did ~~live~~ leave. The speed and depth of this Hellenisation is therefore indicative of the power and quality of the Greek culture even in the climate of its own day. It must have been something quite extraordinary.

The majority of the Egyptian clergy took to living their lives in the Greek manner like the rest of their contemporaries and finally began to think in the Greek way and inevitably to hold no art but Greek art in esteem. Their ancestral art although bound up with their religion, then, seemed as outmoded and even as barbarous to them as medieval art seemed to the ecclesiastical humanists of the Renaissance who scornfully called it Gothic (uncivilized). The revolution this time was <u>within</u> against which no resistance is possible.

(3) THE ART OF INDIA

THE ART OF INDIA

Excavations in Mohenjo, Daro and Harappa have revealed cultural links between the Indus valley and Mesopotamia. Among the things found, which date back to somewhere between the fourth and third millennia B.C., were archaic limestone figures of men, terra-cotta statuettes of women and cylindrical seals which we have already mentioned in connection with Sumerian art.

Around 2,000 B.C. India was occupied by an Aryan race that came from the north, crossed the Indus and gradually pushed on to the Ganges subduing the dark skinned Dravidians en route and spreading its culture throughout the whole peninsula. As well as metals they had writing and a knowledge of cattle-breeding and agriculture.

The hymns of the Rig-Veda date back to the period when they were still in the Indus valley and long before they had elaborated the caste divisions which were to be so characteristic of later India: - the ruling castes of priests and warrors and servile castes of slaves and workers. These hymns tell us of Indra, the war-god, who loved the intoxicating soma. They also told of Agni the god of the hearth and Varuna the guardian of the cosmic system. We also find a sort of self-conscious anthropomorphism that allows for a ribald derision of the gods in much the same manner as the Homeric poems of Greece. This humanizing of the Divine in ancient Indian mythology is of major importance in later developments of Indian art.

The art of this period however has virtually vanished. All that remains in the way of statuettes and figurines suggest a powerful influence from Persia which had a weak repetitive art severely hampered by Zarathustra's teaching against images. Nevertheless this first art supplied the prototypes for the evolution of Indian art as we know it. Between the third and second centuries B.C. it sprang rather suddenly into existence after a considerable period of gestation.

It was king Asoka (273-231) who first made Buddhism the state religion. He seems to have been more enthusiastic about it that Theodosius I was to be about Christianity six hundred years later since he is supposed to have built nearly 84,000 stupas.

From then onwards, the stupa which even in the ancient Brahmanic era could be either round or quadrangular became the characteristic Buddhist

monument. In Asoka's reign the stupa of Sanci, 84feet high, was erected at the northern foot of the Vindhya hills in the centre of India. Here, we can see that the old imagery was not effaced by the new doctrine. These domed monuments as well as being tombs are symbols commemorating the earthly pilgrimage of the Perfect Master who became more and more divine as time went on. From a high square foundation rises a hemisphere whose form - that of a bubble - is intended to suggest the ephemarality and transience of earthly things. On the flattened crest of this is a finial rising in several stages or a small enclosure crowned with a stone parasol symbolizing the bo tree under which Gautama received his enlightenment as well as the sunshade which the Persian kings were wont to carry as signs of sovereignty. Indeed, throughout its evolution Indian architecture was to remain at least in spirit far closer to sculpture than to genuine architecture.

And so it is sculpture and mural painting that provide the best material for the study of the Indian aesthetic. The sculptured images represent its academic aspect while the relief carvings and narrative frescoes betray a more spontaneous every-day vein. It is in these frescoes that the descriptive and narative spirit so typical of Indian literature is demonstrated.

Apparently contemporary with the earliest monuments of historical India mural painting was already at an advanced stage by the time the art of relief carving was beginning to develop at Bharhut and Sanci (2nd - Ist cents B.C.) As far as can be judged its progress over the centuries paralleled -maybe even led- that of relief carving. This is proved by the frescoes found at the Ajanta cave (2nd century). It should be noted here that the caves were in widespread use as monasteries and places of retreat. The Lomas Hsi caves in the Barabar hills like the temples of Bihar and Udayagiri in eastern Bengal date back to the third century B.C. while those of Bhaja, Bedsa, Kondane, Nasibe and Pithalkora carved out of the red hard granite of the Ghats were constructed in the second century. Besides Ajanta the cave-temple at Karli is of particularly important.

Mural painting in any case reaches it apogee in the Gupta period (4th - 7th centuries A.D.) . Its outstanding masterpiece is the series at the Ajanta caves which show a wealth of images of flowers, fruits, animals, spirits and the miracles of the Buddha. They also reveal the influence of the then ruling classes which demanded their own reflection in the form of narrative pictures of a more worldly order as well as portraits. Perspective foreshortening is not in use here and the hierarchical importance of the figures outweighs all other considerations.

Furthermore an extremely subtle compromise is reached between the empirical knowledge of the figures and their optic distortion. The colours range from yellow, red, blue, black, several greens and white as well as violet. After the seventh century painting suffered so that Ajanta remains its most impressive legacy.

Buddhism, which is essentially a community religion, raised vast and permanent edifices for meetings and prayer. This factor in particular determined the flowering of Buddhist art long before the appearance of an art based on Brahmanism. However, Buddhist art started off dependent upon the formulas of Brahmanism which was the very embodiment of India at that time. It was never able completely to assert itself against ancient beliefs and imagery. Gradually, its teaching diverged into the two vehicles . Mahayana became a sort of folk religion deriving its pantheon from the Brahman religion while Hinayana professed the pure doctrine of the Master.

From the second century A.D. therefore we can distinguish two types of sculptural representation of Buddha. One is an austere erect figure with its left hand holding against the hips the upper garment which is draped over the shoulder while the right hand is uplifted in the gesture which signifies -Be not afraid. The other figure is that of the Redeemer seated with crossed legs in the yogi lotus-flower position, the left hand resting on the knee, the right hand once more uplifted. At first the head bore no supernatural emblems but later on it was adorned with various symbols; such as the urn which was presently supplanted by a frontal disc or little ball or lock of hair and which was counted among the thirty two lesser and greater beauties of the Enlightened One. The standing Buddha is often accompanied by the lion while in reliefs the seated Buddha is attended by two figures each clad in a loincloth and many jewels - the Boddhisatvas, the disciples and elect of the Teacher.

The representation of the Buddha constitutes the highlight of the iconographic and aesthetic evolution of Buddhism. Its origin is something of a mystery but it may well have come from ~~Gan-d~~ Gandhara the profoundly Hellenised province of north-west India. In any case it would seem to have emerged in response to a growing need of the faithful to worship something more concrete than mere symbols. This may indicate a decline of faith during the first centuries of Buddhism. However the fact remains that at one point Buddhist art received a host of motifs originatingg from the Hellenistic repertory. The most complete and detailed illustrations of the Buddhist legends were developed in Gandhara and

transmitted with Buddhism to all the regions along the Silk Route.

Brahmanism was also considerably exploited by Buddhism. In this cosmology which owed much to Babylonia were closely associated the two worlds of the Human and the Divine. Both have mountains, rivers, oceans an hierarchical population and a supreme ruler. Everything in these two worlds is founded on analogies and obey immutable laws which govern and correlate all possible events at various levels. Both are subject to a code which justifies from the Indian point of view the establishment of the class system in which the upper class is held sacred. This too determines the relationship between art and ritual. The temple or art work cannot ~~be~~ simply be just a work of art and no more and still less can it be the private in dulgence of the artist. On the contrary if it is to have meaning it must fulfil the religious function for which it is ordained. In brief, it must obey the precise and inexorable laws laid down in aesthetic treatises. The artist has no choice but to painfully follow these rules for fear of producing an imperfect work. If the work does not so conform in every last detail it runs the risk not only of failing to benefit the artist but of being an agent to certain disaster. This may be simple superstition but it is sustained by the doctrine of synchronism between the two worlds.

In this thinking the temple is the divine residence - the world mountain which is the pivot of the universe. Its pyramidal roof corresponds to the different storeys which support the abodes of the gods. The temple is a veritable microcosm in every part a parallel to those in the divine world.

The role of the artist in all this is an anonymous one - the more anonymous the better. He is effaced before his creation. Nevertheless, he is revered as a man with a divine mission. In order to perform the ritual (puja) which precedes the making of a work of art he must be pure of heart. When the work is finished the priests perform a ceremony of consecration which confers a divine nature on the image. By opening the eyes of a statue (by simulating the insertion of pupils) the priest gives it life while at the same time giving it form (rupa) by the bestowal of a name (nama) which is usually the name of the donor coupled to that of the deity.

It is this anonymity of the artist that gives Indian art its collective aura and also explains the incredible cohesion to be found in its various styles. Its nobility on the other hand is to be found in its function of reflecting a composite world in which all creatures and gods are parts of a vast totality.

The Gupta period was the classical period of Indian art. In the following period this art began to express itself in increasingly rich and exuberant forms. It developed in fact into a sort of Baroque having at its disposal an infinite wealth of subjects provided by the elaborate pantheon of Neo-Brahmanism or Hinduism.

Hinduism never managed to create quite the same verve in the illustration of its own legends and usually inclined towards the fantastic rather than the realistic

The world of this new art was peopled by the descendants of the Vedic gods. Restlessness, passion, a preference for the vast and wild were now dominant. Previously the main task of the sculptor had been the portrayal of individual figures. Now he turned to large compositions in which the great epics of Mahabharata and the Ramayana with their innumerable legends triumphantly invaded the artistic realm. The exuberance, dynamism and extravagance of Hinduism gradually prevailed over the Buddhist gentleness and equilibrium.

So densely packed are the works that it is often difficult to recognise individual figures. Krishna, who utters the wisdom of the Bhagavad - Gita is generally represented playing the flute and his adventures with women are often portrayed. Sex of course is sacred to the Indian. Shiva to whom Nandi the bull is sacred is the most mysterious of the divinities. He symbolizes the male power of creation and meditates for thousands of years in the Himalayas or as Sadhu wanders through the country. More often than not he is shown dancing or with his wife Parvati. He is at the same time the god of strictest asceticism and boundless fertility and appears to mankind both as the destroyer and as the spirit of infinite goodness. In his most majestic representations he appears as Brahma, Rudra and Vishnu in the three-handed Trimurti configuration. The forms in which these deities appear are incalculable and inseparable and it is impossible to reduce them to a definite hierarchy. Vishnu appears in the form of his enemy and even that of his enemy's wife. There are countless local divinities too like the Monkey-God Hanuman, a celibate deity of peculiar power, or Ganesha, the elephant-headed son of Shiva and who is regarded as the bringer of good fortune. The profusion is owed to the belief in the transmigration of souls. All forms are merely phenomenal forms of the One Incomprehensible.

In painting, Hinduism produced nothing comparable with Buddhist frescoes. The figures which appear in the wall paintings at Elura as early as the IIth century are characterized by the curiously angular gestures of their fingers, their pointed noses eyes and lips. These paintings were the forerunners of the book illustrations

drawn on palm-leaves from the I3th century on and then on paper in the I5th. Long panoramic scenes whose continuity is often interrupted are coloured with rich reds and blues and combined with a fine sense of spatial relations. A fresh development came about under the increasing Muslim influence which introduced the Persian art of portraiture and miniature-painting on paper and ivory which flourished as a glorious derivative chapter of Islamic art in India from the I7th century onwards.

Hinduism thoroughly adapted one of the great laws of Indian art in general - repetition. This is nowhere more evident than in its temples which it is still in the process of building. At the beginning it drew its inspiration from earlier Buddhist formulas. However it soon rejected the stupa which remains characteristic of Buddhism. Instead it evolved the stepped pyramid temple which at first had a small number of storeys but later gathered more and so on until the elevated roof of mature Hindu architecture was developed. This prolific multiplication of an element and the persistent repetition of a motif (cornice) bring to mind the litanies which always accur in sacred literature. The prayer - wheel, rosary, reply and response, the chant and so on are reflections of an order that is always identical with itself. Hindu temples, like the Lakshmana temple at Sirpur (6th cent), are perfect monuments to this. But Hinduism did not confine its energy to the building of temples only.

The potentialities of monumental relief carving were exploited to the full. One of the most beautiful examples is the celebrated Descent of The Ganges at Mamallapuram (7thcent). In this is recaptured all the verve of the past combined with a cold elegance that is characteristic of the Post - Gupta period. Meanwhile Buddhist art slowed down in its development and became confined to the Bengal region in the north-east, where it was to be an art of virtuosi rather than creative men. It continued its decline and after the beginning of the I3th century it was no longer produced in India.

The fact remains however that India is among the greatest artistic civilizations of all time - by any standards. Even the most intransigent classicist would be hard put to find fault with its simplicity, energy and grace. It is also in my view a mark of its integrity that it was not swamped by Hellenism but intelligently took from it only what it required which as it turned out was very very little.

(4) THE ART OF GREECE

THE ART OF GREECE

Due mainly to its geographical position between Greece Asia Minor and the north coast of Africa the civilisation of Crete was to reach a higher point than elsewhere in the pre-Hellenic world. The contributions of Egypt and Asia which both used Crete as a mid-way harbour for their ships were able to lead a hitherto ignorant race into the refinements of architecture, mythology, writing and ~~metta~~ metallurgy In metals particularly they excelled which they used for jewellery, lithe statues weaponry and bronze vases. They had no liking for Egyptian gigantism and their court art was mainly painting which shows spontaneity, arbitrary colouring and no interest at all in muscalature or anatomical exactness. Bull-fights and acrobatic performances form part of the privileged patrician court life which, though religious at least in intention, was also full of affectation. In their celebrated pottery plant and marine motifs are predominant. And their architecture renowned for its tombs and palaces like their sculpture ahows a definite avoidance of the monumental. Nevertheless, these are the remains of what was undoubtedly a very original and individualistic race whose delicacy may perhaps be due to the matriarchy it supported.

The Minoan civilisation is important not only for its own sake but for the enormous influence it had not only in the other islands of the Aegean but in Mycenae at the south east end of Greece. Here was another civilisation no less extraordinary which came to light in the excavations of 1870-90 conducted by Schliemann at Troy, Mycenae, Tiryns and Orchomenus. The Cretan influence was found to be so pervasive here that scholars refer to the culture as Creto - Mycenaean. It is considered from the evidence of ceramics found in Egypt to be contemporary with the Egyptian New Kingdom (around 1550 to 1150).

Evidence of rivalry and conflict between the two cultures also came to light and it appears that around 1600 B.C. the Mycenaeans sacked and plundered Crete. It is equally certain that Crete recovered her maritime supremacy which led to the opulence and splendour of the second palaces. However, two hundred years later perhaps due to economic crises it was gradually to slip into decay and the Achaeans, as Homer calls them, reigned supreme.

A Mycenaean empire emerged far exceeding the Minoan in size. Provinces which had remained on the fringe of the Helladic world - the Ionian islands kingom of Ulysses, Thessaly and Macedonia all became Mycenaean. Likewise the Cyclades and the islands from Rhodes to Lesbos all succumbed. Along the coast of

Asia traders and even settlers were to install themselves in such towns as Troy and Miletus. The major artistic development as a result of all this was a marked shift towards stylization. Thus pottery tends towards linear-abstract, and decoration at the same time incorporates motifs that had been previously ignored such as human figures, animals and processions of chariots. Painting, still Cretan in its techniques, made use of the more violent themes of war and hunting which were popular in the east. The aesthetic had changed also in the construction of tholoi which becmae increasingly grandiose.

In the IIth century the nomadic migrations which had been sweeping across Asia since the I5th century gathered momentum. Hellenic tribes treked across Thessaly into the Peloponnese and Greeks ousted the Mycenaeans. These northern tribes brought with them an expertise in metals and the motifs that had grown of the industry. The Dorians in particular, known as the Iron Men, brought with them from Europe a whole repertory of geometric shapes which they were to develope in jealous protection against the prevalence of the Cretan curvilinear and spiral forms. About II00 B.C. they took the Peloponnese, the south-west coast of Asia Minor and the more southerly islands of Crete, Rhodes and Melos. The Ionians took the Aegean islands while the Aeolians took the north-west coast of Asia Minor Lesbos and the islands adjacent to it. Out of this strange mixture was to emerge nothing less than a New Man.

The late Creto - Mycenaean art as well as their colonies which were firmly rooted on the Asian coast were of course bound to influence the development of Greek culture and civilisation. Motives from northern Europe came into contact with others which had long before adopted Oriental elements while Asiatic motives combined with Greek geometrical patterns and all sorts of Eastern animals and fabulous creatures crept into the Greek imagination and so into their art. Painted vases which were produced under the rule of Mycenae were still being produced in the seventh century. Some of them bear the artists names. They were found outside the Dipylon, the double gateway of the old cemetery of Athens, on the site of the old potters quarter and their style which consists of dark brown ornamentation on light ochre clay is known as the Dipylon style.

However, before we get involved in the deeper elements in the culture of this race a brief synopsis of their history followed by an equally brief account of the development of their art will hopefully give us leave to do so.

Long after the Trojan war the Greek world was divided into a number of small principalities ruled over by kings who were the objects of family and public cults in which their authority was vested. As the landed aristocracy came to power this sort of society withered away.

As usually happens in this situation the rising aristocracy gave birth to an oligarchy that held all power and controlled all wealth while an expanding population lived in its shadow, in poverty. Thus from the 8th century and before enterprising Greeks sought their prosperity elsewhere notably in the wheat growing regions around the Black Sea, Thrace, Magna Graecia, Sicily, Gaul, Spain and Cyrenaica. These settlements maintaining strong religious and political ties with their parent city-states were to constitute the phenomenal cultural and spiritual unity of the Greek world.

The end of the 7th century which saw the first coins being minted heralded a time of strife following on the growth of manufacture and trade which led to class conflict. These violent confrontations were usually brought to an end by the intervention by a leader such as Gelon in Syracuse, Cypselus in Corinth or Polycrates in Samos. Their tyranny in most cases gave way to a government of the people. By the end of the 6th century the city-states of Athens and Corinth were powerful enough to play important political roles.

In 499 the Greek cities in Ionia supported by Athens rebelled against Darius the Persian king. Its failure induced Darius to declare a war of retaliation against the Greeks who had helped his subjects. In 490 he was defeated at Marathon by the Athenians led by Miltiades. Xerxes with the alliance of Thessaly continued the war after his father's death in 486. Six years later the Lacedaemonians were beaten at Thermopylae. Athens fell, but with her navy reorganised by Themistocles she annihlated the Persian fleet at Salamis. In the following year the Persians were again defeated, this time both on land and sea at Plataea and Mycale.

In 480 Gelon of Syracuse beat the Carthaginians led by Hamilcar. In east and west the Greeks were driving back the barbarians and Athens emerged a great power in the Mediterranean.

The regimes of Aristides, Themistocles and Cimon prepared the way for the golden age of Pericles. Athens was still intent on political leadership despite the hostility of Sparta, Corinth and Boeotian Thebes. Pericles made peace with Persia and secured a thirty years truce with Sparta but was unable to prevent the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431. The collapse of Syracuse in 414 led to a further outbreak of fighting and to Athens eventual defeat seven years later.

Although Athens recovered again and built up another Delian confederacy she was never in the absence of a real leader to regain her supremacy. Sparta and Thebes fought over the laurels the former being defeated in 371 and the latter in 362. With all its strength exhausted Greece was at the mercy of Philip of Macedon who used the sacred war between Phocis and Delphi as an excuse for intervention. Despite the pleas of Demosthenes for unity in his Philippics the Greeks did not join forces and were defeated at Chaeronea in 338. Philip became ruler of Greece and but for his assassination in 336 would have led the Greeks to yet another war against the Persians.

In 480 B.C. the Persians had razed Athens and the Acropolis to the ground, burning the temples and destroying the sacred images. When the Greeks finally conquered the Persians they set about rebuilding the city, even better than before, as a thanks offering to the gods. The old damaged statues they buried in the sacred precincts or used them in preparing the foundations for the buildings of the classic age. In the so-called Persian Dump most of the sixth century statues which had been buried at this time were recovered.

The very first Greek statues however were the small ivory ex votos found at Delos, Sparta, Ephesus, the Dipylon and Delos. Then there wefe the colossi, like the sphinx dedicated by the Naxians at Delphi. This monumental trend was soon abandoned. At Mycenae there were sculptures on the metopes and pediment of the 7th century temple of Athena. There were also the seated statues from Miletus and statues from Samos like the Hera in the Louvre. The chief subjects of sculpture became the nude athletic youth or kouroi and the draped female or korai.

While vase painting took on inner graphic modelling the first temples were being developed around 600B.C. From this period on sculpture becomes more lifelike and three dimensional. It begins to play a dominant role in the decoration of the temple as well as in the relief carving of tombs. The same period also produced magnificent bronze statuary, coins and a flowering of ceramic decoration in which Corinth and Athens excelled.

By the end of the fifth century there were three major centres of art production - Athens, Magna Graecia and Sicily. At Aegina the sculptures of the three pediments of the temple of Aphaia are still fairly crude. Experiments were made with the striding kouros type in Corinth and Sparta and with the draped female figure in Argos. The temple of Zeus at Olympia show the influence of Pindar in the choice of subject, always mythological, like the labours of Hercules, the battle of Lapiths and centaurs as well as Zeus and Apollo.

Phidias, born in Athens around the year 490 was in Olympia

before 455 where he produced the statue of Zeus. In 450 he was summoned to Athens in order to take charge of the sculpture on the Parthenon: and to make the cult statue of Athena, a legendary work that was unveiled in 432. Polycleitus of Argos and Praxiteles (4thcentury) Scopas ~~and Polycleitus~~ are the main names in Greek sculpture.

In the temples of the Acropolis the Doric and Ionic styles find their fulfilment. Around 400 B.C. the Corinthian style emerges as a new type of column with acanthus-leaves capitals. It represents the end of the classical age.

The 4th century is distinguished by a revival of art in the Ionian cities where their great architectural schemes attracted the finest artists in marble and bronze. Scopas was born in Paros and worked in Sicyon and Samothrace before he was summoned to Asia Minor to collaborate on the ornamentation of the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus and the Artemisium at Ephesus.

Praxiteles from Attica preferred to work in marble which was afterwards painted by Nicias. He too made a journey to Asia Minor around 350 during which he helped on the ornamentation of the altar of the Ephesus Artemisium and carved an Aphrodite for the city of Cnidus. To his earlier period belong the Satyr pouring wine and the Satyr resting, the Apollo Sauroctonus and the Aphrodite of Arles, known only from Roman copies. Later works show an increasing religious maturity.

Lysippus, a painter and sculptor in bronze, served his apprenticeship in the Sicyonian workshops and was an innovator whose experiments were concerned with movement, the role of light and the individual personality of his models. He evolved a new canon of more slender proportions (the body, eight heads high) and his works are the reflection of an ideal far removed from Scopas and Praxiteles. Appointed Alexander's official sculptor he followed him on many of his travels and made busts of him. After his death he went from Greece to Sicily and produced a large number of statues of gods.(Hercules of Tarentum and Hermes tying his sandal.)

No frescoes or paintings have survived although we know that painters were held in very high esteem, equal to if not greater than the sculptors. The murals of Pompeii however give us some idea of their taste for allegory and narrative drama which are also reflected in ceramics and adopted by the Romans. Phidias, Nicias, Pausias, Lysippus and Apelles who was Alexander's official painter are the names handed down to us.

Scholars still argue as to what were the real determining factors in the growth of Greek civilisation. Some for example say that the Dorians were a main force with their mathematical designs and their method of organisation in which the passive and servile peasant who had tilled the land gave way to the soldier, and a mercenary at that, who only occasionally turned his hand to farming. Others say that the Zoroastrian dualism of the Persians which had spread like fire throughout the old world had first urged the Greeks to give a prime value to reason. Still others would point to the terrain of Greece with its natural resources and bounded too for the most part by the sea, the effect of which would have to some extent thrown the Greek back on himself, and forced him within the cultural context of the world at that period, to take stock of his own individual destiny. However I would say that this last factor was of more importance to the development of the Minoan civilisation. Cretan art had already, before the Greeks arrived, reached a point of development in which the gods had to a large degree lost their influence. This would follow naturally on a rapid development of trade with its dependence on sound ships and good craftsmanship and the economic expansion that resulted from it. Thus the growing position occupied by metal plus the reduced role of agriculture and the development of trade all combined to reduce the position of the monarchy which would have naturally led to the discountenancing of the gods. This would not, I stress, have been a total split but certainly a detachment sufficiently secure to enable the Cretan to consider his life as a causa sui project and to allow him to poke fun at the gods in his own way without necessarily any loss to the importance of the sacred in his life. However, we can at least be sure that the Greek miracle did not happen as suddenly as we supposed. Already in the Creto-Mycenaean culture are the first stirrings of individuality that was to induce the Greeks to put their names on their earliest pots. Furthermore, the Cretes had shown that art could be detached from its magico-religious context and enjoyed for its own sake which of course led to the first court art. At first its appeal was to sensuous sensiblity but with the Greeks it became primarily an appeal to reason and the intellectual appreciation of the harmonious whole - the microcosm reflecting the macrocosm.

The Greeks, after all, had been speculating philosophically as early as the 7th century in Asia Minor which was under strong Persian influence. Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes came from Miletus, the strongest of the Greek coastal cities. Persian ambition led to the conquest of Ionia in 546. Towards the end of the 5th century the whole region was enslaved which as we saw led to major

conflict between Greece and Persia. Even then there were great thinkers being born there who were to form in Magna Graecia (Italy) and Sicily the second great phase of Greek philosophy. Pythagoras born in 570 in Samos settled in Croton; Xenophom born in Colophon went to Elea an Ionian colony founded about the year 540 and when Heraclitus, arguably the best of the Pre-Socratics, remained in his native Ephesus it was only to watch the triumph of the Persians. All this shows the very early establishment of the Greek ethos as well as the considerable part played by the influences of the East. On this latter point we can do no better than to take a look at some peculiarities of Persian culture.

I suppose the best word to describe it is megalomaniac. The monarch called himself the King of Kings. And the art that surrpunded him was no longer an art like that practised in Assyria dedicated exclusively to the leader's courage, nor like that of Babylon put at the service of a devout king intent on the worship of his god, but an art that in fact celebrated the Superman nearly two and a half thousand years before Nietzsche. Furthermore, the King of Kings was a king of honour and justice, sole elect of all the gods, so that Isaiah was able to write. - Thus spake the Lord to his anmointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have beholden .....I will go before thee that thou mayest know I am the Lord which calls thee by thy name.....I am the Lord and there is noone else.....I form the light and create the darkness....' (Isaiah 45, I-7). Cyrus himself was to write on his seal - The god Marduk considered all the countries of the earth ...o... in search of a righteous king....whom he could lead by the hand. He called his name Cyrus, King of Anshan.

The state architecture that embodies this patriarchal concept of divinity is staggering. Nowhere else had it ever attained such a complete expression. It reveals a clear obsession with the column. Some of these are no less than seventy feet ~~hight~~ in height topped with colossal capitals - an architecture so unrelated to human proportions that men were to wander like pygmies at its feet. At Persepolis all the halls and chambers had columns amounting to the bewildering number of 550 in a small apace. Repetition was the Persian road to majesty and greatness. We find it also in their frieze sculpture with long processions marching in single file, the figures all the same size. Sometimes we see the king in hand to hand combat with a monster which was to become in Christian tradition St George and the Dragon. This is the triumph of Light (Ahura Mazda) over Dark (Ahriman) or order over chaos or, of course, good over evil.

The numerical equivalent of order is, as Carl Jung points out, the

number 4. We have four quadrants to a circle, four sides to a square, four points of the compass, four seasons and so on. We may recall that there are three Magi who journey from the East in search of the missing fourth. In any case that the number had magical significance for the Persians is beyond dispute.

When we consider the number of columns generally used in buildings we find that it is always connected with the number 4 and its multiples: 4 8 I2 I6 36 72 I00. It is probable that here we are faced with a culture that obeys the symbolism of numbers. From the very earliest times the Sumerian goddess Nisaba was thought of as being versed in the meaning of numbers; and the tower of Babel and the Great Temple provide us with typical examples of the architectural application of sacred numbers. It may be that the preponderance of the number 4 at Persepolis corresponds to the four elements then thought to compose the firmament - earth, air, fire and water. In any case, that there was this direct correlation between the objective world and number became of paramount importance to the Greeks who were well acquainted with the Babylonian sciences in which Pythagoras himself was an initiate.

As the search for alternative explanations of the cosmos got under way the gods to the same degree lost their numinous qualities and became more like the Greek himself. Just to what extent the Greek was aware of the anthropomorphism is one question that has yet to be fully answered. I am inclined to think however that the gods were dead long before the state and it is likely that the educated Greek thought one thing and practised another. Socrates was indicted with basphemy against the gods and his non-commital answers on the question did not exactly help his defence. He was undoubtedly a scapegoat of the state whose oligarchy viewed the collapse of its religion with dread and alarm. At any rate Man had to a large extent freed himself from the awe and fear that had hitherto been attached to the gods.

He lived for himself, and by himself, devoted in no small measure to the living of life. His essential aim in life was no longer to play vassal before some supernatural power but to do service to the state and through that to himself. In an organized free society where ~~where~~ religion and festival fused to offer everyday contact with gods who were projections of himself, and therefore lovable, the citizen found his justification in pleasure and the ever higher refinements of life. The freedom of capital and industry were devoted through art to these pursuits. And it was an art that had almost nothing to do with its

original magic function. Art shared this freedom and with the classical era the idea of beauty took shape which up until then had been only a part of the creative instinct. In the Athens of the 5th and 4th centuries artists and philosophers kept company. Plato, supposed to have been a painter in his youth, points this out with regard to Socrates, who was said to have been a sculptor. Art therefore ceased to be purely functional and became idealistic. Democritus had already called to mind the pleasure to be experienced by looking at a work of art and Aristotle later was to state - 'The beautiful is that which is desirable in itself.'

The paths to this beauty were mimesis (imitation) and harmony. Plato observes in this the error of his times because, in so far as this was true, to that extent art failed to achieve true beauty which was a Perfect Idea. Artists themselves however were rapturous in their praise of realism and especially trompe l'oeil and Xenocrates (3rd cent) was actually to write a treatise on it which was of considerable use to the Romans. Polycleitus too, wrote a treatise on his art devoted to a system of proportions of the human body showing that the numerical relations of parts to whole was the source of aesthetic harmony. In the same way the architect devoted his attention to reconciling the functional with the intellectually edifying. Whether the Greek mind was in the services of his senses or vice versa is a question he found it difficult to answer himself: we find it at the centre of all his philosophical speculations. It could even be said that his art was a conscious attempt to create a point where empiricism and abstract thought could coincide. It is certainly true that the making of a work of art was very largely a matter of reconstruction of the numerical relations derived from observation and analysis and fixed in canons which were of vital importance to the Greek artist.

Of equal importance to him was the actual decoration of a temple or three dimensional work. All stone sculpture whether it was in the relief or round was in fact polychromatic. When the famous female statues from the Acropolis were brought to light the colouring on several of them was still visible. Not only were garments, hair, lips and eyes adorned with vivid colours but certain details like embroidery on the robes were, instead of being carved, embossed in paint. Even the flesh was carefully treated with a clear wax foundation. From sculpture to the frescoe, from the bas-relief to the incised stele, each and every work was painted which explains both why the artist was regarded as a very superior craftsman and why he often combined the trades of painter and sculptor in one.

Bronze statues like the Boeotian Poseidon were similarly treated. Cleaning revealed meticulous burin work that must greatly have enhanced their appearance. The eyes were set with coloured stones or green paste, the lips were covered with copper, and the teeth were often highlighted with a small band of chased silver. Other details of dress and anatomy were likewise emphasised with different contrasting metals. Add to this the fact that the statues gleamed like gold when they first arrived from the furnace and you can guess the effect they must have had as they shone forth in the sanctuaries of the temples.

The actual cult statue of the temple god or goddess which was situated at the far end of the central aisle was an entirely different affair. Called chryselephantine it was considered by the Greeks to be the pinnacle of their artistic achievement. They were made of gold and ivory and could sometimes measure up to 40 feet high like the Athena Parthenos or the Zeus at Olympia. The statue was encrusted with precious stones, particularly the eyes, and the whole image was mirrored in a wide shallow pool set before it. The Athena had a shield whose convex face bore gold bas-reliefs depicting the Amazon's attack on the Acropolis. Altogether the effect of these statues must have been dazzling.

The outside of the temple was decorated with mythological scenes. Carved into the pediment and metopes were figures of tremenduous variety - shields, fantastic eastern animals, gods and heroes all in violent motion while the cornices bore lavish ornamental foliage, palmettes and lions' heads, all richly coloured. Originally these served for magical protection for the more vulnerable parts of the building but they soon became ends in themselves. Sometimes we find a peaceful and solemn scene on the pediment of the main facade while on the rear pediment we have a violent and animated scene. The temple of Apollo at Delphi is the best example of this. The favourite themes were the deeds of Hercules and Theseus and the great battles gods and giants, Lapiths and Centaurs. Chariot races, battles, banquets and social events were also illustrated on the continuous frieze above the architrave which allowed the artist considerable freedom. Truly the temple was the pride and joy of the Greek cities.

It was the brain-child of a comparatively wealthy state with time on its hands. But the Greek polis was not free or democratic in our sense of the word. Individuality was respected but extreme individuality was not, as Socrates to name but one, discovered. The successful politician like Pericles was he who knew the law well enough to put it to his advantage or who embodied the accepted values

of which cunning (sophistry) oddly enough was one. Athens which from the 5th century was the centre of civilisation, was indeed governed for the most part by its citizens once the age of the tyrants had passed. But scarcely one tenth of its citizens possessed full civil and political rights. Aside from all those who had in one way and another lost their rights there was a large class of slaves who provided the base for all social development. Nausicaa tells Ulysses that he would find her mother ' sitting by the fireside with her waiting-woman behind her while my father, his chair in the flickering light, slowly sips his wine like a god.' In fact women were held in high esteem by the Greeks which explains to some extent how they were able to cope with the the paternal tyranny that lies veiled beneath patriarchal societies such as the Persian and Egyptian. It is no surprise however to find Aeschylus preaching through his plays against hubris - the pride that would declare itself equal to the gods and thereby invite disaster. Perhaps too he foresaw the cult of king-worship which was to herald the end of the empire. However, we can assume that by this stage the wrath of Zeus was strictly confined to his thunder and lightning.

So we can now look back on the path taken by culture in its evolution. Never again was man to ~~transcene~~ transcend himself so completely and so successfully. Time and again in the course of its development civilization was to turn to the Greeks for inspiration and guidance.

The plight of early man was his vulnerability vis a vis the enormous hostile and chaotic forces of his world. His problem was how to relate to them in a meaningful way - assimilate them if possible - but at least be able to manage them however indirectly. He knew too that he was a superior animal, that he had an edge on creation of which he was to become gradually more aware as his authority increased. In the meantime he had to inveigle the goodwill of the animistic powers that surrounded him. Against others he had to take precautions and build defences. Art was primarily a means of establishing control over these forces which eluded his weak grasp. He could in fact, by making a facsimile of the powers, bring the mana of his own consciousness to bear in the struggle thereby freeing himself without risking physical defeat.

This representation could either be an exact reproduction or an analogous symbol. The first is the path of realism the second abstraction. The symbol, more appealing, in that it appealed solely to mind became more and more stylized and was easily converted into a pattern by virtue of its regular simplicity.

The geometric design, was because of the ease with which it could be made, was sure to keep its position among the least ambitious civilisations and chiefly those races which had held onto their prehistoric traditions in spite of the discovery of metals like bronze and iron. This was moreso among the barbarians of Europe than elsewhere. The Mediterranean civilizations proud of their growing cultures opted rather for realism which they were continually trying to perfect. Egypt and Mesopotamia, the great agrarian empires, concentrated on the art of the facsimile or double. The replica of the god or divinity in statue form assured his presence and the efficacy of prayer was a guarantee when the worthy was fixed for all eternity in an act of worship. The replica of a loved or necessary object without which the dead would not be happy projected its reality in the hereafter.

The replica led to commemorative art which fixed in bas-relief a memorable battle of the king or some hunting scene for his enjoyment or praise. So art was learning to immortalise human activity just as literature was turning towards the epic. War and hunting celebrated the display of powers that were the prerogatives of men. The highly developed Cretans were to take this practise one step further in the celebration of the more refined aspects of life. The Cretans, increasingly dedicated to pleasure, portrayed the prince holding a lily walking peacefully among the flowers in his garden. Hedonism, the art of the senses, was beginning to take shape.

Greek art reduced under the impact of the Dorians to an austere symbolical stylisation was with geometric art to retrace rapidly the road of representation - initially of magico-religious significance later straightforwardly hedonistic. For the first time man had found a way of life in which he had achieved a balance with the exterior forces of the universe. This balance liberated him to the extent that he could devote himself to the sheer pleasure of being and living. He could at last turn his thoughts towards himself and reflect upon himself as an agent of destiny.

That in brief is the triumph of the Greeks without whom our own civilization would have been totally different, if indeed it would have been possible at all. The Romans were the first to see in its culture the instrument of progress and the way to greatness.

(5) THE ART OF ROME

THE ART OF ROME

The first inhabitants of Italy of whome we have close knowledge are the Etruscans. They landed on the shores of Tuscany between the tenth and eighth centuries B.C. They came from Lydia in Asia Minor according to Herodotus. They soon built towns high in the mountains and inland at Orvieto and Chiusi and later at Volterra Perugia and Arezzo. In this part of Italy they found metals of which they had knowledge. Between Populonia and Volterra they could mine tin, lead, zinc and copper. Very early they had developed a trade in bronze figurines. They were also clever builders and provided their houses with barrel-vaulting, water-pipes, fountains and sewers. They also created the podium temple - a simple raised structure with unfluted columns. Some of their streets were fifty feet wide and paved with pebbles. Each town was ruled by a king who was attended by lictors carrying the fasces, symbol of sovereignty and justice.

They seem to have been a morbid people given over to the tragedy of death rather than its mystery. Their vaulted tombs were painted in the Egyptian manner and their writings such as the Disciplina Etrusca written in Greek reveal a people with strong religious beliefs. The relied a lot on omens taken chiefly from thunderbolts and the livers of sacrificial animals which were read by specially trained diviners. A scene popular among their sculptors shows a couple reclining upon a couch the man's arm around his wife. In fact the Etruscans are unique in that their women appear to have enjoyed a social equality with men.

Their expansion southwards led to the foundation of Capua as well as the occupation of Latium then Campania. These cities they bonded into a confederation by the aid of which they exerted considerable influence. They also came into contact with the Greek colonies which boasted an advanced culture.

Meanwhile the monarchy of Rome had established its own social structure based on the curia, a sort of citizens committee, which met in the comitia to confer regality on the king. Numa Pompilius was the most renowned of these early kings not only for his 'pietas' and wisdom but for his knowledge which he was thought to have obtained from Pythagoras who lived in Crotona at the time. Numa reigned for forty years and was revered by the Romans as the author of their entire religious ritual. He built the Regia or palace of the Pontifex Maximus the chief priest and he also revised the ten months calendar adding two months to it.

The actual dominion of Rome consisted of 350 square miles and its basic resources were stone and agriculture. It also controlled the salt route which induced the Etruscans eventually to take it over. They established Etruscan ways including their military techniques, weapons and language. Their kings ruled Rome for a hundred years (590-490-).

Probably the only recognised holder of civic rights was the pater or paterfamilias. The members of his family could not own property or take part in court proceedings. His wife was said to be under his hand his slaves were his property and he possessed the patria potestas which refers to the fathers authority over his descendants including the right of life and death a right which in fact was never rescinded by law. The pater was also the priest in his own house and conducted all the family rites. Its official priestly caste were unique in that its members could hold the highest public office. This led to the gods being regarded chiefly as the protectors of the state which is another development of the patriarchal system. Conflict with the Gauls of the North led her to build a strong army and evolve a system of military strategy that was to be her real genius. In 60 years she had conquered the whole of central Italy and quickly began colonising the rest of it. By 265 B.C. the whole of Italy was under Roman law. In politics she showed herself a past master following the policy of union at all costs and fostered by economic laissez-faire given to its states. She also issued her own coinage of one pound bronze pieces and the single and double silver drachmas.

At first Rome was a plutocracy governed by the patricians but the plebs, the second major class in a city that now boasted nearly a million inhabitants, eventually after two centuries of protest were granted political parity. In theory Rome was now a democracy but in practice the people looked to the old Senate for government. Illiteracy in any case was widespread unlike the Greeks who were mostly literate by the sixth century B.C. and it is likely that those then in politics were the only ones capable of governing such a complex metropolis.

Rome had its temples, the most important of which was on the Capitoline hill and was dedicated to three deities Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva borrowed from the Etruscans. She also saw her religion in terms of law and order. Their word for it meant binding obligation and their highest virtue pietas meant no more than justice toward the gods. Likewise their gods were abstract utilitarian and often the incarnates of moral qualities such as Peace, Liberty, Victory and Good Fortune. Their mythology is unimaginative and they were content to adopt

Greek stories to describe the legends of their own divinities.

Many treasures found their way into Rome from Tarentum, Syracuse, Corinth, Athens and other subject Greek cities. At this time the first great buildings were erected in marble-- such as the peristylar Temple of Jupiter and the Temple of Juno both on the Campus Martius. These were built by the Greek Hermodorus of Salamis in the year 140 B.C. The supremacy of Hellenism was acknowledged by the Romans. Numbers of basilicas were also built for the carrying on of trade and administering justice.

Greek influence was responsible for the introduction of the theatre into Italy. The great one at Pompeii was built in the second century B.C. and the first Roman stone built theatre in 55 B.C. With the general increase in luxury dwelling houses became more opulent and the country villa became the goal to aspire towards. The old four-pillared Italian atrium was now supported by a greater number of Corinthian columns which were used less for their functional value as in Greece but more for embellishment. Flats were also built to such heights that at the beginning of the Imperial period they had to be restricted by law to a maximum of seventy feet. A good example of the elaborate thermae or public baths are those in the Strada Stabiana Pompeii built in the second century B.C. They included cold warm and vapour baths as well as rest rooms, meeting halls libraries porticoes and gymnasia.

Under the Caesars Rome had at last produced an art which in spite of its derivation from Etruscan and Hellenistic sources had unmistakably an individual style. It is known as the Empire style. Its architecture became a new and impressive way of overawing the plebs with buildings of huge size divided into vast halls and apartments. Rome in the time of Augustus and his immediate successors (31 B.C.-68 A.D.) changed from a city of brick into a city of marble. In front of the temple of Caesar rose the orators tribune; colonnade led to colonnade, triumphal arch to triumphal arch. After the fire of Rome ignited by Nero in 64 A.D. the great city under the Flavians rose from the ashes more impressive than ever.

The Colosseum finished in 80 A.D. is in many ways the most magnificent building of the whole period. It consists of an oval plan whose axes measure 620 feet and 510 feet respectively. Here the Etruscan vault reached its fulfilment. The arena itself was exceeded in area only by those of Tarragona and Pozzuoli.

Trajan (98-117 A.D.) was particularly active as a builder. He had Apollodorus of Damascus build the Trajan Forum and the famous Trajan Column round whose shaft, 88feet high, winds a marble relief 39 inches high 650 feet long and containing more than 2,500 figures. These depict in consecutive order and in detail the campaigns and victories of the Emperor.

His successor Hadrian (117-138), whose tomb later became the Castel Sant' Angelo, produced in the Pantheon the largest surviving domed building of antiquity and certainly the most original of all Roman architecture. The height and diameter of the interior are 142.6 feet and the building is lit by an opening in the apex, the opeion, 26 feet across. Besides this he built himself a villa at Tivoli which consisted of many individual buildings offering an entire exposition of the architecture of the known world.

The triumphal arches which were soon to rise up all over the empire were a Roman innovation. As early as 121 B.C. such an arch was believed to have stood in the Forum Romanum. Under Augustus these were erected even in the most remote provinces. Later the single arch was to triple, like the arch of Constantine built in the year 312 A.D. This was built when the empire was on the wane and the Christian spirit was spreading. Such buildings that followed were to be Christian inspired rather than Roman.

Roman sculpture is remarkable for several reasons. Firstly it can boast no great individual artists that we know of; next the high quality of its realistic portraits which are numerous; the rarity of statues of the gods; and the historical nature of the reliefs.

Hellenistic idealism first appeared with statues of Caesar followed by the young Octavius then Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula and so on. Busts also of these as well as many unknown men and women show a forceful style and keen psychological insight. Similarly, historical reliefs show the Roman inventiveness in adapting Hellenism to very different themes. Realism returns in the portraits of Nero and becomes more marked in those of Vespasian Titus and Domitian. Under Trajan and Hadrian the Greek influence became once again dominant and over life-size statues (the Vatican Nerva) make their first appearance. This was the period also of mythological reliefs inspired by the Alexandrian school (Perseus and Andromeda, Sleeping Endymion, Ariadne with the Stag etc). Sarcophagi too become treated with relief ornamentation. And the wealth of mythological figures at the artists disposal was by this time immense because the Romans regarded all foreign gods

as reflections of their own. These figures occupy a new space in the Roman frieze animated by the skilful use of light and shade and offset by a background showing experimentation in perspective all of which foreshadowed the Middle Ages.

The paintings at Pompeii and Herculaneum span three centuries. From them we can see the origin of basic style in Greek theatrical scene-painting. On the walls of the villa of Mysteries we see the cult of Dionysus given a lively naturalistic treatment. And in the so-called House of the Odyssey there are rustic scenes through which the cultivated retired townsman hoped to find his way back to Mother Earth. Late antiquity was to continue expressing these idyllic scenes. In Ravenna for example we see a river-god beside the Jordan during the baptism of Christ. The use of trompe d'oeil and illusionism is also characteristic of Roman painting and mosaics.

When the Romans had exhausted Hellenism they had nothing of their own to rely on. The creative urge fell into ineptitude due partly to moral and physical degeneration which according to Marcellinus, the last of the great Roman historians and himself a Greek, were the real causes of the collapse of the Empire which was in its death throes at the time ofhis writing 353-378. Greek art had in any case lost its integrity with the Romans who could copy its outside form easily enough but not its inner essence. A late Roman bronze statue of an emperor found in Barletta is no longer a portrait of a man but a hieroglyph of severity designed to awe people into silence. At the end there was not enough creative energy left to carve all the panels on the arch to Constantine. And several reliefs from the time of Trajan and Hadrian were being copied over onto other works.

Although the Roman empire made great contributions to the advance of civilization such as its law and engineering and its roads and bridges aqueducts and so on it was at best the epitome of the patriarchal society at the stage where the attributes of divinity had been introjected. Justice they endeavoured to embody in their laws, benevolence in their social welfare which boasted orphanages as well as free corn for the unemployed, and honesty which was the goal of its art literature and historical chronicles. But it was all to no avail because the gods were virtually dead by the time of Hadrian who was a very erudite man, probably the best ruler the Empire had seen, and a profound religious skeptic who had grave reservations about the immortality of the soul. Likewise his successor Marcus Aurelius, also a scholar, was to turn to Stoicism in his perplexity which denies the afterlife and sees virtue as the highest happiness.

The ordinary people looked mainly to the mystery cults for solace and reassurance. It is significant too that Hadrian's favourite city was Athens not Rome and that Marcus Aurelius a born Roman wrote his Meditations in Greek. Commodus was to have himself deified like the insane Caligula and had himself worshipped as Hercules. The Romans had always believed that might was right and knew well enough that power lay in numbers rather than quality. It was after all the number of soldiers they could call to their defence that saved them against Hannibal, undoubtedly the most brilliant war strategist who ever lived. Their art was a tribute to this power, at its worst grotesque in its size, at its best simply honest. But against economic collapse and run away inflation all their might was powerless. All their gold, much of it the fruit of Trajan's victories in Dacia, was to be found in the East where luxury goods were manufactured; and Spain had cornered the market in wine and olives. The Roman legions had lost their patriotism and men were cutting off their thumbs to avoid military service. Finally there was not enough money left to equip or pay the soldiers. Military anarchy followed (235-268). The time was now ripe for the invasions of the Northern barbari. Diocletian thought to save the Empire by splitting it into two with an Emperor in the West and one in the East (Byzantium). Constantine in transfering his residence to Byzantium was merely deserting an old ship that was finally to sink when Alaric led the Goths into Rome (410). He left a Christian Rome and his Empire of the East was to last eleven hundred years.

I**********I

Tell me, sweet flittering soul, I pray,
Guest and companion of my day,
Whither away, whither away,
So pale, so stiff, so bare today,
Never to play, never to play?

(~~EMERO~~ EMPEROR HADRIAN on his deathbed.)

(6) EARLY CHRISTIAN ART AND THE ART OF BYZANTIUM

Late Antique art into which Graeco-Roman art disintegrated through oriental influences constitues the basis of early Christian art. In painting the style is much the same as that at Pompeii and the same methods of using trompe d'oeil and simulated curtains are applied. New subject matter was fitted to old forms. Thus for example the atatuette of Christ the Teacher (3rd cent) from Rome shows the same form as an Antique portrait of Apollo or Orpheus. Likewise the first Christian sarcophagi depict the Old and New Testaments in classical style and Christ is depicted as a beardless youth with the horses and other attributes of the sun god.

The burial of the dead in catacombs was of course a widespread ancient custom among the poor and the slaves. The paintings were done in the old sepulchral manner. In the oldest of them - the Domitilla catacomb of the first century- we see Noah in the flood. Other themes were psyches, winged cherubs, the Dionysian vine and Jesus as miracle worker and child. Not depicted is the crucifixion which seems to have nauseated the first Christians. Symbols too appear such as the peacock, the symbol of immortality, the fisherman who represents water, baptism and discipleship, and the fish the oldest of them all ~~a fish~~ the word for which ICHTHUS is made up of the initial letters of the Greek words -Iesous Christos THeou Uios Soter - which means ~~Jesus~~ Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour. Many of the symbols refer to life after death. When Constantine finally emancipated the outlawed cult it quickly once again set about adapting its new content to old Antique forms. Basilicas were erected above the graves of those who had been martyred for the faith.

This form and the rotunda became the typical forms of the Christian church which lasted until the Baroque era. The roof of the basilica was of wood and the width of the nave was limited by the length and strength of available beams. The transept and side aisles were added later. Unlike Eastern temples it was not the house of the Divinity to which only priests had access but a place of assembly for a large congregation and where the penitent could be welcomed into the faith. Consequently it was plain on the outside while the inside was well decorated chiefly with mosaics.

In the fifth and sixth centuries many of these basilicas were built their plan being modified to suit local needs. Women in the East for example could not sit beside men at divine service and special places had to be provided for them such

as galleries over the side aisles. One of the oldest examples of this is to be seen in the basilica of St.Demetrios in Salonica built in the fifth century.

The territories which today are Islamic as well as Egypt and North Africa were at first the largest Christian communities. In the African basilica the apse was often omitted while the number of aisles was increased; the one at Natifu has seven and the basilica of Damus el Carita has nine.

One of the finest buildings of this period in Europe is the church of Sant' Apollinare in the ancient port of Classis which was dedicated in 549. Beside it is the huge round tower of the campanile. Such towers distinguish the churches of Ravenna from those of Rome where the campanili are always square. Also at Ravenna are the chruches of San Giovanni and San Vitale the latter being one of the most wonderful rotundas in Italy. This form stems from the Roman Pantheon and has its culmination in St. Peters.

Thus we have the beginnings of church art that was to occupy the central position in culture during the Renaissance and after. In the catacombs was already revealed the metamorphosis of Hellenistic realism into a sort of narrative symbolism. It has to be admitted that its primary motive could well have been secrecy but there is evidence to show that the authorites knew all about the catacombs and simply let them be. Pagans and Christians lived side by side sometimes peacefully sometimes not. The movement was essentially a quiet spiritual one that manifested itself in an art whose forms were in the old idiom but whose inner impulse, away from material reality, was already evident. The first step in the path towards the icon had been made. A new interpretation of the cosmos was at the root of it and its nature in an atmosphere and social context that was full of emperor-worship, mystery-cults, Greek philosophies, depravity, anarchy and idleness it could not have been anything less than dangerous, particularly since it was a religion that proposed to restore dignity to the riff raff. If its self expression looked to the vehicle of the old forms it was because it realised the necessity of addressing the people in the language they understood. It only remains for us to see why Christianity triumphed as it did and how in less than a century Imperial realism was to succumb to the opulent ideograms of the Byzantine world.

The revolution in thought had already been introduced by the Persians as early as the 7th century B.C. in the form of dualism, the doctrine of the war of polarity between the opposites spirit and matter which we have already described. It was bitterly opposed by the Greeks whose view of life we found

was based on unity and harmony while that of Zoraster was based on continual conflict. It was promulgated by the Sassanians who were anxious to oppose the Hellenistic penetration. The doctrine was further strengthened by the dogmas that were soon to predominate. Mithras became identified with the solar fire destined to overcome the darkness of evil and prepare the way of salvation in a future life. First associated with Ahura Mazda he was later to be more or less identified with Apollo and through him with Jesus. The cult of Mithras was further spread by the legions of Pompey who first encountered it in Cilicia and brought it as far as the north of England. The senate of Rome looked on with alarm while the Emperor clothed himself in the mantle of the sun-king and had his image printed on the coinage beside Apollo. Already Nero had adorned his brow with a rayed diadem and Constantine was to have a vision of Apollo urging him to make his peace with the Christians. Mani as early as the 3rd century A.D. was to keep the doctrine aflame with his idea of God being in eternal conflict with Anti-God. Out of this notion the first philosophers of the Church were to forge the classic notion of Hell which is probably the most ingenious and effective concept ever devised by man for the subjugation of personal initiative. Zoraster's dualism incidentally had its origins in an earlier religion which was the continuation of a cult of fire introduced by the Aryans. Thus I see in the scroll motif on the decorative frieze of the Ara Pacis (9 B.C.) the prehistoric double spiral associated with fire worship and kept alive in Cretan ornamentation. Rome had inherited this motif therefore via Greece and later transmitted it to Byzantine art where it took on its Christian symbolism - associated for instance in S. Clemente Rome with the ~~Treeof-~~ Tree of Life. From then on it continued to flourish in the Romanesque, the Middle Ages, and later. The fact that it should be associated with the Tree of Life is not so bizarre when you consider that Adam's theft of self-awareness from God is the exact equivalent to the theft of fire from the gods by Prometheus who is punished by being strapped like Jesus to the solid earth, the exact opposite of his ethereal abode, to have his liver pecked at by an eagle. Thus the duality of heaven and earth is once again the mythological extension of the duality of human ~~naut~~ nature as objective and subjective worlds. And now after the tyranny and bloodshed of patriarchy and the death of Jupiter the duality has become totally subjective as the conflict between good and evil or light (fire) and darkness, and being totally subjective it demands a totally different God and this is ~~Jeas~~ Jesus whom the Hebrew prophets had already pre-annointed as the sacrificial lamb destined to pay off

the Promethean debt. Man is now at the limit of his alienation and sees himself as a spiritual agent in a world that contradicts his nature.

The first signs of it were already apparent in the iconography of Imperial Rome which showed the Emperor removed from the human world and carried in apotheosis towards the celestial world which had ceased to be merely the enhanced reflection of our own world as it had been portrayed by ancient mythology. This theme was already the nucleus of the Transfigurations, Ascensions, Assumptions and angelic visitations which were to assume such an important place in Christian iconography and which Islam also adopted for the representation of Mohammed's journey up to the seventh heaven.

The art that evolved could not but be opposed to that of the classical Mediterranean world. Nature, which the Greeks had considered as the only real element from which the spirit could obtain form was renounced. It was felt that the earthly physical world regarded now as the seat of evil should no longer subsist except to testify to spiritual realities. The body was compromised whereas the soul was the instrument of salvation; the earth was foreboding stuff whereas the light shown from Heaven. Henceforth the images of the blessed were to be ringed with coronae, aureoles and haloes - lamps in the dark.

The overwhelming development of monasticism that began almost immediately with the fall of the Greek ethos gave clear confirmation of the fact that the world of the flesh and the senses was being left behind. As already attested by Pliny the Elder these people were weary of life and aspired, according to Philo, to relieve their souls of the burden of sensations and the sensual world.

The consequences of this attitude for art can be readily seen. Formal beauty and even volume itself, the receptacle of matter, was henceforth despised. Figures tended to be flat and discarnate and not in relief. In sculpture the stone was undercut to produce a play of light. And in painting or its substitute mosaics the drawing was abstract and schematic and functioned wholly in the service of colour and was eventually eclipsed by the sheer sparkle of gold. Carried to its logical extremes this art had no longer any place for physical reality, an art that had ceased to represent anything at all and which was no more than a decorative combination of line and colour. Such was the art of Islam, of iconoclastic Byzantium, and the manuscript art of the Irish monks. Whereas Christian art as a whole shunned this radical excess it was nevertheless profoundly marked by it. The mind itself was posited as an alternative world.

In effect art was no longer in the service of reason and the senses. It reverted in form to the full frontal, non-spatial approach of the Egyptians who were nostalgic for the old canons they had once revered before Hellenism had arrived. In Egypt itself the resulting Coptic art seceded to the Arabs in 640 after producing several basilican monasteries such as the White and Red Monasteries done in the Byzantine style. These new motifs could be copied with ease and were therefore easily passed on. But from now on images were intended to move the soul to awe, fear, reverence humility etc by appealing to or rather working on the soul or specifically that part of it we call the subconscious. With this step, perhaps not fully understood at the time, art entered an entirely new field of possibilities.

The early Byzantine art of the fifth and sixth centuries has already its own idiom. In the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna the figure of St Lawrence shines out from its blue background with an unearthly solemnity. This is a supreme example of the true Byzantine style which from Constantinople spread all over Europe and into Russia. Christ is depicted as the Pantocrator whose earthly representative is the Emperor -King of Kings. Around him is his court consisting of angels and saints and beneath him the evil ones banished from his light. Gone is the gentle Shepherd and in his place the majestic ruler.

Then came the revolt of the iconoclasts who feared idolatry. In 726 the pictures in the churches were hung further from the ground; in 728 they were prohibited; and in 754 the mosaics and frescoes were covered over with whitewash. It seemed that this meant the end of Byzantine art. But under the Macedonian emperors (867-1057) the Middle Byzantine began a second flowering in which the established style showed its sublime supremacy over all the rest in Europe. The cruciform domed church emerged, notably the Church of the Apostles, and the Church of St Irene both in Constantinople. They were distinguished by their five cupolas and St. Mark's in Venice is the most perfect example.

In Russia the icon was perfected by monks. The best of these come from Novgorod which escaped the troubles of the Mongol overlordship. Next to the Virgin and Child Saint George the martyr is the most popular saint in Russian iconography. He is most often represented as the solemnly enthroned Byzantine figure. All through the 14th 15th and 16th centuries which were the classic age of Russian painting the Byzantine style remained as elsewhere the changeless style of a change-less faith. And in the West it was to continue for eight long centuries - a period as long as that which separates Picasso from Giotto.

(7) ISLAMIC ART

Just as Byzantine art was connected with a religion rather than with the traditions of any particular people so the art of Islam is by no means purely Arabic but is based squarely on the spiritual content of Islam which means submission to the will of God. This was the completion by Mohammed of Judaism.

Similarities in the Byzantine and Mohammedan creeds produced a similarity in the art of the two religions. Each shows a fundamental abstractionism with a hidden aversion to the physical world. Furthermore, each concentrates its architectural skills and cultural expansion in its place of worship - the church or mosque.

It was not caprice or malice but spiritual compulsion which motivated the Jews to prohibit images; and this move led to the most violent and momentous disputes between Byzantines and Mohammedans. Only if one can appreciate the spiritual and intellectual basis of the two cultures can the the Romanesque style which enriched Christian art for the first time with a magnificent sculpture be seen in its context. Of course the Islamic Empire is far too vast historically speaking for us to deal with it here but the main events in it call for a mention.

The Arab conquest with its resultant rapid diffusion of Mohammedanism in the Mediterranean was the most important factor in the evolution of artistic forms. Shortly before the death of the Prophet (632) the Arabs attacked with irresistible force. They overcame Syria and Palestine which were inadequately protected by Byzantium and then went on to Aleppo, Antioch, Damascus and Jerusalem which they took after two years of siege in 638. Persia weakened by its wars with Rome and Byzantium was next to fall and in the west an expedition headed by Amr drove out the Byzantines in 643. He founded Old Cairo and built a mosque there which bears his name. North Africa was next and Spain was soon to follow in 7II. In 720 France was invaded; Narbonne, Toulouse and the valley of the Rhone fell and the Arabs progressed as far as Poitiers where they were stopped by Charles Martel.

Muawiya governor of Syria from 639 established the throne of the caliphate at Damascus in 66I which replaced Medina and became the capital of the empire. This was the man who founded the Umayyad dynasty named after his grandfather Umayya. He forced the Islamic nation to accept the appointment of an heir presumptive

The mosque was the building par excellence of Mohammedan architecture. At its simplest it consists of a rectangular court, the haram, with a basin or

fountain in the centre which ~~the~~ serves the purpose of religious purification. This is often surrounded by colonnades roofed with cupolas. In the eastern court in the direction of Mecca is the house of prayer; of no great height it is divided by rows of columns. Such mosques are often built in conjunction with the tomb of the founder and with the madrasah or college attached to the mosque where professors gave not only theological lectures but also legal talks; for the Koran includes both the Mohammedan civil and criminal code.

In ornamentation the Mohammedan combines the abstract spirit of his religion with a sensuous and elaborate fancy which is most evident in the arabesque named after its inventors the Arabs. This combines the stylized organic forms of plants -leaves shoots and tendrils- with the Arabic script, and is on the whole far more other-worldly and exuberant than the ornamentation of the Byzantines or Egyptians which tends rather towards simplification. The cursive script encouraged this tendency to cover large surfaces with ornament. In its oldest form Kufic, so called after the city of Kufa, was more in harmony with the austere aspects of Islam while later Islam mellowed and made more use of the curvilinear forms.

With the overthrow of the Omayyads in the year 750 the Arabic rule of the Islam peoples was at an end. The caliphate was transferred to the Persian Abbasids who ruled the Mohammedan world no longer from Damascus but first from Kufa and after 762 from Baghdad. The latter under Harun al Rashid (786-809) was to become the worlds most luxuriant capital filled with mosques and palaces and round spiral towers.

The arabesque gave way to a flatter ornamentation in ~~which~~ which the design repeated itself at short intervals. Combinations of polygons, circles, ellipses and stars replaced the twining foliage of the true arabesque as well as quatre-foils, trefoils and conventionalized grapes and vine-leaves. Furthermore the intimate relation between Arab and Persian taste brought the ceramics of Islam to a perfection never equalled and rarely exceeded. From Baghdad the gold lustre technique spread throughout Persia reaching Egypt and Spain. After turquoise green the favourite colours were ivory white and cobalt blue which were often combined on large vases.

After the death of Harun the Islamic empire crumbled away into independent States. From the beginning of the 13th century the Mongolian hordes of the mighty Genghis Khan and his successors began to spread over Persia and by the conquest of Baghdad in 1258 they extinguished the power of the Abbasids. The new rulers however embraced Islam and Islamic art received a fresh incentive.

For the Persians the Semitic belief in God had always been too rigid and inflexible and they soon began to overlay the original Islamic doctrines with various mystical and pantheist ideas. Now fresh Asiatic and even Chinese motifs found their way into Persian art. Towards the end of the 14th century the Mongol Tamerlane seized the Empire of Genghis Khan. His rule initiated a new concept of art in Samarkand. This Persian art is more figurative sensuous and softer than that of the Arabs, Egyptians and Moors.

In architecture the minarets grew slenderer, taller and smoother and many fine mosques were built, notably the Blue Mosque of Tabriz one of the most important buildings of the 15th century.

Most of the Persian miniatures date from the time of the Safawids of the 16th and 17th centuries. They reflect the brilliance of a Persian art and culture which were already many hundreds of years old and were undoubtedly the highest that Islam had produced. Such plastic and two-dimensional progress as was possible under Islam was realised in Persia. Their manuscript art tells of their day to day life as well as of the teachings and life of the Prophet; and the many exquisite individual portraits reveal a pantheistic feeling for Nature that would seem to be be indebted to the Chinese.

In confluence of all the energies of the East and the blending of the ~~ane~~ ancient inheritance of Persia with Mongolian and Indian motifs and art originated in Persia under Islam, which to the Europeans of the Middle Ages became as did no other, the symbol of the Orient world. Moreover, Persia as the heir of the classical art of Asia Minor produced not only palaces, castles and mosques but caravanserais, bridges and baths of truly monumental architecture.

Many of these were built in Egypt where they mated with classical ~~aad~~ and Byzantine forms while in India, where these influences were absent, there emerged some of the most beautiful buildings in the world.

The teeming animal motifs of Buddhistic and Brahmanic ornament were entirely discarded; only the black columns of destroyed pagodas were used for the courtyards of the new buildings which were erected in quantity. In Delhi, Agra, Adjmir, Djaipur, Fatehpur, Sikri and Bijapur magnificent mosques were erected which had evolved their own Mohammedan-Indian style. Akbar's palace of red sandstone in Agra prepared the way for the lucid and classical style which reached its height under Shah Jehan whose great mosque in Delhi is said to be the largest in the world.

Lastly the Taj Mahal reckoned to be the costliest if not the most

beautiful building in the world was built by the combined efforts of an international team of architects invited from the four corners of the globe. Every part of this building is decorated with marble inlay and semi-precious stones and even the windows consist of translucent and richly decorated sheets of marble.

In Spanish Cordova in the year 786 Abder-rahman the first began to build a mighty mosque in the usual style on the site of an ancient church. As the centuries passed it grew ever larger and larger until at last in the IOth century a forest of two hundred columns no longer contented the humble and in its final form the mosque had no fewer than nineteen aisles and thirty-five transepts with more than one thousand monolithic columns of every imaginable kind of stone. However, the Arabic-Moorish art on Spanish soil was certainly greater than anything the rest of Europe had to offer at the time. And of the same art in Italy we can only guess because the Christian Normans destroyed everything in their zeal while they ruled over Sicily.

Mohammedan art is never gauche and it is always a direct manifestation of the will. The combination of animals and foliage despite their suppleness obeys mathematical laws and leaves nothing to chance. The artists display a complete grasp of rhythm, of tonality and of counterpoint. They arrange nature according to their vision always subjective giving stems and leaves regular undulations always with an eye on the circle or the spiral. It is a cosmic symphony of pattern with botanical variations - a vision far removed from objective reality. The artists themselves like the Indians did not seek to include themselves in the work in the form of originality for instance but were trusted to follow the conventional canons which required no small degree of virtuosity and scholarship.

Basically it is an abstract art based on plant symbols. It was made by men for whom life was a fleeting vortex of moments which could be fixed only conceptually in geometric form which meant that the real world was never really observed although the skill for portraying it was very much present. What matters to him above all is his own inner experience with its inherent mystery. This, in fact, is a modern disposition which explains why art in our day is looking more and more to oriental forms such as the arabesque and the mandala. The effect of it is to fix the observers attention so that he is drawn into a kaleidoscopic world akin to the musical fugue where every sub-theme repeats the main theme at a different pitch and is part of a symphonic totality so that the mind in relating the parts to the whole and vice versa reaches a point where the cosmic totality is open to contemplation

EUROPEAN ART

(A) CHRISTIAN ART OF THE ROMANESQUE AND GOTHIC

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In its formative stage medieval art appeared as a confluence of a wide variety of contributions - themes that go back for thousands of years as far as Mesopotamia took on the form in which Romanesque art would inherit them. Celtic art then still flourishing in Ireland and Northumbria contributed its spiral forms and intricate interlaced patterns while Byzantium, the most important centre of contemporary civilization, transmitted its figurative motifs which were however subordinated to purely rational laws that had a distinct preference for absolute geometrical forms. However, the strong tradition of classical sculpture was not to be submerged, merely transformed into the supportive role of church sculpture. The theme of Mithras, spread all over Europe by the legions, furnished models which the Christian iconography could assimilate. The classical world also survived in the form of the Latin language which was the medium of everyday life of the Church and of the men of ~~le~~ letters.

The I2th and I3th centuries were times of great social ferment throughout Europe. From the mid-eleventh century every great European town was at one time or another in the throes of major building operations. These engrossed the energy of the whole community and were directed to raising the magnificent cathedrals that were the seats of power for the bishops who represented the full panoply of the church's power in the world. Indeed the revival of Christianity was marked by the founding of the Abbey of Cluny in the French province of ~~Cluny~~ Burgundy in the early tenth century. It was to be known as the second Rome and around its order were to be grouped thousands of monasteries in France and other countries. From it was to spread that Romanesque art which was to resolve the inner contradictions posed by the clash of the arts of East and West. But it is the church of St Hugh begun in I088 which marks the real beginning and success of the new art.

Romanesque art took its examples from two sources. On the one hand from the oriental textiles with their Persian ornament which continued the Mesopotamian series of static figures based on heraldic symmetry; and on the other hand it took over the legendary beasts which the barbarians from the Steppes to Scandinavia and Ireland had incorporated into their whirling interlace designs. This strange bestiary, reminiscent of pagan art, was to invade the Middle Ages not without arousing considerable opposition within the Church because it remained the most provocative symbol of the anti-Christian world.

One of the great symbols to appear was the mandorla which grew out of the nimbus that had already appeared in the frescoes at Baouit. It adapted itself very well to the central figure and to the perspective of the tympanum. At first very shallow it emerges more and more dramatically as the figures begin to free themselves from their matrix. In the manuscripts the miniaturist begins to display all his plastic imagination taking the simple mandorla as his starting point. The effort to reconcile the majesty of linear Celtic and Byzantine design with the renewed appreciation of the Roman legacy and the problems of creating light effects in the relief which it had entered upon before its decline, is already evident in the pre-Romanesque altar in S.Martino at Cividale.

The remarkable ~~sonee~~ stone-carved Romanesque Last Judgment over the door of the church at Beaulieu in the south of France, probably the most ancient representation of a scene that was to reappear again and again in the I2th and I3th centuries, is typical of the way the artist had to fit his design into the over all architectural design. Christ sits in front of the cross his arms extended showing the wounds in his feet hands and side. Around him are grouped angels blowing their trumpets to call the living and dead to judgment. The apostles are there and below we see the dead coming out of their tombs. Lower still, monsters devour the damned.

No figure is allowed to ~~just~~ jut out beyond the frame in which it is set and to preserve the characteristic low cutting knees and draperies are ~~are~~ flattened back as it were into the stone.

Painting played a bigger part in Romanesque art than has hitherto been supposed. Many murals virtually unknown a century ago have been rediscovered throughout Europe. These paintings, covering walls, piers and vaults, served the double purpose of decoration and instruction for they are concerned mainly with illustrating the bible. Christ in his majesty has pride of place in all these paintings which are schematic and far removed from the old classical naturalism. We can also discern a major influence coming from manuscript illumination Italian, French and Ottonian.

In Catalonia where a race of merchants had grown up in touch with the peoples of the Mediterranean there flourished a Romanesque school of painting which had its own characteristics. Its artists saw a grandeur in everyday things and sought to give the utmost significance to the inconsequential. In England too painting was not neglected. The figure of St. Paul in St. Anselm's Chapel of Canterbury Cathedral is a fine example of this type of painting. In terms of posture colouring and design similarities with the Bibles of St. Edmunds and Canterbury are evident.

In any event with the emergence of Romanesque art the West achieved at last an organic synthesis of its constituent elements. One further step was left to be made before it could triumph with an art that was forcefully its own based this time not on its Byzantine and Roman forerunners but on principles as yet unknown. This would be the task of Gothic art. Like Romanesque it too would be developed mainly in France spreading from there and confirming the central place France was to have from then on in the culture and art of Europe. Italy alone challenged it successfully for two centuries.

In La Charite sur Loire and at St. Denis as early as the first half of the I2th century we can see the sculptured figures breaking through the boundaries imposed on them by the architectural plan which ceases to dominate them. They gain their autonomy and independence at the same time making peace with naturalism. Simultaneously a unique style of architecture evolved displaying not so much a combination of mass and regular forms as an unexpected organisation of forces brought into play by their weight. Gothic art in, as it were, discovering gravity as if for the first time was preparing to supplant Romanesque art.

A decisive revolution was beginning to take effect. Cluny's power and influence closely connected with the spread of Romanesque art was discredited and superseded by the new spirit preached by the Cistercians. St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, in particular launched a violent attack on the art of his time. 'Why place th these ridiculous monsters these beautiful ~~hoors~~ Rorrow and horrible beauties, he asks, under the eyes of monks who should read and meditate?' What was required was to strip all obstacles away between the self and the Divine, not to pile them up. This new attitude led to a rebirth of sensitivity and directness that had no need for the subtleties of philosophy And, in this way, a path was cleared for the rehabilitation of the five senses as the primary source of knowledge that was to bear fruit in the empiricism and scientific investigation of the I5th century. Aristotle had gradually been gaining ground over Plato, a fact that considerably alarmed the Church, until Thomas Aquinas (I224-I274) showed that Aristotle and all his works could easily be reconciled with Christian doctrine. Henceforth the realist and engineer could combine their empirical observations in pursuit of a common goal universally sanctioned that was to lead to the first Gothic architecture, ad majorem gloriam Dei.

The Gothic architect took as his starting point the demands of gravity and allowed this force to dictate the solutions which best suited it He collaborated with it allowed it to inspire him and let it decide the forms to be used reserving

only the right to organise them so as to achieve that awesome majesty which is the spirit of the new age. This effect was to be the end product of the building whereas previously it had depended on the preliminary choice of forms. To this extent it approached sculpture.

Problems of gravity and balance were to dictate most of the new forms, such as rib vaulting, flying buttresses and pinnacles which in turn were to become superordinate to their original functional purpose and become an array of decorative forms of a geometrical and abstract order that hitherto had been inconceivable. A building was often altered and new plans drawn up while it was under construction. This led to unexpected developments such as the overthrow of the old laws of symmetry, as at Chartres for instance, where there is a striking dissimilarity between the two towers.

In sculpture the new approach is even more marked. Soon the human body was no longer distorted to fit the predesigned geometrical frame. Statues begin to regain their natural form freed from architectural subordination. At Chartres itself the figures of the saints on the south front have already the fullness and flexibility of real life. At the end of the century, at Reims, the statuary consists of animated figures with life-like attitudes conversing in groups and wearing naturalistic clothes as if they were actors who had casually mounted the empty plinths. In carved decoration the change is even more telling. Here the artist drew his inspiration from the woods and fields swamping the forms of his capitals and friezes with ivy, columbine, ferns, chicory and strawberry plants. As time went by his style was to become even more extravagant.

Painting changed less radically. The conventional forms of the Romanesque disappeared only gradually and looked for its inspiration mainly to illumination which for a long time remained under the influence of stained ~~gal~~ glass with its strong outlines and flat but striking tones as did enamelling then at its height.

In the religious realm faith and love became of primary importance. Divine mysteries could not be breached by ~~fa~~ reason alone. More important from the point of view of the oncoming Renaissance is that the cult of the Virgin so dear to St. Bernard and the Cistercians coloured the faith with a feminine compassion. For the first time in Cistercian Burgundy the Mother of God was to replace the Son on the central portal of the churches. Cathedrals were dedicated to her and she became the patroness of cities and countries. Siens after the victory over Florence

was called the City of the Virgin and Bavaria adopted her as patroness. Religion had in fact fallen under the spell that had inspired courtly love just as religion had influenced the latter with ideas of purity deference and chivalry. But alongside all this there grew up scepticism, licentiousness and unbelief which Boccaccio was to reveal in his Decameron (1350). Like Chaucer he highlighted the considerable loss of prestige the Church was suffering at the time. It had bartered its moral authority for secular power which Erasmus was to describe as -..... 'wealth, honours, power, triumphs, offices, dispensations, taxes, indulgences, horses, mules, guards and luxuries.' (In Praise of Folly).

Religious fervour was wilting visibly. During the Romanesque period the universe was viewed with conviction as a perfectly logical whole, the truth and perspicacity of which was revealed by the sacred texts. The philosopher's job had been to relate the exterior world to these texts in much the same way as Marxists relate the events of social change to the dialectical view of Karl Marx. The world existed as the medium through which the divine order could be grasped and understood and spiritual realities revealed. It was not however, as yet, a question of discovering nature as of deciphering it up to its disclosure as a 'mysterium tremens' but certainly no further. This is why the philosophers were invariably churchmen and why the religious life at its most honest was, and still is, the pursuit of God through austerity and contemplation of the mysteries. Now, with the birth of empiricism and the rapid growth of commerce and the growing importance of the bourgeoisie who with ~~the~~ their hard-boiled practical attitudes and insatiable needs the symbolic and mystical interpreation of the visible world receded steadily. Realism everywhere was on the march and the Church, weakened by schisms, heresy, the rivalry of popes and its own corruption, was bound to lose out.

From now on the intellect alone was to be the frame of reference in which the universe was to be explained. It had suddenly become larger than anyone had ever expected and the enterprising classes were anxious to exploit it and appropriate it. In this relationship between man and his powers and the world given as an object God was to seem almost unnecessary. This new wave was an echo of the courageous rationalism of the Graeco-Roman period which itself had superseded an age of religous faith. On this premiss the Italians were to be instinctively drawn to a reclamation of their heritage. Certainly in its outward appearance Gothic art continued. But in fact its death-knell had been sounded. A New Age was dawning.

(B) CHRISTIAN ART OF THE RENAISSANCE

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And so at last we come to a consideration of the rise and fall of Western religious painting as the mirror in which to chart the development of civilization. The search for reality, that is for truth, and the search for beauty at first carried on more or less empirically came increasingly to be conducted by means of the intellect. These two lines of research at first hardly differentiated as with Leonardo da Vinci were to end far apart, the one as science and the other as aesthetics. The latter even claimed kinship with the philosophy of Plato especially his idea that beauty is incorporeal. So in the 15th century in Italy, above all in Florence, the Renaissance laid down the aims and means of art.

From the standpoint of the evolution of art Italy's experience of the Middle Ages was superficial. Its few attempts to consolidate itself with Gothic architecture resulted in hybrids part French and part Imperialist Rome with no apparent hope of a union between them. This is particularly true in St. Marks Venice where the lower half is Romanesque while the upper is Gothic and the decoration inside Byzantine. Here, the surviving art of Byzantium had outlived even the Middle Ages.

The 13th century can be said to be the dawn of the awakening and it begins with a religious reformer - St. Francis Bernardone. By stressing the brotherhood of men the Franciscan spirit cut clean across the old differences of race and civic rivalry. It emancipated the human spirit by preaching that the true relationship of man to man was as brother to brother, not father to son, or master to slave and in this sense it was to prove a timely summons to the establishment of individual rights within the new city-states. This final liberation of the individual from Mediaeval constraint, a liberation which was the essential significance of the Renaissance was of necessity perceptible in its art.

At the end of the 13th century Cimabue in Florence and Cavallini in Rome striving for faithful representation turned towards sculptural art. The ~~initail~~ initial impulse therefore came from sculptors - the new school of Nicola Pisano who sought to unite the Roman style with the French Gothic and the sculptors of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen who based their style on antiquity. From the beginning the direction was fixed for the new style of painting; it was to be realistic and sculptural.

After Francis's death a memorial chapel was built in Assisi and was decorated by the first great figure of Italian painting - Giotto. Chiberti was to say of him.....(Giotto) discovered a whole doctrine that had been buried for 600 years.

In one way or another he seemed to isolate all the plastic problems that have preoccupied artists ever since. So deep was his insight in fact that his immediate followers, the so-called Giotteschi, were content to mimic him as the Mannerists were content to mimic Michelangelo. For over a century after his death he was more or less misunderstood until Masaccio took the torch he had lit so far forward in the space of his short lifetime that the Brancacci Chapel in Florence, where he painted his frescoes, was to be the Mecca for Italian painters for well over a century. The spirit of St. Francis was triumphant. The birds, flowers, animals and stars were reflections of the majesty of God and so was man. It is not too far off the mark to say that Humanism begins with St. Francis. In order to become fully human man must exist as a real man in a real world is the message and one cannot doubt that Giotto was inspired by it.

Nor can we doubt that the Renaissance if it begins anywhere begins in the fabulous city of Florence. In I400 Florence differed markedly from Italy's other major city-states. Strategically it occupied a favorable position : far enough from the Alps not to be threatened by imperial armies, far enough from Rome to have escaped absorption by the Papal States. Protected by the Apennines it could still communicate with the rest of Italy and through the navigable Arno with the world at large. Because the surrounding soil was not rich it had had to build up its manufacturing, its chief sources of wealth being woolen cloth, silk and banking. The Florentines in fact invented and perfected the modern banking system: they had a network of branches and agents extending from London to Lubeck and they were offical bankers to princes and Pope.

Growing business had left its mark on politics. Florence like Venice was a republic: out of a population of some fifty thousand there were six thousand professionals and tradesmen who had some say in government - an unusually high proportion for the time that was conducive to civic spirit and pride. In foreign policy the merchants and bankers favoured a policy of peace and trade that would continue to make the gold florin the strongest currency in Europe. The Florentine lending rate was as high as thirty-five percent.

During the Dark and Middle Ages books had been the preserve of the monks. But now in Florence there had arisen a new class of men with the leisure education and money to indulge a literary appetite. Their tastes differed from the monks. They wanted advice and knowledge not from philosophers and saints but from men and women like themselves in recognisable situations. So they began to search the monastery

libraries of Europe for fresh material. Between I400 and I440 dozens of unknown works of Latin literature and of Greek were found mainly by Florentines. A Latin cookbook turned up in a Swiss monastery side by side with Lucretius' sublime poem De Rerum Natura. Cicero's letters to Atticus were found and revealed the writer not as the monk-like sage the Church had made him out to be but as a staunch republican of lucid intellect who employed his powers in the defence of political liberty. Homer, Thucydides and Plato in particular became more widely known and discussed.

What appealed to the Florentines most was the enormous importance given by the Ancient World to will-power allied with moral virtues. Achilles and Odysseus, Alcibiades and the heroes sung by Pindar each felt he must excel and surpass himself both for himself and the public good. Likewise with the Romans - Scipio Africanus, Sulla, Caesar and countless others had forged their destinies through driving will and determination. It must have sounded like music to the ears of the ambitious Florentines who had been brought up on the strength - sapping counsels of books like Boethius' Consolations of Philosophy which advised a surrender of self to the will of God. Any book that preached different was banned and denounced by the Church. An act of disobedience as usual sounds the alarum for advance.

The people called this moral force by its Roman name - virtus which is fully explained by Cicero. It differed from any Christian virtue even fortitude, which could be equated with equanimity in ~~to~~ the face of danger, in that it was positive boundless vivifying and above all practicable. It was in point of fact the single most important element in the classical ideal evolved in Florence and was to become the dynamo of the city's future achievments. Michelangelo's David was to embody it.

Besides this there were two other elements which the Florentines sought to incorporate from the ancients. The first was public-spiritness the promotion of which helped to put an end to private vendettas and shifted the architectural emphasis from the inside of the building to the outside. The second was versatility, in many ways a more significant quality. This could well have been a reaction against the specialization demanded by the guild system but again its roots lay with the Ancients like Caesar, Pericles and Pliny who aspired to be all-round men. Cicero's statement - 'I have been studying philosophy most earnestly at the very time when I seemed to be doing least' - became famous in Florence with its implication that what was best in man was in his mind and that wisdom can come only with practical experience.

This theory had far reaching effects in the arts. Hitherto the artist had been little better than a crafsman but now the intellectual labour inherent in his work was beginning to be differentiated and appreciated. The revelation that Plato had been a painter and that Socrates knew enough about sculpting to have his Three Graces installed in the Acropolis did much to further his cause. So putting all three elements together we get a good picture of the goal towards which the Renaissance from its conception aspired - the Universal Man strong, resolute, authoratative, wise, worldly, moral, well-versed, public spirited and multi-talented. Leonardo got closest to it.

The Florentines were now even more certain that the Ancients on whom they had begun to model themselves held the key to success in every walk of life. In 1428 in order to transmit the new classical learning they took a major step by reforming the old conservative education system and giving pride of place to classical literature including moral philosophy. They called the new subject 'litterae humaniores' - learning that dealt directly with human beings. Six years later a more dramatic change was to take place when Rinaldo degli Albizzi an old-style leader who believed staunchly in the efficacy of war was sent into exile. His place was given to a banker Cosimo de Medici himself an exile - 45 years of age, shrewd politician, who immediately made peace with Milan, strong, liberal and a lover of art and learning. Thanks to him Florence was to enjoy peace for the next two generations in which many of her great cultural achievements were made.

At this time the famous Ghiberti worked on the second doors of the Baptistery bringing with them the official acceptance of perspective. Fra Angelico as if following the counsel of Plato to the letter that - ...' one should renounce all kinds and all subtleties of ornamentation and contrive above all to make work clear and pure' - purged religious painting of all sensual attraction and gave his figures a gentler and more rational fascination founded on the proportions of forms. Filippo Lippi, in contrast, sanctifies the flesh and prepares the way for the freedom and subtlety of such artists as Botticelli. In the chapel of the Medici palace Benozzo Gozzoli makes of the procession of the Magi a grand civic parade.

Under Cosimo, therefore, art to some extent lost its religious associations and acquired extraordinary dignity as a science. It was not so much a question of what one painted anymore as of how one painted it. All the treatises from Alberti's on painting to the Commentaries by Ghiberti are agreed in giving priority to the mathematical and geometrical aspect of design which was then held to be the basis

of all artistic activity. Mathematical perspective becomes a means of perceiving the world in order to conquer space and volume and has its greatest analyst and practitioner in Paolo Uccello. His great friend Donatello was commissioned by Cosimo to do the bronze David which was in effect the first free standing nude statue to have been made since the days of ancient Rome. Andrea del Castagno on the other hand tried by every possible means to re-establish the relationship between art and content whether historical or religious. His Crucifixion and his Last Supper in Sta Apollonia reveal a passionate intensity and descriptive talent although his figures indicate little or no inner life.

All this time and throughout the I5th century the cultural exchanges between the Mediterranean world and the Flemish were very extensive. Sienese painters such as Sassetta and Giovanni di Paolo appeared to discover and enhance the authentic characteristics of religious mysticism while setting the narrative in a more logical and natural space.

In Padua Mantegna made thorough use of Squarcione's collection of Roman and Greek copies in his attempt to create a heroic and idealized Antiquity as well as numerous new decorative themes. Opposed to him were the artists of Ferrara such as Tura Cossa and Ercole de Roberti who sought to re-establish the Gothic world and its symbols by imposing on them an aggressive linear and rhythmic design.

However, the credit for transforming the Florentine style into an Italian style and for establishing the ideal of balance and clarity animated by the emotional force of the Gothic belongs to Piero della Francesca and Leone Battista Alberti. Piero not only studied Masaccio in Florence but fell under the colourful spell of Domenico Veneziano, the first great link between the Gothic and Renaissance. He was also one of the first to use velatura (very delicate glazing) under Flemish influence. Here we have a monumental art based on a profound analysis of the external world. Subtlety and weight play against each other in a composition as balanced as a hairspring. Man and nature are reconciled in a magical harmony. He raises the heroes who appear in the series of the Legend of the True Cross out of fable and into symbolism. Piero believed in a sl salvation through wisdom and his figures like the Virgin and Child with Two Angels breathe and create a milieu graced with divine light in which the anxieties and tumult of ignorance have been pacified. Ficino, Cosimo's protege, was to write - 'In our time we are no longer satisfied with the miracle: we must have a rational philosophic explanation.'

Piero's ideas were to have a telling effect on Venetian painting through Antonello da Messina and Bellini who were certainly familiar with his work. From then on colour divorced from rationalism as well as volume was to become the immediate means of representing emotion born of nature; at the same time it served that religious feeling mixed with melancholy which under northern European influence was to take the place of the dolorosa genre of sacred pictures throughout Italy.

When Cosimo died in 1464 the Florentines accorded him the title of Pater Patriae and continued the system he had evolved by allowing first his son, then his grandson Lorenzo, to continue as leading citizen. Lorenzo's leadership lasted from 1469 to 1492. As a man he came close to the popular ideal proving himself effective as banker, politician, farmer, breeder of race horses, patron of the arts, philosopher, writer of religious lyrics and bawdy songs. He admired Ficino and they both idolised Plato so much so that they founded a society of Platonists calling it the Academy, the name Plato had given to his own school. The society met regularly to discuss topics arising from the Dialogues and dined annually on Plato's birthday. Its main object was to harmonize Christianity with Classical wisdom which was no easy task. It troubled them for example, that the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans had evolved in the absence of Jesus, a code of ethics based on unselfishness which was much the same as their own. How they asked had Socrates the strength to die for the cause of truth like a Christian martyr? Were they right to assume that their own religion had a monopoly of grace and truth? Led by the priest Ficino they soon arrived at an answer. They argued that God in his omniscience had allowed the human intelligence to foresee dimly some of the supernatural truths later to be revealed by Jesus. If the Greeks held that their hero Perseus was born of a virgin that was because they dimly apprehended the truth of the Incarnation even before it took place. This led to a sense of ancestral kinship with the great men of the past. Ficino called himself Plato reborn and Botticelli was identified with Apelles. Botticelli even went so far as to choose his subjects because they were known to have been painted by Apelles. Furthermore, he incorporated the doctrine of foreshadowing as it was called into his famous Birth of Venus. The goddess is carried to shore on a scallop shell, the Christian symbol of baptism and regeneration. She emerges from the sea as Christ rose from his baptism in the Jordan and is given a garment by a nymph as Noah was clothed by his sons. Similarly in the earlier Primavera Mercury is depicted not merely as servant of the gods but as revealer of truth as he touches the clouds to reveal the mysteries

beyond. And the message of the picture is this: While love awakens the world to beauty it is Love Herself who turns the human heart to truths divine. In fact it is hard to understand the swing of art towards poetry in this age without the concept of love. In considering the symbolism and mysticism of love which developed in all the art of the period we can identify Botticelli's colour, light and grace with that power which as Ficino says - ' wakes things that sleep, lights the darkness, gives life to dead things, form to the formless and perfection to the imperfect.' The Primavera is virtually an illustration of these ideas.

Of course there are many examples of superb 'religious' painters at this time - Perugino the master of Raphael Pinturicchio and Lo Spagna; Crivelli, Montagna, da Messina, del Castagno, Gozzoli, di Cosimo, Carpaccio, Ghirlandaio and so on. All these were eminent men of profound originality but the consummation of the florentine ethos belongs to two men in particular - Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarroti. With Raphael they belong to the High Renaissance; they deal with the problem of unattainable Platonic beauty in idiosyncratic ways that were never to be excelled.

There is something contemporary about Leonardo when you consider that his life's work as a painter was to forge a new type of beauty. I suggest that his lack of productivity in painting was due to the enormity of this task which he was surely conscious of rather than to the demands of his other commitments. What he hoped was to find his way to it through truth; and it is at this point that the scientist in him and the artist come together. His investigations into the movements of the ether and climate lead to the sfumato effects in the Mona Lisa and the Virgin of the Rocks and his examination of the behaviour of water influence his conception of grace - the ripple and sway of folds and hair. He studies ugliness too, which he caricatures in an effort to establish a perspective for his goal, and old age ~~too~~ both of which effect his art. The neo-Platonist teaching of the Academy that the supreme purpose of human existence is the attainment of a state of pure spirituality finds supreme expression in Leonardo. It is to be noted that the only artist quoted many times by him is Botticelli whose aims as we have seen were similar. But whereas Botticelli seeks his solutions in the metamorphosis of the real into myth and dream Leonardo seeks his in the heart of reality where the mystery resides. The phenomenon of life is the mystery. Were it not a phenomenon - a question to be answered - it would have no mystery. Thus Leonardo is the phenomenonologist par excellence. If the work of art is to capture the mystery it must itself be a phenomenon - a phenomenon of beauty. And it is this perplexing problem of how to

recreate beauty rather than merely copy it that absorbs Leonardo's attention and leads him to experiment with new and hazardous techniques. The face of the Gioconda, the group of the Virgin with St. Anne, and the Last Supper are all 'phenomenal' in this sense. The latter reveals how he progressively gave his attention to the phenomenon of the soul of man. There for the first time the artist represents a story of the inner moral mystery of man - the fluid secrets of human action, the hidden impulses, the guilt, the fragmentation at the core of evil, the relentless tide of destiny and the mystery to end all mysteries - God Incarnate - in whom all things rest and have their being. Leonardo brings to the scene not only a philosopher's objectivity but also a more vast and cogent knowledge of man in all his complexity.

The great man had no followers of great note. His disciples in Milan such as Luini, Boltraffio and da Predis were deprived of all originality and initiative by the master's overpowering genius. Only Michelangelo was to reach anything of the same stature as Leonardo. Raphael was to draw from both of them the elements necessary for his own development.

Michelangelo entered Lorenzo's school of sculpture around the age of thirteen. His talent was precocious enough for the poet Angelo Poliziano to suggest to him that he try his hand at a bas-relief of the battle of the centaurs as described in a poem by Ovid. The result was a mass of muscular figures that successfully captured the classical concept of virtus with a passion that was quite unique. It was to be his theme for the rest of his life. The Platonic ideal of pure spirituality which is synonomous for Michelangelo with the idea of beauty gather force in his mind with an uncompromising severity and single-mindedness that one usually associates with sainthood. Moral perfection is to be achieved in opposition to the material world not in union with it. And it is for this reason more than any other that he showed no liking of either Leonardo or Raphael or their work. Indeed he lives out as an intense drama-that eternal conflict in the nature of man between the world without and the world within which we have already dealt with. Matter opposes spirit and seeks to drag it down into its own baseness. This is equivalent to an alienation from God. Therefore in obedience to his goal he is forced to embrace the inevitability of tragedy - to be crucified. And when you read his sonnets you cannot avoid the notion that he in fact sees himself as such. In fact he is engaged in the same struggle as Tolstoy and, to a lesser extent perhaps, Van Gogh. Suffering is unavoidable: it is the conditio sine qua non of human existence - of all existence. And the true

artist is an agent of God's struggle against the physical - a man embarked on a mission. Given these beliefs it is no surprise that Savonarola's anti-materialistic fury was to have a profound effect on him as indeed it had on everyone including Botticelli who is alleged to have hurled many of his finest paintings into the bonfires the Dominican had set up, for the consumption of all cosmetics musical ~~instrumnets~~ instruments indecent books and pagan pictures. (The friars trump cards were hell-fire which obsessed everybody repentance and a prophecy that the sinful city would be consumed by fire. Up to twelve thousand at a time flocked to hear him and many including Michelangelo wept aloud. After being occupied by the French, Florence regarded the friar with even greater awe and handed him complete political power. Immediately he established an oligarchy, led huge penitential processions, declared half the days of the year fast days which virtually ruined the butchers and built his bonfires. The Pope Alexander VI excommunicated him and had all Florentine goods in Rome and elsewhere confiscated. The penitential lines grew thinner and Savonarola slipped down the charts. In order to save the situation one of his more filial converts claimed that Savonarola would walk unscathed across a burning pyre carrying aloft the Blessed Sacrament. The pyre was eagerly built and lighted but at the very last moment Savonarola got cold feet as they say and refused to enter the flames. The Florentines rounded on their former hero and battered him into a series of confessions. In 1498 another pyre was built in the main square and Savonarola was ceremoniously hanged and burned. His ashes were scattered on the waters of the Arno and the people of Florence went back to their cosmetics, their musical instruments, their indecent books, and their pagan pictures. It is a macabre story but we can be sure it had a profound effect on Michelangelo who was then only 23 years of age. He was to hear the friar's words ring in his ears for the rest of his life.) Florence itself was never to fully recover either from the occupation by the French army of Charles VIII nor the four years of economic disaster under Savonarola. Rome was rapidly becoming the new cultural centre of Italy and thither Michelangelo went to carve his Bacchus and the Pieta for St. Peters.

Sculpture more than any other art is tied to matter. 'It is, said Michelangelo, 'an art that is practised by the process of 'taking away', that is, by the physical removal of matter so that the image increases to the same extent that stone disappears.' The art for him is the liberation of the spiritual image from the density of matter that encumbers it. The artists worth is the measure of the difficulties overcome in the struggle to do this. In frescoes the surface must be

forced to assume a strong relief. In this of course Michelangelo is thinking almost exclusively of the nude, a means of expression that he was to take virtually to its limits. In the Sistine ceiling and in the Last Judgment the figures inhabit a stark wilderness so that nothing will distract from their grandeur.

It took him four years to fresco the vast ceiling, 133 feet by 43feet. More than once he had to travel far to implore Julius for funds. The nine main scenes taken from Genesis begin with the creation of the world and continue to the last years of Noah. In the frames surrounding these scenes are seated nude youths symbolizing Greek and Roman man. On the border are the Prophets and Sibyls who foresaw by divine grace the coming of Christ. The painting taken as a whole is a panorama of pre-Christian history viewed as a foreshadowing of Christian redemption. It is important not to forget that all this work was accomplished by a man who looked upon himself as first and foremost a sculptor. That he did it at all is probably due to the fact that it was the kernel of his artistic faith that all the arts could be reduced to an ideal form. His finished sculptures such as those of the tombs of Lorenzo and JuliusII give a clear indication of the ideal he sought to perfect. Even his poetry reveals the striving of a perfect form to match his feelings. That he was aware of trying to express the inexpressible is evident from his last unfinished pietas and those final extraordinary drawings in which the figures seem to disintegrate from the intensity of the force within them. He had been working on his last pieta six days before he died on 18th February 1564. Those who heard the funeral oration of Benedetto Varchi felt they were listening to the story of an epoch in art.

While Michelangelo had been working on the Sistine ceiling Raphael was at work on his own frescoes in the Stanze. This series is really a testament to the theory that there was an unbroken continuity between the philosophy of nature of the ancients and Catholic dogma. His Deposition had already shown in 1507 that a profound continuity could exist between the classical myths and the Christian drama. Now in the great compositions of the Parnassus the School of Athens and the Disputa he exalts this unity and continuity of human experience by setting it in the universality of time and space. This is the real reason for the arched architecture and deep central perspective of the School of Athens. This too is the theme of the Disputa - the invisible union between heaven and earth, miracle and history, Christianity and philosophy providence and intellect. Humanism has here its most articulate spokesman and one who wishes to confirm with all the poetic sensitivity

of which he is capable that beauty lies within nature herself.

Raphael was born in Urbino and was the pupil of Perugino. In Florence between 1505 and 1508 he studied the works of Leonardo and Michelangelo and sought to reconcile their conflicting ideologies; then he worked in Rome up to his death in 1520. He is a synthesis - seeker rather than an originator and forms his own style through careful study and critical appreciation. His painting does not offer a new conception of man and his world but is illustrative of a culture - the perfect expression of a society that believed it had found its equilibrium and established its values. From his first works, The Dream of the Knight, The Three Graces or the Marriage of the Virgin every dramatic action and emphasis is rigorously excluded; his form is henceforth that of a world which places every discordant note in perfect harmony and in which, as Schopenhauer would say, the will is nothing and the representation is all. His aesthetic ideal is both religious and profane. Form and beauty can have value only if they represent in a tangible way the universal truth of scripture affirmed by the Church and visible in history. It is the ethical and religious significance of this all-pervasive unity of human experience that he seeks to establish taking his colour from del Piombo, his naturalness from Leonardo and his formal strength from Michelangelo. This is why he employs the pyramidal structure as well, as in the Madonna with a Goldfinch, so that he can confer monumentality on the religious and philosophical content of his conception. This preoccupation with the unity and harmony of structure leads him naturally to the other arts especially architecture. He was able to change ~~hi~~ the plan of St. Peter's begun by Bramante (1444-1514) into the form of a Latin cross which Michelangelo was to leave unaltered.

When Luther visited Rome in 1511 he was appalled at the general lack of devoutness and worldly concerns. The Romans seemed to care more for Aristotle than the Gospels. But Pope Leo X, son of Lorenzo de Medici, had problems of his own - namely financial. In order to help with the huge sums that St. Peter's was costing he instituted the indulgence in Germany in 1516. A year later Luther published his 95 theses and the Reformation was under way. It had of course been stirring for some time and its effect on art is mirrored in the Mannerist movement.

From the very beginning of the 16th century Durer in Germany and Michelangelo in Rome were involved with the problems arising out of the Reformation. Michelangelo after all could hardly forget the first reform movement initiated by Savonarola. In Rome he joined the circle of Vittoria Colonna which was trying to discover religious authenticity by means of reform. The Inquisition did in fact

suspect him of being a Lutheran. Indeed, the questions which obsessed him at the time were precisely the same questions that lay at the heart of Protestantism-namely salvation and the possibility of direct communication between the individual and God. In his Last Judgment the God of wrath looming over man echoes the terrible Calvinist doctrine of predestination. The figure of Mary incidentally is thought to be a portrait of Vittoria. He was in fact tormented with the idea that God had somehow abandoned man. Likewise, Ficino looked to Eastern mysticism such as Zoroastrianism and the Chaldean oracles as well as alchemy, demonology and magic. Leonardo meditated on the return to nothingness as a law of nature. And even Raphael seems to have had a surprising knowledge of the monsters and fires of Hieronymus Bosch whose work was already in Venice. And the engravings of his followers such as Giorgio Ghisi (Raphael's dream of Michelangelo's Melancholy) and Agostino dei Musi (The Skeleton) reveal images of dread drawn from the Unconscious and which point to Fuseli, Blake and the Surrealists. Raphael also introduced the grotesque in painting and ornament which was to last as far as the 18th century.

This yearning for the mysterious, evident even in Botticelli, and di Cosimo, prepared the way for Mannerism which stemmed it seems from Ficino's development of Neo-Platonism. It was the first break with the Renaissance and is to be regarded not as the stop-gap between the Renaissance and the Baroque but as a movement in its own right. Whereas the Renaissance was essentially an Italian experience Mannerism though it originated in Tuscany soon spread all over Europe with a momentum matched only by the Gothic movement. It ends by common agreement in Toledo with the death of El Greco. Its new artistic creed is individualism.

In 1527 Rome was sacked and laid waste by the French. For the Protestants it had come to mean the city of the Anti-Christ and the symbol of an enemy to be exterminated. Even her art was questioned and Leo was succeeded by a monk from Utrecht, Adrian VI who despised both humanism and the arts. As for Florence the collapse of her last republic in 1530 spelt her end. All that was left was the independent power of Venice source of the first germs of the disintegration of the aesthetic system established by the Renaissance. Little in fact survived by 1530 Raphael had been dead for ten years, Leonardo for eleven. Michelangelo was alone to survive for any length of time only to be torn apart by inner conflicts. The Florentine dream of harmony in which all questions would be answered and all uncertainty erased was shattered. The ghosts of the Middle Ages that had never been fully exorcised were once again to raise their ugly heads. And man was once more plunged into doubt and despair. The Germans in particular were to give expression to this state of affairs.

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The Renaissance had in fact succumbed to the mysterious and the irrational. The social order that had been tought to be the true and everlasting objective reality of mans mind was falling apart. Hitherto reason as the sibyl who could answer all questions had been virtually worshipped - had in fact given humanism with its intellectual freedom its predominance over religion. It was after all the humanist element within the Church that with the help of Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas had endeavoured to solve all religious problems. Just as the spiritual life had been clarified by intellectual discipline so the visible world was logically represented by three-dimensional form. But the unsatisfied forces of the psyche revolted against the tyranny of idealised form. As we have seen already at the beginning of the I6th century Leonardo and Michelangelo at the peak of the Tuscan Renaissance demonstrated this growing dissatisfaction - Michelangelo in his violent treatment of form (terribilita); and Leonardo in his preoccupation with the evocation of mystery and the problems of light.

In Florence and Rome classicism reached its climax between I5I0 and I530: then the balance established by the Renaissance between emotion and reason imagination and reality was upset by the innovations of Pontormo and Rosso both of whom looked to Michelangelo for answers. Michelangelo had ended up by sacrificing form in its classical concept to the exigences of a purely personal and passionate interior vision. Form space colour and light were now just so many problems to be discussed and resolved in an original way. Harmony, particularly structural harmony, gave way to a freer and more imaginative rhythm. An acute spiritual disquiet expressed itself in formal experiments that went so far as to distort reality. Leonardo's 'sfumato' becomes the sensual mellowness of Correggio and Andrea del ~~Arto~~ Sarto, and with Pontormo form begins to lose its solidity and become a mêlée of vibrant contours and diaphanous colour. (Descent from the Cross I530).

Benvenuto Cellini(I500-I57I) was of the same generation. The stucco work of Primaticcio and Giovanni Rosso was a revelation to him while at Fontainebleau where the new Mannerist conception of beauty as a sort of unerotic effeminacy was a radical departure from the old classical formalism. This new spirit he breathed into the Nymph painted for Francois I and in the statue of Perseus (Florence)

The outburst of Mannerism in Emilia central Italy was of no less importance. Besides the art of Correggio whose drive rallied the parctically exhausted spirit of the Renaissance there was Parmigianino who approached the problem of expression with an original imagination. Besides a refined elegance he brought to his forms an atmosphere of melancholy. In the Vision of St. Jerome, the Madonna of the Rose and St. Roch with a Donor, he created a sensitively modulated world of fantasy. Figures were inordinately elongated into a sinuous rhythm and elements borrowed from reality were transformed into the fantastic. It is an art of introspection stamped like Hamlet with the melancholy born of the sense of futility characteristic of the times. Nevertheless Mannerism remained humanist in the sense that it was still based on the human figure. The human being was still the epitome of creation - but only just.

The Reformation had already made effective its attacks on mans pride in an effort to humble him before God. The god was Luther's - the implacable patriarchal deity familiar to Romans and Greeks centuries before. Aeschylus we recall had launched a similar attack on the Athenians shortly before their civilization perished. Salvation, Luther insisted, could not be bought or achieved by any human action; it was entirely a matter of a sincere faith in God and in his mysterious grace. The ultimate effect of this was to bring about an upsurge of individualism which touched the heart of the growing middle class in ~~GEr~~ Germany and Holland (Flanders). But in the meantime men were left with their cherished dream of mans greatness slipping like sand through the fingers. He became acutely aware of his own paltriness in the face of a God whose triumph would be a Judgment of human pride.

At the end of the 15th century Ficino said of man - 'To ~~he~~ him the sky does not seem too high nor the centre of the earth too deep. Time and space do not prevent him from going anywhere at any moment. On all sides he strives to dominate, to be praised, to be eternal like God. How different were Calvin's words some years later - 'The Scriptures show us what we are in order to reduce us to nothing. It is true that men will intoxicate themselves all the more deluding themselves with the belief in their great dignity. They may well think highly of themselves for God in the meantime knows them to be only a lot of stinking refuse...' This was a harsh awakening from the sublime dream of the Renaissance.

From Patenier who died in 1524 to Bruegel (born 1528) there was in northern Europe a sudden spate of cosmic pictures in which man had the unedifying

dimensions and importance of a gnat. In Bruegel's Fall of Icarus, for example, the mighty Icarus falls to his death unnoticed by the peasants working near. A generation earlier Altdorfer had depicted Alexander's entire army reduced to the size of an ant colony in the vastness of the cosmos.

Whereas the Renaissance artists had tried to give a clear ordered representation of nature the Mannerists broke away from actual form per se and became more interested in refined and original expressions rather than the communication of any factual or ideal truth. In fact with them a rift occurs between technique and content the former being so much more important. This in fact is its main achievement because content-wise it made little or no contribution and was content to draw shamelessly from the treasures of Michelangelo and Leonardo who had given virtuosity its impetus. The Mannerist search for rarity and technical proficiency for its own sake resulted in a court art that was as bizarre as it was extravagant. The young Parmigianino for example painted a portrait of himself as he appeared in a convex mirror and he did so for the sake of the resulting distortion of optical appearances. The modern ideal of a detached study of appearances for their existential significance seems to begin here.

The new style was naturally the vogue in aristocratic and court circles - in the same way as Gothic mannerism had been before. Its popularity cannot of course be divorced from the economic climate of the day which was a prosperous one. It flourished particularly under the influence of Rosso and Primaticcio in the school of Fontainebleau from whence it spread to northern Europe. The French gave it a sensuality that goes back to Botticelli. The attraction Fontainebleau had for Flemish artists gave rise to a Romanist school in the Netherlands. From there artists streamed to Rome to study under Barocci, Zuccaro, Tempesta etc. We find Marten de Vos studying Tintoretto in Venice and Denys Calvaert whose pupils were Albani and Guido Reni studying in Bologna in 1560.

Besides the Italians the Flemish school had of course their own masters to refer too - Van Eyck, Van der Weyden, Metsys and Memling whose severe hard-edged religious conceptions remained true to the northern European character; otherwise they might well have been swamped by the delicate worldly charm of Fontainebleau. Brueghel, painting from memory, consciously opposed Italian humanism in favour of the critical integrity of Hieronymus Bosch his predecessor. In total freedom he turns from landscape (Hunters in the Snow 1565) to the nightmares of the Middle Ages (The Triumph of Death) resurrected by Luther.

In Venice between I530 and I540 the influence of Mannerism upset the classical hierarchy dominated by Giorgione. Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and Bassano all made a break from the by now outmoded classical serenity. Giorgione himself following on from Carpaccio and Bellini had initiated and sustained all that was then considered revolutionary in Venetian painting - dominance of rich colour, figurative sensitivity, aerial perspective and so on - all of which satisfied the taste of a free prosperous mercantile republic proud of its independence and ruled by the state rather than the church. But with the anxieties of the times this artistic format became inoperative. In Mannerism therefore was sought a more dynamic means of expression and a way past classicism.

By renouncing complete adherence to exterior reality in the last phase of his work before his death in I576 Titian created a magical world of great depth and dramatic richness in which colour dissolves in light. In response to the tragic drama of his age he increasingly took refuge in an interior world in which his own problems and visions occupy him totally. The final testament to his imagination lies in his ability to give a full poetic interpretation to the deep-rooted fears of his time. His final version of The Crowning of Thorns (Munich) ~~has~~ foreshadows the intensity of Rembrandt in its conception and the technique of impressionism in its execution.

Titian's pupil Tintoretto was more attracted by the sculpteresque element in Mannerism derived from Michelangelo. Furthermore he revitalised the colour spectrum of Giorgione only to sacrifice it in favour of a dramatic chiaroscuro that left no room for the sensual richness characteristic of the Venetian tradition. His approach to his subject was dynamic - visionary even and his impetuosity reveals itself in a dazzling display of brushwork. This virtuosity was to have a bad effect on subsequent Venetian painting. In his portraits he strives to render the individual's awareness outside of its social matrix. In this respect he differs greatly from the mature Titian and was in this respect alone to have a profound effect on El Greco. Venice it should be remembered was excessively class - conscious at this time its oligarchy being derived from the purest pedigree in the state. Tintoretto embraced the spirit of Mannerism and welded it into his own stle.

Paolo Veronese (I528-I588) established his artistic roots in Verona where he encountered the Mannerist style which had spread through central Italy. At Mantua he studied the great decorative work of Giulio Romano and came into contact with the Correggesque manner in the work of Parmigianini and Primaticcio. He also

studied Michelangelo and Raphael. From all these influences there evolved a style that was to triumph in Venice. His genius was clear diaphanous colour and skilful foreshortening which he exploited to the full. He tries to outdo nature both in ever more refined gradations of colour and the perfection of his forms which however avoid academicism. About 1570 he changed radically, abandoning his pageantry and splendour for a more lyrical melancholic expression. His frescoes in the Villa Maser however remain as a triumph to his successful blending of Roman neo-Platonism and mannerism. His was the last great manifestation of the Italian Renaissance.

El Greco would be an impossible anachronism were it not for his contact with the Mannerism of Venice. When he arrived there from Crete around 1566 he painted like 'a maker of Madonnas.' Freeing himself from the Byzantine canons and sharing in the Mannerist vision of Tintoretto he succeeded in becoming part of the contemporary movement. During his two stays in Venice interrupted by a visit to Rome he established his own unique style that was to allow him to give full expression to his mysticism.

This he only achieved after settling in Toledo. The cultural state of Spain at this time was very complex. The Renaissance manner did however provide a certain continuity in Valencia where the Juan de Juanes tradition was kept alive until the end of the 16th century. However, the golden hour was not to come until the ~~16th~~ 17th century when a truly national genre emerged in Seville and Madrid. In the work of El Greco's contemporary Luis De Morales (d.1586) a hidden Gothic element is at work combined with a profound religious feeling. His forms sharpened and drawn out are reinforced by Italian Mannerism. Morales paintings of Ecce Homo and of Madonnas have a passionate mysticism that earned him the nickname of El Divino.

El Greco's work from the time he arrived in Spain was much more complex. His first paintings here already show a reaction against his Venetian experience while the large canvases in Sto Domingo el Antiguo in Toledo are in the Roman tradition; their full generous forms have a serenity that is not to be found in any of his other works. Later after his failure with Philip II his means of expression become entirely personal and introverted and it is difficult to relate him to his contemporaries. His Byzantine training is evident throughout. The enamel-like quality of many of his Italian paintings and the lines broken up into short strokes appear to be of Greek origin. Byzantine aesthetics may also explain the repetition of certain characters and postures which were to acquire

an archetypal significance. From about 1590 on he reverts to Byzantine forms.

His art differs greatly from the Italian Mannerists such as Pontormo and Schiavone whose work he must have known. His figures have a movment that springs from an inner torment which is accentuated by his impressionist technique. El Greco was the first to use this method and we find it later on in Velasquez. Above all a strange metaphysical light fills his paintings which highlights his detachment from the realism that was the basis of the Baroque. All in all his work shows the dignity and grandeur of the best in Spanish painting. The Agony in the Garden is perhaps his most famous image.

Spain in fact was to be an important centre for the revival of Catholicism known as the Counter-Reformation. It was a country that had not experienced the luxury and pleasure of an uninhibited republicanism like that of Venice nor were there many intellectuals who could transform its aristocracy into a class dedicated to the noble aims of intellect and art. Loyal to the medieval and Gothic traditions Spain had dealings only with sovereigns vicars of the Church and God. The very idea of an elite which was the basis of the entire Renaissance movement was foreign to her. The function of the civil authorities was to provide a link not a barrier between God and the people. Thus the spirit of Christian piety and the faith of the Middle Ages were very much intact and were likely to remain so. Thus when the Church became alarmed at the progress of Protestantism and its own waning prestige it was to Spain that she looked.

The Society of Jesus founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1537 was the result. It provided the Church with a veritable army of reformers all subject to a rigorous moral discipline. From Spain too came Francis Xavier, a friend of Ignatius, who set out to carry the new passion for expansion as far as Japan. Finally, the most brutal attempt ever to restore a faith was initiated and developed by the Spanish Inquisition. After the Council of Trent (1545-1563) an anti-Renaissance policy was implemented on a large scale by the Church in an effort to persuade the masses back to the faith. The outcome was the Baroque.

The Baroque style was used first in Rome and Spain by the Jesuits in particular as a means of religious propaganda. Henceforth art was no longer for the appreciation of a well-to-do- elite but for the broad unschooled masses of the faithful. Mannerism had simply taken to extremes the purely aesthetic and therefore bourgeois function that the Renaissance had imputed to art. But Protestantism had quite rightly denounced Rome with her Pope and clerical princes as a monstrous system

dedicated to draining the resources of Christendom in order to pay for its own excesses, of which art indeed was the most costly. So it was desirable to remove all grounds for such accusation. Art was to be restored to its proper function--as a means for influencing the great majority of the faithful principally by an appeal to their emotions rather than their heads. As part of the new policy there was a wide campaign unprecedented since medieval times to build churches.

The resulting change in artistic ideology led to a movement to portray the everyday life of the ordinary people. This 'populist' movement, as it is called, had already been engendered by Jacopo Bassano whose rural origin and general disenchantment with classicism led him to the portrayal of humble life. The same trend was followed by Todeschini, Niccolo Frangipane, and Campi and popularised by the engravings of Villamena. It led to Caravaggio who at the end of the 16th century gave the movement its revolutionary impetus.

Populism also was to be developed in Rome by the bambocciata (rustic-life painters) and in France by Le Nain. Northern Europe exerted the main influence where the Reformation had done more than the Counter-Reformation to oppose the aristocratic bias of the Renaissance. Protestantism which in spite of resistance from Luther was committed to opposing the ruling princes whom they considered the killers and robbers of the peasantry was considered by the people as an instrument of the fight for freedom. Equality before God was its war-cry. This is why Protestantism was immediately accompanied by social movements, revolts and peasant uprisings that were ruthlessly suppressed by the barons. What is more, man was placed face to face with the Word of God as it is revealed in the Bible: faith, it said, the faith of even the humblest individual was more important from the point of view of salvation than all good works. Thus the hierarchy of the Church with all its doctrinaire middlemen was swept aside. In this way Protestantism placed the simple uncultivated peasant on the same footing as the prince. These new ideas were spread abroad by the Pietists the Illuminists and above all by the Anabaptists.

The influx of northern artists to Rome helped merge the two populist waves. Plebeian themes were to have great success all over Europe and Italy and artists like Bruegnel, Bosch, Quentin Metsys as well as Annibale Carracci and Caravaggio were to be influenced by it. Mannerism was now seen for what it was arbitrary formalism and over-refinement sponsored by an elite aristocracy who wanted above all an ideal beauty to offset the baseness of matter and to mirror its own self-conception. The path cleared by Populism was to lead directly to the Baroque.

THE BAROQUE

THE BAROQUE

At the end of the I6th century a reform in art was felt necessary for the reasons already given. It was brought about in Rome by Caravaggio and Annibale Carracci. The former from Lombardy arrived in Rome about I593 and the latter from Bologna about I595. Caravaggio's realism was to influence Flemish, Dutch, Spanish and certain French artists for over a century as well as many Italians especially in Genoa and Naples. Annibale Caracci on the other hand founded a new classicism that influenced th the majority of Italian painters and the greatest of the French masters such as Poussin and Claude Le Lorrain. It was Rome therefore, once again, that was to influence European taste for the next century and a half.

Caravaggio's life was one of continual revolt first against his family and then against Roman society. Towards the end of his short life he had frequent and serious skirmishes with the law, brought on it seems from a persecution mania. This role of libertine enhanced his image and helped spread his influence throughout the Protestant countries. His first Roman period between I592 and I598 saw him adopt the Mannerist technique with its precise contours its bright colours and sculptural sense. Thereafter he wages war not only against Mannerism but against the whole idealistic legacy of the Renaissance. His Magdalen is neither the Christian Venus nor the voluptuous creation of Titian; she is rather the Magdalen of the street, of everday life. He resurrects the still-life in direct antithesis to the bustling crowded canvases of the academics who were basking in their new-found but lofty social position which put them on a par with poets and professors. Books even then had been written about them and historical paintings were ordained by them as the only subject worthy of their attention. But ~~Garagg~~ Caravaggio was convinced three centuries before Cezanne that the humble apple was as difficult to paint as a Madonna or a cavalry charge. And he proved his point by transforming a small basket of fruit into one of the worlds great masterpieces.

Caravaggio's art however only attained perfect cohesion when he subjected his images to the effects of light and shade. The light is neither daylight, nor night light but more in the nature of an abstract force, an outside spiritual emanation that has no single source. It is this light that allows ~~Ca~~ Caravaggio's figures to transcend reality itself. In the Conversion of St. Paul it is this light that awakens the spirit of Saul and brings about his conversion. His Death of the Virgin is considered the most religious of all I7th century

Italian paintings. His intention clearly was to reveal the inner spiritual beauty of the humble lives of simple people and of everyday objects. His influence on Orazio Gentileschi who worked in France, England and Spain assured his renown.

Annibale Carracci was an authentic artist and his true stature is not to be found in the Farnese palace. Two small paintings the Flight into Egypt in the Doria gallery Rome and Christ and the Good Samaritan in Vienna are his real masterpieces. These reveal his individual nature - the dreams of love and melancholy associating light and landscape with his feelings - a Romantic almost, before his time. It was Annibale who in fact launched the classical landscape . Of course landscapes had already been done not only in Italy but in Flanders and Germany but following Carracci it became a genre and enjoyed a world-wide success reaching its classical perfection finally with Claude le Lorrain.

The style of the Carracci family and their pupils answered the demands of contemporary society so well that Bologna was called the Athens of Italy and the Bolognese school became the most admired and sought after for two centuries. One of these pupils was Guido Reni who became famous all over Europe and was called the second Raphael. The French drew inspiration from him even in the I8th century and Goethe praised him as 'a divine genius.' His most famous work is Aurora on the ceiling of the Palazzo Rospigliosi in Rome.

In Spain the Baroque in painting begins traditionally with Francisco Ribalta (I565-I628). He perfected a sort of sombre tenebrism appropriate to the scenes of torture and martyrdom he painted on a vast scale. But it was not Caravaggio whom he imitated but Sebastiano del Piombo some of whose works he copied. The Crucifixion and the Christ Embracing St. Bernard are among his principal works.

Jusepe de Ribera (I50I-I652) thought to be his pupil coupled tenebrism with the expressionism derived from El Greco. In I6I6 he settled in Naples then under Spanish rule and spent the rest of his life there. He derived his style from Caravaggio and his Neapolitan followers and like Ribalta painted the same gloomy pictures of martyrdom and torture. He is nevertheless credited with introducing the Caravaggesque style into Spain. His Boy with a Club Foot is regarded as his masterpiece.

True religious painting however insofar as we can judge it finds its voice in Zurbaran, pupil of Pacheco and friend of Velasquez. He was much overshadowed in his own lifetime by the ambitious Murillo (I6I7-I682) who founded the academy of

Seville (1660). Nevertheless Zurbaran is now recognised as one of the greatest Spanish painters, second only to Velasquez. Characteristic of his work are paintings of monks at prayer and of St. Francis as well as his outstanding still-lifes.

Diego Velasquez (1599-1660) is as far as the craft of painting is concerned, very much out on his own. To begin with, his range of subjects is remarkable - religious, historical and mythological pictures, landscape, still-life and genre painting, animals, and hunting scenes, character studies and portraiture. But he also brought to all of these his own proud sense of humanity. He transfigured what he painted with his own private view of life and fixed the classic form of the Baroque. His second visit to Italy produced the famous portrait of Innocent X as well as the Rokeby Venus in which he sought to imitate Titian. Court life which he settled into in 1631 did not obscure ~~his obscure~~ his intense enquiry into human reality which resulted in the studies of buffoons and dwarfs and the powerful figure of Aesop. His religious pictures include The Adoration of the Magi Jesus in the House of Martha and Mary, Christ at the Column and the Crucifixion. His entire output it is estimated number no more than 170 paintings which perhaps explains why his immediate effect on Spanish art was not all it should have been.

The credit for bringing 17th century Spanish painting in line with the general movement of the European Baroque goes to the fresco painter Francisco Rizi (1608-1685). Though a mediocre painter himself he was the associate or teacher of some of the greatest Baroque masters. In collaboration with Juan Carreno he painted the frescoes in Toledo cathedral. Nevertheless his own work is heavy and earthbound and does not attain the grandeur of Italian frescoes.

Meanwhile in Flanders a Catholic revival was under way which affected all classes of the people during the reign of the Archdukes. The entire city (Antwerp) wrote Henri Pirenne was worked on and so to speak moulded by religion. It was a triumph of orthodoxy an outburst of faith and mysticism. The pilgrimages to Hal and Montaigu drew immense crowds. The convents of Carmelites, Brigittines, Clarisses, Ursulines etc all filled up. The Jesuits who had arrived in the Netherlands in the middle of the 16th century immediately had a great success at Louvain university. Their merit as teachers became indispensable and the Archdukes found them very useful. By 1612 their Order was immense. Their ex-pupils banded into confraternities and Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) was secretary to the one at Antwerp.

The middle classes for their part and even the lower classes

enjoyed a prosperity unknown since the time of Charles V. Industry flourished supported by large-scale trade with products being exported far and wide. The towns maintained their monopolies and privileges and they had their guilds and corporations. An individualistic spirit that was conservative and more and more capitalistic presided over the growth and organisation of an economic life whose main centre was still Antwerp. French, the language of government civil service and aristocracy, strengthened its prestige while Latin remained the stamp of the educated man. The arts of course were to benefit from this highly organised society that was supported politically by Madrid and spiritually by Rome.

The Flemish artists worked with an eye to the universal as well as with a sense of national prestige: their ambition was to see their school ranked among the greatest. In this pursuit they mastered all of the Italian idioms. But the Counter-Reformation like the Renaissance itself took a particular turn in Flanders. Here the Baroque followed on not from classical art but rather from the late Gothic or Flamboyant style whose intricate embellishments corresponded with the Flemish sense of independence as well as their ideal of decorative abundance and dynamic design.

It was Rubens who first digested, absorbed and finally fused the two currents in his native art creating a new style which was to have a powerful and lasting effect on all painting north of the Alps. His first master was an uninspiring Antwerp mannerist called Otto Van Veen. But in 1600 we find Rubens in Italy where he remained for the next eight years broken only by a diplomatic mission to Spain on behalf of Vincenzo Gonzaga. Almost from the beginning his work shows an exuberant if not violent energy like the Hercules and Omphale done when he was 25. Probably too the great Judith dates from the Italian period which depicts a scene of sensual cruelty in which a vengeful woman decapitates Holofernes with a sword.

Shortly after his return from Italy and soon after his marriage in 1609 Rubens was able to take his first steps into the High Baroque and become its chief representative in northern Europe. His industry became legendary although he was eventually forced through the weight of his commissions to take on pupils and assistants to carry out his ideas. At least 2,000 paintings were produced in this way.

Nevertheless noone had ever managed to capature the pomp and power of the Baroque with the same imagination and authority as Rubens. His best known works The Elevation of the Cross and the Descent from the Cross are in Antwerp Cathedral.

The Elevation considered as a work of art is tremendous; but as an expression of religious feeling it fails largely because Rubens' Christ is more akin to a classical hero than a divinity. However in the Descent we see how Rubens so completely triumphs over his failings. Here in plain colours and sharply defined contours a revolution is effected in Flemish art. Rubens was to go on to tackle every other subject touching each with his extraordinary vivacity so that Delacroix, his successor in many ways, was to say of him - 'Glory to the Homer of painting to the father of the warmth and enthusiasm of that style with which he eclipses everything not merely by the perfection he gave to any particular part but by that secret force and that deep inner life he gave everything.' That he was an individualist too is beyond question being one of the few painters of his age who made no compromise with current tastes. He also built a mansion for himslf in Antwerp and married, when in his fifties, Helene Fourment who was not yet twenty. As a diplomat he visited Madrid where he made friends with Velasquez, London where he was knighted by Charles I and where he negotiated the peace between England and Spain. He also supervised the production of engravings of his work and conducted the commercial side of the business himself. All in all his, by all appearances, was a charmed life and he was certainly never to know the tragedy and conflict that was the lot of Rembrandt in the second half of his life.

What we find in his style is a mystical fervour and a realism which were inherited from the Middle Ages and from the I5th century and which the Renaissance had stifled. He is a man of his times so much so that he is able to declare in a letter to Valavez - 'I consider the whole world to be my native land.' Therefore, something in his religious disposition (if any) is probably missing to us in his work which fails to move us as no doubt it moved his contemporary public of kings, archdukes, Jesuits and bourgeois.

Religion enters into and inspires Flemish art and gives it back its enthusiasm and creative impetus. The individual was unable to resist the tide that carried the whole of society with it nor could the artist stand outside the aesthetics of his time and place. At the same time I7th century European man was in the grip of exploration and scientific investigation and demanded for himself an evermore active and effective role in the universe. While recognising provisionally, as it were, his dependence on God he aspired above all to know more about himself, more about the world he lived in. He acquired a taste for portraits, landscapes and still lifes which reflect his successful integration of the world. In Humanism were reflected

all his aspirations and curiosity - a Catholic humanism that no longer despised the evidence of the senses or concrete objects nor the grandeur of the human adventure all of which find their lyrical and vigorous voice in Rubens. This humanism was such that Rubens' pupil Jacob Jordaens worked for Catholic churches despite the fact that he was himself a sincere and militant Calvinist. The influence of his master on the other hand was to be felt right up to the 19th century.

One adjective that describes Rubens and Baroque art in general is rhetorical. Initially its purpose was polemical and therefore communicative. But it soon departed from this ideal and became in the words of Shakespeare - 'full of sound and fury signifying nothing'. This is particularly true of architecture particularly the architecture of south Germany which reacted to the Baroque in much the same way as Flanders. Prague, Vienna and Dresden were the main centres of the rebirth which about the middle of the 18th century assumed one of its most extreme forms in the southern Bavarian pilgrimage church at Wies built by Dominikus Zimmermann and filled with the paintings of his brother Johann Baptist. The numerous sculptural works by Ignaz Gunther refer directly to Bernini and in comparing the two we can see how the Baroque easily grafted itself onto something already indigenous to the German character and which we can see also in Grunewald and Durer. This austere element was particularly intact in those parts of Catholic Germany that had neither been swamped by the Renaissance nor been impounded by Protestantism. The Baroque, in effect, seemed to liberate something that had been repressed in the German character since the Middle Ages by the severity of classical culture. Now it re-emerged in Architecture, painting and sculpture under the stimulus of Baroque mannerism to form a culture whose primary effect was to be experienced by the emotions - by senses and nerves. In this way the Baroque lost its inner cohesion which still retained some discipline and whipped itself up into the sparkling but empty froth of the Rococo whose main ingredients were trompe l'oeil, decorative ~~assy~~ asymmetry and sheer fantasy. The ideal was now to <u>impress</u> by whatever means that were available and the church became in essence the poor mans fairy-tale palace.

France on the other hand which had also been drawn into the Reformation refused to abandon a culture built on a rational basis for one that appealed to the emotions. This made France anti- Baroque although she did not by any means remain immune to it. Although Poussin and Claude Le Lorrain for example lived in Rome and adopted the Baroque canons in narrative and scenic painting they advocated a poetic classicism in favour of Baroque rhetoric. In this way they

they stopped the development of Mannerism that had been inculcated by the Italian influence of the schools of Fontainebleau. When Louis XIV supplanted the Church by the state and turned the authority of the bishops into an extension of his own he also took over the Baroque in certain fields for his own propaganda. The use of display and luxury, impressive town planning and elaborate facades on buildings were useful expressions of his power as were the new art forms of opera and ballet. Yet although Louis agreed with Descartes in condemning the Baroque as depending on the distortion of the passions he was nevertheless fond of its theatrical effect and grandiosity. Thus all the forms on the immense facade of the palace of Versailles are subject to the rational severity of the straight line. The state after all is a logical pyramid that rises without deviation to that emanation of God which is Louis. This geometry is the core of political stability which explains why French classicism remained forever independent and even antagonistic to the Baroque. The latter was of course anti-individual its intention being to weld the faithful into an unquestioning mass under the flag of a new humanism promulgated by the Jesuits. This is why the Baroque of the Americas brought there by the Spaniards is so like the art of India in that the natives could find use only for the application of its outward forms to express their innate feeling for the profuse and luxuriant. This is the reason too why the portraits of Catholic France of the I8th century still remain only social portraits while the painters of Protestant Holland as early as the I7th century had undertaken to explore the depths of the human personality and as in the case of Rembrandt to depict it as a light emerging from the shadows in which it had been enveloped for centuries.

All the elements typical of the Baroque however appear in Rembrandt and it is true to say that its main themes were developed in his work. But in his way of interpretating these themes -mythological religious historical etc- he was unique - an individual - and in this essentially anti-Baroque. When he treated such subjects it was with the northern spirit of revolt against the culture of the south-with the convinced attitude of the Reformation man against the insidious purposes of the Baroque of the Counter-Reformation.

He was born in Leyden on July I5 fourth son of a prosperous miller. He first studied painting in the studio of Jan Van Swanenburgh at Leyden where he spent three years; then for some six months under Pieter Lastman in Amsterdam. From these he acquired the tenebrism of Caravaggio which he was to employ in his very early works such as the Philosopher when he was a fully fledged painter in Leyden. In I63I

he settled in Amsterdam and there followed ten happy and brilliant years. In 1634 he married Saskia van Uilenburgh. Eight years later she was dead leaving him a son Titus, not yet a year old. His housekeeper Hendrickje Stoffels looked after them and did her best to take the place of Saskia as wife and model. But after the painting known as the Night Watch plus the scandal that surrounded his house Rembrandt's popularity declined so that by 1656 he was bankrupt and had to sell his famous art collection and personal belongings to pay off debt. Despite that and probably because of it his work, which had never ceased, gained in depth and clarity. Between 600 and 700 paintings, 300 etchings and nearly 2,000 drawings show the development of his genius. His many portraits of himself constitute a unique diary in the history of painting while his philosophy consistently shines through as a profound faith in the objective reality of the world. In this respect he resembles Goya. In biblical subjects he progressed from the theatrical magnificence of the Woman Taken in Adultery to the moving pathos of Jeremiah Mourning the Destruction of Jerusalem. Throughout and especially in his etchings his concern is with the human element in the Christian Myth. His Nativity for example inclines one to believe that it was so much more important from Rembrandt's point of view that God actually became a humble human being like the Jewish pedlar and outcast of the Amsterdam ghetto where he himself lived than that ~~God~~ man became God. In 1662 Hendrickje also died to be followed six years later by Titus. Rembrandt did not survive the tragedy and died less than a year after his son's death.

It is a touching story equalled in tragedy only by the fate of Van Gogh and much has been made of it by writers and biographers. But there is evidence to suggest that Rembrandt like Picasso found a refuge from tragedy in his work and his last paintings such as the Family Group (Brunswick) reveal an undiminished interest in living. But there is always moving evidence of a constant preoccupation with what psychologists call the questions of ultimate concern that beset mankind. And it is this, more than anything else, that makes Rembrandt a truly great artist in the modern sense. In fact he is regarded by most scholars as the first modern painter and certainly the first real individual painter who sought to express his private vision of life and his relation to it in his work. The Jewish Bride and the Return of the Prodigal Son (1669) are among his very last works. He died on October 8 1669.

Rembrandt's religious convictions are still open to question. That he adhered to the religious beliefs of the Reformation is beyond doubt yet it remains very difficult to define his personal ideology from the scanty information we possess. (He is thought for example to have been friends for a while with the philosopher Liebniz.) He was probably aware of the Lutheran concept that prayer is of less value than action and good works which meant a reappraisal of the importance of the things of daily life. But there was a certain duality in the Lutheran attitude to good works with its assumption that by performing such works one would earn the reward of beatitude which does not seem to fit in with what we know about Rembrandt. For him there never existed a sense of dissociation between the here and now and the beyond.

One fact at least seems certain and that is his acceptance into the sect of the Mennonites which may have helped him to form his own vision of the universe. 'This sect, wrote Baldinucci, lived in a strange way: Their clergy are not chosen among the educated but they appoint to this office men of low condition whom they esteem and whom we would call Worthy and Just Men and for the rest they live as they please.' Basically they believed in religious subjectivism and were just as rebellious towards the established Calvinist church as they were to all confessional institutions. And this fact throws considerable light on Rembrandt's work. There may also be truth in the suggestion that he held beliefs similar to the pantheism of Spinoza which states that God as the Primary Cause of all things lies within reality and is not external to it. All things are merely modifications of the substance of God. And it is true Rembrandt never put one aspect of life above another nor one person above another for that matter. His patrons rejected the Night Watch on the grounds that their individual features could not be properly distinguished from the thronging confused mass that Rembrandt chose to depict. That is because Rembrandt was at this point concerned with revealing the fleeting moment as a psychological point in a universal drama of human destiny. He sees death as the negative pole of being and always psychologically imminent in the personality of his sitter. This concern goes back to his first major success in Amsterdam when in 1632 he painted the Anatomy Lesson of Dr.Tulp for the Guild of Surgeons. It remains his implicit theme thereafter whether he paints the stories of the Old and New Testaments or the portraits of his immediate friends. Death is a living reality for him lurking beind every reunion and every farewell and always present too in the succession of irretrievable moments which is human ~~exist~~ existence.

On this subject of the consciousness of death in Rembrandt's work I can do no better by way of ending off this chapter than by quoting at length a profound observation made by Aldous Huxley in his brilliant essay Variations On a Baroque Tomb.

'Baroque mortuary sculpture has as its basis subject-matter the conflict, on one important front, between the public and the private, between the social and the individual, between the historical and the existential. The prince in his curly wig, the Pope in his vestments, the lawyer with his Latin eulogy and his smirk of self-satisfaction - all these are pillars of society, representatives of great historical forces and even makers of history. But under the smirk and wig and tiara is the body with its unshareable physiological processes, is the psyche with its insights and sudden graces, its abysmal imbecilities and its unavowable desires. Every public figure - and to some extent we are all public figures - is also an island universe of private experiences; and the most private of all these experiences is that of falling out of history, of being separated from society - in a word, the experience of death.'

Rembrandt's painting of the Flayed Ox seen from this point of view is therefore much more than a passing whim but the expression of the central preoccupation of his age - death and salvation. What actually happened was that the religious ideological climate after Luther had become so confused that the mind was automatically thrown back on itself. This was the sceptical position of many humanists who found no certitude beyond their own private experience. 'These, said Montaigne in his Essays, are my humours and my opinions.....I am only trying to discover myself.' This necessity to establish ones own values led to an attitude of lay asceticism in Holland. At the root of it is to be found, if not an actual disdain for accumulated wealth, at least a positive detachment from it arising from the accepted belief that wealth has been granted by the Grace of God (Calvinistic) and man is merely its administrator. Rembrandt himself wrote in 1634 in the autograph album of the German traveller Burchard Grossmann -'An upright heart puts honour before wealth.' Protestantism, therefore, by developing reliance on the inner life and by rejecting the Baroque rhetoric of Roman Catholicism gave a new impetus to individualism. Rembrandt was both the painter who made more self-studies than any other artist and the enquirer who interpreted the Scriptures in so personal a way that he prefigures the isolationism of the Romantic era. So too do the landscapes of Jacob van Ruisdael which add another poignant note to the expression of solitude.

FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ONWARDS

FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ONWARDS

After the Rococo age had burnt itself out in a crescendo of emptiness the ashes of religious inspiration that remained were very tepid indeed. Henceforth there would be no great collective movement inspired by religious ideals. There would of course be art movements largely because the world knows that stasis spells death. But more than that artistic changes from here on overtly follow scientific and social changes rather than religious creeds. On that score the world or Europe at any rate had reached its term. By the I8th century people were clearly divided into Protestant and Catholic. And the artist recognising himself as an individual of equal spiritual worth as the loftiest bishop was no longer bound like Renaissance man to paint what the Church authorised. He was free to paint what he chose although economic pressures on him cannot be understated. Vermeer (I632-I675) for example died in poverty unable to support his eleven children and left behind less than forty paintings. Easel paintings in Holland were popular and were considered as a decorative element in the home. They certainly appealed to the taste of the merchant bourgeoisie who were the dominant class and held political power. Paintings of lustrous metal-ware, fruit laden tables, splendid interiors et cetera were basically tributes to personal esteem just as Gainsborough's (I727-I788) Mr and Mrs Andrews is essentially a homage to landlordship and private property. Art and religion had to all intents and purposes gone their separate ways. This meant that the artist was an employee-cum-entrepreneur conscious of the fact that to produce the goods was not enough but that their exchange value depended entirely on the amount of talent and labour he could put into them. And of course this can be for certain individuals a moral dilemma - whether to please oneself and/or the patron or public taste. Artists these days tend to long for the old days when the artist could devote his energies wholeheartedly to a cause he felt worthy of himself - to become as G.B.Shaw put it 'an instrument of the life-force.' (Shaw incidentally wanted to be a great painter long before he wanted to be a writer.) And we come now to consider those rare individuals who by the turbulence of their inner life had really no choice but to 'follow their own star' as Vincent van Gogh put it in a letter to his brother Theo. God had become no longer a collective goal but a personal one and Van Gogh tragically was to perish in the maelstrom of the Unconscious in frenzied pursuit of that elusive star.

~~Goya was to Spain as the~~

Goya was to Spain as the spring after a hard winter. He inherited an artificial Baroque world boxed in with classicism but was destined to lead the art of his country beyond both into the passionate dawn of the Romantics.

Francisco Goya was born on March 30th, son of Jose and his wife Gracia Lucientes, in the little village of Fuendetodos in Saragossa in the plains of Aragon. He later found employment in the menial service of Jose Luzan a mediocre artist from whom he learnt how to draw and copy prints of the Masters. At the age of I7 he went to Madrid and made two futile attempts to join the Royal Academy. In I770 he went to Rome where he gained notoriety as an adventurer and libertine like Caravaggio before him.

His early work is still I8th century painted with the dash and vigour of Velasquez whom he admired. His daring use of forms recalls Tiepolo and Fragonard and looks forward as far as Manet. He returned to Madrid to marry Josefa Bayeu sister of fellow-pupils Francisco and Ramon and to draft tapestry designs for the Royal Weaving Mills. These were to be his most popular and lighthearted works. During the years following I774 he continued making tapestries doing some fourteen of these in I778 alone. Then in I780 he was elected a member of the San Fernando Academy. The work he submitted, the Crucified, followed the academic style of Mengs and his brother-in-law Francisco Bayeu who was to remain a lifelong friend. In June I786 he was appointed painter to the King which made him a prosperous man with his own savings account, clientele and coach. Besides his genre themes of peasants such as the Folk Festival, Blind Mans Buff, Stilt-Walking, The Little Giant and so on which brought a breath of fresh air to Spanish art he painted portraits notably the magnificent one of Francisco. Still more success was to come his way when CharlesIV ascended the throne and appointed him court painter which meant Royal commissions and their attendant privileges. This period sees the portrait of the actress La Tirana and that of the art collector Sebastain Martinez as well as the tapestry designs of The Straw Doll, Children Climbing Tree and Boy Riding Ram.

It is possible that Goya would have continued in this vein had he not fallen seriously ill on a visit to Andalusia which resulted in a complete loss of hearing. The tragedy drove him into himself and after a period of deep pessimism and depression the clouds gradually cleared and a new period began for him. Completely alone he now expressed the fruits of a long meditation on people and the world he lived in. In Jan I794 he sent, along with some paintings, a letter to Bernardo de Iriarte in which he refers to the works as pieces in which I have succeeded

in retaining observations which are not permitted in normal commissions.....
In 1795 he meets the Duchess of Alba with whom he seems to have been infatuated, particularly after the Duke passed on a year later. His portrait of her shows her dressed entirely in black wearing a mantilla and two rings inscribed Alba-Goya while she points to the words written at her feet - Only Goya. There is no doubt in my mind that Goya was in love with her and that she mistreated him probably on account of his deafness which would have made him an irresistible target for the practical joker. Nor can Goya have been entirely unaware of what was happening. How else does one explain the torrent of anger and frustration that we find in the Caprichos in which the Duchess is the main star. The etchings from the Caprichos called Good Advice, What a Sacrifice and particularly, They Swear to be Faithful yet Marry the First who Proposes, are really about Goya's relationship to the Duchess whom he accuses bitterly of fickleness as in The Dream of Falsehood and Fickleness which he refused to publish. It is unlikely that he ever got over the affair and I have no doubt that the Duchess reappears in at least two etchings from Los Desastres de la Guerra - Truth is Dead and Will She Rise Again.

During the year 1798 he was entrusted with decorating the Chapel of San Antonio de la Florida in Madrid. Goya's frescoes in the dome of the chapel depict people watching St. Anthony bring a dead man back to life. He also decorated the trumpet arch of the main chapel with a triangle showing the Trinity surrounded by praying angels. These frescoes show an astonishing daring in the use of techniques similar to Manet and Daumier. In 1803 he painted the Arrest of Christ for the Cathedral of Toledo. The depth and colouring of this painting reminds one of Rembrandt.

When Napoleons troops marched into Madrid Goya was already an old man of 62. King Ferdinand, exiled in France, was not able to return until six years later in 1814. Meanwhile Goya stayed on as court painter to the French usurper Jospeh I in which capacity he painted notorious French sympathizers and selected pictures from the Royal collection for Napoleons museum. His private thoughts he committed to the eighty etchings of Los Desastres de La Guerra in which man's inhumanity to man is indicted with savage realism. Likewise several small paintings called the Horrors of War and the two large paintings of the 2nd and 3rd of May he retained in his own home. At the same time he continued with his portraits of which the best and most famous is the Duke of Wellington. After the peace Goya regained his old job of artist to the Court and continued with his work painting

several portraits of the monarch. He also did the series of thirty-three etchings called the Taurian Art, or the art of bull-fighting. In the following years however he devoted more and more time to religious painting. Apart from Mary's Ascension 1812, he painted in 1817 a picture of St. Justa and Rufina for the Chapter of Seville, The Last Communion of St. Jose de Calasanz in 1819 and for the Piarist Church in Madrid the almost monochrome Christ on the Mount of Olives. In the so-called Black Paintings from his house and now in the Prado we see Goya's imagination in free flight for these pictures painted in brown grey and black sparsely accented with a dab here and there of red or blue were intended solely for his own contemplation. There is little more to be said of his work because he was now eighty years of age and in bad health. Yet he continued to paint his friends such as Santiago Galos and Juan Muguiro. His last female portrait is The Milkmaid of Bordeaux which is painted with short crossed brush strokes that point directly to impressionism. He died awaiting a visit from his son in the night of the 15th April 1828.

His work taken as a whole reveals a personality with many distinct sides - critic of society, patriot, reformer, individualist, enemy of the French besides having some of them as friends, lover of bull-fights and women, ambitious, cynical, and philosophical, poet and visionary. He inquired resolutely into life and human nature and could not conceal the depression and horror he felt at what he found there. He was certainly a moralist in his own right which indicates that he held fast to certain principles but whether these principles were in the nature of religious belief I cannot find sufficient evidence one way or the other. In this respect he differs from Beethoven with whom he otherwise has very much in common. He painted his religious works in much the same way as he painted everything else. But he was above all a Romantic well acquainted with the hell of alienation and the inherent brutality of life. His influence on subsequent European painting was enormous.

The word Romantic of course as Kenneth Clark and Eric Newton tell me is not to be used lightly and fool would he be who tried to define it because it is at heart a feeling rather than a concept or a state of mind. It occurs throughout the entire history of art and is still so much with us that it is difficult to avoid seeing some trace of it in virtually everything. However, as an element in art it reached its epitome as a full-blooded artistic movement that blossomed in the

general upheavals of the 18th century and culminated, it is thought, in the decade 1830 - 1840. Its chief characteristic was a personal and emotional expression with a feeling for the heroic and the supernatural. Underneath it all was a profound nostalgia for the purity and Christian unity of the Middle Ages before the Reformation which in fact resulted in the conversion to Catholicism of a great many Protestant artists especially in Germany. In France the nostalgia for the Gothic became a virtual craze with the Academie d'Architecture entering into a methodical study of the cathedrals of Strasbourg and Orleans which resulted in those German cathedrals not to mention the British Houses of Parliament which we sometimes think to be genuine Gothic. Meanwhile although Palladianism in England can be said to have come and gone between 1710 and 1750 Neo-Classicism was to continue its revival even in America and to keep its influence right up to the 20th century when Hitler in Germany and Stalin in Russia saw its political possibilities. What we call academic is really the intellectual residue of the Neo-Classicism of the 18th century. In painting the Romantic movement was to pass through the attempt at a revival of Medieval religious sentiment by the German Nazarenes (called incidentally the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood long before the English group adopted the name) and to end up in pantheism. 'God is everywhere even in a grain of sand,' said the great landscape painter Caspar Friedrich which William Blake was to reiterate in his famous poem.

Sculptors strove to imitate the effects of painting because the latter in the plastic arts at any rate enjoyed a predominance explained by the very nature of the Romantic outlook with its love of the mysterious the passionate and the recklessly heroic. During the 18th century Rousseau among others ushered in a new way of looking at nature and man's place within it. Watteau, Voss, Fragonard and in music the immortal Mozart aroused feelings and nostalgias that were collectively to earn the title Romantic. The state of spiritual confusion that ended the century and resulted from the rise of industry, war, hedonism and political and social ferment so that people looked longingly to the past rather than the present, to myth rather than doctrine, to hope rather than despair, to the infinite rather than the finite. The perfect symbol of it is Gericault's Raft of the Medusa in which the human adventure is depicted as an heroic struggle for survival towards an unknown but boundless future. Romantic literature in England flourished with Byron, Shelley, Keats, Chatterton, Coleridge and Wordsworth while in painting apart from Constable, Turner, Stubbs and so on Blake entered the door of the Unconscious opened by Fuseli.

Before we go on to Blake who for many, including myself, is the clearest and most articulate voice of this particular era we should look more deeply into this question of a revival of landscape its nature and meaning and above all its connection with the religious sentiment be it personal or collective. Unfortunately it would require a book in itself to do justice to this particular theme and so I can only hope to touch what to me is essential in the question.

Kenneth Clark says in his Landscape Into Art - 'To read what was said of colour by Ingres, Gleyre, Gerome and the other great teachers of the 19th century one would suppose that it was some particularly dangerous and disreputable form of vice. This was a rearguard action of idealist philosophy which had maintained that form was a function of the intellect, colour of the senses. The belief was philosophically unsound and had proved a real obstacle to free and sincere expression for centuries. Its removal gained a new liberty for the human spirit.'

This I can agree with as far as it goes knowing that the revolution of Cezanne was precisely that - the perception that colour though the least stable of visible phenomena was a structural component; that form and colour could no more be separated than heat and light that the world itself was a totality-a web-where to lift one strand is to lift the whole; and that a work of art if it to be true to the world must mirror this totality in its perfect balance of space colour and form which is why Cezanne felt himself free to alter the actual shape of the things he painted according to the exigencies of the design. But what Clark should have stressed was that this delusion of form being a function of the intellect and colour of the senses was propped up and mediated by religious convictions and long standing religious convictions at that which gathered strength and persuasive power with the advent of Christianity and culminated in the struggle of Byzantine art with the religiously fanatical Iconoclasts and the moderates.

St. Anselm writing at the beginning of the 12th century maintained that things were harmful in proportion to the number of senses which they delighted, and therefore rated it dangerous to sit in a garden where there are roses to satisfy the senses of sight and smell ..... So even when St. Francis put an end to this Pauline severity the great Giotto although consciously engaged in portraying St. Francis' vision of the union of man and nature could not bring himself to portray the sensual allurement of nature. There are no flowers, plants, grasses or trees in his backgrounds - only sterile rocks. It was left to the Sienese Lorenzetti to produce the first recognisable landscapes in his frescoes of Good and Bad Government

which were to remain unique for over a century. However these are still more symbolical than real and we must await the next major step in the book of the Tres Riches Heures (1409-1415) by the Limbourg brothers. These represent scenes from country life such as peasants working in the fields hunting parties ladies with falcons on their wrists etc rendered with a truth to ~~deati~~ detail that was to be surpassed only by Brueghel. Landscape was to be of considerable importance with Jan van Eyck but it is Patenier who is usually credited with making it a primary feature in painting. Factual landscape gains in sentiment with the water-colours of Durer and the mysticism of Leonardo and in Venice by Bellini and Mantegna. Giorgione takes it to new heights transcending all the romanticism of the 16th century and pointing directly to Constable and Turner. Michelangelo avoids landscape altogether for reasons already given, while Altdorfer uses it to dwarf all human significance. Only two of the leading Mannerists produced landscapes of any significance - Tintoretto and El Greco who produced the expressionistic View of Toledo. The scenic work of Titian is really a continuation of Giorgione. The 17th century saw the cultivation of the domesticcated landscape by the Dutch school - van Goyen, Rembrandt (who also painted imaginary landscapes) Ruisdael Hobbema, Koninck, Cuyp and others although the Flemish Rubens is very much out on his own. The classical landscape developed in Rome by Bril Elsheimer Annibale Carracci and Domenichino finds its fulfilment in Poussin who did not paint pure landscapes until 1648 when he was fifty four. The 18th and early 19th centuries see the development of the English school with Gainsborough, Constable and Turner appearing in succession. At this point we are deep in Romantic territory and on the threshold of Impressionism.

The really ironic thing is that landscape painting was developed along pantheistic lines by the Chinese in the first few centuries of the Christian era. Consider this for example written by Ku K'ai-chih (A.D. 345-411)

'.....In painting this reddish bluff overhanging the gully, I must show its terrifying grandeur. A Taoist master sits there forming a group with the shadows of the rock on which he is sitting. Down in the gully some peach trees on its banks will be appropriate. The master will be depicted as thin and bony, but with a distant look, his face towards the disciples, pointing to the peaches from his elevated position.'

Clearly what the artist is concerned with here is the union of man and nature and the presence of the Taoist master is a crucial element in the picture. A still

better example is the treatise of Tsung Ping (A.D. 375-443).

'.....In this way all the delicacies of the Sung and Hua mountains and the beauties of this universe can be recaptured in a painting. For that which meets the eye and calls forth response from the heart as the true forms of things will also meet the eye and call forth response from the heart of the onlookers if the representation is skilful. When this spiritual contact is established, the true forms are realised and the spirit is recaptured. Is it not as good as seeing the mountains themselves? Moreover, the spirit has no form of its own, but takes form in things. The inner law of things(li) can be traced through light and darkness. If these things are skilfully represented, they are truth itself.'

This sheer enjoyment of nature is Taoist and is associated with the poet and recluse who spurn the allurements of office and wealth. In my view the words of Tsung Ping could just as easily have been written by Rembrandt or Ruisdael or for that matter by any one of the Impressionists particularly Seurat.

It is hard to believe that when those words were written St. Augustine was writing his Confessions. When twelve hundred years later Europeans discovered landscape as if for the first time they left it to the poets -Keats Shelley Blake Whitman - to explain what they were doing. The presence which they found in nature

Something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man. (Wordsworth)

is identical with Hsuan P'in, the mysterious Valley Spirit of the Tao Te Ching, who reveals herself to the landscape painter and through him to others. Certainly what painters like Friedrich Fuseli and Samuel Palmer were engaged in was the expression of a sense of the infinite which, as we have seen, was not a new sense by any means. But it would be an error I think to make too much of the Chinese analogy because where Chinese pantheism is a natural development over a long period of time of the Tao Romantic pantheism is as it were a last resort of men who felt quite rightly that their natural roots in nature were being severed by the rise of capitalism and the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Nor was Rousseau the only one to reason out the danger: In England William Blake in his poetry and engravings was to pit what he called the 'inner eye of innocence' and imagination agains the 'bodily eye' of scientific and philosophical speculation.

The account of Blake given by Malcolm Muggeridge in his A Third

Testament establishes for me his authenticity. He really was a visionary; he really did see images from his inner world and he really did hold these images before him while he painted them. 'When the sun rises, someone asked him, 'do you not see a round disc of fire?' 'Oh no, no,' he replied, 'I see an innumerable company of the Heavenly Host crying Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty.'

At this time many cultural links were being made between Paris and London. Turner and Girtin visited France as early as 1802 and Bonington was trained there as a pupil of Gros. The French Romantics (Gericault, Charlet Delacroix) were drawn to London and admired the work of Lawrence, Etty, Wilkie and Landseer. From 1815 the popularity of the Picturesque resulted in watercolours of Italian lakes, German rivers, Swiss mountains and Normandy architecture.

Blake (1757-1827) however stood apart from all this. Although self-taught he benefited from studying with the engraver J. Basire after which he earned a meagre living from working for publishers and even tried his hand at advertising. In 1789 he published the Songs of Innocence and five years later the Songs of Experience and a series of Prophetic books (1793-1804). He not only engraved the text of the poems himself but surrounded them with hand-coloured illustrations. His early work was Neoclassical in style and he admired the stark honest contours of Michelangelo but as his visionary faculty evolved he transformed his Mannerist and medieval sources by the power of his imagination. He worked either in watercolour or in a type of tempera (Satan Smiting Job). His greatest works were his colour-printed drawings Pity, Hecate, Newton, Elijah, Elohim Creating Adam and his large watercolours illustrating the Book of Job. His is an extraordinary and solitary rebellion against his age even though he was a friend of Flaxman and Fuseli. For Winckelmann, Diderot and Piranesi the sublime was all: For Blake it is scarcely a starting point and the only man I can think of to match the quality and insight of his social satire is John Bunyan. His words have an almost Apocalyptic ring to them :- 'We are in a World of Generation and Death and this world we must cast off if we would be painters such as Rafael, Mich. Angelo and the Ancient Sculptors; if we do not cast off this world we shall be only Venetian Painters, who will be cast off and lost from Art.' The fact too that he was a dedicated bible reader from 1760 on is a great help in trying to understand him:- 'Why,' he asks in a letter of 1799, 'is the Bible more entertaining and instructive than any other book?' And of course his illustrations to the Book of Job, done a year before his death,

and whose poor reception by the public vexed him greatly could well be viewed as his finest artistic achievement. As for his famous inspiration - that is best described by himself:- 'Imagination is the Divine Vision not of The World, or of Man, not from Man in so far as he is a Natural Man, but only as he is a Spiritual Man, Imagination has nothing to do with Memory.'

Blake is certainly a unique phenomenon in the history of art. There has been noone like him since and in terms of his prophetic acumen which was deadly accurate I can only think of Soren Kerkegaard, Karl Marx, Leo Tolstoy and possibly even the television prophet Malcolm Muggeridge whose worth in that regard will be assessed when and if our civilization does eventually go down the drains as he so confidently predicts. In the field of the visual arts he is a last signpost in the lineage of religious mysticism that goes back to El Greco. Nobody in the 20th century with the singular exception of Georges Rouault has followed this particular path.

True religious art did not vanish altogether if by that we mean works concerned with theistic or biblical themes: Manet painted two pictures of the Passion: Cezanne a Mary Magdalen: Gauguin The Yellow Christ and a Calvary: Rodin St. John the Baptist: Redon a Sacred Heart; Epstein's Christ in Majesty; Sutherlands Crucifixions; Salvador Dali's Crucifixion and Last Supper; Henry Moore's two versions of the Madonna and Child theme; Chagall's stained glass windows and numerous crucifixions and illustrations of the bible; and Matisse of course designed and decorated a chapel at Vence. But there was never again to be a Blake who made of his art a blazing witness to his faith.

And it is here we reach an intellectual dilemma. Are we for example entitled to call all work which has not got an overt theistic or biblical content irreligious? What in fact in the 20th century do we mean by religious? And if by religion we mean an interpretation of life commonly espoused which figures the concept of God as the central term how can the ideas-system of Marx claim so many believers? Is a bad work of art done by a so-called religious man of greater meaning than a superb work of art done by an atheist? In other words is aesthetics entitled to hold one set of criteria for religious art and another for non-religious? Questions of this sort by association tend to multiply until in order to answer one of them one has to answer a hundred of its brothers. The easy way out as one man said of psychedelic art is to say - 'there is no such thing as religious art. There is just painting or sculpture or whatever. Perhaps in the end therefore it comes as usual back to ourselves. I will continue this inquiry in my conclusion but before that

I will take a look at the lives and work of Van Gogh and Cezanne. The temptation is to deal also with Rouault or Chagall but I consider they have nothing of importance to contribute to my investigation. Rouault (1871-1958) paints the decrepitude of society into his pictures while Blake relies on his poetry and whereas Blakes inner eye is trained on the future Chagall's is trained on the past. Blake therefore in my view not only foreshadows both but dominates them in much the same way as Shakespeare foreshadows and dominates all the tragedians who came after him.

Itwas said of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) that he was as unique in his madness as he was in his art. There one would think the matter would rest but scarcely a month passes without some new theory about the man's soul being published: some say that he was an epileptic, others that he was an ego-maniac, others that he was schizophrenic or a neurasthenic or the victim of a Messianic complex or a homosexual (our most popular theory) or impotent or the victim of syphilis. We believe perhaps that if we can diagnose the ailment we can get at the secret of his art. And of course this is a delusion because a work of art exists as such largely because of its element of mystery which itself is no mystery but clear as a bell especially in the work of those like Leonardo who were aware of the mystery. The mystery comes to us fixed in an image brought into being by a mind that has realised and felt deeply its limitations and its crass inability to solve the ultimate questions of existence. Art is the refuge of the intellectually humiliated. And it has ever been at variance with science which imagines its arbitrary solutions to some of these questions to be truth itslf. Harold Schilling in his book The New Consciousness in Science and Religion stresses how urgent it is that science becomes humanised with a sense of mystery while Krishnamurti has been preaching for years of the obstacles to understanding inherent in the make-up of the mind itself. Jung on the other hand points out that there is no hope whatever of man awakening to the wonder and mystery of life until he has first of all awakened to himself, warts and all, as they say. Can it not be argued that the allotted function of art is to keep alive this mystery for man in precisely the same way as the mystery rites of ancient Greece and Rome or our own Christian myth with its Immaculate Conception its miracles and saints, has kept alive the greater possibilities of life dormant in the vast ontological mystery of the Cosmos? The first cave paintings after all were born of this sense, as was religion, and it has been the mystery above all which has goaded man to ever higher achievements because he never knows what may be behind the next quaser on on the surface of the next planet. It is to be observed that when a

civilization's god dies the civilization dies also. The Egyptians perished when their polytheism (Amon-Re) lost credibility and they refused the monotheism of Akhnaton which would have meant the priestly caste giving up power which they would not do. The result was anarchy, strife, religious confusion and of course the Persians knew that the time was ripe for conquest. When Jupiter died the Romans sought refuge first in the Emperor and then in the mystery rites of Orpheus, Mithras and Isis. And now it looks as though Jesus could very well be on the way out which has already resulted in the drop-out phenomenon which is not unlike the detachment of the Stoics that followed on the death of Zeus shortly before the Greeks fell. The swan song of all these events is the loss of a sense of personal involvement in the mystery of creation. (Who can forget all the poems of protest that followed on the landing of a man on the moon? It was the end of an era for the poets. Neither life nor the moon would ever be the same again.) Man, then, is becoming increasingly aware of the threat and he knows that he must at all costs keep the mystery alive - because this if anything will be his salvation. In other words if Jesus does go he had better find something bigger and better than Chairman Mao to put in his place just as Jesus himself was around when the God-Emperor was discovered to have feet of clay. And what has all this to do with van Gogh? I make no apologies for the digression because it goes far I think to explain the enormous popularity and stature of this artist in our own day and age. He is a light in the dark - the man who lived through the hang-ups of our age long before any of us knew what a hang-up was. The man whose life is even more fascinating than his art - the spiritual man who died of unrequited love for God and Man - a lamb to the slaughter. In fact in the world of art and even outside it Van Gogh has become nothing less than a Jesus who is more accessible to us. As the songster puts it:-

> Now I understand what you tried to say to me
> How you suffered for your sanity
> How you tried to set them free
> They would not listen; they're not listening still.
> Perhaps they never will.

All romantic sentiment aside the second and third lines of that verse are perfectly true of van Gogh. And it only remains for me to deliver the ~~fade~~ facts.

~~Hewe~~ He was born at Groot-Zundert in north Brabant Holland on March30 1853. He was twenty-six when he made his first drawings, thirty-three when he

settled on a style and thirty-seven when he died. We know now that he took to art out of a profound sense of failure with his life, the final blow being his ridiculed attempt at evangelism among the miners of the Borinage - the Skid Row of Belgium. His insistence on living life as Jesus might have lived it led to a removal of his licence. For the son of a Dutch minister this must have been a shattering blow and one wonders if the man ever got over it but there is no evidence that his avowed love for his fellow human being in any way diminished as a result: he merely transfers his his burning sense of mission to painting. From April to December 1881 we find him at Etten with his parents when he begins his new profession with studies and paintings of peasants in the style of Millet. There too he meets with yet another cruel disappointment when his affections for his cousin 'K' are rejected.

It was only when he came to Paris in 1886 that he won for himself his rightful place in the history of modern art lighting the way for the Fauves and the Expressionists that were to follow. Through contacts with Pissarro Gauguin and Signac he got the measure of his own possibilities. He painted views of Paris, still-lifes and portraits which show the influence of pointillism. In the end however he could not endure the rat race he found himself in and so in 1888 he went to Arles in the south of France which appeared to him as he said in a letter 'aussi beau que le Japon pour la limpidite de l'atmosphere et les effets de couleur gaie.' Here begins an intensive period of work in which his whole emotions and vision are brought to play. He paints the Cafe de Nuit in which he tries to 'express in red and green the frightful passions of human beings.' Pure colour and the bold vigorous line of the Japanese print become his basic tools. Then when things seem to be going well for him he invites Gauguin to stay with him. Gauguin was everything Van Gogh was not and they quarrel bitterly. Now, it is a fact that Van Gogh had difficulty in expressing himself by the spoken word while Gauguin was a past master in this art and known for his wit which could at times be caustic, to put it mildly. Furthermore, Gauguin loved alcohol which he consumed in vast quantities whereas Van Gogh liked to keep within his limits because he feared the effects it had on him. At any rate on Christmas night of 1888 during a typical quarrel Van Gogh hurled his glass in Gauguins face. What happened after that we do not know: but on the following night, Gauguin tells us, Van Gogh followed him through the streets with a razor in his hand. Luckily, he turned in time to see him and Van Gogh smitten with self-consciousness returned home and cut off the lobe of his left ear. Several months later he signed himself into the lunatic asylum at Saint-Remy. Thereafter his works take on the tortuous swirling effects we are familiar with.

His mental attacks became more and more frequent yet his creative drive was far from exhausted: in fact some of his most moving pictures come from this period. He painted the Cornfield with Cypress, the Asylum in Autumn, the portraits of Dr. Gachet and many landscapes and drawings. But gradually the spectre of failure against which he had been battling all his life took complete possession of him and he committed suicide . Six months later his brother Theo who had supported him financially over the years followed him.

Vincent van Gogh was a priest of art - utterly sane in his insanity. There have been few artists who have worshipped at the feet of Nature with such passion and abandonment: - 'Is it not, he writes, emotion, the sincerity of one's feeling for nature, that draws us, and if the emotions are sometimes so strong that one works without knowing one works..... then one must remember that it has not always been so, and that in the time to come there will again be heavy days, empty of inspiration.' It is believed that for the last five years of his life van Gogh was in the grip of this inspiration; and it is likely that he killed himself when he caught sight of the black clouds of despair gather themselves around his sun. 'Misery will never end,' he confided to Theo before he died. Gauguin 'that monstrous egotist' as his wife called him was to live to see his meteoric rise to fame. And we need not guss at his reactions which are there in his letters. He mentions van Gogh begrudgingly and usually with a view to boosting his own ego even going so far as to say that it was he, Gauguin, who had first suggested to van Gogh that he should paint sunflowers which we all know are van Gogh's most famous works. This is of course prize bullshit as van Gogh was painting sunflowers long before Gauguin ever got to Arles. In any case there is little anyone can do to discredit the ~~work~~ art of the 'madman' whose work is now acknowledged as the product of an eminently conscious mind: nor can anyone deny that he was more than successful in his mission to reveal through art the union of Man and the Cosmos : -

To express hope by some star, the eagerness of a soul by a sunset radiance.

(Letter to Theo - Arles, 1888.)

The life of Paul Cezanne (1839 - 1906) is quite different from Van Gogh's. He was the son of a wealthy banker who left him two million francs when he died in 1886, a considerable fortune in those days. While he was studying in Paris he received an allowance of 125 francs a week which at least saved him from the fate of Van Gogh who succumbed to pangs of guilt and remorse at having to sponge continually from his brother. Though irascible by temperament he made friends with Pissarro Guillaumin

as well as conducting a lifelong and tempestuous relationship with Emile Zola. From 1878 onwards he worked continuously around Aix his birth-place, Gardanne and l'Estaque His wife Hortense Fiquet and his sister supervised his son's education and looked after the home and on Sundays they all went regularly to mass. His life-style was middle class and he was quite proud of his country-gentleman image. His approach to art was introspective and analytical and is best described by Jacques Maritain in his book Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry: - ' The primacy of visual sensation in Cezanne's art gets clear of the rational grammar of painting, especially of classical perspective, but in order to assert more forcefully the power of direct apprehension of corporeal existents, the realist knowledge-value which is inherent in sensation as such. Cezanne's painting strives obscurely after a reality in things which is deeper, more mysterious, and more significant than things themselves as offered in their logically interpreted appearances. So it is that this painting is intent on ' the spectacle that the Pater Omnipotens Aeterne Deus spreads out before our eyes.' On the other hand, the real incentive for Cezanne's fervor for sensation was in him the intensity of an emotion and inner pressure of subjectivity bent on grasping and disclosing itself through creative vision. Thus it is that Cezanne's painting conveys such a moving charge of humanity.' The ironic thing is that all this could also be said of Van Gogh and when one begins to seek for what is common to both men as individuals and artists one begins to see remarkable similarities. In a letter to the dealer Vollard dated Jan 9 1903 Cezanne writes:-

> I have made some progress, but why so painfully and so late? Is art perhaps a kind of priesthood, demanding complete self-sacrifice?

Again both men were tortured by a feeling of failure, a feeling that they had not come close enough to expressing themselves. 'I am too old, writes Cezanne, and I came too soon, but I mark the way and others will follow.' Despite his secure circumstances Cezanne it seems did not live a serene life. He was continually at war with the two currents that wrestled for dominance within him - the Baroque and the Classical— the senses and the mind. As Zola says in a letter to Joachim Gasquet: - ' From his youth onwards he waged war against the gangrene of romanticism within himself, but could never quite repel it. This was his sickness perhaps, this mistaken idea, which afflicted him at times like an iron bar across his brain.' This is certainly attested too by his early work which has all the elements of romanticism and the free expression of energy and which in style is curiously reminiscent of the early Van Gogh.

That he was well aware of what the struggle entailed is likewise attested too in a letter to Gasquet in which he declares his aim in art.(which highlights his main difference to Van Gogh who believed in surrendering himself to his emotion): -

> There are two things in painting, vision and mind, and they should work in unison. As a painter, one must try to develop them harmoniously: vision, by looking at nature; mind, by ruling one's senses logically, thus providing the means of expression. This is now my aim.

As to his view of himself this is what he said to Vollard: - 'You well know that there is only one painter in the world, and that's me !' And of his failings he wrote - 'I deserve to be lonely, but at least no one will get hold of me (paranoia) .....In life I am weak, and so I had better lean on Rome.' Indeed he was a good Catholic by conventional standards up to the day of his death. As to his sense of mission which he also shared with van Gogh he had this to say which incidentally is the central concept of this thesis: -

> 'Our canvases are the milestones of Man - from the reindeer on the walls of the caves to the cliffs of Monet - from the hunters, the fishermen who inhabit the tombs of Egypt, the comical scenes of Pompeii, the frescoes of Pisa and Siena, the mythological compositions of Veronese and Rubens, from all these the same spirit comes down to us..... We are all the same man. I shall add another link to the chain of colour. My own blue link.'

The source of Cezanne's disenchantment with the art of his time lies in his perception that Impressionism was devoted to the surface of things while he wanted above all to penetrate into his own intuition which he called his petite sensation of the world being held together in its depths and that this unity could only be reflected in the structural cohesion between form space and colour.

> 'I am trying to render perspective by means of colour. There are no lines, no modelling, nothing but contrasts, and these are shown not by black and white but by the feeling of colour.'

His concern therefore is the opposite of the Taoist painter or indeed of all pre-Romantic landscape painting because he is neither content to suggest the unity he feels like the Impressionists nor least of all to efface himself before it. On the contrary he wishes to show that man himself is the extension of this unity and that the organizing power of this unity is the creative spirit or mind which makes its appearance in the painting only in unison with what he calls his 'petite sensation.'

So too in Van Gogh the opposites of reality and emotion, of the subjective and objective worlds are united and reconciled so that man is the mirror in which nature can see herself and nature is the mirror in which man can see himself and the work of art is in fact both an extension of man and nature.

'We all start from Cezanne,' said Braque in 1953 and every new subsequent innovation in art seems already to have existed in Cezanne: Fauvism is dormant in the many views of Mont Sainte-Victoire just as Expressionism was in the Temptation of St. Anthony (1867) and Cubism in the still-lifes and the Cardplayers. In his life's masterpiece, Les Grandes Baigneuses, we see more clearly what his goal in painting was and what he meant when he said that he wanted to 'refaire Poussin sur nature' and to make of impressionism 'an art of the museums.' In a sense the evolution of landscape painting ends with Cezanne because with him a new freedom emerges into the world of art. Neither Van Gogh nor Cezanne were fully aware of the horizons they had opened up in the world of art. Henceforth nature would exist for the artist and he for her and their relationship would be a sympathetic one of mutual concern. And the painter was blessed with a new freedom which meant that he was no longer bound to give a convincing representation of visible reality in order to be true to himself or to nature: he could use her as the starting point for the creation of his own pictorial reality whose poetry and beauty would edify both himself and her. This is the beginning of abstract art and the liberation of the individual. From here on each man has his own interpretation of reality his own relationship to the world and his own God.

And here for all intents and purposes my thesis ends. Modern art has as it were reached the point of total freedom. Anything goes these days and when we speak of religion in art be it of Roy de Maistre or Albert Gleizes or Stanley Spencer what we are talking about is no longer the expression of a new creed but simply the solitary view of one mans interpretation of his own world. This is important: it means that art and religion have gone their separate ways and that there is nothing in any collective sense of an ideology to stand between the spectator and the work of art. That is why, when a modern man thinks of religious art, he automatically thinks of the sublime purity of Byzantium or the seering humility of Michelangelo's pietas. Apart from stained glass windows and the odd church dedicated to one or other of the sects in our midst there is nothing that is ordered specifically for the glory of Man or God. This is a lamentable state of affairs. And yet what art has achieved in the past it can excel in the future if only society is with it.

CONCLUSION

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'Art is not,' writes Tolstoy, 'as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious idea of beauty or God; it is not, as the aesthetical psychologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy; it is not the production of pleasing objects; and, above all, it is not pleasure; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feeling, and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and humanity.' (extract from F.L.Lucas - Literature and Psychology)

What Tolstoy means by art here is an ontological phenomenon - an end product, and a means with a function. Certainly if we strip away all the influences art has had on our perception - on how we actually see it and the world we live in we would find ourselves in a colourless vacuum. A visit to Rome would reveal only a heap of ruins and rubble that would be best swept away, and Venice would be robbed of all romanticism and allowed to sink. As to the binding power of art on the community there is abundant evidence to show that this is so all through history: the cave paintings of the Franco-Cantabrian had a magico-religious function that that bonded the tribe in the shared feeling of its human superiority; in Egypt and Mesopotamia, particularly the former, art was central to their religion as it was in India; the Greeks had an anthropomorphic religion and their art glorified man which the Renaissance tried to continue; and of course the Baroque was the child of the Counter-Reformation in which the Catholic Church tried to bind the faithful together against the spread of Lutheranism. Only in our day has the social collective function disintegrated into a private mysticism and the binding force of art been taken over by the mass-media, radio, television and the publishing houses. It could be argued that this is a good thing were it not for the fact that the media is ephemeral by nature and is for the most part information - orientated while painting and sculpture are essentially depth-languages that appeal to the whole man and not just to his head.

And yet behind the acclaim that great art has always received there is the suspicion that the image per se prevents us from reaching the Truth or God and I suspect that the hostility that invariably greets new art movements is owed to this unconscious resentment. Iconoclasm after all is nothing new and certain elements in art have been banished by turns throughout the centuries especially the human figure, as in Islam. Iris Murdoch has this to say in her book The Fire and The Sun

'We are now in a position to see the fundamentally religious nature of Plato's objections to art.....(Art) cherishes itself not the truth, and wishes to be indestructible and eternal. Art makes us content with appearances, and by playing magically with particular images it steals the educational wonder of the world away from philosophy and confuses our sense of direction toward reality and our motives for discerning it.....Art objects are not real objects but pseudo-objects completed by the fantasizing mind in its escape from reality. The pull of the transcendent as reality and good is confused and mimicked..... Art is a false presence and a false present.....We seek eternal possession of the good, but art offers a spurious worthless immortality.....The artist deceives the saving Eros by producing magical objects which feed the fantasy life of the ego and its desire for omnipotence.....The Good (truth, reality) is absent from us and hard of access, but it is there and only the Good will satisfy. This fact is concealed by the consoling image-making ego in the guise of the artist whom every one of us to some extent is. Art with its secret claim to supreme power blurs the distinction between the presence and the absence of reality, and tries to cover up with charming imagery the harsh but inspiring truth of the distance between man and God.

..... In the East art is seen as a humbler and more felicitously ambiguous handmaid of religion. Whereas Western art, becoming separated and grand and 'an authority', just as Plato feared, has surreptitiously lent its power to an ossifying of the religion it purports to serve. (The sin of pride). Although art in the East is even more generally (loosely) connected with religion than it is in the West, the imagery is usually, though significant, less highly specialized, less rationally clarified, less relentlessly literary. The magnificent Hindu deities, however clearly and lovingly rendered, are more mysterious. Eastern religions lack the terrible historical clarity of Christianity. Eastern art is humbler, less 'grand', and has a quieter and perhaps for that reason deeper relation to the spiritual. We may perhaps find a parallel to Plato's attitude in the dignified puritanism of Islam with its reservations about 'figures' and 'objects' and its rejection of role-playing theatre.....Art will mediate and adorn, and develop magical structures to conceal the absence of God or his distance. We live now amid the collapse of many such structures, and as religion and metaphysics in the West withdraw from the embraces of art, we are it might seem being forced to become mystics through the lack of any imagery that could satisfy the mind.'

We do not forget of course that Platonic philosophy was the power behind the artistic revolution of the Renaissance though I find it difficult to reconcile the production of any art whatever with what Murdoch tells me was the real meaning of Plato's aesthetics. Perhaps the Renaissance men and the Florentine Academy in particular were devoted to eradicating the essential flaw in art from Plato's point of view, namely that the work of art is but a pale reflection of the Absolute Form or Idea that precedes each and every individual, created thing. And that the only way around the problem was to try and incorporate those essential elements of the Absolute Form - beauty and harmony. But the fact remains that Greek artists had been engaged in precisely this when Plato was writing his Phaedo, Republic, Theaetetus and so on; and, as we saw, Plato denounces the art of his time in no uncertain terms. What probably happened was the Florentines found that their own religious ideal of a state of pure spirituality squared well with Plato's doctrine of a transcendent Absolute Idea towards which the human being must battle his way against all illusion, which is incidentally the real meaning of Vergil's Aeneid, Dante's Inferno and Plato's myth of The Cave. And so they merely took from Plato what was useful to them at the time which Ficino saw fit to change later on in his search for truth and which gave rise to Neo-Platonism and endorsed Mannerism. The other possible explanation is that the Florentines simply did not have enough of Plato's writings available to them to enable them to see clearly where he stood in relation to art. Lastly one could take the possible Marxist view and conclude that the philosophical basis of the Florentine aesthetic was just so much convenient whitewash to hide the real purpose of Renaissance art which was to bolster the prestige of the Church and promote the political interests of its patrons. Whatever the real truth of the matter the fact remains that without Plato and Aristotle the European world would have been vastly different.

Murdoch's phrase 'the terrible historical clarity of Christianity' is of telling significance. Man in the West could contemplate a God made flesh - the divine Logos Incarnate - and at the same time to be able to relate to Him via the cosmic mystery of human suffering. This heralds the predominance in human thinking and action of the interior Self over the exterior self. Man had not only found a God worthy of him but One moreover he could interiorise as his own Self. This means, in the language of Fromm, that Man had reached a sufficient consciousness of his own nature and powers to be able to withdraw as well as clarify in an intellectual

sense the attributes of an imaginary deity who had been posited and supported by him right down through history. As well as that the God was now real - an historical fact in the person of Jesus - which gave a divine significane to human destiny, which later on became confused by Calvin with pre-destination. Man could now reflect on the mystery of a God dying and suffering for him and, much more important, for him personally, and in this way he could look on himself as not just 'a tattered coat upon a stick', as Yeats puts it, but as 'somebody' irrespective of whether he was tramp, slave or criminal. In this way he could become conscious of the divine spark within him in its true nature of self-sacrifical love and attend thenceforth to his earthly duties without quibble in the expectation of rejoining his full transcendent Divinity when his days were ended. And this, which is the core of the Christian faith, is what Luther endeavoured to save from the authority and exploitation of the Roman Church. It is also the rock on which Van Gogh perished. And the curious thing is Christianity, from the beginning, plays down the powerful symbolism of the Crucifixion; and Byzantine art is exclusively concerned with the regality and authority of Christ Pantocrator, or the patriarchal aspects of the Deity which had survived from Antiquity. Clearly therefore what was of paramount importance to the early Christians was the fact, if you could believe it, of God become man. It is only with the ascent of self-consciousness that the Crucifixion takes on its pre-eminent symbolical power. And this brings with it the whole problem of existentialist dread and anxiety and the rise of the science of the mind or psychology. But before going on to that let me recap on the stages travelled by the Self in its rise to independence or individualism. Jacques Maritain does this beautifully and so I offer here a synopsis of what he says

In the first historical phase the mystery of the Person comes into sight as a mere object. Egyptian art is devoted to the religious cult of the Thing - bodies are embalmed, sculpture and architecture tend naturally towards gigantism and things are reconstituted in the afterlife by the Ptah ritual. The Greeks discover that Man himself is the most beautiful object in nature and their art is centred on this coupled with the Eastern notion of cosmic order (Logos). (Prof. E. R. Dodds writes in the Greeks and the Irrational:- Without Delphi, Greek society could scarcely have endured the tensions to which it was subjected in the Archaic age. The crushing sense of human ignorance and human insecurity, the dread of divine phthonos, the dread of miasma - the accumulated burden of these things would have been unendurable without the assurance which such an omniscient divine counsellor could

give, the assurance that behind the seeming chaos there was knowledge and purpose). Next, Man (having found his new image in Jesus) emerges above Nature and has conquered the world. Here we have Byzantine art - decidedly spiritual or anti-matter and therefore resembling Oriental art but much freer now in its relation to things. Christ exists as Ruler and King, stern and awesome and the Self retreats behind the veil of the symbolical and universal as it does in Islamic art. The Godhood of Christ the Father dominates everything.

In the next phase the mystery discloses its more human depths and becomes Christ the Redeemer and nature and man are reconciled in the grace of the Gospel. This is the beginning of the Gothic and the revolution of St. Francis - Duccio, Giotto, Angelico, French and Spanish Pietas, and the fervor of Grunewald. The Self has attained now some understanding of its true humanity and although it still exists in art as a figurative object it is an object that suffers and feels. (Giotto and German Gothic). The stage is set for man's glorification of himself and therefore an inevitable return to the achievements in that sphere of the Greeks and Romans.

In the third phase, Maritain submits, ' human subjectivity enters a process of internalization, and passes from the object depicted to the mode with which the artist performs his work.' This is the advent of individualism, conscious of itself and its purpose, which is the source of the Renaissance, the Baroque and Classicism. Man peers into the nature of his world. Science, anatomical knowledge, mathematics, philosophy and discoveries in the field of pictorial representation all become the property of the artist and his calling is seen in a loftier light. The tyranny of the Thing was overthrown. The external form was not to be copied but to be interpreted - thus Michelangelo's precept, to give moving figures the form of the flame of fire was long an accepted maxim. This meant a liberation of the imagination, and it is to the imagination through the senses that Renaissance art speaks, a fact which is of paramount importance and often overlooked. 'We painters take the same liberties as poets and madmen take,' Veronese said. We can see here how far art had come from the time of the Greeks when the art-object existed as a solid token of external laws and an image of ideal beauty that was to be grasped objectively by the senses.

In the fourth phase of the evolution we arrive at modern painting. It began after the preparations of Romanticism with the second half of the last

century, and it seems to be already entering a serious crisis in our own day. Painting like poetry has here become conscious of itself and is not concerned with measuring itself against anything possessed of a separate value-in-itself be it an aesthetic ideal or canon or religious conception. However, human subjectivity is also aware that it cannot awaken either to itself or its creativity except in a communing with 'things'. The modern artist enters where Cezanne leaves off and his intention is to explore ever deeper and further the infinite meanings encased in Things but he is henceforth pledged, whether he knows it or not, (by reason of the fact that he comes at a certain moment in time), to reveal in Things not simply as with Chinese painting a life-giving ghost concealed in them (Taoist) but a vaster and more real immanent Unknown; and this of course is the realm of mysticism and cosmic consciousness. The danger probably is that the artist will be led to an effacement of his own ego in this quest and our art will become reduced to the collective amorphism of Indian and South American art.

In this delicate situation psychology not religion will be our guardian. Maritain appears to repeat in terms of the evolution what Fromm, we recall, already said about the evolution of religious awareness. The two go hand in hand.

It was in the year 1900 that the epoch-making The Interpretation of Dreams was published by Freud. It established the personal subconscious of man as an objective reality - invisible to be sure but a reality none the less. Freud went on to postulate that the singular driving force in this underworld was sex and that the cause of neuroses was sexual repression, which outraged the puritanism of the day. However, the trouble was not that Freud was entirely wrong in what he said; in fact his theories for a particular type of pathology are applicable, but that he did not go far enough in his investigation and instead turned his system into a doctrine over which he presided as the absolute authority. It was this attitude that caused the famous rift with Jung. This is dealt with at length in Jung's autobiography Memories Dreams and Reflections. Furthermore Freud would not acknowledge the existence either of paranormal or psychic phenomena or of the Collective Unconscious and it was left to Jung to explore this domain alone.

The world of science too at this time was poised for a breakthrough into Einsteinian relativity (cf Laurens van der Post, Jung and the Story of our Time) and the world of literature and the arts was red hot with prophetic doom ;- ' like that vortex of crows which Vincent van Gogh, in whom a sense of prophetic unrest was already present as a fever in his urgent brush, painted into several of his most

disconcerting landscapes of a Provence yellow with the corn of some last rich summer of spirit, fulfilled but never to return' Nietzsche wrote Zarathustra and proposed from the depths of his ego-mania the theory of the Superman which appealed to another ego-maniac, Hitler, and led to the abominations of the last world war. And the root of the existentialist nightmare was the experience of the absence of God which Dostoievsky was to diagnose in his Crime and Punishment, The Idiot, ~~Crime~~ The Brothers Karamazov etc. The rationalism derived from Cartesian philosophy failed to satisfy the human need for an object to worship and this need denied its normal satisfaction and outlet in religion transferred itself automatically to the cult of the hero, the sublime, the mysterious, nature and freedom which were (and still are) the main elements in Romanticism. None of these could possibly succeed as Blake had rightly foreseen and men turned next to nationalism and power to return to them a sense of personal involvement: it was the old story all over again only this time on a much vaster scale. Intelligence, reason and moral sense finally gave way and the Unconscious, freed from all restraint of the ego, unlocked the flood gates of savagery and destruction. Jung saw the holocaust in a dream long before it happened.

Derangement and neurosis were regarded by Jung as a measure of man's estrangement from his full unconscious self; an affliction sent to redirect him and set him on his true course. This course is the path to wholeness in which man is reunited with his Universal Self; and it is to be effected by a reconciliation of the masculine and feminine principles in the psyche. The process is called individuation and the end is Selfhood which is not incompatible with the religious concept of salvation. Jung therefore saw that it was in man's best interests that the church, such as it was, must be cemented together again because for most people the archetype of Jesus still lives on in the Unconscious awaiting a context in which it could feel free to re-emerge. The church had evidently failed man by denying him direct experience of his own Unconscious Self.

This path to wholeness is of course a tough one. But it is nevertheless the only path worthy of an artist. As Ernest Becker says in The Denial of Death; .....The most terrifying burden of the creature is to be isolated, which is what happens in individuation: one separates himself out of the herd. This move exposes the person to the sense of being completely crushed and annihilated because he sticks out so much, has to carry so much in himself.' This is precisely the

definition of the creative type:- ..... The key to the creative type is that he is sepa separated out of the pool of shared meanings. There is something in his life experience that makes him take in the world as a problem; as a result he has to make personal sense of it. Existence becomes a problem that needs an ideal answer; but when you no longer accept the collective solution to the problem of existence, then you must fashion your own. The work of art is then, the ideal answer of the creative type to the problem of existence as he takes it in - not only the existence of the external world, but especially his own: who he is as a painfully separated person with nothing to lean on. He has to answer the burden of his extreme individuation, his so painful isolation. He wants to know how to earn immortality as a result of his own unique gifts. His creative work is at the same time the expression of his heroism and the justification of it. It is his private religion.'.....' There is no way for the artist to be at peace with his work or with the society that accepts it. The artist's gift is always to creation itself, to the ultimate meaning of life, to God.....Absolution has to come from the absolute beyond.'

I have to agree with Becker in toto. In other words, the artist's work is a project of ultimate concern to him and one moreover that would be completely invalidated did he not presuppose consciously or unconsciously that there is a superior reality to himself that will fix in aeternum the opus et operandi of his activity. The idea after all that a man must prove himself worthy of immortality by the exercise of his talents is a familiar theme in all mythologies (the parable of the Just Steward; the Twelve Labours of Hercules etc etc). It certainly throws light on the heroic stance taken by many artists, particularly Gauguin, against the mores and shared meanings of the day. Admittedly, new knowledge may come to light in the future that will throw this theory into disrepute but in the meantime I am content with the psychological view endorsed by my own experience that the artist is in fact, though he may never admit it, bucking for immortality through the medium of his work. In this respect he is not unlike the penitent who believes, in his naievety, that the harder he prays and the longer he prays and the more he prays the nearer by that measure he gets to heaven. Both in a real way are fleeing from death, the first into art and the second into God. And Pablo Picasso by declaring that in his work he was engaged in nothing more than his own salvation lends considerable weight to the theory. And so if we accept this view we must ask

ourselves - Is the artist deluding himself? There is no way we can answer the question and the artist knows that the last laugh is with him. Hermann Hesse, for one, is on his side and in Narziss and Goldmund in which he examines the introverted and extroverted characters, the former in the guise of the priestly ascetic and contemplative and the second in the guise of the action-loving adventurer, the book ends with the extrovert Goldmund embodying his life's experience into a statue which will exist for all time as his Self. This idea of art being the eternal affirmation of the artist is central to Hesse's work and explains why he strove for a perfect form for his writings. (And indeed man himself does all in his power to ensure the continuation of the acknowledged masterpiece by storing it away in museums). And who can doubt that so long as there are ears to hear the music of past masters and ages will continue to touch us? The argument however is scientific and for the moment unanswerable and we must surrender our judgment to an act of faith. Let us leave this brief discussion of the eternal in art, so important in the past to all races particularly the Egyptian, with Van der Post's account of a discussion he had with Jung on the subject of Leonardo's painting of The Virgin on the Rocks: - .....
'You see,' Jung was to say to me many years later, of this painting,' there is the eternally feminine soul of man where it belongs in the dark feminine earth. See how tenderly and confidently the Virgin holds in her arms the child - our greater future self. But make no mistake, da Vinci saw her there not only in her Christian role but also joined to her pagan aboriginal version. That is why the painting is so meaningful. She is not just Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She is also the feminine soul of man, the everlasting Ariadne. Her immediate uses fulfilled, she is forgotten and abandoned on the rocks.....Rediscovered, as she was briefly in the Renaissance, da Vinci's prophetic self already foresaw that she was about to be abandoned again. The wonder is that unlike Ariadne, the Virgin is not in tears. She is content, confident and unresentful because she is also the love that endureth and beareth all things even beyond faith and hope. She knows that, in the end, the child will grow and all shall be well.'

Jung's masculine and feminine principles which he calls animus and anima were also intuited by Nietzsche in what he called the Apollonian and Dionysian in man and these are in fact identical with the Chinese Yin and Yang. The Trojan war in fact is a myth that depicts the struggle in the Greek mind to establish what role the femine self was to play in their lives. It results in the epic voyage of Odysseus in search of self-fulfilment which is seen as the eventual reconciliation with his eternal

feminine self who is embodied as Penelope patiently awaiting him on the island of Ithaca. This, in fact, is the spiritual revolution of the Greeks - this realisation that man was not only tied to his own incommunicable ego like Sisyphus to his rock but more important that he was dependent totally on the attributes of his anima - tenderness, understanding, patience, virtue, beauty as well as intuition and cunning which the Greeks prized above all. The Trojan horse is a symbol of the triumph of consciousness over ignorance, of cunning over dullness, of the feminine over the masculine. It is also the symbol of the anima as the womb of being - the source of creativity.

The feminine is also synonomous with all that is dark and earthly and Christianity was sound in this apprehension. Its mistake however was to conclude that the journey to God who is pure light or spirituality must be essentially a renouncing of the material world and a flight from the siren call of the feminine. Far from trying to incorporate her as the Virgin into the Trinity where she belongs the Church banished her from immanence into the vague beyond where her role was a subsidiary one of intercessor between man and God - a role moreover that was shared with an ever increasing number of saints. Asceticism and monasticism was the immediate result as well as Church celibacy, puritanism, guilt, sin and the doctrine of the Fall where the evil of corporeality is explained as a descent from from a state of innocence and grace. It is only recently that man is trying to get rid of this pernicious nonsense and is returning so to speak to his senses. And it is probable that in this enterprise the plastic arts will prove to be of considerable value.

Jung wrote an article on Pablo Picasso which I have before me. Picasso of course is not a religious painter in the conventional sense. He is known to have produced one such work - the crucifixion of 1930 for which he did a series of drawings. And at this point having established that the true mission of the artist is to voyage like Odysseus towards selfhood in the craft of his art and that it is of little relevance except to ourselves whether he paints biblical themes or pagan we can now listen to Jung give a psychological interpretation of Picasso's blue exhibition at the Zurich Kunsthaus, 1932: - .....

' In the one case it is possible to make out what he would like to express: in the other, what he is capable of expressing. The mysterious content is to be seen in both. A series of images of this kind, whether made up of drawings or of written words, usually begins with the symbol of the Nekya, of the descent into Hades, into the unconscious, and of a farewell to the upper world. The later

images still make use of the forms and shapes of the world of light, but they show a hidden meaning and they therefore possess a symbolic character. Thus Picasso too begins with the paintings of objects and the paintings are blue, the blue of night of water or of moonlight, the Touat-blue of the Egyptian underworld. He dies and his soul flies away to the beyond on a horse. Sunlit life clings to him and a woman with a child advances to exhort him. Just as day is a woman for him so too is night, and psychologically this is the same as the light and the dark aspects of the soul (anima). The dark soul sits waiting, and it waits in the twilit blue, arousing pathological forebodings. As the colours change we enter Hades. The concrete forms, expressed as they are in the dismal masterpiece of the prostituted, tubercular, syphlitic adolescent girl, are given over to death. The theme of the prostitute begins with entry into the other world, where 'he' in the form of a dead soul meets several other people who have died. I say 'he' because in relation to Picasso I think of that character who undergoes the doom of the lower world, of the man who by reason of that doom turns not towards the world of the light but towards the darkness, the man who follows not the acknowledged ideal of the good and the beautiful but rather the demoniac pull of the ugly and the evil, which in modern man resists and counteracts Christianity, and by veiling the sunlit world with these same mists of Hades brings into being a pessimistic, end-of-the-world atmosphere; and which in doing so begets a deadly spiritual sickness of disintegration, to end, like a country shattered by an earthquake, by falling apart in fragments - broken lines, rags, faint remnants, debris, and lifeless entities. Picasso and the exhibition of Picasso's works are, like the twenty-eight thousand people who have seen them, transitory phenomena..... Among the patients we may distinguishtwo groups, the neurotics and the schizophrenes. The first produce pictures of a synthetic character which display one single, uniform feeling throughout. Even when they are completely abstract and devoid of the emotional character they are at least either clearly symmetrical or they possess an unmistakable direction. The second, on the other hand, make pictures that instantly reveal the strangeness of their emotion. In any event , they do not display, any single harmonious feeling but rather contradictory emotions or even a complete absence of sensibility. From a strictly formal point of view, their predominant characteristic is that of an intellectual laceration, rendered by what are termed broken lines, that is to say, psychic clefts or rents that traverse the image. The picture leaves one either unmoved or astonished at its paradoxical disturbing, frightening, or grotesque

flights of audacity. Picasso belongs to this second group.'

Jung was attacked for this article which appeared in Cahiers d'Art which clearly puts Picasso in the company of madmen - at least in those days. Nowadays, thanks ironically to Jung himself and more recently R.D. Laing we are coming to see the schizophrenic as being so much nearer sanity than the rest of us. In any case the association between the irrational and art, even though the word irrational hardly does justice to that hell of conflict the schizophrenic is immersed in caught between the spurious reality without and the alternative reality within, was as old as the Greeks. As Plato says in the Phaedrus:-

.....sound reason fades into nothingness before the poetry of madmen.

Or as Blake put it: -

All Pictures that's Painted with Sense and with Thought
Are Painted by Madmen, as sure as a Groat;

Or, Novalis in more poignant terms:-

.....'The poet is literally out of his senses - in exchange, all comes about within him. He is, to the letter, subject and object at the same time, soul and universe. And of course the Surrealists, engaged in~~to~~ their own research into the Unconscious, devoted their art to the non-rational activities of the Mind. Jung's words however bring to light the real nature of artistic activity as the upsurge of one man's endeavour to make sense of his own world and his relation to it while the skull of death mocks his every move. As Becker has said:-) ....' Man's anxiety is a function of his sheer ambiguity and of his complete powerlessness to overcome that ambiguity, to be straightforward an animal or an angel. He cannot live heedless of his fate, nor can he take sure control over that fate and triumph over it by being outside the human condition.' And Picasso rejects the solace of religion which has the power to take this very creatureliness, ones insignificance, and make of it a condition of hope. He has found his own religion in art and strives to effect his salvation through it. And this, of course, is the culmination of individualism - man living in and for himself as a Person in the process of Self-fulfilment.

That is not to say that art never again will be in the service of a collective creed or religious ideal. This is still a possibility although the nature of our society at present makes it an unlikely one. It is more likely I think that a political revolution will, by necessity, precede such a spiritual renewal before the colossal wastage of creative power at present in the pay-roll of capital can be halted. However there is no room here for pessimism. Better late than never.

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