Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought? The Traditional View of Art

Revised Edition with Previously Unpublished Author's Notes

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

Introduction by
Roger Lipsey

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This new edition of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy's *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought?* includes material from the author's notes and comments which he made after the book was first published in 1946, as well as a new introduction by Roger Lipsey, the leading authority on the life and work of Coomaraswamy. We are grateful to Dr. Lipsey not only for his introduction, but also for the editing of some of these essays when he re-issued them in C*oomaraswamy I. Selected Papers: Traditional Art and Symbolism* (Princeton University Press, 1977), now long out-of-print and difficult to obtain. Coomaraswamy himself was fluent in many languages and assumed, no doubt correctly in the 1930s and 1940s, that most of his readers would also be fluent in the major European languages. Often, therefore, he did not translate words, phrases, and even long passages in Greek, Latin, French, German, and Italian. He did, however, have mercy on his readers with regard to words in Sanskrit which he almost always explained or translated. To make this new edition more accessible to a wide audience, we have rendered in English all of the previously untranslated material in the above languages and have transliterated all Greek words into our alphabet. The editor is grateful to Dr. Richard McCombs for his transliterations and translations of Greek and his translations of Latin words and phrases. Deborah Kornblau, Roger Gaetani, and Susana Marin all generously assisted in translations from the other languages. Dr. Timothy Scott cheerfully proofread the entire typescript. We have also added to this new edition a list of abbreviations and short titles of works utilized by the author and a list of his own works cited in the essays, as well as an index. Margaret Rich and AnnaLee Pauls of the Rare Books and Special Collections Department of the Princeton University Library kindly provided us with photocopies of Coomaraswamy's own copies of some of the essays in this volume. The editor is greatly appreciative of the help and dedication of the editorial and design staff of World Wisdom Books: Michael Fitzgerald, Mary-Kathryne Steele, Stephen Williams, Roger Gaetani, Susana Marin, and former staff member Sarah Jacobi. It has been a pleasure to work with them. Finally we are all grateful to the late Dr. Rama P. Coomaraswamy who was an enthusiastic supporter of this project, providing us many helpful suggestions as well as his father's annotated desk copies of several of his publications. We only regret that Dr. Coomaraswamy could not still be with us to see the fruit of his and our labors.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy 1877-1947

"Blessed is the man on whose tomb can be written *Hic jacet nemo*" [Here lies no one].
(A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, p.30)

In response to a request for autobiographical information, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy replied: "I must explain that I am not at all interested in biographical matter relating to myself and that I consider the *modern* practice of publishing details about the lives and personalities of well-known men is nothing but a vulgar catering to illegitimate curiosity… this is not a matter of 'modesty' but one of principle." The principle involved here, often enunciated by Coomaraswamy, was to value the truths expressed by the man above the man himself, who was merely a vehicle for their expression. Now nearly sixty years after his death, he would perhaps forgive us this venture into biography, especially since the wisdom he so eloquently unfolded remains of such precious value in this world of uncertainty and flux in which we live in the twenty-first century.

The breadth of Coomaraswamy's knowledge, the many fields of which he had full grasp, seems astonishing in today's world of narrow scholarly specialization. While primarily known among scholars as an art historian, he shed light upon many other diverse subjects, for he did not limit the study of art to descriptive or historical inquiry. He drew the broadest implications for the meaning and always-present value of the works of art under consideration, delving into aesthetics, literature and language, folklore, religion, metaphysics and many other fields. His heritage and early years uniquely prepared him for this life's work. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy was born in 1877 in Colombo, Ceylon. His father was the distinguished Sri Lankan barrister Sir Mutu Coomaraswamy and his mother Elizabeth Clay Beebe, from a wealthy English family. Sir Mutu died in 1879 when Ananda Coomaraswamy was two years old. His mother had already brought the young Ananda back to England, and after his father's death, they lived in a cottage in Kent. Ananda attended Wycliffe College in Gloucestershire from 1889 to 1897. He received the B. Sc. in geology and botany from University College, London in 1900 and in 1906 his doctorate in Geology from London University. At least as early as 1896 he began to make annual

visits to Ceylon, the homeland of his father, where he undertook geological surveys and studies and was soon appointed the first director of the newly-established Mineralogical Survey of Ceylon.

In 1902 he traveled by ox cart throughout Ceylon in fulfillment of his geological research. He quickly became aware of the traditional Buddhist and Hindu culture and the arts and crafts which still flourished in the remoter regions of Ceylon, more-or-less untouched by modern European civilization. At the same time, with his English upbringing he was painfully aware of the neglect of this traditional culture by the Western-educated Sinhalese under the pressure of colonialism. His interest in the protection and revival of Sri Lankan culture led him to the founding in 1905 of the Ceylon Social Reform Society. The purposes of the Society expressed Coomaraswamy's full comprehension of the value of the traditional society of Ceylon and his awareness of what was at stake if these traditions were irreparably lost. In his travels throughout the country he had discovered the hieratic sacred Buddhist temple sculpture, the vibrant folk and utilitarian arts, the traditional dress, the marvelous literature and language where "ploughmen spoke as elegantly as courtiers," and the customs and ceremonial life which still ordered daily existence. During his time in Ceylon, living in a cottage outside the city of Kandy, his interests gradually changed from geology to traditional Indian and Sinhalese arts and culture. In 1906 he resigned his position as director of the Mineralogical Survey, publishing little in a scientific vein thereafter, and in 1907 during travels in India, he formally became a Hindu in Lahore, prior to returning to England. Although he gave up his geological work, his scientific training was later to serve him well in his careful studies of iconography and his precise and penetrating expositions of linguistics and metaphysics.

Coomaraswamy's early efforts in Ceylon led to an eloquent series of articles, books, and exhibitions, in which he portrayed the deadening effects of colonialism on the traditional cultures of India and Ceylon and the need to nurture and revitalize all the traditional arts, including handcraft traditions. In the emerging *svadeshi* movement of the day, some Indian nationalists had advocated local craft production as a bulwark against economic and political control of Indian life by the British, but Coomaraswamy differed with them in stressing the need for spiritual and cultural preservation and revival. Only by preserving core values which recognized the beauty and spiritual meaning in traditional forms could a true nationalist movement be founded, a movement that could free itself not only from Western economic and political domination but of greater importance, from cultural domination. Following the lead of

John Ruskin and William Morris, Coomaraswamy decried the mediocrity and uniformity of machine-made products as well as the sapping effects of factory work upon laborers and the meaninglessness of an industrial culture no longer based upon spiritual traditions.

Coomaraswamy's ideas helped set the stage for the full-scale incorporation of the local production of handcrafts into the Indian nationalist movement led by Mohandas Gandhi. Throughout his life Coomaraswamy maintained an active interest in the progress of Indian independence from British rule. He first met Gandhi at a meeting in London in 1914 and always commended his work which he saw inspired at the highest level. Shortly before India achieved independence in 1947, in answer to a question about Gandhi, Coomaraswamy responded that the former's advocacy of non-violence (*satyāgraha*) made him a teacher not only for India but a *jagat-guru* (a teacher whose role is of universal significance), for "non-violence, as he knows, is not merely a matter of refraining from visibly violent actions; it is a matter of making peace with our selves, one of learning to obey our Inner Man; for none but the outer man or ego is aggressive." Here Coomaraswamy placed the most essential spiritual commandment, to know and master thyself, as the necessary basis of all human and hence political and social action.

Returning to England in 1907 Coomaraswamy took part in the Arts and Crafts Movement, applying more broadly the ideas concerning traditional arts he had formulated in Ceylon and India. He soon became closely associated with C. R. Ashbee, a disciple of William Morris and even acquired Morris's printing press upon which he printed his first major publication, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art* in 1908. At this time he began the serious study of Indian art, contributing articles on Hindu and Buddhist bronze statuary to scholarly publications. He worked quickly to correct the Eurocentric view of English and other historians who saw India as an inferior civilization and its sacred art either without value or totally dependent upon Greece and Roman sources. In a paper given before the Oriental Congress in Copenhagen in 1908, Coomaraswamy stated that the Greek influence upon Indian sculpture was "magnified out of all proportion" by European scholars and was "ultimately neither very profound nor very important." At the same time he began to publish his studies of Mughal and Rajput and other Indian painting. Rajput painting in particular was virtually unknown in the West and underappreciated in India until Coomaraswamy began collecting examples of it, upon which he first lectured in Calcutta in 1910 and which he first published in 1912 in his *Indian Drawings: Second Series, Chiefly Rajput.* In 1916 he published his magisterial *Rajput Painting*, a pioneering work

which in two large volumes dealt with and illustrated this remarkable school of Hindu painting flourishing in Rajasthan and the Punjabi regions of northern India from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Of central importance in the Rajput school are the paintings illustrating the life of Rādhā and Krishna, providing a profound allegory for the path of the soul through love towards God. Coomaraswamy recognized that Rajput painting was a deeply symbolic art unconcerned with naturalism, yet vitally concerned with human ends. He wrote in *Rajput Painting*: "Rarely has any other art combined so little fear with so much tenderness, so much delight with such complete renunciation."

With the outbreak of the First World War, as an Indian nationalist—in a sense he was the spiritual conscience of the *svadeshi* movement—Coomaraswamy was against Indian involvement in the military effort: "We have no imperial call to offer military service to either combatant, or to rejoice intemperately at the success of this or that industrial empire.... neutrality of thought may be efficacious for the tempering of strife ... because ... all things are intertwined and indivisible." For this principled anti-colonialist and anti-industrialist stand ("what we call our civilization is but a murderous machine," Coomaraswamy would later quote Prof. George La Piana of Harvard), he was threatened with legal proceedings in England and had some of his property confiscated by the government, but was able in 1917 to emigrate to America with some financial assets and of most importance, with his invaluable collection of Indian art. Through the support of Dr. Denman Ross, a professor of art and design at Harvard and patron of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Coomaraswamy was hired in April 1917 as the first Keeper (Curator) of the newly-established Section of Indian Art in the Museum's Asiatic Department. Ross also purchased for the Museum most of Coomaraswamy's Indian painting collection which formed the basis of the new Indian section.

Prior to assuming his duties, Coomaraswamy quickly acquainted himself with his new homeland. He traveled across the United States, spending time in New Mexico where he helped to inspire the revival of Indian and Hispanic arts and also visiting the Navajo and Hopi Indian reservations before going on to the west coast. Returning to Boston, over the next decade he produced for the Museum a series of catalogues of the collection, monographs, and articles which were models of art historical scholarship and essentially established the basis for the modern study of Indian art. These works set the stage for his major work, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art,* published in 1927. It became the standard reference work on the subject and is still in print today.

Having established himself as a pre-eminent scholar in the field, Coomaraswamy gradually returned to interests of his earlier life: a renewed concern with metaphysics and religion and their application to contemporary life. In the late 1920s he began in-depth studies of the Vedas and other classics of Hindu and Buddhist spiritual thought and in 1933 published the first fruits of his labors as *A New Approach to the Vedas*. It was impossible, he said, to truly understand the sacred art of India without simultaneously knowing the full spiritual context in which it was created, for which these scriptures were important keys. And this was not merely an academic task: "It is evident that for an understanding of the Vedas, a knowledge of Sanskrit, *however profound*, is insufficient. Indians themselves ... insist upon the absolute necessity of study at the feet of a *guru*."

Given that it was not possible for most Westerners to study in this traditional manner, Coomaraswamy's method, his "new approach," first involved rigorous translation of the spiritual terms in the texts, translations which, unlike previous academic efforts, embodied the fullness of meaning of each term. In order to understand these terms and the ideas embodied by them, normal word usage in modern English and other European languages was not adequate, so Coomaraswamy began careful etymological and theological studies of medieval Christian texts: thinkers such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, as well as study of the Greek classics: Plato, Aristotle, the neo-Platonists and others. These studies which he continued through the remainder of his life had two purposes: first, to provide a fully adequate understanding of the Vedic and Buddhist scriptures, and second, to demonstrate that such an understanding of metaphysical concepts was an essential and normal part of the Western tradition, but gradually had been forgotten or debased in the West after the Renaissance. Thus a further purpose in Coomaraswamy's later writing was to show how far removed the modern world was from the traditional world of the East and the medieval West. And such a removal was by no means "progress," as commonly thought. Coomaraswamy often quoted the observation of his colleague John Lodge: "From the Stone Age until now, *quelle degringolade* [what a decline]." And he spoke of the "impoverished reality" of the contemporary world to be found in nearly every aspect of life, from the profound disconnection with the spirit to the dehumanizing manufacture and use of every day objects.

Coomaraswamy's work in this period returned to his earlier concerns, but now understood and presented at a deeper level. Commentators have offered different reasons for this radical (in the original

sense of returning to the root) change in his work, but it is perhaps best explained by Coomaraswamy himself in a 1947 letter to his colleague Herman Goetz: "You connect my change of interest from art history to metaphysics with age.... However, I would also like to explain that this was also a natural and necessary development arising from my former work in which the iconographic interest prevails. I was no longer satisfied with a merely descriptive iconography and had to be able to explain the reason of the forms; and for this it was necessary to go back to the Vedas and to metaphysics in general, for there lies the seminal reasons of iconographic development. I could not of course be satisfied with merely 'sociological' explanations since the forms of traditional societies themselves can only be explained metaphysically."

In the early 1930s Coomaraswamy's work was further inspired by his encounter with the writings of the French thinker René Guénon (1886-1951). In a series of books beginning in 1921 Guénon had written authoritatively of Hindu metaphysics and vehemently of the loss of sacred tradition in the modern West. His work was a confirmation of the renewed direction which Coomaraswamy was taking, and the two became collaborators, sharing their work and ideas. Their approaches, however, differed in that Guénon avoided immersion in academia while Coomaraswamy relished it. He was a highly regarded scholar and he thought that his most important work should be directed to the academic community: "I feel that rectification must begin at the reputed 'top', and only so will find its way into schools and text books and encyclopedias."

In the late 1930s and early 1940s he also began writing more popular articles, as well as lectures and radio broadcasts, directed to the educated public. These works generally deal with two major subjects. First they are intended to show that the appreciation of art must involve the whole person, that true art has primarily an intellective—that is an objective spiritual—purpose and can not merely be appreciated for its aesthetic qualities, which finally are superficial and subjective. Secondly they are thoughtful and powerful critiques of the values and direction of modern life. Still a supporter of Gandhi and Indian independence, Coomaraswamy wrote trenchant indictments of the effects of modern industrial civilization on traditional peoples, not only those of India but also more "primitive" peoples whose ways of life and cultures were rapidly being crushed by colonialist exploitation. And he demonstrated that these deleterious effects also and inevitably played a role in the spiritual degeneration of the modern West.

Finally, all of Coomaraswamy's late work is focused on the primacy of the spirit within the human soul, the inborn truth that is inherent in our deepest nature. The immanent spirit, characterized in medieval thought as the synteresis (intellect, conscience) is that "spark of Divine Awareness" which should be the source of all discursive thought and action. While it is sometimes equated simply with conscience in the moral sense, Coomaraswamy notes that it is far more comprehensive than that, for it is the source of self-knowledge and consequently of all doing and all creating. It is the "habit of First Principles," as Coomaraswamy notes, following St. Thomas, habit being understood in the sense of an inborn predilection for truth and understanding. All thought and action, whether intellective, moral, or creative depends upon direct reference to First Principles, to that innate spark of consciousness in every human soul and cannot depend upon the individuality, the little "I" which does as it pleases. Coomaraswamy's message was twofold: first to make clear the objective and subjective reality of the divine presence within us, as it is enunciated in all traditions, and secondly to make us draw the inevitable conclusions that this presence has for all aspects of our life and thought.

Coomaraswamy did not see his method as a spiritual "Way" but rather as the necessary clarifying of thought and intention prior to finding a Way, which could and should be found within the reader's own tradition. He saw himself not as a guru or sage but merely as the explicator of fundamental truths which had been neglected and forgotten by the modern world: "I am neither [a saint nor an intellectual giant], but I do say those whose authority I rely on when I speak, have been both."

William Wroth
February 2007

"Editor's Preface" to Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought?

Features in

Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought: The Traditional View of Art

by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, edited by William Wroth

INTRODUCTION

Some years ago the historian Jonathan Spence treated us all to his book, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, the vivid study of a Jesuit missionary in sixteenth-century China who introduced Chinese scholars and administrators to the Jesuits' expert art of remembering. The gist of the method was to construct a memory palace, an imaginary structure as vast and detailed as required to house, room by room, the memories one wished to retain and recall at will. *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought?* introduces us to the memory palace of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. He would object at once that it is not his own memory palace, not even remotely a personal possession, but rather the common inheritance of humankind diligently assembled. The point would be well taken. Yet as he often cited from St. Thomas Aquinas, "everything is known in the mode of the knower." The memory palace in this book and throughout Coomaraswamy's later work carries the signature of a very great mind.

Everyone knows that Coomaraswamy's writings are often difficult. His footnotes can be book-length; many essays are two in one, a primary text purposefully guided across an ocean of secondary references and reflections. A shift in metaphor may be helpful: there is a cartographer's intent and passion at work here. Mapmakers do not skip a promontory or summarize a river; their task is to be rigorously exact. But even while recalling the complexity of certain of Coomaraswamy's writings and the long challenge they pose, one has to remember two quite different elements. There are essays of wonderful simplicity and directness (here, for example, "Shaker Furniture" and "Literary Symbolism"), and even in difficult writings passages shine with the poet's gift for the perfect word or image, as if everything that came before, no matter how complex, prepares such luminous moments.

This is the least indulgent of writers. His *daimon* drove him to the farthest reaches of complexity in search of complete truth that could withstand every test. He was among the first global thinkers, a scholar of comparative wisdom—in this book, wisdom about art—who could not rest content with the ideas, icons, and teaching narratives (sacred history, myth, and tale) of one culture only. He shows us Christian ideas, icons, and narratives alongside Hindu and Buddhist ideas, icons, and narratives, and these in turn alongside Platonic and Muslim elements of culture—and more still. He sought and saw their underlying

unity. He said memorably of the Delaware Indians that their religion possessed everything necessary to become a world religion, but for one thing only: they had too few guns and ships to impose themselves on others. The comment reflects both the breadth of his ecumenical vision and his awareness as an early participant in India's struggle for independence of the undercurrent of violence in imperialism.

Coomaraswamy uncovers and puts before us the truths of a primordial tradition, reflected in the world's existing traditions and expressed by them as if in differing dialects. He asks us to join him in the effort to *decipher* the religiously rich arts and crafts, literatures and folklore of the world's traditions. Linking all of his writings, the act or gesture of decipherment recognizes that traditions are richly encoded and reveal themselves only superficially in the absence of key ideas and perspectives. Those ideas and perspectives are present at the center of each tradition, but they must be seen and stated with clarity if they are to provide a reliable orientation.

The vast learning marshaled by Coomaraswamy in this book and others provides a basis for deciphering traditional works of art and the cultural conditions that needed those works and gave life to them. Coomaraswamy does not invite us to stroll past pictures at an exhibition for pleasure's sake but rather to engage in a quest for understanding. A pair of essays in this book, "The Nature of Buddhist Art" and "*Saṃvega*: Aesthetic Shock," speaks to this intensified quality of encounter with works of art. In the first of the two essays, the opening paragraph states with spare nobility the entire premise of Coomaraswamy's approach to traditional religious art:

> In order to understand the nature of the Buddha image and its meaning for a Buddhist we must, to begin with, reconstruct its environment, trace its ancestry, and remodel our own personality. We must forget that we are looking at "art" in a museum, and see the image in its place in a Buddhist church or as part of a sculptured rock wall; and having seen it, receive it as an image of what we are ourselves potentially. Remember that we are pilgrims come from some great distance to see God; that what we see will depend upon ourselves. We are to see, not the likeness made by hands, but its transcendental archetype; we are to take part in a communion. We have heard the spoken Word, and remember that "He who sees the Word, sees Me"; we are to see this Word, not now in an audible but in a visible and tangible form.... The image is of one Awakened: and for our

> awakening, who are still asleep. The objective methods of "science" will not suffice; there can be no understanding without assimilation; to understand is to have been born again. (p. 145)

For all of us who encounter works of traditional religious art and yearn to receive the messages placed in them long ago as if in safekeeping, Coomaraswamy continues to be the teacher without peer. To know art with his guidance is to be in quest. To know with his guidance is the fullest of acts, not only mental, not only aesthetic, not only affective, but a movement of the whole person toward another order of knowledge. Coomaraswamy wrote of this, again in "The Nature of Buddhist Art," in words that exemplify his unique poetry. A seemingly dry exposition concludes with an image of ecstatic beauty:

> If the use of [a] symbol is to function mediately as a bridge between the world of local position and a "world" that cannot be traversed or described in terms of size, it is sufficiently evident that the hither end of such a bridge must be somewhere, and in fact wherever our edification begins: procedure is from the known to the unknown; it is the other end of the bridge that has no position. (p. 156)

Coomaraswamy was a great academic. His catalogues of Asian art in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, are models of their kind, and there are nearly innumerable articles and books dedicated to clarifying points of knowledge within the honorable boundaries of the academic disciplines he practiced, primarily art history and Sanskrit/Pali study. But in his last 16 years or so, from about 1932 until his passing in the fall of 1947, he tended to use his comprehensive knowledge of the history of art, of languages ancient and modern, Indic and Western, and of Western and Asian scripture and commentary and philosophy, to purposes that often transcended and occasionally defied typical academic aims. He was gathering ancient and traditional knowledge before it was too late. In opposition to the secular culture of our time, which he considered empty and profoundly misleading as to the proper goals of human life, he assembled a palace of memory in which ideas, images, and narratives rooted in pre-modern tradition were recognized, cleansed of misunderstandings, placed in logical order, linked with kindred materials, and restored as teachings for our time. This memory palace was not a museum; it was and still is for habitation, for use. He worked with a kind of desperation, not only because he was approaching his older years but because he experienced the society around him as amnesiac, willfully and grossly forgetful of the "traditional or 'normal' view" of

life and art. He had long been a scholar. Now he was a teacher and prophet.

The study of art history and the critical reception of contemporary art have moved in fruitful directions since Coomaraswamy's time. We are certainly better at the social history of art than we were then. We have noticed the actuality of women as individual artists and as the owners of the fingers that produced magnificent works. Archaeology has advanced, and with it many times and places of artistic accomplishment are far better understood. In terms of critical theory, we have ideas so compelling that they can easily overshadow the patient study of the work of art itself. The art of the twentieth century, which with few exceptions Coomaraswamy held in contempt, was richer in spirituality than he acknowledged. On the other hand, many of Coomaraswamy's concerns and practices—his attention to iconography, his exploration of literary sources and parallels, his interest in the artist's values and procedures—are more firmly part of the fabric of art-historical and art-critical study than they were in his day. Though readers will notice in Coomaraswamy's writings attitudes and interpretations that seem dated, the core of his work is surely classic, fresh in each generation.

In "*Saṃvega*: Aesthetic Shock," a complex work with unexpected passages of unforgettable force, Coomaraswamy writes of "the shock or wonder that may be felt when the perception of a work of art becomes a serious experience."

> In the deepest experience that can be induced by a work of art (or other reminder) our very being is shaken … to its roots.... It involves … a self-naughting … and it is for this reason that it can be described as "dreadful," even though we could not wish to avoid it.... I have myself been completely dissolved and broken up by … reading aloud Plato's *Phaedo*. That cannot have been an "aesthetic" emotion, such as could have been felt in the presence of some insignificant work of art, but represents the shock of conviction that only an intellectual art can deliver, the body-blow that is delivered by any perfect and therefore convincing statement of truth. (p. 181)

Orientation is a strange thing. It takes only a little light, shining in the right direction, to show the way. Coomaraswamy's writings are filled with light, but even a short passage such as this shows the way. It reflects a hierarchy of values, a quality of engagement with works of art that does not leave one cold or unchanged, continuity between spiritual experience and the experience of art. Every passage from his writings cited in this brief introduction speaks to the seeker in each of us, to

the one who perceives in arts long past—the peacefulness and intensity of an early Byzantine icon, the glowing turquoise glaze of an Iranian ceramic, the limitless joy of Shiva dancing—not just material treasures luckily preserved but signs intimately addressed to us.

How clumsy one feels in the effort to say, in all simplicity, that Coomaraswamy is an irreplaceable teacher. Surely one must go on from his writings; they are not a pen or tether. Just as surely, they must be remembered. The ideal curriculum would be a full year of study of his writings; this book represents a superb point of entry. Thereafter, as St. Augustine wrote in a homily on the first Letter of John, "Love and do what you will." We need to move freely in society and culture as they are today, and to contribute as and where we can. This too is self-naughting: not to stand apart. Yet one remembers.

Roger Lipsey

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

With the exception of the first, the seventeen chapters following are revised versions of essays that have appeared in various Journals, chiefly American. I wish to express my indebtedness to the Editors of the *Art Bulletin, College Art Journal, Art Quarterly, Catholic Art Quarterly, American Bookman, Journal of Aesthetics, Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Eastern Art,* and *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society;* to the Editor and Publisher of the *Dictionary of World Literature;* and to Mr. A. Townshend Johnson for his permission to reprint "The Nature of Buddhist Art," which first appeared in a costly work by Professor Benjamin Rowland and myself, entitled *The Wall Paintings of India, Central Asia, and Ceylon* and published by the Merrymount Press in 1938.

This is not a systematic treatise: each of the eighteen chapters deals with some particular aspect or application of the traditional theory of art, and is complete in itself; a certain amount of repetition has been therefore inevitable. But if not systematic, the subject matter of the whole is consistently one and the same, and no other than that of my *Why Exhibit Works of Art?* and *Transformation of Nature in Art*: and I think I may say that whoever makes use of these three books *and* of the sources referred to in them will have a fairly complete view of the doctrine about art that the greater part of mankind has accepted from prehistoric times until yesterday.

The notes, which some readers will wish to ignore, refer to the sources which others may wish to consult; but they also contain some matter not less important than that of the text, as, for example, in the case of Chapter X, note 4.

I am most grateful to my friends Marco Pallis and Walter Shewring for their proof reading.

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
August 22, 1945.

CHAPTER I

"A Figure of Speech, or a Figure of Thought?"[1]

Egō de technēn ou kalō, ho an ē alogon pragma.
Plato, *Gorgias* 465A[2]

We are peculiar people. I say this with reference to the fact that whereas almost all other peoples have called their theory of art or expression a "rhetoric" and have thought of art as a kind of knowledge, we have invented an "aesthetic" and think of art as a kind of feeling.

The Greek original of the word "aesthetic" means perception by the senses, especially by feeling. Aesthetic experience is a faculty that we share with animals and vegetables, and is irrational. The "aesthetic soul" is that part of our psychic makeup that "senses" things and reacts to them: in other words, the "sentimental" part of us. To identify our approach to art with the pursuit of these reactions is not to make art "fine" but to apply it only to the life of pleasure and to disconnect it from the active and contemplative lives.

Our word "aesthetic," then, takes for granted what is now commonly assumed, viz. that art is evoked by, and has for its end to express and again evoke, emotions. In this connection, Alfred North Whitehead has remarked that "it was a tremendous discovery, how to excite emotions for their own sake."[3] We have gone on to invent a science of our likes and dislikes, a "science of the soul," psychology, and have substituted psychological explanations for the traditional conception of art as an intellectual virtue and of beauty as pertaining to knowledge.[4] Our

[1] Quintilian IX.4.117, "Figura? Quae? cum orationis, tum etiam sententiae?" Cf. Plato, *Republic* 601B.

[2] "I cannot fairly give the name of 'art' to anything irrational." Cf. *Laws* 890D, "Law and art are children of the intellect (*nous*)." Sensation (*aisthēsis*) and pleasure (*hēdonē*) are irrational (*alogos;* see *Timaeus* 28A, 47D, 69D). In the *Gorgias*, the irrational is that which cannot give an account of itself, that which is unreasonable, has no *raison d'être.* See also Philo, *Legum Allegoriarum* I.48, "For as grass is the food of irrational beings, so has the sensibly-perceptible (*to aisthēton*) been assigned to the irrational part of the soul." *Aisthēsis* is just what the biologist now calls "irritability."

[3] Quoted with approval by Herbert Read, *Art and Society* (New York, 1937), p. 84, from Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York, 1926).

[4] *Sum. Theol.* I-II.57.3c (art is an intellectual virtue); I.5.4 *ad* 1 (beauty pertains to the cognitive, not the appetitive faculty).

current resentment of meaning in art is as strong as the word "aesthetic" implies. When we speak of a work of art as "significant" we try to forget that this word can only be used with a following "of," that expression can be significant only *of* some thesis that was to be expressed, and we overlook that whatever does not mean something is literally *in-significant*. If, indeed, the whole end of art were "to express emotion," then the degree of our emotional reaction would be the measure of beauty and all judgment would be subjective, for there can be no disputing about tastes. It should be remembered that a reaction is an "affection," and every affection a passion, that is, something passively suffered or undergone, and not—as in the operation of judgment—an activity on our part.[5] To equate the love of art with a love of fine sensations is to make of works of art a kind of aphrodisiac. The words "disinterested aesthetic contemplation" are a contradiction in terms and a pure nonsense.

"Rhetoric," of which the Greek original means skill in public speaking, implies, on the other hand, a theory of art as the effective expression of theses. There is a very wide difference between what is said for effect, and what is said or made to be *effective*, and must *work*, or would not have been worth saying or making. It is true that there is a so-called rhetoric of the production of "effects," just as there is a so-called poetry that consists only of emotive words, and a sort of painting that is merely spectacular; but this kind of eloquence that makes use of figures for their own sake, or merely to display the artist, or to betray the truth in courts of law, is not properly a rhetoric, but a sophistic, or art of flattery. By "rhetoric" we mean, with Plato and Aristotle, "the art of giving effectiveness to truth."[6] My thesis will be, then, that if we propose to use or understand any works of art (with the possible exception of contemporary works, which may be "unintelligible"[7]), we ought

[5] "Pathology ... 2. The study of the passions or emotions" (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1933, VII, 554). The "psychology of art" is not a science of art but of the way in which we are affected by works of art. An affection (*pathēma*) is passive; making or doing (*poiēma, ergon*) is an activity.

[6] See Charles Sears Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic* (New York, 1928), p. 3. "A real art of speaking which does not lay hold upon the truth does not exist and never will" (*Phaedrus* 260E; cf. *Gorgias* 463-465, 513D, 517A, 527C, *Laws* 937E).

[7] See E. F. Rothschild, *The Meaning of Unintelligibility in Modern Art* (Chicago, 1934), p. 98. "The course of artistic achievement was the change from the visual as a means of comprehending the non-visual to the visual as an end in itself and the abstract structure of physical forms as the purely artistic transcendence of the visual ... *a transcendence utterly alien and unintelligible* to the average [sc. normal] man" (F. de W. Bolman, criti-

to abandon the term "aesthetic" in its present application and return to "rhetoric," Quintilian's "bene dicendi scientia" [art of speaking well –Ed. trans.]

It may be objected by those for whom art is not a language but a spectacle that rhetoric has primarily to do with verbal eloquence and not with the life of works of art in general. I am not sure that even such objectors should really agree to describe their own works as dumb or ineloquent. But however this may be, we must affirm that the principles of art are not altered by the variety of the material in which the artist works—materials such as vibrant air in the case of music or poetry, human flesh on the stage, or stone, metal, clay in architecture, sculpture, and pottery. Nor can one material be called more beautiful than another; you cannot make a better sword of gold than of steel. Indeed, the material as such, being relatively formless, is relatively ugly. Art implies a transformation of the material, the impression of a new form on material that had been more or less formless; and it is precisely in this sense that the creation of the world from a completely formless matter is called a "work of adornment."

There are good reasons for the fact that the theory of art has generally been stated in terms of the spoken (or secondarily, written) word. It is, in the first place, "by a word conceived in intellect" that the artist, whether human or divine, works.[8] Again, those whose own art was, like mine, verbal, naturally discussed the art of verbal expression, while those who worked in other materials were not also necessarily expert in "logical" formulation. And finally, the art of speaking can be better understood by all than could the art of, let us say, the potter, because all men make use of speech (whether rhetorically, to communicate a meaning, or sophistically, to exhibit themselves), while relatively few are workers in clay.

All our sources are conscious of the fundamental identity of all the arts. Plato, for example, remarks that "the expert, who is intent upon

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cizing E. Kahler's *Man the Measure*, in *Journal of Philosophy*, XLI, 1944, 134-135; italics mine).

[8] *Sum. Theol.* 1.45.6c, "Artifex autem per verbum in intellectu conceptum et per amorem suae voluntatis ad aliquid relatum, operatur" [the artist works through a word conceived in the intellect and through the love of the will for something relative –Ed. trans.]; 1.14.8c, "Artifex operatur per suum intellectum" [The artist works through his intellect –Ed. trans.]; 1.45.7c "Forma artificiati est ex conceptione artificis" [The form of a work of art is from the conception of the artist –Ed. trans.]. See also St. Bonaventura, *II Sententiarum* I-I.I.I *ad* 3 and 4, "Agens per intellectum producit per formas" [Acting through the intellect (the artist) makes through forms –Ed. trans.]. Informality is ugliness.

the best when he speaks, will surely not speak at random, but with an end in view; he is just like all those other artists, the painters, builders, shipwrights, etc.;"[9] and again, "the production of all arts are kinds of poetry, and their craftsmen are all poets,"[10] in the broad sense of the word. "Demiurge" (*dēmiourgos*) and "technician" (*technitnēs*) are the ordinary Greek words for "artist" (*artifex*) and under these headings Plato includes not only poets, painters, and musicians, but also archers, weavers, embroiderers, potters, carpenters, sculptors, farmers, doctors, hunters, and above all those whose art is government, only making a distinction between creation (*dēmiourgia*) and mere labor (*cheirourgia*), art (*technē*) and artless industry (*atechnos tribē*).[11] All these artists, insofar as they are really makers and not merely industrious, insofar as they are musical and therefore wise and good, and insofar as they are in possession of their art (*evtechnos*, cf. *entheos*) and governed by it, are infallible.[12] The primary meaning of the word *sophia* "wisdom," is that of "skill," just as Sanskrit *kauśalam* is "skill" of any kind, whether in making, doing, or knowing.

Now what are all these arts for? Always and only to supply a real or an imagined need or deficiency on the part of the human patron, for whom as the collective consumer the artist works.[13] When he is working for himself, the artist as a human being is also a consumer. The

[9] *Gorgias* 503E.

[10] *Symposium* 205C.

[11] See, for example, *Statesman* 259E, *Phaedrus* 260E, *Laws* 938A. The word *tribē* literally means "a rubbing," and is an exact equivalent of our modern expression "a grind." (Cf. Hippocrates, *Fractures* 772, "shameful and artless," and Ruskin's "industry without art is brutality.") "For all well-governed peoples there is a work enjoined upon each man which he must perform" (*Republic* 405C). "Leisure" is the opportunity to do this work without interference (*Republic* 370C). A "work for leisure" is one requiring undivided attention (Euripides, *Andromache* 552). Plato's view of work in no way differs from that of Hesiod, who says that work is no reproach but the best gift of the gods to men (*Works and Days* 295-296). Whenever Plato disparages the mechanical arts, it is with reference to the kinds of work that provide for the well-being of the body only, and do not at the same time provide spiritual food; he does not connect culture with idleness.

[12] *Republic* 342BC. What is made by art is correctly made (*Alcibiades* I.108B). It will follow that those who are in possession of and governed by their art and not by their own irrational impulses, which yearn for innovations, will operate in the same way (*Republic* 349-350, *Laws* 660B). "Art has fixed ends and ascertained means of operation" (*Sum. Theol.* II-II.47.4 *ad* 2, 49.5 *ad* 2). It is in the same way that an oracle, speaking *ex cathedra*, is infallible, but not so the man when speaking for himself. This is similarly true in the case of a guru.

[13] *Republic* 369BC, *Statesman* 279CD, *Epinomis* 975C.

necessities to be served by art may appear to be material *or* spiritual, but as Plato insists, it is one and the same art—or a combination of both arts, practical and philosophical—that must serve both body and soul if it is to be admitted in the ideal City.[14] We shall see presently that to propose to serve the two ends separately is the peculiar symptom of our modern "heartlessness." Our distinction of "fine" from "applied" art (ridiculous, because the fine art itself is applied to giving pleasure) is as though "not by bread alone"[15] had meant "by cake" for the elite that go to exhibitions and "bread alone" for the majority and usually for all. Plato's music and gymnastics, which correspond to what we seem to intend by "fine" and "applied" art (since one is for the soul and the other for the body), are never divorced in his theory of education; to follow one alone leads to effeminacy, to follow only the other, to brutality; the tender artist is no more a man than the tough athlete; music must be realized in bodily graces, and physical power should be exercised only in measured, not in violent motions.[16]

It would be superfluous to explain what are the material necessities to be served by art: we need only remember that a censorship of what ought or ought not to be made at all should correspond to our knowledge of what is good or bad for us. It is clear that a wise government, even a government of the free by the free, cannot permit the manufacture and sale of products that are necessarily injurious, however profitable such manufacture may be to those whose interest it is to sell, but must insist upon those standards of living to secure which was once the function of the guilds and of the individual artist "inclined by justice, which rectifies the will, to do his work faithfully."[17]

As for the spiritual ends of the arts, what Plato says is that we are endowed by the gods with vision and hearing, and harmony "was given by the Muses to him that can use them intellectually (*meta noū*), not as an aid to irrational pleasure (*hēdonē alogos*), as is nowadays supposed,

[14] *Republic* 398A, 401B, 605-607; *Laws* 656C.

[15] Deut. 8:3, Luke 4:4

[16] *Republic* 376E, 410A-412A, 521E-522A, *Laws* 673A. Plato always has in view an attainment of the "best" for both the body and the soul, "since for any single kind to be left by itself pure and isolated is not good, nor altogether possible" (*Philebus* 63B; cf. *Republic* 409-410). "The one means of salvation from these evils is neither to exercise the soul without the body nor the body without the soul" (*Timaeus* 88B).

[17] *Sum. Theol.* I-II.57.3 *ad* 2 (based on Plato's view of justice, which assigns to every man the work for which he is naturally fitted). None of the arts pursues its own good, but only the patron's (*Republic* 342B, 347A), which lies in the excellence of the product.

but to assist the soul's interior revolution, to restore it to order and concord with itself. And because of the want of measure and lack of graces in most of us, rhythm was given us by the same gods for the same ends";[18] and that while the passion (*pathē*) evoked by a composition of sounds "furnishes a pleasure-of-the-senses (*hēdonē*) to the unintelligent, it (the composition) bestows on the intelligent that heartsease that is induced by the imitation of the divine harmony produced in mortal motions."[19] This last delight or gladness that is experienced when we partake of the feast of reason, which is also a communion, is not a passion but an ecstasy, a going out of ourselves and being in the spirit: a condition insusceptible of analysis in terms of the pleasure or pain that can be felt by sensitive bodies or souls.

The soulful or sentimental self enjoys itself in the aesthetic surfaces of natural or artificial things, to which it is akin; the intellectual or spiritual self enjoys their order and is nourished by what in them is akin to it. The spirit is much rather a fastidious than a sensitive entity; it is not the physical qualities of things, but what is called their scent or flavor, for example "the picture not in the colors," or "the unheard music," not a sensible shape but an intelligible form, that it tastes. Plato's "heartsease" is the same as that "intellectual beatitude" which Indian rhetoric sees in the "tasting of the flavor" of a work of art, an immediate experience, and congeneric with the tasting of God.[20]

This is, then, by no means an aesthetic or psychological experience but implies what Plato and Aristotle call a *katharsis*, and a "defeat of the sensations of pleasure" or pain.[21] *Katharsis* is a sacrificial purgation and purification "consisting in a separation, as far as that is possible, of the soul from the body"; it is, in other words, a kind of dying, that kind of dying to which the philosopher's life is dedicated.[22] The Platonic *katharsis* implies an ecstasy, or "standing aside" of the energetic, spiritual, and imperturbable self from the passive, aesthetic, and natural self, a "being out of oneself" that is a being "in one's right mind" and real

[18] *Timaeus* 47DE; cf. *Laws* 659E, on the chant.

[19] *Timaeus* 80B, echoed in Quintilian IX.117, "docti rationem componendi intelligunt, etiam indocti voluptatem" [the learned, employing reason, understand while the unlearned seek pleasure –Ed. trans.]. Cf. *Timaeus* 47, 9OD.

[20] *Sāhitya Darpaṇa* III.2–3; cf. Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, 1934, 48–51.

[21] *Laws* 840C. On *katharsis*, see Plato, *Sophist* 226-227, *Phaedrus* 243AB, *Phaedus* 66–67, 82B, *Republic* 399E; Aristotle, *Poetics* VI.2.1.1449b.

[22] *Phaedo* 67DE.

Self, that "in-sistence" that Plato has in mind when he "would be born again in beauty inwardly," and calls this a sufficient prayer.[23]

Plato rebukes his much-beloved Homer for attributing to the gods and heroes all-too-human passions, and for the skillful imitations of these passions that are so well calculated to arouse our own "sym-pathies."[24] The *katharsis* of Plato's City is to be effected not by such exhibitions as this, but by the banishment of artists who allow themselves to imitate all sorts of things, however shameful. Our own novelists and biographers would have been the first to go, while among modern poets it is not easy to think of any but William Morris of whom Plato could have heartily approved.

The *katharsis* of the City parallels that of the individual; the emotions are traditionally connected with the organs of evacuation, precisely because the emotions are waste products. It is difficult to be sure of the exact meaning of Aristotle's better-known definition, in which tragedy "by its imitation of pity and fear effects a *katharsis* from these and like passions,"[25] though it is clear that for him too the purification is *from* the passions (*pathēmata*); we must bear in mind that, for Aristotle, tragedy is still essentially a representation of actions, and not of character. It is certainly not a periodical "outlet" of —that is to say, indulgence in—our "pent-up" emotions that can bring about an emancipation from them; such an outlet, like a drunkard's bout, can be only a temporary satiation.[26] In what Plato calls with approval the

[23] *Phaedrus* 279BC; so also Hermes, *Lib.* XIII.3, 4, "I have passed forth out of myself," and Chuang-tzu, ch. 2, "Today I buried myself." Cf. Coomaraswamy, "On Being in One's Right Mind," 1942.

[24] *Republic* 389–398.

[25] Aristotle, *Poetics* VI.2.1449b.

[26] The aesthetic man is "one who is too weak to stand up against pleasure and pain' (*Republic* 556C). If we think of impassibility (*apatheia*, not what we mean by "apathy" but a being superior to the pulls of pleasure and pain; cf. BG II.56) with horror, it is because we should be "unwilling to live without hunger and thirst and the like, if we could not also *suffer* (*paschō*, Skr. *bādh*) the natural consequences of these passions," the pleasures of eating and drinking and enjoying fine colors and sounds (*Philebus* 54E, 55B.) Our attitude to pleasures and pains is always passive, if not, indeed, masochistic. Cf. Coomaraswamy, *Time and Eternity*, 1947, p. 73 and notes.

It is very clear from *Republic* 606 that the enjoyment of an emotional storm is just what Plato does not mean by a *katharsis*; such an indulgence merely fosters the very feelings that we are trying to suppress. A perfect parallel is found in the *Milinda Pañho* (Mil, p. 76); it is asked, of tears shed for the death of a mother or shed for love of the Truth, which can be called a "cure" (*bhesajjam*)—i.e. for man's mortality—and it is pointed out that the former are fevered, the latter cool, and that it is what cools that cures.

"more austere" kind of poetry, we are presumed to be enjoying a feast of reason rather than a "break-fast" of sensations. His *katharsis* is an ecstasy or liberation of the "immortal soul" from the affections of the "mortal," a conception of emancipation that is closely paralleled in the Indian texts in which liberation is realized by a process of "shaking off one's bodies."[27] The reader or spectator of the imitation of a "myth" is to be rapt away from his habitual and passible personality and, just as in all other sacrificial rituals, becomes a god for the duration of the rite and only returns to himself when the rite is relinquished, when the epiphany is at an end and the curtain falls. We must remember that all artistic operations were originally rites, and that the purpose of the rite (as the word *teletē* implies) is to sacrifice the old and to bring into being a new and more perfect man.

We can well imagine, then, what Plato, stating a philosophy of art that is not "his own" but intrinsic to the Philosophia Perennis, would have thought of our aesthetic interpretations and of our contention that the last end of art is simply to please. For, as he says, "ornament, painting, and music made only to give pleasure" are just "toys."[28] The "lover of art," in other words, is a "playboy." It is admitted that a majority of men judge works of art by the pleasure they afford; but rather than sink to such a level, Socrates says no, "not even if all the oxen and horses and animals in the world, by their pursuit of pleasure, proclaim that such is the criterion."[29] The kind of music of which he approves is not a multifarious and changeable but a canonical music;[30] not the sound of "poly-harmonic" instruments, but the simple music (*haplotēs*) of the lyre accompanied by chanting "deliberately designed to produce in the soul that symphony of which we have been speaking";[31] not the music of Marsyas the Satyr, but that of Apollo.[32]

All the arts, without exception, are imitative. The work of art can only be judged as such (and independently of its "value") by the degree to which the model has been correctly represented. The beauty of the work is proportionate to its accuracy (*orthotēs* = *integritas sive perfectio*

[27] JUB III.30.2 and 39.2; BU III.7.3–4; CU VIII.13; Švet. Up. V.14. Cf. *Phaedo* 65–69.

[28] *Statesman* 288C.

[29] *Philebus* 67B.

[30] *Republic* 399–404; cf. *Laws* 656E, 660, 797–799.

[31] *Laws* 659E; see also note 86, below.

[32] *Republic* 399E; cf. Dante, *Paradiso* 1.13–21.

[integrity or perfection –Ed. trans.]), or truth (*alētheia* = *veritas*). In other words, the artist's judgment of his own work by the criterion of art is a criticism based upon the proportion of essential to actual form, paradigm to image. "Imitation" (*mimēsis*), a word that can be as easily misunderstood as St. Thomas Aquinas's "Art is the imitation of Nature in her manner of operation,"[33] can be mistaken to mean that that is the best art that is "truest to nature," as we now use the word in its most limited sense, with reference not to "Mother Nature," Natura naturans, Creatrix Universalis, Deus [creative Nature, Creatress of All, God –Ed. trans.] but to whatever is presented by our own immediate and natural environment whether visually or otherwise accessible to observation (*aisthēsis*). In this connection it is important not to overlook that the delineation of character (*ēthos*) in literature and painting is, just as much as the representation of the looking-glass image of a physiognomy, an empirical and realistic procedure, dependent on observation. St. Thomas's "Nature," on the other hand, is that Nature "to find which," as Meister Eckhart says, "all her forms must be shattered."

The imitation or "re-presentation" of a model (even a "presented" model) involves, indeed, a likeness (*homoia*, Latin *similitudo*, Skr. *sādṛśya*), but hardly what we usually mean by "verisimilitude" (*homoiotēs*). What is traditionally meant by "likeness" is not a copy but an image akin (*sungenēs*) and "equal" (*isos*) to its model; in other words, a natural and "adequate" symbol of its referent. The representation of a man, for example, must really correspond to the idea of the man, but must not look so like him as to deceive the eye; for the work of art, as regards its form, is a mind-made thing and aims at the mind, but an illusion is no more intelligible than the natural object it mimics. The plaster cast of a man will not be a work of art, but the representation of a man on wheels where verisimilitude would have required feet may be an entirely adequate "imitation" well and *truly* made.[34]

[33] Aristotle, *Physics* II.2.I94a 20, *hē technē mimeitai tēn physin* [art imitates nature –Ed. trans.] –both employing suitable means toward a known end.

[34] Art is iconography, the making of images or copies of some model (*paradeigma*), whether visible (presented) or invisible (contemplated); see Plato, *Republic* 373B, 377E, 392–397, 402, *Laws* 667–669, *Statesman* 306D, *Cratylus* 439A, *Timaeus* 28AB, 52BC, *Sophist* 234C, 236C; Aristotle, *Poetics* I.1–2. In the same way, Indian works of art are called counterfeits or commensurations (*anukṛti*, *tadākāratā*, *pratikṛti*, *pratibimba*, *pratimāna*), and likeness (*sārūpya*, *sādṛśya*) is demanded. This does not mean that it is a likeness in all respects that is needed to evoke the original, but an equality as to the whichness (*tosouton, hoson*) and whatness (*toiouton, hoion*) – or form (*idea*) and force (*dynamis*) – of the archetype. It is this "real equality" or "adequacy" (*auto to ison*) that

It is with perfect right that the mathematician speaks of a "beautiful equation" and feels for it what we feel about "art."[35] The beauty of the admirable equation is the attractive aspect of its simplicity. It is a single form that is the form of many different things. In the same way Beauty absolutely is the equation that is the single form of all things, which are themselves beautiful to the extent that they participate in the simplicity of their source. "The beauty of the straight line and the circle, and the plane and solid figures formed from these ... is not, like that of other things, relative, but always absolutely beautiful."[36] Now we know that Plato, who says this, is always praising what is ancient and deprecating innovations (of which the causes are, in the strictest and worst sense of the word, aesthetic), and that he ranks the formal and canonical arts of Egypt far above the humanistic Greek art that he saw coming into fashion.[37] The kind of art that Plato endorsed was, then, precisely what we know as Greek Geometric art. We must not think that it would have been primarily for its decorative values that Plato must have admired this kind of "primitive" art, but for its truth or accuracy, *because* of which it has the kind of beauty that is universal and invariable, its equations being "akin" to the First Principles of which the myths and mysteries, related or enacted, are imitations in other kinds of material. The forms of the simplest and severest kinds of art, the synoptic kind of art that we call "primitive," are the natural language of all traditional philosophy; and it is for this very reason that Plato's dialectic makes continual use of *figures* of speech, which are really figures of thought.

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is the truth and the beauty of the work (*Laws* 667–664, *Timaeus* 28AB, *Phaedo* 74–75). We have shown elsewhere that the Indian *sādṛśya* does not imply an illusion but only a real equivalence. It is clear from *Timaeus* 28–29 that by "equality" and "likeness" Plato also means a real kinship (*sungeneia*) and analogy (*analogia*) and that it is these qualities that make it possible for an image to "interpret" or "deduce" (*exēgeomai*, cf. Skr. *ānī*) its archetype. For example, words are *eidola* [images] of things (*Sophist* 234C), "true names" are not correct by accident (*Cratylus* 387D, 439A), the body is an *eidolon* [image] of the soul (*Laws* 959B), and these images are at the same time like and yet unlike their referents. In other words, what Plato means by "imitation" and by "art" is an "adequate symbolism" (cf. distinction of image from duplicate, *Cratylus* 432).

35 "The mathematician's patterns, like the painter's or the poet's, must be *beautiful"* (G. H. Hardy, *A Mathematician's Apology*, Cambridge, 1940, p. 85); cf. Coomarawsamy, *Why Exhibit Works of Art?*, 1943, ch. 9.

36 *Philebus* 51C. For beauty by participation, see *Phaedo* 100D; cf. *Republic* 476; St. Augustine, *Confessions* X.34; Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus* IV.5.

37 *Laws* 657AB, 665C, 700C.

Plato knew as well as the Scholastic philosophers that the artist as such has no moral responsibilities, and can sin as an artist only if he fails to consider the sole good of the work to be done, whatever it may be.[38] But, like Cicero, Plato also knows that "though he is an artist, he is nevertheless a man"[39] and, if a free man, responsible as such for whatever it may be that he undertakes to make; a man who, if he represents what ought not to be represented and brings into being things unworthy of free men, should be punished, or at the least restrained or exiled like any other criminal or madman. It is precisely those poets or other artists who imitate anything and everything, and are not ashamed to represent or even "idealize" things essentially base, that Plato, without respect for their abilities, however great, would banish from the society of rational men, "lest from the imitation of shameful things men should imbibe their actuality,"[40] that is to say, for the same reasons that we in moments of sanity (*sōphrosynē*) see fit to condemn the exhibition of gangster films in which the villain is made a hero, or agree to forbid the manufacture of even the most skillfully adulterated foods.

If we dare not ask with Plato "imitations of what sort of life?" and "whether of the appearance or the reality, the phantasm or the truth?"[41] it is because we are no longer sure what kind of life it is that we ought for our own good and happiness to imitate, and are for the most part convinced that no one knows or can know the final truth about anything: we only know what we "approve" of, i.e., what we *like* to do or think, and we desire a freedom to do and think what we like more than we desire a freedom from error. Our educational systems are chaotic because we are not agreed for what to educate, if not for self-expression. But all tradition is agreed as to what kind of models are to be imitated: "The city can never otherwise be happy unless it is designed by those painters who follow a divine original";[42] "The crafts such as building and carpentry ... take their principles from that realm and from the thinking there";[43] "Lo, make all things in accordance with the pattern that was shown thee upon the mount";[44] "It is in imitation (*anukṛti*) of the divine

[38] *Laws* 670E; *Sum. Theol.* I.9I.3, I-II-57.3 *ad* 2.

[39] Cicero, *Pro quinctio* xxv.78.

[40] *Republic* 395C; cf. 395–401, esp. 401BC, 605–607, and *Laws* 656C.

[41] *Republic* 400A, 598B; cf. *Timaeus* 29C.

[42] *Republic* 500E.

[43] Plotinus, *Enneads* V.9.II, like Plato, *Timaeus* 28AB.

[44] Exod. 25:40.

forms that any human form (*śilpa*) is invented here";[45] "There is this divine harp, to be sure; this human harp comes into being in its likeness" (*tad anukṛti*);[46] "We must do what the Gods did first."[47] *This* is the "imitation of Nature in her manner of operation," and, like the first creation, the imitation of an intelligible, not a perceptible model.

But such in imitation of the divine principles is only possible if we have known them "as they are," for if we have not ourselves seen them, our mimetic iconography, based upon opinion, will be at fault; we cannot know the reflection of anything unless we know itself.[48] It is the basis of Plato's criticism of naturalistic poets and painters that they know nothing of the reality but only the appearances of things, for which their vision is overkeen; their imitations are not of the divine originals, but are only copies of copies.[49] And seeing that God alone is truly beautiful, and all other beauty is by participation, it is only a work of art that has been wrought, in its kind (*idea*) and its significance (*dynamis*), after an eternal model, that can be called beautiful.[50] And since the eternal and intelligible models are supersensual and invisible, it is evidently "not by observation" but in contemplation that they must

[45] AB VI.27.

[46] ŚA VIII.9.

[47] ŚB VII.2.1.4; cf. III.3.3.16, XIV.I.2.26, and TS V.5.4.4. Whenever the Sacrificers are at a loss, they are required to contemplate (*cetayadhvam*) and the required form thus seen becomes their model. Cf. Philo, *Moses* 11.74–76.

[48] *Republic* 377, 402, *Laws* 667–668, *Timaeus* 28AB, *Phaedrus* 243AB (on *hamartia peri mythologlan* [error concerning mythology –Ed. trans.]), *Republic* 382BC (misuse of words is a symptom of sickness in the soul).

[49] See *Republic* 601, for example. Porphyry tells us that Plotinus refused to have his portrait painted, objecting, "Must I consent to leave, as a desirable spectacle for posterity, an image of an image?" Cf. Asterius, bishop of Amasea, ca. A.D. 340: "Paint not Christ: for the one humility of his incarnation suffices him" (Migne, *Patrologia graeca* XI.167). The real basis of the Semitic objection to graven images, and of all other iconoclasm, is not an objection to art (adequate symbolism), but an objection to a realism that implies an essentially idolatrous worship of nature. The figuration of the Ark according to the pattern that was seen upon the mount (Exod. 25:40) is not "that kind of imagery with reference to which the prohibition was given" (Tertullian, *Contra Marcionem* II.22).

[50] *Timaeus* 28AB; cf. note 34, above. The symbols that are rightly sanctioned by a hieratic art are not conventionally but *naturally* correct (*orthotēta physei parechomena*, *Laws* 657A). One distinguishes, accordingly, between *le symbolisme qui sait* and *le symbolisme qui cherche* [the symbolism which knows and the symbolism which searches –Ed. trans.]. It is the former that the iconographer can and must understand, but he will hardly be able to do so unless he is himself accustomed to thinking in these precise terms.

be known.[51] Two acts, then, one of contemplation and one of operation, are necessary to the production of any work of art.[52]

And now as to the judgment of the work of art, first by the criterion of art, and second with respect to its human value. As we have already seen, it is not by our reactions, pleasurable or otherwise, but by its perfect accuracy, beauty, or perfection, or truth—in other words, by the equality or proportion of the image to its model—that a work of art can be judged as such. That is to consider only the good of the work to be done, the business of the artist. But we have also to consider the good of the man for whom the work is done, whether this "consumer" (*chrōmenos*) be the artist himself or some other patron.[53] This man judges in another way, not, or not only, by this truth or accuracy, but by the artifact's utility or aptitude (*ōpheleia*) to serve the purpose of its original intention (*boulēsis*), viz. the need (*endeia*) that was the first and is also the last cause of the work. Accuracy and aptitude together make the "wholesomeness" (*hygienon*) of the work that is its ultimate-rightness (*orthotēs*).[54] The distinction of beauty from utility is logical, not real (*in re*).

[51] The realities are seen "by the eye of the soul" (*Republic* 533D) "the soul alone and by itself" (*Theatetus* 186A, 187A), "gazing ever on what is authentic" (*pros to kata tauta echon blepōn aei*, *Timaeus* 28A; cf. *pros ton theon blepein* [looking towards God –Ed. trans.], *Phaedrus* 253A), and thus "by inwit (intuition) of what really is" (*peri to on ontōs ennoiuis*, *Philebus* 59D). Just so in India, it is only when the senses have been withdrawn from their objects, only when the eye has been turned round (*āvṛtta cakṣus*), and with the eye of Gnosis (*jñāna cakṣus*), that the reality can be apprehended.

[52] The contemplative *actus primus* (*theōria*, Skr. *dhī, dhyāna*)and operative *actus secundus* (*apergasia*, Skr. *karma*) of the Scholastic philosophers.

[53] "One man is able to beget the productions of art, but the ability to judge of their utility (*ōphelia*) or harmfulness to their users belongs to another" (*Phaedrus* 274E). The two men are united in the whole man and complete connoisseur, as they are in the Divine Architect whose "judgments" are recorded in Gen. I:25 and 31.

[54] *Laws* 667; for a need as first and last cause, see *Republic* 369BC. As to "wholesomeness," cf. Richard Bernheimer, in *Art: A Bryn Mawr Symposium* (Bryn Mawr, 1940), pp. 28-29: "There should be a deep ethical purpose in all of art, of which the classical aesthetic was fully aware ... To have forgotten this purpose before the mirage of absolute patterns and designs is perhaps the fundamental fallacy of the abstract movement in art." The modern abstractionist forgets that the Neolithic formalist was not an interior decorator but a metaphysical man who had to live by his wits.

The indivisibility of beauty and use is affirmed in Xenophon, *Memorabilia* III.8.8, "that the same house is both beautiful and useful was a lesson in the art of building houses as they ought to be" (cf. IV.6.9). "Omnis enim artifex intendit producere opus pulcrum et utile et stabile.... Scientia reddit opus pulcrum, voluntas reddit utile, perse-

So when taste has been rejected as a criterion in art, Plato's Stranger sums up thus, "The judge of anything that has been made (*poiēma*) must know its essence—what its intention (*boulēsis*) is and what the real thing of which it is an image—or else will hardly be able to diagnose whether it hits or misses the mark of its intention." And again, "The expert critic of any image, whether in painting, music, or any other art, must know three things, what was the archetype, and in each case whether it was correctly and whether well made ... whether the representation was good (*kalon*) or not."[55] The complete judgment, made by the whole man, is as to whether the thing under consideration has been both truly *and* well made. It is only "by the mob that the beautiful and the just are rent apart,"[56] by the mob, shall we say, of "aesthetes," the men who "know what they like"?

Of the two judgments, respectively by art and by value, the first only establishes the existence of the object as a true work of art and not a falsification (*pseudos*) of its archetype: it is a judgment normally made by the artist before he can allow the work to leave his shop, and so a judgment that is really presupposed when we as patrons or

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verantia reddit stabile" (St. Bonaventura, *De reductione artium ad theologian* 13; tr. by J. de Vinck: "Every maker intends to produce a beautiful, useful, and enduring object.... Knowledge makes a work beautiful, the will makes it useful, and perseverance makes it enduring."). So for St. Augustine, the stylus is "et in suo genere pulcher, et ad usum nostrum accommodatus" (*De vera religione* 39) [both beautiful in its kind and suited to our use –Ed. trans.]. Philo defines art as "a system of concepts coordinated towards some useful end" (*Congr.* 141). Only those whose notion of utility is solely with reference to bodily needs, or on the other hand, the pseudomystics who despise the body rather than use it, vaunt the "uselessness" of art: so Gautier, "Il n'y a de vraiment beau que ce qui ne peut servir à rien; tout ce qui est utile est laid" [There is nothing truly beautiful but that which can never be of any use whatsoever; everything useful is ugly –Ed. trans.] (quoted by Dorothy Richardson, "Saintsbury and Art for Art's Sake in England," PMLA, XLIX, 1944, p. 245), and Paul Valéry (see Coomaraswamy, *Why Exhibit Works of Art?*, 1943, p. 95). Gautier's cynical "tout ce qui est utile est laid" adequately illustrates Ruskin's "industry without art is brutality"; a more scathing judgment of the modern world in which utilities are really ugly could hardly be imagined. As H. T. Massingham said, "The combination of use and beauty is part of what used to be called 'the natural law' and is indispensable for self-preservation," and it is because of the neglect of this principle that civilization "is perishing" (*This Plot of Earth*, London, 1944, p. 176). The modern world is dying of its own squalor just because *its* concept of practical utility is limited to that which "can be used directly for the destruction of human life or for accentuating the present inequalities in the distribution of wealth" (Hardy, *A Mathematician's Apology*, p. 120, note), and it is only under these unprecedented conditions that it could have been propounded by the escapists that the useful and the beautiful are opposites.

55 *Laws* 668C, 669AB, 670E.

56 *Laws* 860C.

consumers propose to evaluate the work. It is only under certain conditions, and typically those of modern manufacture and salesmanship, that it becomes necessary for the patron or consumer to ask whether the object he has commissioned or proposes to buy is really a true work of art. Under normal conditions, where making is a vocation and the artist is disposed *and free* to consider nothing but the good of the work to be done, it is superfluous to ask, Is this a "true" work of art? When, however, the question must be asked, or if we wish to ask it in order to understand completely the genesis of the work, then the grounds of our judgment in this respect will be the same as for the original artist; we must know of what the work is intended to remind us, and whether it is equal to (is an "adequate symbol" of) this content, or by want of truth betrays its paradigm. In any case, when this judgment has been made, or is taken for granted, we can proceed to ask whether or not the work has a value for us, to ask whether it will serve our needs. If we are whole men, not such as live by bread alone, the question will be asked with respect to spiritual and physical needs to be satisfied together; we shall ask whether the model has been well chosen, and whether it has been applied to the material in such a way as to serve our immediate need; in other words, What does it say? and Will it work? If we have asked for a bread that will support the whole man and receive however fine a stone, we are not morally, though we may be legally, bound to "pay the piper." All our efforts to obey the Devil and "command this stone that it be made bread" are doomed to failure.

It is one of Plato's virtues, and that of all traditional doctrine about art, that "value" is never taken to mean an exclusively spiritual or exclusively physical value. It is neither advantageous, nor altogether possible, to separate these values, making some things sacred and other profane: the highest wisdom must be "mixed"[57] with practical knowledge, the contemplative life combined with the active. The pleasures that pertain to these lives are altogether legitimate, and it is only those pleasures that are irrational, bestial, and in the worst sense of the word seductive and distracting that are to be excluded. Plato's music and gymnastics, which correspond to our culture and physical training, are not alternative curricula, but essential parts of one and the same education.[58] Philosophy is the highest form of music (culture), but the philosopher who has escaped from the cave must return to it to participate in the

[57] *Philebus* 61B-D.

[58] *Republic* 376E, 410-412, 521E-522A.

everyday life of the world and, quite literally, play the game.[59] Plato's criterion of "wholesomeness" implies that nothing ought to be made, nothing can be really worth having, that is not at the same time correct or true or formal or beautiful (whichever word you prefer) *and* adapted to good use.

For, to state the Platonic doctrine in more familiar words, "It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God, ... that bread which came down from heaven,"[60] that is, not by mere utilities but also by those "divine realities" and "causal beauty" with which the wholesome works of art are informed, so that they also live and speak. It is just to the extent that we try to live by bread alone and by all the other insignificant utilities that "bread alone" includes—good as utilities, but bad as *mere* utilities—that our contemporary civilization can be rightly called inhuman and must be unfavorably compared with the "primitive" cultures in which, as the anthropologists assure us, "the needs of the body and soul are satisfied together."[61] Manufacture for the needs of the body alone is the curse of modern civilization.

Should we propose to raise our standard of living to the savage level, on which there is no distinction of fine from applied or sacred from profane art, it need not imply the sacrifice of any of the necessities or even conveniences of life, but only of luxuries, only of such utilities as are not at the same time useful *and* significant. If such a proposal to return to primitive levels of culture should seem to be utopian and impracticable, it is only because a manufacture of significant utilities would have to be a manufacture for use, the use of the whole man, and not for the salesman's profit. The price to be paid for putting back into the market place, where they belong, such things as are now to be seen only in museums would be that of economic revolution. It may be doubted whether our boasted love of art extends so far.

It has sometimes been asked whether the "artist" can survive under modern conditions. In the sense in which the word is used by those who ask the question, one does not see how he can or why he should survive. For, just as the modern artist is neither a useful or significant, but only an ornamental member of society, so the modern workman is nothing but a useful member and is neither significant nor ornamental.

[59] *Republic* 519-520, 539E, *Laws* 644, and 803 in conjunction with 807. Cf. BG III.I-25; also Coomaraswamy, "Līlā," 1941, and "Play and Seriousness," 1942.

[60] Deut. 8:3, Luke 4:4, John 6:58.

[61] R. R. Schmidt, *Dawn of the Human Mind* (*Der Geist der Vorzeit*), tr. by R.A.S. Macalister (London, 1936), p. 167.

It is certain we shall have to go on working, but not so certain that we could not live, and handsomely, without the exhibitionists of our studios, galleries, and playing fields. We cannot do without art, because art is the knowledge of how things ought to be made, art is the principle of manufacture (*recta ratio factibilium*), and while an artless play may be innocent, an artless manufacture is merely brutish labor and a sin against the wholesomeness of human nature; we *can* do without "fine" artists, whose art does not "apply" to anything, and whose organized manufacture of art in studios is the inverse of the laborer's artless manufacture in factories; and we *ought* to be able to do without the base mechanics "whose souls are bowed and mutilated by their vulgar occupations even as their bodies are marred by their mechanical arts."[62]

Plato himself discusses, in connection with all the arts, whether of potter, painter, poet, or "craftsman of civic liberty," the relation between the practice of an art and the earning of a livelihood.[63] He points out that the practice of an art and the wage-earning capacity are two different things; that the artist (in Plato's sense and that of the Christian and Oriental social philosophies) does not earn wages by his art. He *works by* his art, and is only accidentally a trader if he sells what he makes. Being a vocation, his art is most intimately his own and pertains to his own nature, and the pleasure that he takes in it perfects the operation. There is nothing he would rather work (or "play") at than his making; to him the leisure state would be an abomination of boredom. This situation, in which each man does what is naturally (*kata physin* = Skr. *svabhāvatas*) his to do (*to heautou prattein* = Skr. *svadharma, svakarma*), not only is the type of Justice,[64] but furthermore, under these conditions (i.e., when the maker loves to work), "more is done, and better done, and with more ease, than in any other way."[65] Artists

[62] *Republic* 495E; cf. 522B, 611D, *Theaetetus* 173AB. That "industry without art is brutality" is hardly flattering to those whose admiration of the industrial system is equal to their interest in it. Aristotle defines as "slaves" those who have nothing but their bodies to offer (*Politics* I.5.1254b 18). It is on the work of such "slaves," or literally "prostitutes," that the industrial system of production for profit ultimately rests. Their political freedom does not make of assembly-line workers and other "base mechanics" what Plato means by "free men."

[63] *Republic* 395B, 500D. Cf. Philo, *De opificio mundi* 78.

[64] *Republic* 433B, 443C.

[65] *Republic* 370C; cf. 347E, 374BC, 406C. Paul Shorey had the naïveté to see in Plato's conception of a vocational society an anticipation of Adam Smith's division of labor; see *The Republic*, tr. and ed. P. Shorey (LCL, 1935), I, 150-151, note b. Actually, no two conceptions could be more contrary. In Plato's division of labor it is taken for granted

are not tradesmen. "They know how to make, but not how to hoard."[66] Under these conditions the worker and maker is not a hireling, but one whose salary enables him to go on doing and making. He is just like any other member of a feudal society, in which none are "hired" men, but all enfeoffed and all possessed of a hereditary standing, that of a professional whose reward is by gift or endowment and not "at so much an hour."

The separation of the creative from the profit motive not only leaves the artist free to put the good of the work above his own good, but at the same time abstracts from manufacture the stain of simony, or "traffic in things sacred"; and this conclusion, which rings strangely in our ears, for whom work and play are alike secular activities, is actually in complete agreement with the traditional order, in which the artist's operation is not a meaningless labor, but quite literally a significant and sacred rite, and quite as much as the product itself an adequate symbol of a spiritual reality. It is therefore a way, or rather *the* way, by which the artist, whether potter or painter, poet or king, can best erect or edify (*eksorthoō*) *himself* at the same time that he "trues" or cor-rects (*orthoō*) his work.[67] It is, indeed, only by the "true" workman that "true" work can be done; like engenders like.

When Plato lays it down that the arts shall "care for the bodies and souls of your citizens," and that only things that are sane and free and not any shameful things unbecoming free men (*aneleuthera*)[68] are to be represented, it is as much as to say that the true artist in whatever material must be a free man, meaning by this not an "emancipated artist" in

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not that the artist is a special kind of man but that every man is a special kind of artist; his specialization is for the good of all concerned, producer and consumer alike. Adam Smith's division benefits no one but the manufacturer and salesman. Plato, who detested any "fractioning of human faculty" (*Republic* 395B), could hardly have seen in *our* division of labor a type of justice. Modern research has rediscovered that "workers are *not* governed primarily by economic motives" (see Stuart Chase, "*What* Makes the Worker Like to Work?" *Reader's Digest*, February 1941, p. 19).

66 Chuang-tzu, as quoted by Arthur Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China* (London, 1939), p. 62. It is not true to say that "the artist is a mercenary living by the sale of his own works" (F. J. Mather, C*oncerning Beauty*, Princeton, 1935, p. 240). He is not working in order to make money but accepts money (or its equivalent) in order to be able to go on working at his living—and I say "working at his *living*" because the man *is* what he does.

67 "A man attains perfection by devotion to his own work ... by his own work praising Him who wove this all.... Whoever does the work appointed by his own nature incurs no sin" (BG XVIII.45-46).

68 *Republic* 395C. See Aristotle on "leisure," *Nicomachean Ethics* X.7.5-7.1177b.

the vulgar sense of one having no obligation or commitment of any kind, but a man emancipated from the despotism of the salesman. Whoever is to "imitate the actions of gods and heroes, the intellections and revolutions of the All," the very selves and divine paradigms or ideas of our useful inventions, must have known these realities "themselves (*auta*) and as they really are (*hoia estin*)": for "what we have not and know not we can neither give to another nor teach our neighbor."[69]

In other words, an act of "imagination," in which the idea to be represented is first clothed in the imitable form or image of the thing to be made, must precede the operation in which this form is impressed upon the actual material. The first of these acts, in the terms of Scholastic philosophy, is free, the second servile. It is only if the first be omitted that the word "servile" acquires a dishonorable connotation; then we can speak only of labor, and not of art. It need hardly be argued that our methods of manufacture are, in this shameful sense, servile, nor be denied that the industrial system, for which these methods are needed is an abomination "unfit for free men." A system of manufacture governed by money values presupposes that there shall be two different kinds of makers, privileged artists who may be "inspired," and underprivileged laborers, unimaginative by hypothesis, since they are required only to make what other men have imagined, or more often only to copy what other men have already made. It has often been claimed that the productions of "fine" art are useless; it would seem to be a mockery to speak of a society as "free" where it is only the makers of useless things who are supposedly free.

Inspiration is defined in Webster as "a supernatural influence which qualifies men to receive and communicate divine truth." This is stated in the word itself, which implies the presence of a guiding "spirit" distinguished from but nevertheless "within" the agent who is in-spired, but is certainly not inspired if "expressing himself." Before continuing we must clear the air by showing how the word "inspire" has been scabrously abused by modern authors. We have found it said that "a poet or other artist may let the rain inspire him."[70] Such misuse of words debar the student from ever learning what the ancient writers may have

[69] *Republic* 377E, *Symposium* 196E.

[70] H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (2d ed., London, 1933), p. 11. Clement Greenberg (in *The Nation*, April 19, 1941, p. 481) tells us that the "modern painter derives his inspiration from the very physical materials he works with." Both critics forget the customary distinction of spirit from matter. What their statements actually mean is that the modern artist may be excited, but is not inspired.

really meant. We say "misuse" because neither is the rain, or anything perceptible to sense, *in* us; nor is the rain a kind of *spirit*. The rationalist has a right to disbelieve in inspiration and to leave it out of his account, as he very easily can if he is considering art only from the aesthetic (sensational) point of view, but he has no right to pretend that one can be "inspired" by a sense perception, by which, in fact, one can only be "affected," and to which one can only "react." On the other hand, Meister Eckhart's phrase "inspired by his art" is quite correct, since art is a kind of knowledge, not anything that can be seen, but akin to the soul and prior to the body and the world.[71] We can properly say that not only "Love" but "Art" and "Law" are names of the Spirit.

Here we are concerned not with the rationalist's point of view, but only with the sources from which we can learn how the artist's operation is explained in a tradition that we must understand if we are to understand its products. Here it is always by the Spirit that a man is thought of as inspired (*entheos*, sc. *hypo tou erōtos* [under love's power –Ed. trans.]). "The Genius breathed into my heart (*enepneuse phresi daimōn*)to weave," Penelope says.[72] Hesiod tells us that the Muses "breathed into me a divine voice (*enepneusan de moi audēn thespin*)... and bade me sing the race of the blessed Gods."[73] Christ, "through whom all things were made," does not bear witness of (express) himself, but says "I do nothing of myself, but as my Father taught me, I speak."[74] Dante writes, I am "one who when Love (Amor, Eros) inspires me (*mi spira*), attend, and go setting it forth in such wise as He dictates within me."[75] For "there is no real speaking that does not lay hold upon the Truth."[76] And who is it ("What self?") that speaks the "Truth that cannot be refuted"? Not this man, So-and-so, Dante, or Socrates, or "I," but the Synteresis, the Immanent Spirit, Socrates' and Plato's Daimon, he "who lives in every one of us"[77] and "cares for nothing, but the

71 Eckhart, Evans ed., II, 211; cf. *Laws* 892BC.

72 Homer, O*dyssey* XIX.138.

73 *Theogony* 31-32.

74 John 8:28; cf. 5:19 and 30, 7:16 and 18 ("He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory"). A column in *Parnassus*, XIII (May 1941), p. 189, comments on the female nude as Maillol's "exclusive inspiration." That is mere hot air; Renoir was not afraid to call a spade a spade when he said with what brush he painted.

75 *Purgatorio* XXIV·52-54.

76 *Phaedrus* 260E; *Symposium* 201C (on the irrefutable truth).

77 *Timaeus* 69C, 90A.

Truth."[78] It is the "God himself that speaks" when we are not thinking our own thoughts but are His exponents, or priests.

And so as Plato, the father of European wisdom, asks, "Do we not know that as regards the practice of the arts (*tēn tōn technōn dēmiourgian*) the man who has this God for his teacher will be renowned and as it were a beacon light, but one whom Love has not possessed will be obscure?"[79] This is with particular reference to the divine originators of archery, medicine, and oracles, music, metalwork, weaving, and piloting, each of whom was "Love's disciple." He means, of course, the "cosmic Love" that harmonizes opposite forces, the Love that acts for the sake of what it has and to beget itself, not the profane love that lacks and desires. So the maker of anything, if he is to be called a creator, is at his best the servant of an immanent Genius; he must not be called "a genius," but "*in*genious"; he is not working of or for himself, but by and for another energy, that of the Immanent Eros, Sanctus Spiritus, the source of all "gifts." "All that is true, by whomsoever it has been said, has its origin in the Spirit."[80]

We can now, perhaps, consider, with less danger of misunderstanding, Plato's longest passage on inspiration. "It is a divine power that moves (*theia de dynamis, hē … kinei*)"[81] even the rhapsodist or literary critic, insofar as he speaks well, though he is only the exponent of an exponent. The original maker and exponent, if he is to be an imitator of realities and not of mere appearances, "is God-indwelt and possessed (*entheos, katechomenos*)…an airy, winged and sacred substance (*hieron*, Skr. *brahma-*) unable ever to indite until he has been born again of the God within him (*prin an entheos te genētai*)[82] and is out of his own wits

[78] *Hippias Major* 288D.

[79] *Symposium* 197A.

[80] Ambrose on I Cor. 12:3, cited in *Sum. Theol.* I-II.109.1. Note that "a quocum-que dicatur" [by whomever it is said –Ed. trans.] contradicts the claim that it is only Christian truth that is "revealed."

[81] *Ion* 533D. For the passage on inspiration, see *Ion* 533D-–536D. Plato's doctrine of inspiration is not "mechanical" but "dynamic"; in a later theology it became a matter for debate in which of these two ways the Spirit actuates the interpreter.

[82] Ion 533E, 534B. *Gignomai* here is used in the radical sense of "coming into a new state of being." Cf. *Phaedrus* 279B, *kalō genesthai tandothen*, "May I be born in beauty inwardly," i.e., born of the immanent deity (*d' en hēmīn theiō*, *Timaeus* 90D), authentic and divine beauty (*auto to theion kalon*, *Symposium* 211E). The New Testament equivalents are "in the Spirit" and "born again of the Spirit."

(*ekphrōn*), and his own mind (*nous*) is no longer in him;[83] for every man, so long as he retains *that* property is powerless to make (*poiein*) or to incant (*chrēsmōdein*, Skr. *mantrakṛ*)…. The men whom he dements God uses as his ministers (*hypēretai*)... but it is the God[84] himself (*ho theos autos*) that speaks, and through them enlightens (*pthenzetai*) us.... The makers are but His exponents (*hermēnēs*) according to the way in which they are possessed."[85] It is only when he returns to himself from what is really a sacrificial operation that the maker exercises his own powers of judgment; and then primarily to "try the spirits, whether they be of God," and secondarily to try his work whether it agrees with the vision or audition.

The most immediately significant point that emerges from this profound analysis of the nature of inspiration is that of the artist's priestly or ministerial function. The original intention of intelligible forms was not to entertain us, but literally to "re-mind" us. The chant is not for the approval of the ear,[86] nor the picture for that of the eye (although these senses can be taught to approve the splendor of truth, and can be trusted when they have been trained), but to effect such a transformation of our being as is the purpose of all ritual acts. It is, in fact, the ritual arts that are the most "artistic," because the most "correct," as they must be if they are to be effectual.

[83] *Ion* 534B. "The madness that comes of God is superior to the sanity which is of human origin" (*Phaedrus* 244D, 245A). Cf. *Timaeus* 71D-72B, *Laws* 719C; and MU VI.34.7, "When one attains to mindlessness, that is the last step." The subject needs a longer explanation; briefly, the supralogical is superior to the logical, the logical to the illogical.

[84] "The God" is the Immanent Spirit, Daimon, Eros. "He is a maker (*poiētēs*) so really wise (*sophos*) that he is the cause of making in others" (*Symposium* 196E). The voice is "enigmatic" (*Timaeus* 72B, and poetry, therefore, "naturally enigmatic" (*Alcibiades* II 147B), so that in "revelation" (scripture, Skr. *śruti*, "what was heard") we see "through a glass darkly" (*en ainigmati*, I Cor. 13:12). Because divination is of a Truth that cannot (with human faculties) be seen directly (Skr. *sākṣāt*), the soothsayer must speak in symbols (whether verbal or visual), which are reflections of the Truth; it is for us to understand and use the symbols as supports of contemplation and with a view to "recollection." It is because the symbols are things seen "through a glass" that contemplation is "speculation."

[85] See *Ion* 534, 535. Related passages have been cited in notes 82-84, above. The last words refer the diversity of the gifts of the spirit; see I. Cor.12:4-11.

[86] "What we call 'chants' … are evidently in reality 'incantations' seriously designated to produce in souls that harmony of which we have been speaking" (*Laws* 659E; cf. 665C, 656E, 660B, 668-669, 812C, *Republic* 399, 424). Such incantations are called *mantras* in Sanskrit.

The heavens declare the glory of God: their interpretation in science or art—and *ars sine scientia nihil* [art without science is nothing - Ed. trans.]—is not in order to flatter or merely "interest" us, but "in order that we may follow up the intellections and revolutions of the All, not those revolutions that are in our own heads and were distorted at our birth, but correcting (*eksorthounta*) these by studying the harmonies and revolutions of the All: so that by an assimilation of the knower to the to-be-known (*tō katanooumenō to katanooun eksomoiōsai*),[87] the archetypal Nature, and coming to be in *that* likeness,[88] we may attain at last to a part in that 'life's best' that has been appointed by the gods to men for this time being and hereafter."[89]

This is what is spoken of in India as a "metrical self-integration" (*candobhir ātmānaṃ saṃskaraṇa*), or "edification of another man" (*anyam ātmānaṃ*), to be achieved by an imitation (*anukaraṇa*) of the divine forms (*daivyāni śilpāni*).[90] The final reference to a good to be realized here *and* hereafter brings us back again to the "wholesomeness" of art, defined in terms of its simultaneous application to practical necessities and spiritual meanings, back to that fulfillment of the needs of the body and soul together that is characteristic of the arts of the uncivilized peoples and the "folk," but foreign to our industrial life. For in that life the arts are *either* for use *or* for pleasure, but are never spiritually significant and very rarely intelligible.

Such an application of the arts as Plato prescribes for his City of God, arts that as he says "will care for the bodies and the souls of your

87 *Timaeus* 90D. The whole purpose of contemplation and yoga is to reach that state of being in which there is no longer any distinction of knower from known, or being from knowing. It is just from this point of view that while all the arts are imitative, it matters so much *what* is imitated, a reality or an effect, for we become like what we think most about. "One comes to be of just such stuff as that on which the mind is set" (MU VI.34).

88 "To become like God (*homoiōsis theō*), so far as that is possible, is to 'escape'" (*Theatetus* 176B; *phygē* [flight] here = *lysis* [release] = Skr. *mokṣa*). "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image ... looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ... the things which ... *are* eternal" (II Cor. 3:18, 4:18). "This likeness begins now again to be formed in us" (St. Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 37). Cf. Coomaraswamy, "The Traditional Conception of Ideal Portraiture," in *Why Exhibit Works of Art?*, 1943.

89 *Timaeus* 90D.

90 AB VI.27.

citizens,"[91] survives for so long as forms and symbols are employed to express a meaning, for so long as "ornament" means "equipment,"[92] and until what were originally imitations of the reality, not the appearance, of things become (as they were already rapidly becoming in Plato's time) merely "art forms, more and more emptied of significance on their way down to us"[93]—no longer figures of thought, but only figures of speech.

We have so far made use of Oriental sources only incidentally, and chiefly to remind ourselves that the true philosophy of art is always and everywhere the same. But since we are dealing with the distinction between the arts of flattery and those of ministration, we propose to refer briefly to some of the Indian texts in which the "whole end of the expressive faculty" is discussed. This natural faculty is that of the "Voice": not the audibly spoken word, but the *opyavov* [means] by which a concept is communicated. The relation of this maternal Voice to the paternal Intellect is that of our feminine "nature" to our masculine "essence"; their begotten child is the Logos of theology and the spoken myth of anthropology. The work of art is expressly the artist's child, the child of both his natures, human and divine: stillborn if he has not at his command the art of delivery (rhetoric), a bastard if the Voice has been seduced, but a valid concept if born in lawful marriage.

The Voice is at once the daughter, bride, messenger, and instrument of the Intellect.[94] Possessed of him, the immanent deity, she brings

[91] *Republic* 409-410.

[92] See Coomaraswamy, "Ornament" [Chapter III below - Ed.].

[93] Walter Andrae, *Die ionische Säule* (Berlin, 1933), p. 65 [see Chapter XVIII below —Ed.]. The same scholar writes, with reference to pottery, especially that of the Stone Age and with reference to Assyrian glazing, "Ceramic art in the service of Wisdom, the wisdom that activates knowledge to the level of the spiritual, indeed the divine, as science does to earthbound things of all kinds. Service is here a voluntary, entirely self-sacrificing and entirely conscious dedication of the personality ... as it is and should be in true divine worship. Only this service is worthy of art, of ceramic art. To make the primordial truth intelligible, to make the unheard audible, to enunciate the primordial word, to illustrate the primordial image —such is the task of art, or it is not art." ("Keramik im Dienste der Weisheit," *Berichte der deutschen keramischen Gesellschaft*, XVII:12 [1936], 623.) Cf. *Timaeus* 28AB.

[94] ŚB VIII.1.2.8; AB V.23; TS II.5.11.5; JUB I. 33.4 (*karoty eva vācā ... gamayati manasā*). Vāc is the Muse, and as the Muses are the daughters of Zeus, so is Vāc the daughter of the Progenitor, of Intellect (*Manas, nous*)—i.e. *intellectus vel spiritus* [intellect or spirit –Ed. trans.], "the habit of First Principles." As Sarasvatī she bears the lute and is seated on the Sunbird as vehicle.

forth his image (reflection, imitation, similitude, *pratirūpa*, child).[95] She is the power and the glory,[96] without whom the Sacrifice itself could not proceed.[97] But if he, the divine Intellect, Brahmā or Prajāpati, "does not precede and direct her, then it is only a gibberish in which she expresses herself."[98] Translated into the terms of the art of government, this means that if the Regnum acts on its own initiative, unadvised by the Sacerdotium, it will not be Law, but only regulations that it promulgates.

The conflict of Apollo with Marsyas the Satyr, to which Plato alludes,[99] is the same as that of Prajāpati (the Progenitor) with Death,[100] and the same as the contention of the Gandharvas, the gods of Love and Science, with the mundane deities, the sense powers, for the hand of the Voice, the Mother of the Word, the wife of the Sacerdotium.[101] This is, in fact, the debate of the Sacerdotium and the Regnum with which we are most familiar in terms of an opposition of sacred and profane, eternal and secular, an opposition that must be present wherever the needs of the soul and the body are *not* satisfied together.

Now what was chanted and enacted by the Progenitor in his sacrificial contest with Death was "calculated" (*saṃkhyānam*)[102] and

[95] "This the 'Beatitude' (*ānanda*) of Brahmā, that by means of Intellect (*Manas*, *nous*), his highest form, he betakes himself to 'the Woman' (Vāc); a son like himself is born of her" (BU IV.1.6). The son is Agni, *bṛhad uktha*, the Logos.

[96] RV X.31.2 (*śreyāṇsaṃ dakṣaṃ manasā jagṛbhyāt*); BD II.84. The governing authority is always masculine, the power feminine.

[97] AB V.33, etc. Śrī as *brahmavādinī* is "Theologia."

[98] ŚB III.2.4.11; cf. "the Asura's gibberish" (ŚB III.2.1.23). It is because of the dual possibility of an application of the Voice to the statement of truth or falsehood that she is called the "double-faced"—i.e., "two-tongued" (ŚB III.2.4.16). These two possibilities correspond to Plato's distinction of the Uranian from the Pandemic (*Pandēmos*) and disordered (*ataktos*) Aphrodite, one the mother of the Uranian or Cosmic Eros, the other, the "Queen of Various Song" (*Polymnia*) and mother of the Pandemic Eros (*Symposium* 180DE, 187E, *Laws* 840E).

[99] *Republic* 399E.

[100] JB II.69, 70, and 73.

[101] ŚB III.2.4.1–6 and 16–22; cf. III.2 1.19–23.

[102] *Saṃkhyānam* is "reckoning" or "calculation" and corresponds in more senses than one to Plato's *logismos*. We have seen that accuracy (*orthotēs*, Latin *integritas*) is the first requirement for good art, and that this amounts to saying that art is essentially iconography, to be distinguished by its *logic* from merely emotional and instinctive expression. It is precisely the precision of "classical" and "canonical" art that modern feeling most resents; we demand organic forms adapted to an "in-feeling" (*Einfühlung*) rather than the

"immortal," and what by Death "uncalculated" and "mortal"; and that deadly music played by Death is now our secular art of the "parlor" (*patnīśālā*), "whatever people sing to the harp, or dance, or do to please themselves (*vṛthā*)," or even more literally, "do heretically," for the words "*vṛthā*" and "heresy" derive from a common root that means to "choose for oneself," to "know what one likes and to grasp at it." Death's informal and irregular music is disintegrating. On the other hand, the Progenitor "puts himself together," composes or synthesizes himself, "by means of the meters"; the Sacrificer "perfects himself so as to be metrically constituted,"[103] and makes of the measures the wings of his ascension.[104] The distinctions made here between a quickening art and one that adds to the sum of our mortality are those that underlie Plato's *katharsis* and all true puritanism and fastidiousness. There is no disparagement of the Voice (Sophia) herself, or of music or dancing or

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measured forms that require "in-sight" (*Einsehen*).

A good example of this can be cited in Lars-Ivar Ringbom's "Entstehung und Entwicklung der Spiralornamentik," in *Acta Archaeologica*, IV (1933), 151-200. Ringbom demonstrates first the extraordinary perfection of early spiral ornament and shows how even its most complicated forms must have been produced with the aid of simple *tools*. But he resents this "measured" perfection, as of something "known and deliberately made, the work of the intellect rather than a psychic expression" ("sie ist bewusst and willkürlich gemacht, mehr Verstandesarbeit als seelischer Ausdruck") and admires the later "forms of freer growth, approximating more to those of Nature." These organic ("organisch-gewaehsen") forms are the "psychological expression of man's instinctive powers, that drive him more and more to representation and figuration." Ringbom could hardly have better described the kind of art that Plato would have called unworthy of free men; the free man is not "driven by forces of instinct." What Plato admired was precisely not the organic and figurative art that was coming into fashion in his time, but the formal and canonical art of Egypt that remained constant for what he thought had been ten thousand years, for there it had been possible "for those modes that are by nature correct to be canonized and held forever sacred" (*Laws* 656–657; cf. 798AB, 799A). There "art ... was not for the delectation ... of the senses" (Earl Baldwin Smith, *Egyptian Architecture*, New York, 1938, p.27).

[103] AĀ III.2.6, *sa candobhir ātmānam samādadhāt;* AB VI.27, *candomayam ... ātmānaṃ saṃskurute.*

[104] For what Plato means by wings, see *Phaedrus* 246–256 and *Ion* 534B. "It is as a bird that the Sacrificer reaches the world of heaven" (PB V.3.5). *Phaedrus* 247BC corresponds to PB XIV.1.12-13, "Those who reach the top of the great tree, how do they fare thereafter? Those who have wings fly forth, those that are wingless fall down"; the former are the "wise," the latter the "foolish" (cf. *Phaedrus* 249C, "It is only the philosopher's discriminating mind that is winged"). For the Gandharva (Eros) as a winged "maker" and as such the archetype of human poets, see RV X.177.2 and JUB III.36. For "metrical wings," see PB X.4.5 and PB XIX.11.8; JUB III.13.10; AV VIII.9.12. The meters are "birds" (TS VI.1.6.1; PB XIX.11.8).

any other art as such. Whatever disparagement there is, is not of the instrument; there can be no good use without art.

The contest of the Gandharvas, the high gods of Love and Music (in Plato's broad sense of that word), is with the unregenerate powers of the soul, whose natural inclination is the pursuit of pleasures. What the Gandharvas offer to the Voice is their sacred science, the thesis of their incantation; what the mundane deities offer is "to please her." The Gandharvas' is a holy conversation (*brahmodaya*), that of the mundane deities an appetizing colloquy (*prakāmodaya*). Only too often the Voice, the expressive power, is seduced by the mundane deities to lend herself to the representation of whatever may best please them and be most flattering to herself; and it is when she thus prefers the pleasant falsehoods to the splendor of the sometimes bitter truth that the high gods have to fear lest she in turn seduce their legitimate spokesman, the Sacrificer himself; to fear, that is to say, a secularization of the sacred symbols and the hieratic language, the depletion of meaning that we are only too familiar with in the history of art, as it descends from formality to figuration, just as language develops from an original precision to what are ultimately hardly more than blurred emotive values.

It was not for this, as Plato said, that powers of vision and hearing are ours. In language as nearly as may be identical with his, and in terms of the universal philosophy wherever we find it, the Indian texts define the "whole end of the Voice" (*krtsnaṃ vāgārtham*). We have already called the voice an "organ," to be taken in the musical as well as the organic sense. It is very evidently not the reason of an organ to play of itself, but to be played upon, just as it is not for the clay to determine the form of the vessel, but to receive it.

"Now there is this divine harp: the human harp is in its likeness ... and just as the harp struck by a skilled player fulfills the whole reason of the harp, so the Voice moved by a skilled speaker fulfills its whole reason."[105] "Skill in any performance is a yoking, as of steeds together,"[106] or, in other words, implies a marriage of the master and the means. The product of the marriage of the player, Intellect, with

[105] ŚA VIII.10.

[106] BG II.50, *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam.* If yoga is also the "renunciation" (*saṃnyāsa*) of works (BG V.1and VI.2), this is only another way of saying the same thing, since this renunciation is essentially the abandonment of the notion "I am the doer" and a reference of the works to their real author whose skill is infallible: "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10).

the instrument, the Voice, is Truth (*satyam*) or Science (*vidyā*),[107] not that approximate, hypothetical, and statistical truth that we refer to as science, but philosophy in Plato's sense,[108] and that "meaning of the Vedas" by which, if we understand it, "all good" (*sakalam bhadram*) is attainable, here and hereafter.[109]

The *raison d'être* of the Voice is to incarnate in a communicable form the concept of Truth; the formal beauty of the precise expression is that of the *splendor veritatis* [splendor of truth – Ed. trans]. The player and the instrument are both essential here. We, in our somatic individuality, are the instrument, of which the "strings" or "senses" are to be regulated, so as to be neither slack nor overstrained; we are the organ, the inorganic God within us the organist. We are the organism, He its energy. It is not for us to play our own tunes, but to sing His songs, who is both the Person in the Sun (Apollo) and our own Person (as distinguished from our "personality"). When "those who sing here to the harp sing Him,"[110] then all desires are attainable, here and hereafter.

There is, then, a distinction to be drawn between a significant (*padārthābhinaya*) and liberating (*vimuktida*) art, the art of those who in their performances are celebrating God, the Golden Person, in both His natures, immanent and transcendent, and the *in-significant* art that is "colored by worldly passion" (*lokānurañjaka*) and "dependent on the moods" (*bhāvāśraya*). The former is the "highway" (*mārga*, Gr. *hodos*) art that leads directly to the end of the road, the latter a "pagan" (*deśī*, Gr. *hagrios*) and eccentric art that wanders off in all directions, imitating anything and everything.[111]

If now the orthodox doctrines reported by Plato and the East are not convincing, this is because our sentimental generation, in which the power of the intellect has been so perverted by the power of observa-

[107] ŚA VII.5 and 7; cf. *Phaedo* 61AB.

[108] What is meant by *vidyā* as opposed to *avidyā* is explicit in *Phaedrus* 247C-E, "All true knowledge is concerned with what is colorless, formless and intangible (Skr. *avarṇa*, *arūpa*, *agrahya*)" "not such knowledge as has a beginning and varies as it is associated with one or another of the things that we now call realities, but that which is really real (Skr. *satyasya satyam*)." Cf. CU VII.16.1 and 17.1, with commentary; also *Philebus* 58A.

[109] ŚA XIV.2.

[110] CU I.7.6–7. Cf. Coomaraswamy, "The Sun-kiss," 1940, p. 49, n. 11.

[111] For all the statements in this paragraph, see CU I.6–9; *Sāhitya Darpaṇa* I.4–6; and *Daśarūpa* I.12–14.

tion that we can no longer distinguish the reality from the phenomenon, the Person in the Sun from his sightly body, or the uncreated from electric light, will not be persuaded "though one rose from the dead." Yet I hope to have shown, in a way that may be ignored but cannot be refuted, that our use of the term "aesthetic" forbids us also to speak of art as pertaining to the "higher things of life" or the immortal part of us; that the distinction of "fine" from "applied" art, and corresponding manufacture of art in studios and artless industry in factories, takes it for granted that neither the artist nor the artisan shall be a whole man; that our freedom to work or starve is not a responsible freedom but only a legal fiction that conceals an actual servitude; that our hankering after a leisure state, or state of pleasure, to be attained by a multiplication of labor-saving devices, is born of the fact that most of us are doing forced labor, working at jobs to which we could never have been "called" by any other master than the salesman; that the very few, the happy few of us whose work is a vocation, and whose status is relatively secure, like nothing better than our work and can hardly be dragged away from it; that our division of labor, Plato's "fractioning of human faculty," makes the workman a part of the machine, unable ever to make or to co-operate responsibly in the making of any whole thing; that in the last analysis the so-called "emancipation of the artist"[112] is nothing but his final release from any obligation whatever to the God within him, and his opportunity to imitate himself or any other common clay at its worst; that all willful self-expression is autoerotic, narcissistic, and satanic, and the more its essentially paranoiac quality develops, suicidal; that while our invention of innumerable conveniences has made our unnatural manner of living in great cities so endurable that we cannot imagine what it would be like to do without them, yet the fact remains that not even the multimillionaire is rich enough to commission such works of art as are preserved in our museums but were originally made for men of relatively moderate means or, under the patronage of the church, for God and all men, and the fact remains that the multimillionaire can no longer send to the ends of the earth for the products of other courts or the humbler works of the folk, for all these things have been destroyed and their makers reduced to being the providers of raw materials for our factories, wherever our civilizing influence has been felt; and so, in short, that while the operation that we call a "progress" has been very successful, man the patient has succumbed.

[112] See John D. Wild, *Plato's Theory of Man* (Cambridge, Mass., 1946), p. 84.

Let us, then, admit that the greater part of what is taught in the fine arts departments of our universities, all of the psychologies of art, all the obscurities of modern aesthetics, are only so much verbiage, only a kind of defense that stands in the way of our understanding of the wholesome art, at the same time iconographically true and practically useful, that was once to be had in the marketplace or from any good artist; and that whereas the rhetoric that cares for nothing but the truth is the rule and method of the intellectual arts, our aesthetic is nothing but a false rhetoric, and a flattery of human weakness by which we can account only for the arts that have no other purpose than to please.

The whole intention of our own art may be aesthetic, and we may wish to have it so. But however this may be, we also pretend to a scientific and objective discipline of the history and appreciation of art, in which we take account not only of contemporary or very recent art but also of the whole of art from the beginning until now. It is in this arena that I shall throw down a minimum challenge: I put it to you that it is not by our aesthetic, but only by their rhetoric, that we can hope to understand and interpret the arts of other peoples and other ages than our own. I put it to you that our present university courses in this field embody a pathetic fallacy, and are anything but scientific in any sense.

And now, finally, in case you should complain that I have been drawing upon very antiquated sources (and what else could I do, seeing that we are all "so young" and "do not possess a single belief that is ancient and derived from old tradition, nor yet one science that is hoary with age"[113]) let me conclude with a very modern echo of this ancient wisdom, and say with Thomas Mann that "I like to think—yes, I feel sure—that a future is coming in which we shall condemn as black magic, as the brainless, irresponsible product of instinct, all art which is not controlled by the intellect."[114]

[113] *Timaeus* 22BC.

[114] In *The Nation* (December 10, 1938). Cf. Socrates' dictum at the head of this chapter.

CHAPTER II

The Mediaeval Theory of Beauty

Ex divina pulchritudine esse omnium derivatur
[From the divine beauty the being of all things is derived].
St. Thomas Aquinas

Each thing receives a *moira tou kalou* [share of the beautiful] according to its capacity.
Plotinus, *Enneads* I.6.6, lines 32-33

Introduction

The present article is the first of a series in which it is intended to make more readily accessible to modern students of mediaeval art the most important sources for the corresponding aesthetic theory. The mediaeval artist is, much more than an individual, the channel through which the unanimous consciousness of an organic and international community found expression; in the material to be studied will be found the basic assumptions upon which his operation depended. Without a knowledge of these assumptions, which embrace the formal and final causes of the work itself, the student must necessarily be restricted to an investigation of the efficient and material causes, that is, of technique and material; and while a knowledge of these is indispensable for a full understanding of the work in all its accidental aspects, something more is required for judgment and criticism, judgment within the mediaeval definition depending upon comparison of the actual or accidental form of the work with its substantial or essential form as it preexisted in the mind of the artist; because "similitude is said with respect to the form" (*Sum. Theol.* I.5.4), and not with respect to any other and external object presumed to have been imitated. It is, however, not merely for the sake of the professed student of mediaeval Christian art that these studies have been undertaken, but also because the Scholastic aesthetic provides for the European student an admirable introduction to that of the East, and because of the intrinsic charm of the material itself. No one who has once appreciated the consistency of the Scholastic theory, the legal finesse of its arguments, or realized all the advantages proper to its precise technical terminology, can ever wish to ignore the patristic texts. Not only is the mediaeval aesthetic universally applicable and incompa-

rably clear and satisfying, but also, at the same time that it is about the beautiful, it is beautiful in itself.

The modern student of "art" may be at first inclined to resent the combination of aesthetic with theology. This, however, belongs to a point of view which did not divide experience into independently self-subsistent compartments; and the student who realizes that he must somehow or other acquaint himself with mediaeval modes of thought and feeling had better accommodate himself to this from the beginning. Theology is itself an art of the highest order, being concerned with the "arrangement of God," and in relation to the mediaeval works of art stands in the position of formal cause, in ignorance of which a judgment of the art, otherwise than upon a basis of personal taste, remains impossible.

I.

THE TRANSLATIONS

The Scholastic doctrine of Beauty is fundamentally based on the brief treatment by Dionysius the Areopagite[1] in the chapter of the *De divinis nominibus* entitled "De pulchro et bono." We therefore will commence with a translation of this short text made, not from the Greek, but from the Latin version of Johannes Saracenus, which was used by Albertus Magnus in his *Opusculum de pulchro*[2] (sometimes attributed to St. Thomas) and by Ulrich of Strassburg in the chapter of his *Summa de bono* entitled "De pulchro," the translation of which forms the second text of the present series. Ulrich Engelberti of Strassburg who died in 1277, was himself a pupil of Albertus Magnus.[3] Our translation

[1] On Dionysius, see Darboy, *St. Denys l'aréopagite* (Paris, 1932, and C. E. Rolt, *Dionysis the Areopagite*, 2nd ed. (London, 1940), with bibliography.

[2] This rather inaccessible text can be consulted in (1) P. A. Uccelli, *Notizie storico-critiche circa un commentario inedito di S. Tommaso d'Aquino sopra il libro di S. Dionigi Dei Nomi Divini, la scienza e la fede*, Serie III, Vol. V (Naples, 1869), 338–369, where the authorship is discussed, the discussion being followed by the text "De pulchro et bono ex commentario anecdoto Sancti Thomae Aquinatis in librum Sancti Dionysii De divinis nominibus, cap. 4, lect. 5" (pp. 389-459), and (2) in Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, *Opuscula selecta*, Vol. IV, opusc. XXXI, "De pulchro et bono," ex comm, S. Th. Aq. in lib. S. Dionysii *De divinis nominibus*, cap. 4, lect. 5 (Paris, n.d.).

The shorter commentary on the same text, also translated below, certainly by St. Thomas, occurs in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Opera omnia* (Parma, 1864), as opusc. VII, cap. 4, lect. 5.

3 Cf. Martin Grabmann, "Studien über Ulrich von Strassburg. Bilderwissenschaftlichen

is made from the Latin text edited and published by Grabmann[4] from manuscript sources; it adheres rather more closely to the original than does Grabmann's excellent German rendering. The same editor adds an introduction, one of the best accounts of mediaeval aesthetic that has yet appeared.[5]

Plato's doctrine of the relatively beautiful and of an absolute Beauty is most clearly stated in the *Symposium* 210E-211B:

"To him who has been instructed thus far in the lore of love (*ta erotika*),[6] considering beautiful things one after another in their proper order, there will be suddenly revealed the marvel of the nature of Beauty, and it was for this, O Socrates, that all those former labors were undertaken. This Beauty, in the first place, is everlasting, not growing and decaying, or waxing and waning; secondly, it is not fair from one point of view and foul from another, or in one relation and in one place fair and at another time or in another relation foul, so as to be fair to some and foul to others ... but Beauty absolute, ever existent in uniformity with itself, and such that while all the multitude of beautiful

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Lebens und Strebens aus der Schule Alberts des Grossen," in *Zeit. für kath. Theologie*, XXIX (1905), or in "Mittelalterliches Geistesleben," in *Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Scholastik and Mystik*, 3 vols. (Munich, 1926).

[4] Martin Grabmann, "Des Ulrich Engelberti von Strassburg, O.Pr. (†1277) abhandlung De pulchro," in *Sitzb. Bayer. Akad. Wiss., Phil. . . . Klasse* (Munich, 1926), abh. 5.

[5] To the short bibliography in Coomaraswamy, *Why Exhibit Works of Art?*, 1943, p.59, add: A. Dyroff, "Zur allgemeinen Kunstlehre des hl. Thomas," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, *Supplementband* II (Münster, 1923), 197–219; E. de Bruyne, "Bulletin d'esthétique," *Revue néoscolastique* (August 1933); A. Thiéry, *De la Bonté et de la Beauté*, Louvain, 1897; L. Wencélius, "La philosophic de l'art chez les néo-scolastiques de langue française," *Études d'histoire et de philosophie publiées par la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de l'Université de Strasbourg*, No. 27 (Paris, 1932); J. Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism* (New York, 1931); J. Huré, *St. Augustin musicien* (Paris, 1924); W. Hoffmann, *Philosophische Interpretation der Augustinusschrift De arte musica* (Marburg, 1931).

Among these works, that of Dyroff is probably the best. Those of Maritain and de Bruyne are somewhat tendentious, and Maritain's seems to me to be tainted by modernism. Further references will be found in these works, and it is not our present intention to attempt a complete bibliography. It may be added that a sound modern and practical application of Scholastic doctrine as to beauty and workmanship will be found in the writings and works of Eric Gill.

[6] The theory or science of Love, in its social as well as in its spiritual significance and introductory to the higher "rites and mysteries" (*Symposium* 210A, cf. 188B), is represented typically in the Middle Ages (Provence, Dante, *les Fidèles d'Amour*, courtly love), in Islam (Rūmī and the Sūfīs generally), and in India (Jayadeva, Vidyāpati, Bihārī, etc.). In this tradition the phenomena of love are the adequate symbols of initiatory teaching, to be distinguished from a merely erotic "mysticism."

things participate in it, it is never increased or diminished, but remains impassible, although they come to be and pass away.... Beauty itself, entire, pure, unmixed ... divine, and coessential with itself."

This passage is the source of Dionysius the Areopagite on the beautiful and Beauty in *De divinis nominibus*, cap. 4, lect. 5, which is in turn the subject of the commentaries by Ulrich Engelberti and St. Thomas Aquinas. The three texts are translated below.

1. Dionysius the Areopagite

The good is praised by sainted theologians as the beautiful and as Beauty; as delight and the delectable; and by whatever other befitting names are held to imply the beautifying power or the attractive qualities of Beauty. The beautiful and Beauty are indivisible in their cause, which embraces All in One. In existing things these are divided into "participation" and "participants"; for we call "beautiful" what participates in beauty;[7] and "beauty" that participation in the beautifying power which is the cause of all that is beautiful in things.

But the supersubstantial beautiful is rightly called Beauty absolutely, both because the beautiful that is in existing things according to their several natures is derived from it, and because it is the cause of all things being in harmony (*consonantia*) and of illumination (*claritas*); because, moreover, in the likeness of light it sends forth to everything the beautifying distributions of its own fontal raying; and for that it summons all things to itself. Hence, it is called *kalon* [beautiful, good –Ed. trans.] as gathering all things several into one whole, and *pulchrum* as at the same time most beautiful and superbeautiful; ever existent in one and the same mode, and beautiful in one and the same way; neither created nor destroyed, nor increased nor diminished; nor beautiful in one place or at one time and ugly elsewhere or at another time; nor beautiful in one relation and ugly in another; nor here but not there, as though it might be beautiful for some and not for others; but as being self-accordant with itself and uniform with itself; and always beautiful; and as it were the fount of all beauty; and in itself preeminently possessed of beauty. For in the simple and supernatural nature of all things beautiful, all beauty and all that is beautiful have preexisted uniformly in their cause.

[7] Cf. "Imitation, Expression, and Participation" [Chapter IX in this volume – Ed.], notes 36, 38.

From this [super-] beautiful it is that there are individual beauties in existing things each in its own kind; and because of the beautiful are all alliances and friendships and fellowships, and all are united by the beautiful. And the super-beautiful is the principle of all things as being their efficient cause, and moving all of them, and maintaining all by love of its own Beauty. It is likewise the end of all, as being their final cause, since all things are made for the sake of the beautiful;[8] and likewise the exemplary cause, since all things are determined by it; and therefore the good and the beautiful are the same; for all things desire the beautiful for every reason, nor is there anything existing that does not participate

[8] This must not be understood to mean that the artist as such has in view simply to make "something" beautiful, or to "create beauty." The statement of Dionysius refers to the final end from the point of view of the patron (who may be either the artist himself, not as artist but as man, or may be some other man or some organization or society in general), who expects to be pleased as well as served by the object made; for what is the end in one operation may itself be ordained to something else as an end (*Sum. Theol.* I-II.13.4), as, for example, "to give pleasure when seen, of when apprehended" (*ibid.*, I.5.4 and I.27.1 *ad* 3); cf. Augustine, *Lib. de ver. rel.* 39, "An iron style is made by the smith on the one hand that we may write with it, and on the other that we may take pleasure in it; and in its kind it is at the same time beautiful and adapted to our use," where "we" refers to man as patron, as in St. Thomas, *Physics* II.4.8, where it is said that "man" is the general end of all things made by art, which are brought into being for his sake. The artist may know that the thing well and truly made (Skr. *sukṛta*) will and must be beautiful, but he cannot be said to be working with this beauty in immediate view, because he is always working to a determinate end, while beauty, as being proper to and inevitable in *whatever* is well and truly made, represents an indeterminate end. The same conclusion follows from the consideration that all beauty is formal, and that form is the same thing as species; things are beautiful *in their kind*, and not indefinitely. Scholastic philosophy is never tired of pointing out that every rational agent, and the artist in particular, is always working for determinate and singular, and not for infinite and vague ends; for example, *Sum. Theol.* I.25.5C, "the wisdom of the maker is restricted to some definite order"; I.7.4, "no agent acts aimlessly"; II-I.1.2C, "If the agent were not determinate to some particular effect, it would not do one thing rather than another"; I.45.6C, "operating by a word conceived in his intellect (*per verbum in intellectu conceptum*) and moved by the direction of his will towards the specific object to be made"; *Phys.* II.1.10, affirming again that art is determined to singular ends and is not infinite, and Aquinas, *De coelo et mundo* II.3.8, that the intellect is conformed to a universal order only in connection with a particular idea. Cf. St. Bonaventura, I *Sent.* d.35, a.unic., q.1, fund.2, "Every agent acting rationally, not at random, nor under compulsion, foreknows the thing before it is, viz. in a likeness, by which likeness, which is the 'idea' of the thing, the thing is both known and brought into being." What is true of *factibilia* [things to be made] is true in the same way of *agibilia* [actions to be done]; a man does not perform a *particular* good deed for the sake of its beauty, for *any* good deed will be beautiful in effect, but he does precisely *that* good deed which the occasion requires, in relation to which occasion some other good deed would be inappropriate (*ineptum*), and therefore awkward or ugly. In the same way the work of art is always occasional, and if not opportune, is superfluous.

in the Beautiful and the Good. And we make bold to say that the nonexistent also participates in the Beautiful and the Good; for then it is at once truly the Beautiful and the Good when it is praised supersubstantially in God by the subtraction of all attributes.

2. Ulrich Engelberti, *De pulchro*[9]

Just as the form of anything whatever is its "goodness,"[10] perfection being desired by whatever is perfectible, so also the beauty of everything is the same as its formal excellence, which, as Dionysius says, is like a light that shines upon the thing that has been formed; which also appears inasmuch as matter subject to privation of form is called vile (*turpis*) by philosophers, and desires form in the same way that the ugly (*turpe*) desires what is good and beautiful. So then the beautiful by another name is the "specific," from species or form.[11] So Augustine

[9] See Grabmann, "Des Ulrich Engelberti von Strassburg."

[10] This note has been made an appendix to this chapter. - Ed.]

[11] Cf. *Sum. Theol.* II-I.18.2C, "The primary goodness of a natural thing is derived from its form, which gives it its species," and I.39.8C, "Species or beauty has a likeness to the property of the Son," viz. as Exemplar. In general, the form, species, beauty, and perfection or goodness or truth of a thing are coincident and indivisible in it, although not in themselves synonymous in the sense of interchangeable terms.

A clear grasp of what is meant by "form" (Lat. *forma* = Gr. *eidos*) is absolutely essential for the student of mediaeval aesthetic. In the first place, form as coincident with idea, image, species, similitude, reason, etc., is the purely intellectual and immaterial cause of the thing being what it is, as well as the means by which it is known; form in this sense is the "art in the artist," to which he conforms his material and which remains in him, and this holds equally for the Divine Architect and for the human artist. This exemplary form is called substantial or essential, not as subsisting apart from the intellect on which it depends, but because it is like a substance (I.45.5 *ad* 4). Scholastic philosophy followed Aristotle (*Metaphysics* IX.8.15) rather than Plato, "who held that ideas existed of themselves, and not in the intellect" (*ibid.*, I.2.15.1 *ad* 1). Accidents "proper to the form," e.g., that the idea of "man" is that of a biped, are inseparable from the form as it thus subsists in the mind of the artist.

In the second place, over against the essential form or art in the artist as above defined, and constituting the exemplary or formal cause of the becoming of the work of art (*artificiatum*, *opus*, that which is made *per artem*, by art), is the accidental or actual form of the work itself, which as materially formed (*materialis efficitur*) is determined not only by the idea or art as formal cause, but also by the efficient and material causes; and inasmuch as these introduce factors that are not essential to the idea nor inevitably annexed to it, the actual form or shape of the work of art is called its accidental form. The artist therefore knows the form essentially, the observer only accidentally, to the extent that he can really identify his point of view with that of the artist on whose intellect the thing made immediately depends.

(*De Trinitate* VI) says that Hilary predicated species in the image as being the occasion of beauty therein; and calls the ugly "deformed" because of its privation of due form. Just because it is present insofar as the formal light shines upon what is formed or proportioned, material beauty subsists in a harmony of proportion, viz. of perfection to perfectible.[12] And therefore Dionysius defines beauty as harmony (*consonantia*) and illumination (*claritas*).

The distinction between the two senses in which the word "form" is used is very clearly drawn by St. Bonaventura, *I Sent.* d.35, a.unic., q.2, opp.1 as follows: "Form is twofold, being either the form that is the perfection of a thing, or the exemplary form. In both cases there is postulated a relation; in the latter case, a relation to the material that is informed, in the former a relation to that [idea] which is actually exemplified."

Scholastic philosophy in general, and when no qualifying adjectives are employed, employs the word "form" in the causal and exemplary sense; modern speech more often in the other sense as equivalent to physical shape, though the older meaning is retained when we speak of a form or mold to which a thing is shaped or trued. It is often impossible to understand just what is meant by "form" as the word is used by contemporary aestheticians.

[12] The material beauty, perfection, or goodness of any thing is here defined by the ratio of essential (substantial) form to accidental (actual) form, which becomes in the case of manufacture the ratio of art in the artist to artifact; in other words, anything participates in beauty, or is beautiful, to the extent that the intention of the maker has been realized in it. Similarly, "A thing is said to be perfect if it lacks nothing to the mode of its perfection" (*Sum. Theol.* I.5.5C); or, as we should express it, if it is altogether good of its kind. Natural objects are always beautiful in their several kinds because their maker, *Deus vel Natura Naturans* [God or Creative Nature –Ed. trans.], is infallible; artifacts are beautiful to the extent that the artificer has been able to control his material. Questions of taste or value (what we like or dislike, can or cannot use) are equally irrelevant in either case.

The problem of "truth to nature" as a criterion of judgment in our modern sense does not arise in Christian art. "Truth is primarily in the intellect, and secondly in things accordingly as they are related to the intellect which is their principle" (*Sum. Theol.* I.16.1). Truth in a work of art (*artificiatum*, artifact) is a being well and truly made according to the pattern in the artist's mind, and so "a house is said to be true that expresses the likeness of the form in the artist's mind, and words are said to be true insofar as they are signs of truth in the intellect" (*ibid.*). In the same way, a work of art is called "false" when the form of the art is wanting in it, and an artist is said to produce a "false" work, if it falls short of the proper operation of his art (I.17.1). In other words, the work of art as such is good or bad of its kind, and cannot be judged in any other way; whether or not we like or have any use for the kind being another matter, irrelevant to any judgment of the art itself.

The problem of "truth to nature" in our sense arises only when a confusion is introduced by an intrusion of the scientific, empirical, and rational point of view. Then the work of art, which is properly a symbol, is interpreted as though it had been a sign, and a *resemblance* is demanded as between the sign and the thing presumed to be signified or denoted; and we hear it said of "primitive" art that "that was before they knew anything about anatomy." The Scholastic distinction of sign and symbol is made as fol-

Now God is the "one true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9), and this is by His Nature; which Light, as being the divine manner of understanding, shines upon the ground of His Nature, which ground is predicated of His Nature when we speak of "God" concretely. For thus He dwells in an inaccessible Light, and this ground of the Divine Nature is not merely in harmony with, but altogether the same as His Nature; which has in itself Three Persons coordinate in a marvelous harmony, the Son being the image of the Father and the Holy Ghost the link between them.

Here he says that God is not only perfectly beautiful in Himself, being the limit of beauty, but more than this, that He is the efficient and exemplary and final cause of all created beauty.[13] Efficient cause:

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lows: "'whereas in every other science things are signified by words, this science has the property that the things signified by the words have themselves also a significance" (*Sum. Theol.* I.1.10). By "this science" St. Thomas means, of course, theology, and the words referred to are those of scripture; but theology and art in principle are the same, the one employing a verbal, the other a visual imagery to communicate an ideology. The problem of "truth to nature" in our sense, then, arises whenever the habit of attention changes its direction, interest being concentrated upon things as they are in themselves and no longer primarily upon their intelligible aspects; in other words, when there is a shift from the speculative or idealistic to a rational or realistic point of view (the reader should bear in mind that speculative or mirror-knowledge meant originally, and in all traditions, a certain and infallible knowledge, phenomenal things as such being regarded as unintelligible and merely the occasions of sensory reactions such as animals also have). The shift of interest, which may be described as an extroversion, took place in Europe with the Renaissance and similarly in Greece, at the end of the fifth century B.C. Nothing of the same kind has ever taken place in Asia.

Thus, it is evident that Christian art cannot be judged by any standards of taste or verisimilitude, but solely as to whether and how far it clearly expresses the ideas that are the formal basis of its whole constitution; nor can we make this judgment in ignorance of the ideas themselves. The same will hold good for archaic, primitive, and Oriental art generally.

[13] The fourth of the Aristotelian causes, viz. the material cause, is necessarily omitted here, Christian dogma denying that God operates as the material cause of anything. The Scholastic "primary matter," the "nonexistent" of Dionysius, is not the infinite omnipotence (Skr. *aditi*, *śakti*, *mūla-prakṛti*, etc.) of the divine nature, "Natura Naturans, Creatrix, Deus," but a potentiality that extends only to the natural forms or possibilities of manifestation (*Sum Theol.* I.7.2 *ad* 3; thus, Dante's "Pura potenza tenne la parte ima," [Pure potentiality held the lowest part –Ed. trans.] *Paradiso* XXIX.34). It is not the absolute naught of the Divine Darkness, but the relative naught (*kha*, *ākāśa* as quintessence) out of which the world was made (*ex nihilo fit*), and in the act of creation takes the place of the "material cause." As such it is remote from God (*Sum. Theol.* I.14.2 *ad* 3), who is defined as being wholly in act (I.14.2C), though it "retains a certain likeness to the divine being" (I.14.2 *ad* 3), viz. that "nature by which the Father begets" (I.41.5); cf. Augustine,

just as the light of the sun by pouring out and causing light and colors is the maker of all physical beauty; just so the true and primal Light pours out from itself all the formal light, which is the beauty of all things.[14] Exemplary cause: just as physical light is one in kind, which is nonetheless that of the beauty that is in all colors, which the more light they have the more beautiful they are, and of which the diversity is occasioned by the diversity of the surfaces that receive the light, and the more light lacks, the more are they hideous and formless; even so the divine Light is one nature, that has in itself simply and uniformly whatever beauty is in all created forms, the diversity of which depends on the recipients themselves—from whom also the form is more or less remote in the manner of their unlikeness to the primal intellectual Light, and is obscured; and therefore the beauty of forms does not consist in their diversity, but rather has its cause in the one intellectual Light that is omniform, for the omniform is intelligible by its own nature, and the more purely the form possesses this Light, the more is it beautiful and like the primal Light, so as to be an image of it or imprint of its likeness; and the more it recedes from this nature and is done into matter

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De Trinitate XIV.9, "That nature, to wit, which created all others."

If, on the other hand, we consider, not God as distinct from Godhead, but rather the unity of essence and nature in the Supreme Identity of the conjoint principles, it will be proper to say that all causes are present in Deity, for this nature, viz. Natura Naturans, Creatrix (of which the manner of operation is imitated in art, *Sum. Theol.* I.117.1C), is God. Just as the procession of the Son, the Word, "is from a living conjoint principle (*a principio vivente conjuncto*)" and "is properly called generation and nativity" (I.27.2), and "that by which the Father begets is the divine nature" (I.41.5), so the human artist works through "a word conceived in his intellect" (*per verbum intellectu conceptum*, I.45.6C).

It is only when, taking the human analogy too literally, we consider the divine procession and creation as temporal events that the divine nature apparently "recedes from" the divine essence, potentiality becoming "means" (Skr. *māyā*) over against "act"; this is the diremption of BU I.4.3 ("He divided his Essence in twain," *dvedhā apātayat*), the flight apart of Heaven and Earth in JUB I.54 (*te vyadravatām*), as in Genesis I, "God divided the upper from the nether waters." If, then, God be defined as "all act" or "pure act," and as the Divine Architect in operation, the material cause of the things created is not in Him. Just as, in human operation, the material cause is external to the artist, not in him, and inasmuch as the material cause in his case is already to some extent "formed" and not like primary matter altogether informal, tractable, and passive, the material cause both offers a certain resistance to the artist's purpose (Dante's *sorda*, *Paradiso* I.129) and in some measure determines the result; at the same time that in its disposition to the reception of another form it resembles primary matter and lends itself to the intention of the artist, who may be compared to the Divine Architect insofar as he fully controls the material, although never completely.

[14] As in RV V.81.2 where the Supernal Sun *viśvā rūpāṇi prati muñcate* [the Sapient One arrays himself in every form –Ralph T.H. Griffith trans. – Ed.].

(*materialis efficitur*) the less it has of beauty and the less like the primal Light. And final cause, for form is desired by whatever is perfectible, as being its perfection,[15] the nature of which perfection is in the form only by way of likeness to the untreated Light, likeness to which is beauty in created things; as is evident inasmuch as form is desired and tended towards as being good, and also as being beautiful; and so the divine Beauty in itself, or in any likeness of it, is an end attracting every will. And therefore Cicero in his *De officiis* [*De inven. rhet.* II.158] identified the beautiful with the worthy (*honestum*) when he said that "the beautiful is that which draws us by its power and allures by its sweetness."

Beauty is, therefore, really the same as goodness, as Dionysius says, as being the very form of the thing; but beauty and goodness differ logically, form as perfection being the "goodness" of the thing, while form as possessing in itself the formal and intellectual light, and shining on the material, or on anything that being apt to the reception of form is in this sense material, is "beauty." So as John 1:4 says, "All things were in God life, and light." Life, because as being perfections, they bestow fullness of being; and Light, because being diffused in what is formed, they beautify it. So that in this way all that is beautiful is good. Whence if there be anything good that is not beautiful, many sensually delightful things being, for example, ugly (*turpia*),[16] this depends upon the lack of some specific goodness in them; and conversely, when anything beautiful is said to be otherwise than good, as in Proverbs, at the end [31:30], "Favor is deceitful, and beauty vain," this is insofar as it becomes the occasion of sin.[17]

[15] No "personification" of the thing is implied, "desires" being equivalent to "needs." When we say that a thing "wants" or "needs" something to be perfect, this is as much as to say both that it lacks that something and that it requires that something. A crab, for example, may not be conscious that it has lost a limb, but it is in some sense aware, and it is a kind of will that results in the growth of another limb. Or if we consider an inanimate object, such as a table "wanting" a leg, then the corresponding "will" is attributed to primary matter, "insatiable for form"; *in materia est dispositio ad formam* [matter has a disposition for form –Ed. trans.].

[16] As pointed out by Augustine, *De musica* VI.38, some people take pleasure in *deformia*, and these the Greeks in the vernacular called *saprophiloi* [lovers of rottenness –Ed. trans.] or as we should say, perverts; cf. BG XVII.10. Augustine elsewhere (*Lib. de ver. rel.* 59) points out that while things that please us do so because they are beautiful, the converse, viz. that things are beautiful because they please us, does not hold.

[17] The problem of sinister beauty raised by Proverbs 31:30 is rather better dealt with in the *Opusculum de pulchro* (of Albertus Magnus), where it is pointed out that the beautiful is never separated from the good when things of the same kind are considered, "for example, the beauty of the body is never separated from the good of the body nor the

Now because there are both substantial and accidental forms besides the uncreated Beauty, beauty is twofold, as being either essential or accidental. And each of these beauties is again twofold. For essential beauty is either spiritual—the soul, for example, an ethereal beauty—or intellectual, as in the case of the beauty of an angel; or it is physical, the beauty of material being its nature or natural form. In the same way, accidental form is either spiritual—science, grace, and virtues being the beauty of the soul, and ignorance and sins its deformities--or it is physical, as Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XXII, describes it, when he says, "Beauty is the agreement of the parts together with a certain sweetness of color."[18]

Because also all that is made by the divine art has a certain species to which it is formed, as Augustine says, *De Trinitate* VI, it follows that the beautiful, like the good, is synonymous with being in the subject,

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beauty of the soul from the good of the soul; so that when beauty is thus called vain, what is meant is the beauty of the body from the point of view of the good of the soul." It is nowhere argued that the beauty of the body can be a bad thing in itself; bodily beauty being rather taken as the outward sign of an inward and constitutional well-being or health. That such a beauty and health, although a great good in itself, may also be called vain from another point of view will be apparent to everyone; for example, if a man be so much attached to the well-being of the body that he will not risk his life in a good cause. How little Christian philosophy conceives of natural beauty as something sinister in itself may be seen in Augustine, who says that the beautiful is to be found everywhere and in everything, "for example in a fighting cock" (*De ordine* I.25; he selects the fighting cock as something in a manner despicable from his own point of view), and that this beauty in creatures is the voice of God who made them (*confessio ejus in terra et coelo* [confession of him in earth and heaven –Ed. trans.], *Enarratio in psalmum*, CXLVIII), a point of view that is inseparable also from the concept of the world as a theophany (as in Erigena) and the doctrine of the *vestigium pedis* [foot print] (as in Bonaventura). On the other hand, to be attached to the forms as they are in themselves is precisely what is meant by "idolatry," and as Eckhart (Evans ed., I, 259) says, "to find nature herself all her forms must be shattered, and the further in, the nearer the actual thing"; cf. Jāmī, "shouldst thou fear to drink wine from Form's flagon, thou canst not drain the draught of the Ideal. But yet beware! Be not by Form belated: strive rather with all speed the bridge to traverse."

For "many things are beautiful to the eye (of the flesh) which it would be hardly proper to call worthy" (*honestus*, St. Augustine, QQ. LXXXIII.30; cf. Plato, *Laws* 728D, where we are to honor "goodness above beauty"). It is in the same way that we do not choose the most beautiful to work with, but *the best for our purpose* (*Sum. Theol.* I.91.3).

[18] *Pulchritudo est partium congruentia cum quadam suavitate coloris;* cf. Cicero, *Tusculum disputations* IV.31, *Corporis est quaedam apta figura membrorum cum coloris quadam suavitate* [of the body, there is a certain fitting arrangement of parts with a certain agreeableness of color –Ed. trans.].

and considered essentially adds to this the aforesaid character of being formal.[19]

To enlarge upon what was said above, that beauty requires proportion of material to form, this proportion exists in things as a fourfold harmony (*consonantia*),[20] viz. (1) in the harmony of predisposition to receive form; (2) in a harmony of mass to natural form—for as the Philosopher Aristotle, *De anima* II, expressed it, "the nature of all composites is their last end and the measure of their size and growth"; (3) in the harmony of the number of the parts of the material with the number of the potentialities in the form, which concerns inanimate things; and (4) in the harmony of the parts as measured among themselves and according to the whole. Therefore, in such bodies all these things are necessary to perfect and essential beauty. According to the first, a man is of a good bodily habit whose constitution is most like that of Heaven, and he is essentially more beautiful than a melancholy man or one ill-constituted in some other way. According to the second, the Philosopher Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* IV, says that beauty resides in things of full stature[21] and that little things, though they may be ele-

[19] "Formal" is here tantamount to exemplary and imitable; cf. St. Bonaventura, I *Sent.* d.36, a.2, q.2 *ad* 1, "Idea does not denote essence as such, but essence as being imitable," and *Sum. Theol.* I.15.2, "It is inasmuch as God knows His essence as being imitable by this or that creature, that He knows it as the particular reason and idea of that creature." The "imitable essence" in this sense is the same thing as "nature" ("Natura naturans, Creatrix, Deus") in the very important passage, "ars imitatur naturam in sua operatione" [art imitates nature in its operation –Ed. trans.], *Sum. Theol.* I.117.1.

[20] In my *Transformation of Nature in Art*, 1934, I interpreted *consonantia* too narrowly, to mean only "correspondence to pictorial and formal elements in the work of art," or what Ulrich calls the "proportion of material to form." C*onsonantia*, however, includes all that we mean by "order," and it is the requirement of this harmony that underlies all the interest that has been felt in "canons of proportion" (Skr. *tālamāna*).

[21] "*In magno corpore*, lit. "in a large body." Whatever Aristotle may have intended, Scholastic aesthetic by no means asserts that only large things can be beautiful as such. The point is rather that a due size is essential to beauty; if a thing is undersized, it lacks the element of due stature that is proper to the species; whatever is dwarfed may be elegant (*formosus*), but not truly beautiful (*pulcher*), nor fully in being (*esse habens*), nor altogether good (*bonus*), because the idiosyncrasy of the species is not fully realized in it. In the same way, whatever is oversized in its kind cannot be called beautiful. In other words, a definition of beauty as formal implies also "scale."

Elsewhere St. Thomas Aquinas substitutes *magnitudo* for *integritas* (see *Sum. Theol.*, Turin ed., 1932, p. 266, note 1), the work being imperfect *nisi sit proportionata magnitudo*, unless it have due size [cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.3.5]. Perhaps we ought to think of *magnitudo* as a kind of "magnificence," or even a "monumental" quality. See note 46.

gant and symmetrical, cannot be called beautiful. Whence we see that elegance and beauty differ qualitatively, for beauty adds to elegance an agreement of the mass with the character of the form, which form does not have the perfection of its virtue unless in a due amount of material. According to the third, whatever lacks in any member is not beautiful, but is defective and a deformity, and the more so the nobler is that part as to which there is privation, so that the want of any facial organ is a greater deformity than the want of a hand or finger. According to the fourth, monstrous parts are not perfectly beautiful; if, for example, the head is disproportionate as being too large or too small in relation to the other, members and the mass of the whole body.[22] It is rather symmetry (*commensuratio*) that makes things beautiful.

[22] This fourth condition of *consonantia* again asserts the normality of beauty: an excess of any single virtue is a fault in nature or art because it detracts from the unity of the whole. All peculiarity, whether liked or disliked, detracts from beauty; for example, a complexion so marvelous as to outshine all other qualities, or whatever dates or marks the particular style of a work of art. Peculiarity, though it may be a certain kind of good, and is inevitable "under the sun," implies a contraction of beauty simply and absolutely; and we recognize this when we speak of certain works of art as "universal," meaning that they have a value always and for all kinds of men. St. Thomas, in comment on Dionysius, *De div. nom.* IV, remarks that "the second defect of the [relatively] beautiful is that all creatures have a somewhat particularized beauty, even as they have a particularized nature."

It is to be observed that idiosyncrasy in the work of art is of two kinds: (1) essential, as that of the species, which is determined by the formal and final causes, and (2) accidental, depending on the efficient and material causes. The essential idiosyncrasy, which represents the perfect good of the species, is not a "privation as evil," and can be regarded as a defect only as being a minor beauty when compared to that of the universe as a whole. Accidental idiosyncrasy is not a defect when the accident "is proper to the species," as when the portrait of a colored man is colored accordingly, or the portrait in stone differs from the portrait in metal. Accidental idiosyncrasy due to the material will be a defect only when the effects proper to one material are sought for in another, or if there is a resort to some inferior substitute for the material actually required. Accidental idiosyncrasy due to the efficient cause is represented by "style," that which betrays the hand of the given artist, race, or period: it is because, as Leonardo says, *il pittore pinge se stesso* [the painter paints himself –Ed. trans.] that it is required that the artist be a sane and normal man, for if not, the work will embody something of the artist's own defect; and, in the same way, there will be defect in the product if the tools are in bad condition or wrongly chosen or used, the blunt ax, for example, not producing a clean cut. Essential idiosyncrasy due to the final cause is a matter of the patron's commission to the artist (not forgetting that patron and artist *may* be the same person), or that this will involve defect whenever bad taste imposes on the artist some deviation from the *certas vias operandi* [certain ways of working –Ed. trans.] of his art (good taste is simply that that which finds satisfaction in the proper operation of the artist): there will be defect, for example, if the patron demands in the plan of a house something agreeable to himself

It will also be a true dictum, as Dionysius says, to declare that even the non-existent partakes of beauty, not indeed as being altogether non-existent, for whatever is nothing is not beautiful, but non-existent as being not in act but *in potentia*, as in the case of matter which has the essence of form in itself in a manner of imperfect or non-existent being, which is privation as an evil.[23] For either this is in a good nature sin in

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in particular but contrary to art (a sound popular judgment is often expressed in such cases by calling a building so and so's "folly"), or if he demands an effigy of himself that shall represent him not merely as a functioning type (e.g., as knight, doctor, engineer), but as an individual and a personality to be flattered.

Individual expression, the trace of good or evil passions, is the same thing as characteristic expression: the psychological novel or painting is concerned with "character" in this sense, the epic only with *types* of character. What affects us in monumental art, whatever its immediate subject, is nothing particular or individual, but only the power of a numinous *presence.* The facts of mediaeval art agree with this thesis. In Byzantine art and before the end of the thirteenth century, as well as in "early" art generally, the peculiarity of the individual artist eludes the student; the work invariably shows "respect for the material," which is used appropriately; and it is not until after the thirteenth century that the effigy assumes an individual character, so as to become a portrait in the modern psychological sense. Cf. "The Traditional Conception of Ideal Portraiture" in Coomaraswamy, *Why Exhibit Works of Art?*, 1943.

[23] Orthodox doctrine maintains that God is wholly in act, and that there is no potentiality in Him. In any case, it will be correct to say that He does not proceed from potentiality to act after the manner of creatures, which, being in time, are necessarily partly in potentiality and partly in act. It will also be correct to say that God is wholly in act, if the name be taken "concretely," i.e., in logical distinction from Godhead. But we think that the exegesis of Dionysius by Albertus Magnus (or St. Thomas) in the *Opusculum de pulchro* and by Ulrich, as above, is incomplete in this matter of the beauty of the non-existent. Dionysius is really asserting the beauty of the Divine Darkness or Dark Ray as being in no way less than that of the Divine Light; distinguishing the beauty of the Godhead from that of God, although logically and not really. From the metaphysical point of view, the Divine Darkness is as real a darkness as the Divine Light is a light, and ought not to be explained away as merely an excess of light. Cf. Dionysius, *De div. nom.* VII, "not otherwise seeing darkness except through light," which also implies the converse; and it would be reasonable to paraphrase Ulrich's words as follows, "For if there were no Darkness, there would be only the intelligible beauty of the Light," etc. Cf. also Meister Eckhart, Evans ed., I, 369, "the motionless Dark that no one knows but He in whom it reigns. First to arise in it is Light." Cf. also Boehme, "And the deep of the darkness is as great as the habitation of the light; and they stand not one distant from the other, but together in one another, and neither of them hath beginning nor end." The Beauty of the Divine Darkness is asserted also in other traditions, cf. the names Kṛṣṇa and Kālī and the corresponding iconography; and as MU V.2 expresses it, "The part of Him which is characterized by Darkness (*tamas*) . . . is this Rudra"; in RV III.55.7, where Agni is said to "proceed foremost whilst yet abiding in His ground," this "ground" is also the Darkness, as in X.55.5, "Thou stayest in the Darkness" (i.e., *ab intra*). The conjunction of these "opposites" (*chāyā-tāpau*, "light and shade," KU III.1 and VI.5; *amṛta* and *mṛtyu*, "life

act or in the agent; or it has some good nature of its own, as when a just penalty is actively accepted, or an unjust penalty is passively accepted and patiently endured. In the first way (i.e., as potentiality), then, evil taken in relation to the subject is beautiful; it is indeed deformity in itself, but is so accidentally, as being contrasted with the good; it is the occasion of beauty, goodness, and virtue, not as being these really, but as conducting to their manifestation. Hence, Augustine, *Enchiridion*, C. 11, says, "It is because of the beauty of good things that God allowed evil to be made." For if there were no evil, there would be only the absolute beauty of the good; but when there is evil, then there is annexed a relative beauty of the good; so that by contrast with the opposite evil the nature of the good shines out more clearly. Taking evil in the second and third ways (i.e., as penalty), evil is beautiful in itself as being just and good, though a deformity as being an evil. But since nothing is altogether without a good nature, but evil is rather called an imperfect good, so no entity is altogether without the quality of beauty, but what in beauty is imperfectly beautiful is called "ugly" (*turpe*). But this imperfection is either absolute, and this is when there lacks in anything something natural to it, so that whatever is corrupt or foul is "ugly"; or relative, and this is when there lacks in anything the beauty of something nobler than itself to which it is compared, as though it strove to imitate that thing, granted that it has something of the same nature, as when Augustine,

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and death," RV X.121.2) in Him as the Supreme Identity no more implies a composition than does the *principium conjunctum* of St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* I.27.2C, as cited above.

All these considerations, which at first sight appear to pertain rather to theology than aesthetics, have an immediate bearing upon the mediaeval representation of God's majesty and wrath, as manifested, for example, on the Judgment Day, to which Ulrich himself refers at the close of his treatise. When we consider actual representations of the Last Judgment, it is needful to be aware that God was thought of here as no less beautiful in His wrath than elsewhere in His love, and that the representations of the damned and of the blessed in art and as representations were regarded as equally beautiful; as St. Thomas says (*Sum. Theol.* I.39.8), "an image is said to be beautiful if it perfectly represents even an ugly thing," and this accords with the (unstated) converse of St. Augustine's dictum that things are not beautiful merely because they please us. *Sum. Theol.* III.94.1 *ad* 2 and III.95.5C, says also, "Although the beauty of the thing seen conduces to the perfection of vision, there may be deformity of the thing seen without imperfection of vision; because the images of things, whereby the soul knows contraries, are not themselves contrary," and, "We delight in knowing evil things, although the evil things themselves delight us not," as in KU V.11: "Even as the Sun, the eye of the universe, is not contaminated by the defects of things outwardly seen, so the Inner Self of all beings is uncontaminated by the evil in the world, which evil is external to it" [cf. *Mathnawī* II.2535, 2542; III.1372]. In affirming that the beauty of the work of art does not depend on the beauty of the theme, mediaeval and modern aesthetic meet on common ground.

De natura boni contra Manicheos, C. 22, says that "In the form of a man, beauty is greater, in comparison wherewith the beauty of a monkey is called a deformity."[24]

Augustine, in the Book of Questions [*De diversibus quaestionibus*] LXXXIII [q. 30], also says that the worthy (*honestum*) is an intelligible beauty, or what we properly call a spiritual beauty, and he also says there that visible beauties are also called values, but less properly. Whence it seems that the beautiful and the worthy are the same; and this agrees with Cicero's definition of both (as cited above). But this is so to be understood, that as the ugly (*turpe*) is referred to in two ways, either generally with respect to any deforming defect, or alternatively with respect of a voluntary and culpable defect, so also the worthy is referred to in two ways, either generally with respect to whatever is adorned (*decoratum*) by a participation in anything divine, or particularly with respect to whatever perfects the adornment (*decor*, Skr. *alaṃkāra*) of the rational creature.[25] According to the first way, the worthy is synonymous with the good and the beautiful; but there is a triple distinction, inasmuch as the goodness of a thing is its perfection, the beauty of a thing is the comeliness of its formality, and the worthy belongs to anything when it is compared to something else, so that it pleases and delights the spectator either intellectually or sensibly. For that is what Cicero's definition, "attracts us by its power, etc.," amounts to. What is to be understood is a matter of propriety (*aptitudo*), for all the terms of a definition bespeak what is proper (to the thing defined).

[24] The assumption is implied that monkey and man have something in common, both being animals; and further, that the monkey is a would-be man, man being taken to be the most perfect animal, and all things tending to their ultimate perfection. Psychologically, a certain analogy can be recognized in the modern theory of evolution, which is anthropocentric in the same sense. The comparison of monkey and man (which derives from Plato, *Hippias Major* 289A) cannot be fairly made except, as Augustine makes it, relatively; for things are only beautiful or good in their kind, and if two things are equally beautiful in their kind we cannot say that one is more beautiful or better than another absolutely, all kinds as such being equally good and beautiful, viz. in their eternal reasons, though there is hierarchy *ab extra*, in *ordo per esse* [on the outside, in the order of being --Ed. trans.]. Things as they are in God, viz. in kind or intelligible species, are all the same, and it is only as being exemplified that they can be ranked.

[25] "Worth" (*honestas*) can be predicated *secundum quod* (*aliquid*) *habet spiritualem decorem.... Dicitur enim aliquid honestun...inquantum habet quemdam decorem ex ordinatione rationis. Delectabile autem propter se appetitur appetitu sensitivo* [to the degree that something has spiritual adornment ... for something to be called worthy ... inasmuch as it has some adornment from a rational ordering. (It is called) delightful inasmuch as it is desired by sensuous appetite –Ed. trans.] (*Sum. Theol.* II-II.145.3 and 4).

In the second way the worthy is not synonymous with the good, but is a division of the good when the good is divided into the worthy, the useful, and the delightful. And in the same way it is a part of the beautiful and not synonymous with it, but such that what is worthy, viz. grace and virtues, is an accidental beauty in the rational or intellectual creature. Isidorus likewise says in *De summo bono*, "The adornment of things consists in what is beautiful and appropriate (*pulcher et aptus*)," and so these three, adornment, beauty, and propriety are differentiated. For whatever makes a thing comely (*decens*) is called adornment (*decor*), whether it be in the thing or externally adapted to it, as ornaments of clothing and jewels and the like. Hence, adornment is common to the beautiful and appropriate. And these two, according to Isidorus, differ as absolute and relative, because whatever is ordered to the ornamentation of something else is appropriate to it, as clothes or ornaments to bodies, and grace and virtues to spiritual substances; but whatever is its own adornment is called beautiful, as in the case of a man, or angel, or like creature.

So that beauty in creatures is by way of being a formal cause in relation to matter, or to whatever is formed and in this respect corresponds to matter. From these considerations it is plainly evident, as Dionysius says, that light is prior to beauty, being its cause. For as physical light is the cause of the beauty of all colors, so the Formal Light is of the beauty of all forms.[26] But the category of the delightful coincides with both because, besides being made visible, the beautiful is what is desired by everyone, and therewith also beloved, for, as Augustine, *De civitate Dei* [XIV.7], says, desire for a thing not in possession, and love of a thing possessed are the same,[27] and since desire of this sort necessarily has an

[26] Ulrich naturally presupposes in the reader a familiarity with the fundamental doctrine of exemplarism, without which it would be impossible to grasp the meaning of "formal light." Those who are not versed in the doctrine of exemplarism may consult J. M. Bissen, *L'Exemplarisme divin selon Saint Bonaventure* (Paris, 1929). The doctrine of the inherence of the many in the one is common to all traditional teaching; it may be briefly summarized in Eckhart's "single form that is the form of very different things" (Skr. *viśvam ekam*) and "image-bearing light" (Skr. *jyotir viśvarūpam*), cf. St. Bonaventura, *I Sent.*, d.35, a.unic. q.2 *ad* 2, "A sort of illustration can be adduced in light, which is one numerically but gives expression to many and various kinds of color."

[27] Ulrich misquotes Augustine (who is cited also by St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* II-I.25.2); what Augustine says is that "love yearning to possess the beloved object is desire; but having and enjoying it, is joy," and Meister Eckhart, Evans ed., I, 82, follows when he says, "We desire a thing while as yet we do not possess it. When we have it, we love it, desire then falling away." The greater profundity of Augustine's and Eckhart's understanding is evident. Augustine says too, *De Trinitate* X.10, "We enjoy what we have

object of its own kind, the natural desire for what is good and beautiful is for the good as such and for the beautiful insofar as it is the same as the good, as Dionysius says, who uses this argument to prove that the good and the beautiful are the same.

Dionysius, however, propounds many characteristics of the divine Beauty, saying that beauty and the beautiful are not divided into participant and participated in God, as is the case in creatures, but are altogether the same in Him. Also that it is the efficient cause of all beauty, "in the likeness of light sending forth to everything," together with idiosyncrasy, "the beautifying distributions of its own frontal radiance," and this applies to Him in mode of beauty inasmuch as God is in this way the efficient cause and in causal operation pours out perfections. Thus cometh goodness from Goodness, beauty from Beauty, wisdom from Wisdom, and so forth. Again, it "summons all things to itself," as that which is desirable evokes desire, and the Greek name for beauty shows this. For *kalos* meaning "good" and *kalos* meaning "beautiful," are taken from *kalo* which is to "call" or "cry";[28] not merely that God called all things into being out of nothing when He spake and they were made [Psalm 149.5], but also that as being beautiful and good He is the end that summons all desire unto Himself, and by the calling and desire moves all things to move toward this end in all that they do, and so He holds all things together in participation of Himself by the love of His own Beauty. Again, in all things He assembles all things that are theirs inasmuch as in His mode of Beauty He pours out every form, as light unites all the parts of a composite thing in its own being, and Dionysius says the same. Just as ignorance is divisive of those things that wander (*ignorantia divisiva est errantium*),[29] so the presence of the intelligible

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when the delighted will is at rest therein," and this proposition, like so many in Scholastic philosophy, is equally valid from the theological and the aesthetic points of view, which in the last analysis are inseparable: cf. the Indian view of the "tasting of *rasa*" (i.e., "aesthetic experience") as "connatural with the tasting of Brahman" (*Sāhitya Darpaṇa* III.2-3, where *sahodaraḥ* is equivalent to *ex uno fonte* [from one source - Ed. trans.]).

[28] This etymology is ultimately derived from Plato, C*ratylus* 416C: "To have called (*to kalesan*) things useful is one and the same thing as to speak of the beautiful (*to kalon*). Then through Plotinus, Hermes, Proklus, and Dionysius it reaches Ulrich. It is, of course, a hermeneutic rather than a scientific etymology.

[29] *Ignorantia* = Skr. *avidyā*, "knowledge-of," objective, empirical, relative knowledge. Cf. BU IV.4.19, "Only by Intellect (*manasā*) can it be seen that 'There is no plurality of Him'"; and KU IV.14, "Just as water rained upon a lofty peak runs here and there (*vidhāvati* = *errat*) amongst the hills, so one who sees the principles in multiplicity (*dharmāṇy pṛthak paśyam*) pursues after them (*anudhāvati* = *vagatur*)." Ulrich's *errantium* = Skr. *samsārasya.*

Light assembles and unites all things that it illuminates. Moreover, "it is neither created nor destroyed," whether in act or in potentiality, being beautiful essentially and not by participation. For neither are such things made, nor being in such a nature are they subject to corruption. Beauty is neither made to be beautiful, nor can it be made to be otherwise than beautiful. So, again, "there can be neither increase nor decrease of Beauty" whether in act or in potentiality, because as being the limit of beauty it cannot be increased, and because not having any opposite it cannot be diminished. "Nor is it beautiful in some part of its essence and ugly in another" as are all beauties that depend upon a cause; which are beautiful in proportion to their likeness to the primal Beautiful, but in the measure of their imperfection when compared to it, and to the extent that they are like to what is naught, are ugly; which cannot be in Him Whose essence is Beauty, and so it is possible for the beautiful to be ugly, but not indeed for Beauty to be ugly. "Nor is it beautiful in one place and not in another," as is the case with those other and created things which were naturally deformed when the "earth was without form and void" (Genesis 1:2), and afterwards were formed when the Spirit of God moved over the waters warming (*fovens*)[30] and forming all things; and as thus they take their beauty from another, without which other they might not be beautiful, for as Avicenna (*Metaphysics*) says, everything that receives anything from another may also not receive it from that other. But there is nothing of this sort in the First Cause of beauty, which gets its beauty from itself; this is no matter of a possible beauty, but of inevitable and infallible necessity. "Nor is it beautiful in one relation and ugly in another," after the manner of creatures, each of which is comparatively ugly; for the less elegant is ugly when compared to what is more beautiful, and the most beautiful is ugly when compared with the uncreated Beauty. As in Job 4:18, "Behold, He put no trust in His servants; and His angels He charged with folly," where he is comparing them with God whence it is laid down: No man can be justified if he be compared to God. Similarly, Job 15:15, "Behold, He putteth no trust in His saints: yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight." Hence, He alone is the Most Beautiful simply, nor has He any relative deformity. Again, he "is not beautiful in one place and not in

[30] *Fovere* = Skr. *tap*. Cf. AĀ II.4.3, "He glowed upon (*abhyatapata*) the Waters, and from the Waters that were set aglow (*abhitaptābhyah*) a form (*mūrtiḥ*) was born"; AĀ II.2.1, "He who glows (*tapati*) is the Spiritus (*prāṇah*)"; and JUB I.54, where "He who glows yonder" is the Supernal Sun, *Āditya*; also AV X.7.32, "proceeding in a glowing (*tapasi*) on the face (lit. *pṛṣṭhe*, 'back') of the Waters."

another," as is the beautiful that is in some things and not in another, as if He had exemplary Beauty for some things and for some others had it not; but since He is of perfect beauty, He has simply and singly in Himself all of Beauty without any deduction therefrom.

And as besides the goodness in which the goodness of individual things subsists there is a certain goodness of the universe, so also beside the beauty of individual things there is one beauty of the whole universe, which beauty results from the integration of all that is beautiful in any manner to make one most beautiful world, wherein the highest and divine Beauty can be participated in by the creature; and as to these things, it is said in Genesis 2:1, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished (*perfecti*)," which is to be taken as referring to the goodness of all their adornment (*ornatus*), that is, to their beauty.[31] And since there

[31] The doctrine of the beauty of the universe integrally, as being greater than that of any of its parts, is extensively developed in Christian Scholastic as well as in Oriental philosophy; we hope to be able to present subsequently a translation of Hugo of St. Victor, *De tribus diebus* C. 4-13, in which he treats of the beauty of the world as a whole and in its parts, combining the theological and aesthetic points of view [this translation apparently was never done by Coomaraswamy –Ed.]. As regards Genesis 2:1, St. Augustine (*Confessions* XIII.28) emphasizes the concept of the greater beauty of the whole when he says, "Thou sawest everything that Thou hadst made, and behold it was not only Good, but also Very Good, as being now all together." This beauty of the whole universe, viz. of all that has been, is, or will be anywhere, is that of the "world-picture" as God sees it, and as it may be seen by others in the eternal mirror of the divine intellect, according to their capacity; as Augustine says (*De civ. Dei* XII.29) with reference to angelic (Skr. *adhidaivata*, *parokṣa*) understanding, "The eternal mirror leads the minds of those who look in it to a knowledge of all things, and better than in any other way." The divine "satisfaction," expressed in the words of Genesis "saw that it was very good," represents the perfection of "aesthetic" experience, as also in Śaṇkarācārya's *Svātma-nirūpāna* 95, "The Ultimate Essence, regarding the world-picture painted by the Essence on the vast canvas of the Essence takes a great delight therein," echoed in the *Siddhāntamuktāvalī*, p. 181, "I behold the world as a picture, I see the Essence"; all this corresponding to the Vedic concept of the Supernal Sun as the "eye" of Varuṇa wherewith He "surveys the whole universe" (*viśvam abhicaṣṭe*, RV I.164.44, cf. VII.61.1), and in Buddhism to the designation of the Buddha as "the eye of the world," *cakkhuṃ loke*. All the contempt of the world which has been attributed to Christianity and to the Vedānta is directed not against the world as seen in its perfection, *sub specie aeternitatis* [under the aspect of eternity –Ed. trans.], and in the mirror of the speculative intellect, but against an empirical vision of the world as made up of independently self-subsistent parts to which we attribute an intrinsic goodness or badness based on our own liking or disliking, the "two highwaymen" or "footpaths" of BG III.34 (cf. V.20, VI.32). "It naught availeth to be wroth at things" (Euripides, *Bell.* fr. 289). "Many are the injustices we commit when we attach an absolute value" to the contraries, pain and pleasure, death and life, over which we have no control, and "he clearly acts impiously who is not himself neutral (*epises*) towards them" (Marcus Aurelius VI.41, IX.1). For "there is no evil in things, but only in

cannot be a more perfect beauty than the universally perfect, unless it be the superperfect Beauty that is in God alone, it is true, as Cicero says, *De natura Deorum* [II:87], that "all the parts of the World are so constituted that they could not be better for use nor more beautiful in their kind." But this must be understood according to the distinction made above,[32] where it was shown in what manner the universe can be either more or less good. For in the same way it can be more or less beautiful. Because since whatever is deformed either has some beauty in it, as in the case of monstrosities or that of penal evil, or alternatively raises the beauty of its opposite to a higher degree, as in the case of natural defect or moral sin, it is clear that deformities themselves have their source in the beauty of the universe, viz. insofar as they are beautiful essentially or accidentally, or on the contrary do not originate thence, viz. insofar as they are privations of beauty. Whence it follows that the beauty of the universe cannot be increased or diminished; because what is diminished in one part is increased in another, either intensively, when goods are seen to be the more beautiful when contrasted with their opposite evils, or extensively, in that the corruption of one thing is the generation of another, and the deformity of guilt is repaired by the beauty of justice in the penalty.[33] There are also certain other things that do

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the sinner's misuse of them" (St. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* III.12): impartiality, apathy, ataraxia, patience, *upekṣā*, *sama-dṛṣṭi*, these are the indispensable prerequisites for any true activity; the so-called actions that are "economically" determined by likes and dislikes are not really acts but only a passive, pathetic reaction or behaviorism.

If we ignore the appreciation of the beauty of the world that is a fundamental doctrine in Scholastic philosophy, we shall be in great danger of misinterpreting the whole "spirit" of Gothic art. It is true that Christian art is anything but "naturalistic" in our modern and idolatrous sense (cf. Blake's protest, when he says that he is "afraid that Wordsworth is fond of nature"); but for all its abstraction, or, in other words, its intellectuality, it is saturated with a sense of the formal beauty that is proper to everything in its kind and coincident with its natural life; and unless we recognize that *this* naturalism is altogether consistent with what is explicitly affirmed in the underlying philosophy, we are very likely to commit the romantic error of supposing that whatever in Gothic art seems to be taken directly from nature or to be "true to nature" represents an interpolation of profane experience; in other words, we shall run the risk of seeing in the art an interior conflict that is altogether foreign to it and really belongs only to ourselves.

[32] Viz. in the preceding chapter of the *Summa de bono* which deals with the "Good of the Universe."

[33] Cf. our "poetic justice." It may be observed that Beauty as an efficient cause of all specific beauties can be compared to the scientific concept of Energy as manifested in a diversity of forces, the notion of a conservation of Beauty corresponding to that of the conservation of Energy. But it must not be overlooked that these are analogies on different levels of reference.

not depend on the natural beauty of the universe, as not being derived from this natural beauty essentially, nor accidents of this natural beauty arising from the essential principles of the universe, but yet pour out abundantly a supernatural beauty in the universe, as in the case of gifts of graces, the incarnation of the Son of God, the renewal of the world, the glorification of the saints, the penalty of the damned, and in general whatever is miraculous. For grace is a supernatural likeness of the divine Beauty. And through the incarnation every creature really participates in the essence of the divine Beauty, by a natural and personal union with it, before which creatures participated in it only by similitude; for as Gregory says [*Hom.* XX in *Evangelia*, *n.* 7, see Migne, *Series latina*], "Man is in a manner all creatures."[34] Moreover, by the renewal of the world and the glorification of the saints the universe in all its essential parts is adorned with a new glory; and by the punishment of the wicked and the order of divine providence, the further adornment of justice, which is now seen but darkly, is poured out into the world; and in miracles, all the creature's passive powers are reduced to act—and every act is the "beauty" of its potentiality.

3. St. Thomas Aquinas
"On the Divine Beautiful, and how it is attributed to God"[35]

"This good is praised by the sainted theologians as the beautiful and as beauty; and as love and the lovely." After Dionysius has treated of light, he now treats of the beautiful, for the understanding of which light is prerequisite. In this connection, he first lays down that the beautiful is attributed to God, and secondly, he shows in what manner it is attributed to Him, saying: "The beautiful and beauty are indivisible in their cause, which embraces All in One."

[34] It is in this sense that as Meister Eckhart says (Evans ed., I, 380), "creatures never rest till they have gotten into human nature; therein do they attain to their original form, God namely." Intellect, being conformable to whatever is knowable, "raises up all things into God," so that "I alone take all things out of their sense and make them one in me."(I, 87 and 380). And this is precisely what the artist does, whose first gesture (*actus primus*, Aquinas, *De coelo et mundo* II.4 and 5) is an interior and contemplative act (Skr. *dhyāna*) in which the intellect envisages the thing not as the senses know it, nor with respect to its value, but as intelligible form or species; the likeness of which he afterwards (*actus secundus*) proceeds to embody in the material, "similitude being with respect to the form" (*Sum. Theol.* I.5.4).

[35] Aquinas, *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis*, *Opera omnia* (Parma, 1864), opusc. VII, c.4, lect. 5.

He says first, therefore, that this supersubstantial "good," which is God, "is praised by the sainted theologians" in Holy Writ: "as the beautiful," [as in] the Song of Songs 1:15, "Lo! thou art beautiful, my beloved," and "as beauty," [as in] Psalm 95:6, "Praise and beauty are before Him," and "as love," [as in] John 4:16, "God is love," and "as lovely," according to the text from the Song of Songs, "and by whatever other befitting names" of God are proper to beauty, whether in its causal aspect, and this is with reference to "the beautiful and beauty," or inasmuch as beauty is pleasing, and this is with reference to "love and the lovely." Hence in saying: "The beautiful and beauty are indivisible in their cause, which embraces All in One," he shows how it is attributed to God; and here he does three things. First, he premises that the beautiful and beauty are attributed differently to God and to creatures; second, how beauty is attributed to creatures, saying: "In existing things, the beautiful and beauty are distinguished as participations and participants, for we call beautiful what participates in beauty, and beauty the participation of the beautifying power which is the cause of all that is beautiful in things"[36]; third, how it is attributed to God, saying that "the supersubstantial beautiful is rightly called Beauty absolutely."

Hence he says, first, that in the first cause, that is, in God, the beautiful and beauty are not divided as if in Him the beautiful was one thing, and beauty another. The reason is that the First Cause, because of its simplicity and perfection, embraces by itself "All," that is everything, "in One."[37] Hence, although in creatures the beautiful and beauty differ, nevertheless God in Himself embraces both, in unity, and identity.

Next, when he says "In existing things, the beautiful and beauty are distinguished ... ," he shows how they are to be attributed to creatures, saying that in existing things the beautiful and beauty are distinguished as "participations" and "participants," for the beautiful is what participates in beauty, and beauty is the participation of the First Cause, which makes all things beautiful. The creature's beauty is naught else but a likeness (*similitudo*) of divine beauty participated in by things.[38]

[36] The beautiful thing is a participant just as "all beings are not their own being apart from God, but beings by participation" (St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* I.44.1), and in the same way that "creation is the emanation of all being from the Universal Being" (*ibid.*, 45.4 ad 1).

[37] For the convergence of all particular beauties in the divine service, cf. CU IV.15.2; also Plato, *Phaedo* 100D; *Republic* 476D.

[38] Here the concept of participation is qualified by the statement that the mode of participation is by likeness. That the word "being" (*essentia*) is used of the being of things

Next, when he says "But the supersubstantial beautiful is rightly indeed called Beauty, because the beautiful that is in existing things according to their several natures is derived from it," he shows how the aforesaid [beautiful and Beauty] are attributed to God: first how Beauty is attributed to Him, and second, how the beautiful. "Beautiful," as being at the same time most beautiful, and superbeautiful. Therefore he says first that God, who is "the supersubstantial beautiful, is called Beauty," and, for this reason, second, that He bestows on all created beings "according to their idiosyncrasy." For the beauty of the spirit and the beauty of the body are different, and again the beauties of different bodies are different. And in what consists the essence of their beauty he shows when he goes on to say that God transmits beauty to all things inasmuch as He is the "cause of harmony and lucidity" (*causa consonantiae et claritatis*). For so it is that we call a man beautiful on account of the suitable proportion of his members in size and placement and when he has a clear and bright color (*propter decentem proportionem membrorum in quantitate et situ, et propter hoc quod habet clarum et nitidum colorem*). Hence, applying the same principle proportionately in other beings, we see that any of them is called beautiful according as it has its own generic lucidity (*claritatem sui generis*), spiritual or bodily as the case may be, and according as it is constituted with due proportion.

How God is the cause of this lucidity he shows, saying that God sends out upon each creature, together with a certain flashing (*quodam fulgore*),[39] a distribution of His luminous "raying" (*radii*) which is the font of all light; which flashing "distributions (*traditiones*) are to be understood as a participation of likeness; and these distributions are beautifying," that is to say, are the makers of the beauty that is in things.

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in themselves and also of their being principally in God, and therefore as God, does not imply that their being in themselves, as realities in nature, is a *fraction* of His being; and in the same stay their beauty (which, as *integritas sive perfectio* [integrity or perfection –Ed. trans.], is the measure of their being) is not a fraction of the Universal Beauty, but a reflection or likeness (*similitudo*, Skr., *pratibimba*, *pratimāna*, etc.) of it; cf. *Sum. Theol.* I.4.3. Likeness is of different kinds: (1) of nature, and is called "likeness of univocation or participation" with reference to this nature, as in the case of the Father and the Son; (2) of imitation, or participation by analogy; and (3) exemplary, or expressive. The creature's participation in the divine being and beauty is to some extent of the second, and mainly of the third sort. The distinctions made here are Bonaventura's; for references see Bissen, *L'Exemplarisme divin selon Saint Bonaventure*, pp.23 ff., and for exemplarism generally, Coomaraswamy, "Vedic Exemplarism," 1936.

[39] *Fulgor* corresponds to Skr. *tejas*.

Again, he explains the other part, viz. that God is the cause of the "harmony" (*consonantia*) that is in things. But this harmony in things is of two sorts. The first as regards the order of creatures to God, and he touches upon this when he says that God is the cause of harmony "for that it summons all things to itself," inasmuch as He (or it) turns about all things toward Himself (or itself), as being their end, as was said above; wherefore in the Greek, beauty is called *kalos* which is derived from [the verb *kaleō* which means] "to summon." And second, harmony is in creatures accordingly as they are ordered to one another; and this he touches upon when he says that it gathers together all in all to be one and same. Which may be understood in the sense of the Platonists, viz. that higher things are in the lower by participation, the lower in the higher eminently (*per excellentiam quandam*),[40] and thus all things are in all. And since all things are thus found in all according to some order, it follows that all are ordered to one and the same last end.[41]

[40] Lower and higher things differ in nature, as, for example, an effigy in stone differs from a man in the flesh. The higher are contained in the lower formally, or, as here expressed, "by participation," the "form" of the living man, for example, being in the effigy as its formal cause or pattern; or as the Soul in the body, or "spirit" in the "letter." *Vice versa*, the lower is in the higher "more excellently," the form of the effigy, for example, being alive in the man.

[41] The "end" of anything is that toward which its movement tends, and in which this movement comes to rest, which may be simply illustrated by the case of the arrow and its target; and as we have already seen, all sin, including "artistic sin," consists in a "departure from the order to the end." Here we are told that it is the beauty of God by which we are attracted to Him, as to man's last end; and inasmuch as Dionysius affirms the coincidence of love and beauty, there can be seen here an illustration of Eckhart's dictum to the effect that we desire a thing while as yet we do not possess it, but when we possess it, love it, or as Augustine expresses it, enjoy it; desire and attraction implying pursuit, love and fruition implying rest; see also the following note.

The superiority of contemplation, perfected in *raptus* [rapture, ecstatic transport –Ed. trans.] (Skr. *samādhi*), to action is assumed; which is, indeed, the orthodox point of view, consistently maintained in universal tradition and by no means only (as sometimes assumed) in the Orient, however it may have been obscured by the moralistic tendencies of modern European religious philosophy. The Scholastic treatment of "beauty" as an essential name of God exactly parallels that of the Hindu rhetoric, in which "aesthetic experience" (*rasāsvādana*, lit. "the tasting of flavor") is called the very twin of the "tasting of God" (*brahmāsvādana*). A clear distinction of contemplative experience from aesthetic pleasure is involved; "tasting" is not a "matter of taste" (Skr. *tat lagnam hṛd*, "what sticks to the heart"). Just as "with finding God, all progress ends" (Eckhart), so in perfect contemplative experience the operation of the attracting power of beauty—aesthetic pleasure as distinct from the "rapture" of disinterested contemplation—is at an end. If action ensues, when the contemplative returns to the plane of conduct, as is inevitable, this will neither add to nor detract from the higher "value" of the contempla-

Thereafter, when he speaks of "the beautiful as being at the same time most beautiful and superbeautiful, superexistent in one and the same mode," he shows how the beautiful is predicated of God. And first he shows that it is predicated by excess; and second that it is said with respect to causality: "From this beautiful it is that there are individual beauties in existing things each in its own manner." As regards the former proposition he does two things. First, he sets forth the fact of the excess; second, he explains it "as superexistent in one and the same mode." Now there are two sorts of excess: one within a genus, and this is signified by comparative and superlative, the other, outside of genus, and this is signified by the addition of this preposition *super*. For example, if we say that a fire exceeds in heat by an excess within the genus, that is as much as to say that it is very hot; but the sun exceeds by an excess outside the genus, whence we say, not that it is very hot, but that it is superhot, because heat is not in it in the same

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tive experience. On the other hand, the action itself will be really, although not necessarily perceptibly, of another sort than before, as being now a manifestation, rather than motivated; in other words, whereas the individual may previously have acted or striven to act according to a concept of "duty" (or more technically stated, "prudently") and, as it were, against himself, he will now be acting spontaneously (Skr. *sahaja*) and, as it were, of himself (or as St. Thomas so grandly expressed it, "the perfect cause acts for the love of what it has," and Eckhart, "willingly but not from will"); it is in this sense that "Jesus was all virtue, because he acted from impulse and not from rules" (Blake). It scarcely needs to be said that the self-confidence of "genius" is far removed from the "spontaneity" referred to here; our spontaneity is rather that of the workman who is "in full possession of his art," which may or may not be the case of "genius."

These considerations should be found of value by the student of T. V. Smith's thoughtful volume, *Beyond Conscience* (New York and London, 1934), in which he speaks of "the richness of the aesthetic pattern furnished by conscience to understanding," and suggests that "the last ought impulse of the imperious conscience would be [i.e., should be] to legislate itself into an abiding object for the contemplative self" (p. 355). It is only from the modern sentimental position (in which the will is exalted at the expense of the intellect) that such an assertion of the superiority of "aesthetic" contemplation could appear "shocking." If we do now shrink from the doctrine of the superiority of contemplation, it is mainly for two reasons, both dependent on the sentimental fallacy: first because, in opposition to the traditional doctrine that beauty has primarily to do with cognition, we now think of aesthetic contemplation as merely a kind of heightened emotion; and second, because of the currency of that monstrous perversion of the truth according to which it is argued that, because of his greater sensibilities, a moral license should be allowed to the artist *as a man*, greater than is allowed to other men. If only because to some extent the painter always paints himself "it is not enough to be a painter, a great and skilful master; I believe that one must further be of blameless life, even if possible a saint, that the Holy Spirit may inspire one's understanding" (Michelangelo, quoted in A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy*, Oxford, 1940, p. 71; cf. St. Augustine, *De ordine* 2.XIX.50).

way, but eminently. And granted that this double excess is not found simultaneously in things caused, we say, nevertheless, that God is both most beautiful and superbeautiful; not as if He were in any genus, but because all things that are in any genus are attributed to Him.

Then when he says "and superexistent," he explains what he had said. First, he explains why God is called most beautiful, and second, why He is called superbeautiful, saying "and as it were the fount of all the beautiful, and in itself preeminently possessed of beauty." For, as a thing is called more white the more it is unmixed with black, so likewise a thing is called more beautiful the more it is removed from any defect of beauty. Now there are two sorts of defect of beauty in creatures: first, there are some things that have a changeable beauty, as may be seen in corruptible things. This defect he excludes from God by saying first that God is always beautiful after one and the same mode, and so any alteration of beauty is precluded. And again, there is neither generation nor corruption of beauty in Him, nor any dimming, nor any increase or decrease, such as is seen in corporeal things. The second defect of beauty is that all creatures have a beauty that is in some way a particularized [individual] nature. Now this defect he excludes from God as regards every kind of particularization, saying that God is not beautiful in one part and ugly in another as sometimes happens in particular things; nor beautiful at one time and not at another, as happens in things of which the beauty is in time: nor again is He beautiful in relation to one and not to another, as happens in all things that are ordered to one determined use or end—for if they are applied to another use or end, their harmony (*consonantia*), and therefore their beauty, is no longer maintained; nor again is He beautiful in one place and not in another, as happens in some things because to some they seem and to others do not seem to be beautiful. But God is beautiful to all and simply.

And for all these premises he gives the reason when he adds that He is beautiful "in Himself," thereby denying that He is beautiful in one part alone, and at one time alone, for that which belongs to a thing in itself and primordially, belongs to it all and always and everywhere. Again, God is beautiful in Himself, not in relation to any determined thing. And hence it cannot be said that He is beautiful in relation to this, but not in relation to that; nor beautiful to these persons, and not to those. Again, He is always and uniformly beautiful; whereby the first defect of beauty is excluded.

Then when he says "and as being in Himself preeminently possessed of beauty," the fount of all the beautiful, he shows for what reason God is called superbeautiful, viz. inasmuch as He possesses in Himself

supremely and before all others the fount of all beauty. For in this, the simple and supernatural nature of all things beautiful that derive from it, all of beauty and all the beautiful preexist, not indeed separately, but "uniformally," after the mode in which many effects preexist in one cause. Then when he says: "From this beautiful it is that there is being (*esse*) in all existing things and that individual things are beautiful each in its own way," he shows how the beautiful is predicated of God as cause. First, he posits this causality of the beautiful; second, he explains it, saying, "and it is the principle of all things." He says first, therefore, that from this beautiful proceeds "the being in all existing things." For lucidity (*claritas*) is indispensable for beauty, as was said: and every form whereby anything has being, is a certain participation of the divine lucidity, and this is what he adds, "that individual things are beautiful each in its own way," that is, according to its own form. Hence it is evident that it is from the divine beauty that the being of all things is derived (*ex divina pulchritudine esse omnium derivatur*). Again, likewise, it has been said that harmony is indispensable for beauty, hence, everything that is in any way proper to harmony proceeds from the divine beauty; and this is what he adds, that because of the divine good are all the "agreements" (*concordiae*) of rational creatures in the realm of intellect—for they are in agreement who consent to the same proposition; and "friendships" (*amicitiae*) in the realm of the affections; and "fellowships" (*communiones*) in the realm of action or with respect to any external matter; and in general, whatever bond of union there may be between all creatures is by virtue of the beautiful.

Then when he says, "and it is the principle of all things beautiful," he explains what he had said about the causality of the beautiful. First, about the nature of causing; and second, about the variety of causes, saying: "This one good and beautiful is the only cause of all and sundry beauties and goods." As regards the first, he does two things. First, he gives the reason why the beautiful is called a cause; second, he draws a corollary from his statements, saying, "therefore the good and the beautiful are the same." Therefore he says first, that the beautiful "is the principle of all things as being their efficient cause," giving them being, and "moving" cause, and "maintaining" cause, that is preserving "all things," for it is evident that these three belong to the category of the efficient cause, the function of which is to give being, to move, and to preserve.

But some efficient causes act by their desire for the end, and this belongs to an imperfect cause that does not yet possess what it desires. On the other hand, the perfect cause acts for the love of what it has;

hence he says that the beautiful, which is God, is the efficient, moving, and maintaining cause "by love of its own beauty." For since He possesses His own beauty, he wishes it to be multiplied as much as possible, viz. by the communication of his likeness.[42] Then he says that the

[42] All this has a direct bearing upon our notions of "aesthetic" appreciation. All love, delight, satisfaction, and rest in (as distinguished from desire for) anything, implies a possession (*delectatio autem vel amor est complementum appetitus* [delight or love is the complement of appetite –Ed. trans.], Witelo, *Liber de intelligentiis* XVIII); it is in another way, "in an imperfect cause that is not yet in possession of what it desires," that love means "desire" (*appetitus naturalis vel amor*, *Sum. Theol.* I.60.1). See also Augustine and Eckhart as cited in n. 27.

Delight or satisfaction may be either aesthetic (sensible) or intellectual (rational). Only the latter pertains to "life," the nature of which is to be in act; the satisfactions that are felt by the senses being not an act, but a habit or passion (Witelo, *Liber de intelligentiis* XVIII, XIX): the work of art then only pertains to our "life" when it has been *understood*, and not when it has only been *felt.*

The delight or satisfaction that pertains to the life of the mind arises "by the union of the active power with the exemplary form to which it is ordered" (Witelo, *Liber de intelligentiis* XVIII). The pleasure felt by the artist is of this kind; the exemplary form of the thing to be made being "alive" in him and a part of his "life" (*omnes res ... in artifice creato dicuntur vivere* [everything ... created by art is called alive –Ed. trans.], St. Bonaventura, I *Sent.* d.36, a.2, q.1 *ad* 4) as the form of his intellect, therewith identified (Dante, C*onvito*, Canzone IV.iii.53 and 54, and IV.10.10-11; Plotinus, IV.4.2; Philo, *De opificio mundi* 20). Cf. Coomaraswamy, *Why Exhibit Works of Art?* 1943, p.46. With respect to this intellectual identification with the form of the thing to be made, involved in the *actus primus*, or free act of contemplation, the artist "himself" (spiritually) becomes the formal cause: in the *actus secundus*, or servile act of operation, the artist "himself" (psycho-physically) becomes an instrument, or efficient cause. Under these conditions, "pleasure perfects the operation" (*Sum. Theol.* II-I.33.4C).

Analogous to the artist's providential satisfaction in possession of the exemplary form of the thing to be made is the spectator's subsequent delight in the thing that has been made (as distinguished from his pleasure in the use of it). This second and "reflex delight" (*delectatio reflexa*, Witelo, *Liber de intelligentiis* XX) is what we really mean by that of a "disinterested aesthetic contemplation," though this is an awkward phrase because "disinterested aesthetic" is a contradiction in terms. The reflex delight is no more, in fact, a sensation than was the former delight in a thing that had not yet been made; it is again a "life of the intellect" (*vita cognoscitiva*), depending upon "the union of the active power with the exemplary form to which it is ordered" (*ibid.*, XVIII): "ordered," or "occasioned," now by the sight of the thing that has been made, and not, as before, by the need for making.

With this second identification of an intellect with its object, and consequent delight or satisfaction, the artifact, dead matter in itself, comes to be "alive" in the spectator as it was in the artist; and once more it can be said that the love of the thing becomes a love of one's (true) self. It is in this sense, indeed, that "it is not for the sake of things themselves, but for the sake of the Self that all things are dear" (BU IV.5).

Both of these delights or satisfactions (*delectatio et delectatio reflexa*) are proper to God as the Divine Artificer and Spectator, but not in Him as successive acts of being, He being at the same time both artist and patron.

beautiful, which is God, is "the end of all things, as being their final cause." For all things are made so that they may somewhat imitate the divine Beauty. Third, it is the exemplary [i.e., formal] cause; for it is according to the divine beautiful that all things are distinguished, and the sign of this is that no one takes pains to make an image or a representation except for the sake of the beautiful.[43]

Then, in that he says "the good and the beautiful are the same," he draws a corollary from the aforesaid, saying that because the beautiful is in so many ways the cause of being, therefore, "the good and the beautiful are the same," for all things desire the beautiful and the good as a cause in every one of these ways, and because there is "nothing that does not participate in the beautiful and the good," everything being beautiful and good with respect to its proper form.

Moreover, we can boldly say that "the nonexistent," that is to say, primary matter, "participates in the beautiful and the good," since the nonexistent primal being (*ens primum non existens*, Skr. *asat*) has a certain likeness to the divine beautiful and good. For the beautiful and good

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The "love of His own beauty" is explained above as the reason of a multiplication of similitudes, for just as it belongs to the nature of light to reveal itself by a raying, so "the perfection of the active power consists in a multiplication of itself" (Witelo, *Liber de intelligentiis* XXXI); only when light (*lux*) becomes an illumination (*lumen*), effective as *color* (St. Bonaventura, I *Sent.* d.17, p.1, a.unic., q.1), is it "in act." From the possession of an art, in other words, the operation of the artist naturally follows. This operation, given the act of identification as postulated by Dante and others, is a self-expression, i.e., an expression of that which can be regarded either as the exemplary form of the thing to be made, or as the form assumed by the artist's intellect: not, of course, a self-expression in the sense of an exhibit of the artist's personality. In this distinction lies the explanation of the characteristic anonymity of the mediaeval artist as an individual—*Non tamen est multum curandum de causa efficiente* (the artist, So-and-so by name or family), *cum non quis dicat, sed quid dicatur, sit attendendum!* [Nothing is greatly cared for on account of its efficient cause, since we must attend, not to who speaks, but to what is said! –Ed. trans.].

[43] Statements of this sort cannot be twisted to mean that "Beauty," indefinitely and absolutely, is the final cause of the artist's endeavors. That things are "distinguished" means each in its kind and from one another; to "take pains" in making anything is to do one's best to embody its "form" in the material, and that is the same as to make it as beautiful as one can. The artist is always working for the good of the work to be done, "intending to give to his work the best disposition," etc. (*Sum. Theol.* I.91.3C), in other words, with a view to the perfection of the work, perfection implying almost literally "well and truly made." The beauty which, in the words of our text, "adds to the good an ordering to the cognitive faculty" is the appearance of this perfection, by which one is attracted to it. It is not the artist's end to make something beautiful, but something that will be beautiful only because it is perfect. Beauty, in this philosophy, is the attractive power of perfection.

is praised in God by a certain abstraction; and while in primary matter we consider abstraction by defect, we consider abstraction in God by excess, inasmuch as His existence is supersubstantial.[44]

But although the beautiful and the good are one and the same in their subject, nevertheless, because lucidity and harmony are contained in the idea of the good, they differ logically, since the beautiful adds to the good an ordering to the cognitive faculty by which the good is known as such.

II.
COMMENTARY BY COOMARASWAMY ON THE *TRIA REQUIRUNTUR*

Beauty is not in any special or exclusive sense a property of works of art, but much rather a quality or value that may be manifested by all things that are, in proportion to the degree of their actual being and perfection. Beauty may be recognized either in spiritual or material substances, and if in the latter, then either in natural objects or in works of art. Its conditions are always the same.

[44] "Primary matter" is that "nothing" (*to mē on*) [non-being - Ed. trans.] out of which the world was made. "Existence in nature does not belong to primary matter, which is a potentiality, unless it is reduced to act by form" (*Sum. Theol.* I.14.2 *ad 1*): "Primary matter does not exist by itself in nature; it is concreated rather than created. Its potentiality is not absolutely infinite because it extends only to natural forms" (I.7.2 *ad 3*). "Creation does not mean the building up of a composite but that something is created so that it is brought into being at the same time with all its principles" (I.45.4 *ad* 2).

But inasmuch as Dionysius is discussing beauty all the time as an essential name of God, and particularly the beautiful as being the Divine Light, following the *via analogica* and ascribing beauty to God by excess, it would seem likely that when he turns to the *via negativa* and, by abstraction, ascribes the beautiful and the good also to the "nonexistent," he is not thinking of "primary matter," as a nature that "recedes from likeness to God" (*Sum. Theol.* I.14.11 *ad 3*) and as material cause is not in Him, but of the Divine Darkness that "is impervious to all illuminations and hidden from all knowledge" (Dionysius, in *Ep. ad Caium Monach.*), the Godhead, the potentiality of which *is* absolutely infinite, and at the same time (as Eckhart says) "is as though it were not," though it is not remote from God, being that "nature by which the Father begets" (*Sum. Theol.* I.41.5), "that nature, to wit, which created all others" (Augustine, *De Trinitate* XIV.9). Quite differently expressed, one may say that what Dionysius means is that the Deity in the aspect of wrath is no less beautiful and good than under the aspect of mercy; or expressed in Indian terms, that Bhairava and Kālī are no less beautiful and "right" than Śiva and Pārvatī.

"Three things are necessary to beauty. First indeed, accuracy or perfection; for the more things are impaired, thereby the uglier they are. And due proportion, or harmony. And also clarity; whence things that have a bright color are called beautiful." (*Ad pulchritudinem tria requiruntur. Primo quidem integritas, sive perfectio; quae enim diminuta sunt, hoc ipso turpia sunt. Et debita proportio, sive consonantia. Et iterum claritas; unde quae habent colorem nitidum, pulchra esse dicuntur* [*Sum. Theol.* I.39.8C]).

It is essential to understand the terms of this definition. *Integritas* in the moral sense is not what is meant, but rather in that of "entire correspondence with an original condition" (Webster). The meaning "accuracy" may be seen in Cicero, *Brutus* XXXV.132, *sermonis integritas*, and in St. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* IV.10, *locutionis integritas. Perfectio* must be taken in the triple sense of *Sum. Theol.* I.6.3, "first according to the condition of a thing's own being [all it can or ought to be]; second in respect of any accidents being added as necessary to its perfect operation;[45] thirdly, perfection consists in the attaining to something else as the end."[46] So in *Sum. Theol.* I.48.5C, where evil in anything whatever is defined as privation of the good considered as a being "in perfection and in act," the *actus primus* is the thing's *forma et integritas*, and the corresponding evil is "either defect of the form or of some part of it necessary to the thing's *integritas*." In *Sum. Theol.* Suppl. 80.1.C, "integrity" and "perfection" imply an "entire correspondence" and "correspondence in full proportion" of the accidental to the substantial form of the natural or artificial object. And since "the first perfection of a thing consists in its very form, from which it derives its species" (*Sum. Theol.* III.29.2C) and that "likeness is with respect to the form" (I.5.4), we see that *integritas* is really "correctness" of the iconography and corresponds to Plato's *orthotēs*; all things being beautiful to the extent that they imitate or participate in the beauty of God, the formal cause of their being at all.

Diminuta does not mean "broken up but rather "impaired," abated or diminished by defect of anything that should be present, as in

[45] Accidents necessary to the perfect operation of anything are its "ornaments" or "decoration"; see "Ornament" [Chapter III in this volume - Ed]. Hence beauty and decoration are coincident in the subject (*Sum. Theol.* II-II.145.2C, *ratio pulchri sive decori*).

[46] I.e., in the thing's utility or aptitude. In sum, we cannot call a piece of iron a "beautiful knife" unless it is indeed a knife, if it is not sharp, or if it is not so shaped as to serve the particular end for which it was designed. Things can be beautiful or perfect only in their own way, and only good of their kind, never absolutely. Cf. Plato, *Hippias Major* 290D, and Philo, *Heres* 157-158.

Nicomachean Ethics IV.3.5, and in Psalm 11:2, *diminutae sunt veritates* [truths are decayed – Ed. from Douay-Rheims trans.] , and Rev. 22:19, "if any man shall take away (*diminuerit*)"[47]. It must be from this point of view that we should understand "magnitude" as essential to beauty (see n. 21, above): viz. an appropriate, rather than any absolute size. In mediaeval and similar arts the size of a figure is proportionate to its importance (and this is the chief sense of the expression *debita proportio* [due proportion –Ed. trans.]), and not perspectively determined by its physical relationship to other figures; while in nature, whatever is "undersized" is puny and ugly. *Superfluum et diminutum* [overflowing and diminishing –Ed. trans.] (*Nicomachean Ethics* I-II.27.2 *ad* 2) are the extremes to be avoided in whatever is to be "correct"; the Sanskrit equivalents are the *ūnātiriktau*, "too little and too much," to be avoided in ritual operation. "Beautiful" and "ugly" are *pulcher* and *turpis*, like Gr. *kalos* and *aischros* and Skr. *kalyāṇa* and *pāpa;* "ugly" coinciding with "disgraceful" or "sinful," and beauty with "grace" or "goodness." The terms have a far more than merely aesthetic significance. Skr. √*kal*, present in *kalyāṇa* and Gr. *kalos* is recognizable also in "hale," "healthy," "whole," and "holy"; its primary senses are to "be in act," "be effective," "*cal*-culate," "make," and a derivative is *kāla*, "time." This √*kal* is probably identical with √*kṛ* (*kar*) in *kāra*, "creation" and *kratu*, "power," Lat. *creo*, etc., Gr. *krainō* [reign] whence *kratos* [power], etc., and in the same way *kronos*, "time." The doctrine that "beauty is a formal cause" and that *ex divina pulchritudine esse omnium derivatur* is deeply embedded in language itself.

"Due proportion" and "consonance" (*consonantia* = Gr. *harmonia*) are (1) of the actual to the substantial form and (2) of the parts of a thing among themselves. The former conception, I think, predominates, as in Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* I.62, "For then an ark is a true ark when it agrees with (*consonat*) the art" (in the mind of the artist), and as suggested above in connection with "magnitude." On the other hand, in the *De pulchro* translated above, St. Thomas by *consonantia* is plainly referring to the due proportion of the parts of a thing in relation to one another. "Due proportion" necessary to beauty is mentioned also in *Sum. Theol.* I.5.4 *ad* 1 and II-II.45.2C.

Claritas is the radiance, illumination, lucidity, splendor, or glory proper to the object itself, and not the effect of any external illumination. The outstanding examples of clarity are the sun and gold, to

[47] Cf. Plato, *Laws* 667D, where correctness (*orthotēs* = *integritas*) is a matter of adequacy (*isotēs*) both as to quality and quantity; also *Republic* 402A and 524C.

which a "glorified" body is therefore commonly compared; so also Transfiguration is a clarification (cf. *Sum. Theol.* Suppl. 85.1 and 2).

Everything has its own "generic lucidity" (Aquinas, *De pulchro*), that of the "shining of the formal light upon what is formed or proportioned" (Ulrich Engelberti, *De pulchro*). An excellent illustration can be cited in CU IV.14.2, where one man says to another, "Your face, my dear, shines like that of one who has known God." Compare Old English, *Hire lure lumes liht, as a launterne a nyht* [her face beams light, like a lantern at night –Ed. trans.], William Blake's "Tiger, Tiger, burning bright," and the "flaming kine" of RV II.34.5. In this sense we speak of all beautiful things as "splendid," whether they be natural objects such as tigers or trees, or artifacts such as buildings or poems, in which clarity is the same as intelligibility and the opposite of obscurity. The color of anything beautiful must be bright or pure, since color is determined by the nature of the colored object itself, and if dull or muddy will be a sign of its impurity. So again the color of gold is traditionally the most beautiful color.

Beauty and goodness are identical fundamentally, for they both originate in the form, but they differ logically; goodness relating to the appetite, and beauty to cognition or apprehension; "for beautiful things are those which please when seen (*pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent*)." It is because of "due proportion" that they please; for sense (*sensus*) delights in things duly proportioned, as in what is after its own kind (*Sum. Theol.* I.5.4 *ad* 1). "Those senses chiefly regard the beautiful, viz. sight and hearing, as ministering to reason. Thus it is evident that beauty adds to goodness a relation to the cognitive power; so that good (*bonum*) means that which simply pleases the appetite, while the beautiful is something pleasing to apprehend." In other words, "that belongs to the nature of the beautiful in which, being seen or known, the appetite is brought to rest" (I-II.27.1 *ad* 3).[48] "Whereas other animals take delight in the objects of the senses only as ordered to food and sex, man alone takes pleasure in the beauty of sensible objects for their own sake" (I.91.3 *ad* 3).

It is clearly recognized that aesthetic pleasures are natural and legitimate, and even essential; for the good cannot be an object of the appetite unless it has been apprehended (*Sum. Theol.* I-II.27.2C), and "pleasure perfects the operation" (I-II.4.1 *ad* 3, I-II.33.4C, etc.). Because the beauty of the work is inviting, *delectare* [delight] has its due place

[48] "We enjoy what we know when the delighted will is at rest therein," St. Augustine, *De Trinitate* X.10.

in the traditional formulae defining the purpose of eloquence.[49] At the same time, to say that its beauty is an invitation to the goodness of anything is also to make it self-evident that *its* beauty is not, like the good, a final end or end in itself. Exactly the same point of view is present for Plato, for whom "learning is accompanied by the pleasure taken in charm" (*tes charitos tēn hedone*) but the correctness and utility, goodness and beauty of the work are consequences of its truth; the pleasure is not a criterion of the adequacy of the work, and cannot be made the basis of a judgment, which can only be made if we know the work's intention (*boulesis*) (*Laws* 667-669).[50] It is in making aesthetic pleasures, rather than pleasure in the intelligible good,[51] the end of art, that the modern "aesthetic" differs most profoundly from the traditional doctrine; the current philosophy of art is essentially *sens*ational, i.e., *sent*imental.

"Art imitates Nature in her manner of operation" (*ars imitatur naturam in sua operatione*, *Sum. Theol.* I.117.1C). "Natural things depend on the divine intellect, as do things made by art upon a human intellect" (I.17.1C). In the first citation, the immediate reference is to the art of medicine, in which natural means are employed. But these are not the "nature" that operates, since it is not the tools but the operator that makes the work of art. "Nature herself causes natural things as regards their form, but presupposes matter," and "the work of art is ascribed not to the instrument but to the artist" (I.45.2C and Suppl. 80.1 *ad* 3). Hence the "nature" referred to is Natura naturans, Creatrix universalis, Deus, and not Natura naturata. The truth of art is to Natura naturans.

The net result of the traditional doctrine of beauty, as expounded by St. Thomas Aquinas, is to identify beauty with formality or order, and ugliness with informality or want of order. Ugliness, like other evils, is a privation. The like is expressed in Sanskrit by the terms *pratirūpa*,

[49] See Coomaraswamy, *Why Exhibit Works of Art?*, 1943, p.104

[50] As pointed out by St. Augustine, taste cannot be made a criterion of beauty, for there are some who like deformities. Things that please us do so because they are beautiful; it does not follow that they are beautiful because they please us (*De musica* VI.38; *Lib. de ver. rel.* 59).

[51] The current philosophy of manufacture, subservient to industrial interests, distinguishes the fine or useless from the applied or useful arts. The traditional philosophy, on the other hand, asserts that beauty and utility are indivisible in the object, and that nothing useless can properly be called beautiful (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* III.8.6, IV.6.9; Plato, *Cratylus* 416C; Horace, *Epistula ad Pisones* 334: St. Augustine, *Lib. de ver. rel.* 39; St. Bonaventura, *De reductione artium ad theologiam* 14, etc.). The anti-traditional view of life is trivial rather than "realistic" or practical; much of its "culture" is actually useless.

"formal," and *apratirūpa*, "informal," as equivalents of *kalyāṇa* and *pāpa*. Beauty, in other words, is always "ideal," in the proper sense of the word; but "our" ideal (in the vulgar sense, that of what we like) may not be beautiful at all.

APPENDIX

With respect to "goodness" (*bonitas*), the reader must bear in mind that good and evil in Scholastic philosophy are not moral categories, except in connection with conduct and when so specified; the worthy or moral good (*bonum honestum* or *bonum moris*) being distinguished from the useful (*bonun utile*) and the enjoyable good (*bonum delectabile*). In general, the good is synonymous with being or act as distinguished from nonbeing or potentiality, and in this universal sense the good is generally defined as that which any creature desires or relishes (*Sum. Theol.* I.5.1, I.48.1, and *passim*, Scholastic philosophy following Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I.1.1 "The good is that which all desire"). When, for example, it is a matter of the *summum bonum*, which is God, this Good is so called as being man's last end (Skr., *paramārtha*) and the limit of desire; it is "good," not as virtue is opposed to possible vice ("There," as Eckhart says, "neither vice nor virtue ever entered in"), but as being that which draws all things to itself by its Beauty.

It is above all in connection with the arts that goodness is not a moral quality. As "Prudence is the norm of conduct" (*recta ratio agibilium*, *Sum. Theol.* II-I.56.3), so "Art is the norm of workmanship (*recta ratio factibilium*).... The artist (*artifex*) is commendable as such, not for the will with which he does a work, but for the quality of the work" (II-I.57.3); "Art does not presuppose rectitude of the appetite" (II-I.57.4); "Art does not require of the artist that his act be a good act, but that his work be good.... Wherefore the artist needs art, not that he may lead a good life, but that he may produce a good work of art, and have it in good care" (II-I.57.5). Those whose interest is in ethics rather than in art should note the converse proposition, "There cannot be a good use without the art" (II-I.57.3 *ad* 1), tantamount to Ruskin's "industry without art is brutality."

The distinction of art from prudence underlies the injunction to "take no thought for the morrow." "Thy mastery is of the work, never of its fruits; so neither work for the fruits, nor be inclined to refrain from working" (BG II.47); similarly, St. Thomas Aquinas, "God ordained that we should not be careful about that which is no affair of ours, viz. the

consequences of our acts (*de eventibus nostrarum actionum*), but did *not* forbid us to be careful about that which is our affair, viz. the act itself" (*Summa contra Gentiles* III.35).

As, however, there can be moral sin, so also there can be artistic sin. Sin being defined as "a departure from the order to the end," may be of two kinds, arising either in connection with *factibilia* [things to be made] or in connection with *agibilia* [actions to be done], thus: "Firstly, by a departure from the particular end intended by the artist: and this sin will be proper to the art; for instance, if an artist produce a bad thing, while intending to produce something good; or produce something good, while intending to produce something bad. Secondly, by a departure from the general end of human life (Skr. *puruṣārtha*, in its fourfold division): and then he will be said to sin, if he intend to produce a bad work, and does so actually in order that another may be taken in thereby. But this sin is not proper to the artist as such, but as a man. Consequently, for the former sin that artist is blamed as an artist; while for the latter he is blamed as a man" (*Summa contra Gentiles* II-I.21.1.2). For example, the smith will be sinning as an artist if he fails to make a sharp knife, but as a man if he makes one in order to commit murder, or for someone whom he *knows* to intend to commit murder.

Artistic sin in the first of these senses is recognized in ŚB II.1.4.6 in connection with error in the performance of ritual, to be avoided because "that would be a sin (*aparādhi*, missing the mark), just as if one were to do one thing while intending to do another, or if one were to say one thing while intending to say another; or were to go in one direction while intending to go in another."

It should be added that there can be also a metaphysical sin, as of error, or "heresy," resulting from an infirm act of contemplation (Skr. *śithila samādhi*, or *kheda* in *dhyāna*); see "The Intellectual Operation in Indian Art" [Chapter X in this volume – Ed].). There can, accordingly, be a departure from the order to the end in three ways: (1) in art, as when a man says "I do not know anything about art, but I know what I like"; (2) in conduct, as when a man says "I do not know what is right, but I know what I like doing"; and (3) in speculation, as when a man says "I do not know what is true, but I know what I like to think."

It is noteworthy that the Scholastic definition of sin as a "departure from the order to the end" is literally identical with that of KU II.2, where he who prefers what he most likes (*preyas*) to what is most beautiful (*śreyas*) is said to "miss the mark" (*hīyate arthāt*). The primary meaning of *śrī* is "radiant light" or "splendor," and the superlative, *śreyas*, without loss of this content, is generally tantamount to

"felicity" and *summum bonum; śreyas* and *preyas* are thus by no means good and evil simply or in a specifically moralistic sense, but rather the universal as distinguished from any particular good. If, as Dante says, he who would portray a figure cannot do so unless he *be* it, or as we might express it, unless he *lives* it (cf. *Sum. Theol.* I.27.1 *ad* 2), it is no less certain that he who would (and "Judgment is the perfection of art," II-II.26.3 ff.) appreciate and understand an already completed work, can only do it subject to the same condition, and this means that he must conform his intellect to that of the artist so as to think with his thoughts and see with his eyes. Acts of self-renunciation are required of all those who aspire to "culture," that is to be other than provincials. It is in this sense that "Wer den Dichter will verstehen,/ muss in Dichters Lande gehen" [Whoever wants to understand the poet must go into the poet's land – (Goethe) - Ed. trans.].

To judge of Romanesque works of art and to communicate them, the critic or professor in this field must become a Romanesque man, and more is needed for this than a sensitivity to Romanesque works of art or knowledge about them; to assert that a professed "materialist" or "atheist" could in this proper sense become a Doctor in mediaeval art would be a contradiction in terms. Humanly speaking, it is no less absurd to contemplate the teaching of the Bible as "literature." No one can "write a fairy tale" who does not believe in fairies and is not acquainted with the laws of faery.

It may be remarked that the very word "understanding," in application to anything whatever, implies to identify our own consciousness with that upon which the thing itself originally depended for its being. Such an identification, *rei et intellectus* [of reality and intellect –Ed. trans.], is implied by the Platonic distinction of *sunesis* (understanding, or literally association) from *mathēsis* (learning) or, in Sanskrit, that of *artha-jñāna* (gnosis of meaning) from *adhyayana* (study): it is not as a mere Savant (*panḍitaḥ*), but as a Comprehensor (*evaṃvit*) that one benefits from what one studies, assimilating what one knows. Understanding implies and demands a kind of repentance ("change of mind"), and so too a recantation of whatever may have been said on the basis of observation alone, without understanding. Only what is correct is comprehensible; hence one cannot understand *and* disagree. All understanding in this sense implies a formal endorsement; he who really understands a work of art would have made it as it is and not in any other likeness. Like the original artist, he may be aware of some defect of skill or of the material, but cannot wish that the art by which, that is to say the form to which, the thing was made had been other than it

was, without to the same extent denying the artist's very being. He who would have had the form be other than it was, does so not as a judge of art, but as a patron *post factum;* he is judging, not the formal beauty of the artifact, but only its practical value for himself. So with respect to natural things, no one can be said to have fully understood them, but only to have described them, who would not have made them as they are, had he been their first cause, whether we name that cause "Natura naturans" or "God."

In these respects, the importation of the doctrine of *Einfühlung* or empathy into the theory of criticism marks a step in the right direction; but only a right intention, rather than a perfected gesture, so far as Christian and like arts are concerned. For "infeeling" is subject to the same defect here as the word "aesthetic" itself. Christian and like arts are primarily formal and intellectual, or, as sometimes expressed, "immaterial" and "spiritual"; the relation of beauty is primarily to cognition (*Sum. Theol.* I.5.4); the artist works "by intellect," which is the same as "by his art" (I.14.8; I.16.1C; I.39.8; and I.45.7C). Note, in this connection, that Scholastic philosophy never speaks of the work (*opus*) as "art"; the "art" always remains in the artist, while the work, as *artificiatum*, is a thing done *by* art, *per artem.* Assuming that the artist is either his own patron working for himself (as typically in the case of the Divine Architect), or freely consents to the final end of the work to be done, conceiving it to be a desirable end, it will be true that he is working both *per artem et per voluntatem* [by art and by will –Ed. trans.] — "The artist works through the word conceived in his mind, and through the love of his will regarding some object" (I.45.6C); that is, as an artist with respect to the formal cause of the thing to be made, as a patron with respect to its final cause. Here we are considering not what things ought to be made, but the part played by art in their making; and as this is a matter of intellect rather than of will, it is evident that "infeeling" and "aesthetic" are hardly satisfactory terms, and that some such words as "conformation" (Skr. *tadākāratā*) and "apprehension" (Skr. *grahaṇa*) would be preferable.

All this has an important bearing on "archaism" in practice. A thing "is said to be true absolutely, insofar as it is related to the intellect from which it depends," but it "may be related to an intellect either essentially or accidentally" (*Sum. Theol.* I.16.1C). This explains why it is that "modern Gothic" seems to be what it really is, "false" and "insincere." For, evidently, Gothic art can be known to the profane architect only accidentally, viz. through the study and measurement of Gothic buildings; however learned he may be, the work can only be a forgery. For

as Eckhart says (Evans ed., I, 108), "to be properly expressed, a thing must proceed from within, moved by its form; it must come, not in from without, but out from within," and in the same way St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* I.14.16C) speaks of the feasible (*operabile*) as depending, not on a resolution of the thing made into its principles, but on the application of form to material. And since the modern architect is not a Gothic man, the form is not in him, and the same will hold for the workmen who carry out his designs. A like defect of proper expression is perceived when the sacrificial music of the Church is performed, not as such but by secular choirs, as "music," or when the Bible or the *Divina Commedia* are taught as "literature." In the same way, whenever the accidents of an alien style are imitated elsewhere, the operation of the artist is vitiated, and we readily detect in this case not so much a forgery as a caricature. It will be easily seen that the study of "influences" should be regarded as one of the least important aspects of the history of art, and hybrid arts as the least important of all arts. We can think one another's thoughts, ideas being independent of time and local position, but we cannot express them for one another, but only in our own way.

CHAPTER III

Ornament

As remarked by Clement of Alexandria, the scriptural style is parabolic, but it is not for the sake of elegance of diction that prophecy makes use of figures of speech. On the other hand, "the sensible forms [of artifacts], in which there was at first a polar balance of physical and metaphysical, have been more and more voided of content on their way down to us: so we say, 'this is an ornament' ... an 'art form.' ... [Is the symbol] therefore dead, because its living meaning had been lost, because it was denied that it was the image of a spiritual truth? I think not" (W. Andrae, *Die ionische Säule: Bauform oder Symbol?* Berlin, 1933, "Conclusion"). And as I have so often said myself, a divorce of utility and meaning, concepts which are united in the one Sanskrit word *artha*, would have been inconceivable to early man or in any traditional culture.[1]

We know that in traditional philosophy the work of art is a reminder; the summons of its beauty is to a thesis, as to something to be understood, rather than merely enjoyed. Unwilling as we may be to accept such a proposition today, in a world increasingly emptied of meaning, it is even harder for us to believe that "ornament" and "decoration" are, properly speaking, integral factors of the beauty of the work of art, certainly not in-significant parts of it, but rather necessary to its efficacy.

What we have in view, under these circumstances, is to support by the analysis of certain familiar terms and categories the proposition that our modern preoccupation with the "decorative" and "aesthetic" aspects of art represents an aberration that has little or nothing to do with the original purposes of "ornament"; to demonstrate from the side of semantics the position that has been stated by Maes with special reference to Negro art that "Vouloir séparer l'objet de sa signification

[1] As remarked by T. W. Danzel, in a primitive culture—by "primitive" the anthropologist often means no more than "not quite up to (our) date"—"sind auch die Kulturgebiete Kunst, Religion, Wirtschaft usw. noch nicht als selbständige, gesonderte, geschlossene Betätigungsbereiche vorhanden" [The cultural domains of art, religion, science, etc, didn't exist yet as spheres of independent, separated, closed activities –Ed. trans.] (*Kultur und Religion des primitiven Menschen*, Stuttgart, 1924, p. 7). This is, incidentally, a devastating criticism of such societies as are not "primitive," and in which the various functions of life and branches of knowledge are treated as specialties, *gesondert and geschlossen* from any unifying principle.

sociale, son rôle ethnique, pour n'y voir, n'y admirer et n'y chercher que le côté esthétique, c'est enlever à ces souvenirs de l'art nègre leur sens, leur significance et leur raison d'être! Ne cherchons point à effacer l'idée que l'indigène a incrustée dans l'ensemble comme dans chacun des détails pour n'y voir que la beauté d'exécution de l'objet sans signification, raison d'être, ou vie. Efforçons-nous au contraire de comprendre la psychologie de l'art nègre et nous finirons par en pénétrer toute la beauté et toute la vie" [To wish to separate the object from its social meaning, its ethnic role, in order to see, admire and look for only the aesthetic side is to remove from these mementos of Black art their sense, their significance and their *raison d'être*! Let us in no way try to eliminate the idea with which the native has imbued the work as a whole, as well as in each of its details, in order to see only the beauty of execution of the object without its significance, *raison d'être*, or life. Let us, on the contrary, make the effort to understand the psychology of Black art so that we will in the end penetrate all its beauty and all its life –Ed. trans.]. (*IPEK*, 1926, p. 283); and that, as remarked by Karsten, "the ornaments of savage peoples can only be properly studied in connection with a study of their magical and religious beliefs" (*ibid.*, 1925, p. 164). We emphasize, however, that the application of these considerations is not merely to Negro, "savage," and folk art but to all traditional arts, those, for example, of the Middle Ages and of India.

Let us consider now the history of various words that have been used to express the notion of an ornamentation or decoration, and which in modern usage for the most part import an aesthetic value added to things of which the said "decoration" is not an essential or necessary part. It will be found that most of these words, which imply for us the notion of something adventitious and luxurious, added to utilities but not essential to their efficacy, originally implied a completion or fulfillment of the artifact or other object in question; that to "decorate" an object or person originally meant to endow the object or person with its or his "necessary accidents," with a view to proper operation; and that the aesthetic senses of the words are secondary to their practical connotation; whatever was originally necessary to the completion of anything, and thus proper to it, naturally giving pleasure to the user; until still later what had once been essential to the nature of the object came to be regarded as an "ornament" that could be added to it or omitted at will; until, in other words, the art by which the thing itself had been made whole began to mean only a sort of millinery or upholstery that covered over a body that had not been made by "art" but rather by "labor"—a point of view bound up with our peculiar

distinction of a fine or useless from an applied or useful art, and of the artist from the workman, and with our substitution of ceremonies for rites. A related example of a degeneration of meaning can be cited in our words "artifice," meaning "trick," but originally *artificium*, "thing made by art," "work of art," and our "artificial," meaning "false," but originally *artificialis*, "of or for work."

The Sanskrit word *alaṃkāra*[2] is usually rendered by "ornament," with reference either to the rhetorical use of "ornaments" (figures of speech, assonances, kennings, etc.), or to jewelry or trappings. The Indian category of *alaṃkāra-śāstra*, the "science of poetic ornament," corresponds, however, to the mediaeval category of rhetoric or art of oratory, in which eloquence is thought of not as an end in itself or art for art's sake, or to display the artist's skill, but as the art of effective communication. There exists, indeed, a mass of mediaeval Indian poetry that is "sophistic" in Augustine's sense: "A speech seeking verbal ornament beyond the bounds of responsibility to its burden (*gravitas*) is called 'sophistic,'" (*De doctrina Christiana* II.31). At a time when "poetry" (*kāvya*)[3] had to some extent become an end in itself, a discussion arose as to whether or not "ornaments" (*alaṃkāra*) represent the essence of poetry; the consensus being that, far from this, poetry is distinguishable from prose (i.e., the poetic from the prosaic, not verse from prose) by its "sapidity" or "flavor" (*rasa*, corresponding to the *sap-* in Lat. *sapientia*, wisdom, *scientia cum sapore*). Sound and meaning are thought of as indissolubly wedded; just as in all the other arts of whatever kind there was originally a radical and natural connection between form and significance, without divorce of function and meaning.

If we analyze now the word *alaṃkāra*, and consider the many other than merely aesthetic senses in which the verb *alaṃ-kṛ* is employed, we

[2] The present article was suggested by, and makes considerable use of, J. Gonda, "The Meaning of the Word '*alaṃkāra*', in *Volume of Eastern and Indian Studies Presented to F. W. Thomas*, ed. S. M. Katre and P. K. Gode (Bombay, 1939), pp. 97-114; *The Meaning of Vedic* bhūṣati (Wageningen, 1939); and *"Ābharaṇa,"* in *New Indian Antiquary*, II (May 1939).

[3] Derivative of *kavi*, "poet." The reference of these words to "poetry" and "poet" in the modern sense is late. In Vedic contexts *kavi* is primarily an epithet of the highest gods with reference to their utterance of words of creative power, *kāvya* and *kavitva* the corresponding quality of wisdom, Vedic *kavi* being therefore rather an "enchanter" than a "charmer" in the later sense of one who merely pleases us by his sweet words.

In much the same way Greek *poēsis* originally meant a "making," so that, as Plato says, "The productions of all arts are kinds of poetry and their craftsmen are all poets" (*Symposium* 205C); cf. RV X.106.1, *vitanvātha dhiyo vastrāpaseva* "Ye weave your songs as men weave garments."

shall find that the word is composed of *alam*, "sufficient," or "enough," and *kṛ* to "make." It must be mentioned for the sake of what follows that Sanskrit *l* and *r* are often interchangeable, and that *alam* is represented by *aram* in the older literature. Analogous to the transitive *araṃ-kṛ* are the intransitive *arambhū*, "to become able, fit for" and *araṃ-gam*, "to serve or suffice for." The root of *aram* may be the same as that of Greek *ararisko*, "to fit together, equip, or furnish." *Aram* with *kṛ* or *bhū* occurs in Vedic texts in phrases meaning preparedness, ability, suitability, fitness, hence also that of "satisfying" (a word that renders *araṃ-kṛ* very literally, *satis* corresponding to *aram* and *facere* to *kṛ*), as in RV VII.29.3, "What satisfaction (*araṃkṛti*) is there for thee, Indra, by means of our hymns?" *Alaṃ-kṛ* in the *Atharva Veda* (XVIII.2) and in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is employed with reference to the due ordering of the sacrifice, rather than to its adornment, the sacrifice indeed being much less a ceremony than a rite; but already in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, a "poetical" work, the word has usually the meaning to "adorn."

Without going into further detail, it can easily be seen what was once the meaning of an "adornment," viz. the furnishing of anything essential to the validity of whatever is "adorned," or enhances its effect, empowering it. For example, "the mind is adorned (*alaṃkṛiyate*) by learning, folly by vice, elephants by mast, rivers by water, night by the moon, resolution by composure, kingship by leading."[4]

In just the same way *bhūṣaṇa* and *bhūṣ*, words that mean in classical Sanskrit "ornament," respectively as noun and as verb, do not have this value in Vedic Sanskrit, where (like *alaṃkāra*, etc.) they refer to the provision of whatever properties or means increase the efficacy of the thing or person with reference to which or to whom they are employed:[5] the hymns, for example, with which the deity is said to be "adorned," are an affirmation of and therefore a confirmation and magnification of the divine power to act on the singers' behalf. Whatever is in this sense

[4] *Pañcatantra* III.120 (Edgerton ed., p. 391). *Alaṃ-kṛ* in the senses "equip" and "ornament" has almost exactly the same senses as *upa-kṛ*, "to assist, furnish, ornament," and so we find it stated that poetical figures (*alaṃkāra*) enhance (*upakurvanti*) the "flavor" of a poem in the same way that jewels are not ends in themselves but enhance the efficacy of the person that wears them. Ornaments are the necessary accidents of essence, whether artificial or natural.

[5] The two values of *bhūṣaṇa* are found side by side in *Viṣṇudharmottara* III.41.10, where outline, shading (the representation of), jewelry (*bhūṣaṇam*), and color are collectively "the ornaments (*bhūṣaṇam*) of painting," and it is clear that these "ornaments" are not a needless elaboration of the art but, rather, the essentials or characteristics of painting, by which it is recognized as such.

"ornamented" is thereby made more in act, and more in being. That this should be so corresponds to the root meaning of the verb, which is an extension of *bhū*, to "become," but with a causative nuance, so that, as pointed out by Gonda, *bhūṣati dyūn* in RV X.11.7 does not mean "ornaments his days" but "lengthens his life," "makes more his life"; cf. Skr. *bhūyas*, "becoming in a greater degree" (Pāṇini), "abundantly furnished with," and "more." *Bhūṣ* has thus the value of *vṛdh*, "to increase" (trans.), A. A. Macdonell rendering the gerundives *ābhūṣenya* and *vāvṛdhenya* both alike by "to be glorified" (*Vedic Grammar*, Strassburg, 1910, §80, p. 242). An identical connection of ideas survives in England, where to "glorify" is also to "magnify" the Lord, and certain chants are "magnificats." Vedic *bhūṣ* in the sense "increase" or "strengthen," and synonymous with *vṛdh*, corresponds to the later causative *bhāv* (from *bhū*), as can be clearly seen if we compare RV IX.104.1, where Soma is to be "adorned," or rather "magnified" (*pari bhūṣata*) by sacrifices, "as it were a child" (*śiśuṃ na*), with AĀ II.5, where the mother "nourishes" (*bhāvayati*) the unborn child, and the father is said to "support" (*bhāvayati*) it both before and after birth; bearing also in mind that in RV IX.103.1, the hymns addressed to Soma are actually compared to "food" (*bhṛti*) from *bhṛ*, to "bear," "bring," "support," and that in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* context the mother "nourishes ... and bears the child" (*bhāvayati …garbhaṃ bibharti*). And insofar as *ābharaṇa* and *bhūṣaṇa* in other contexts are often "jewelry" or other decoration of the person or thing referred to, it may be observed that the values of jewelry were not originally those of vain adornment in any culture, but rather metaphysical or magical.[6] To some extent this can be recognized even at the present day: if, for example, the judge is only a judge in act when wearing his robes, if the mayor is empowered by his chain, and the king by his crown, if the pope is only infallible and verily pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra*, "from the throne," none of these things is a mere ornament, but rather equipment by which the man himself is "mored" (*bhūyaskṛta*), just as in AV X.6.6 Bṛhaspati wears a jewel, or let us say a talisman, "in order to have power" (*ojase*). Even today the conferring of an order is a "decoration" in the same sense: and it is only to the extent that we have learned to think of knighthood, for example,

[6] As in AV VI.133, where the girdle is worn "for length of life," and invoked to endow the wearer with insight, understanding, fervor, and virility. "In der Antike noch keine Moden ohne Sinn gab" [In Antiquity, there were not yet customs without meaning –Ed. trans.] (B. Segall, *Katalog der Goldschmiede-Arbeiten*, Benaki Museum, Athens, 1938, p. 124).

as an "empty honor" that the "decoration" takes on the purely aesthetic values that we nowadays associate with the word.[7]

The mention of *bhṛ*, above, leads us to consider also the word *ābharaṇa*, in which the root is combined with a self-referent *ā*, "towards." *Ābharaṇa* is generally rendered by "ornament," but is more literally "assumption" or "attribute." In this sense the characteristic weapons or other objects held by a deity, or worn, are his proper attributes, *ābharaṇam*, by which his mode of operation is denoted iconographically. In what sense a bracelet of conch (*śaṇkha*),[8] worn for long life, etc., is an *ābharaṇam* can be seen in AV IV.10, where the "sea-born" shell is "fetched (*ābhṛtaḥ*) from the waters." In the same way *āhārya*, from *hṛ*, to "bring," with *ā* as before, means in the first place that which is "to be eaten," i.e., nourishment, and second, the costume and jewels of an actor, regarded as one of the four factors of dramatic expression; in the latter sense the sun and moon are called the *āhārya* of Śiva when he manifests himself on the world stage (*Abhinaya Darpaṇa*, invocatory introduction).

Returning now to *alaṃkāra* as "rhetorical ornament," Gonda very properly asks, "Have they always been but embellishments?" and points out that very many of these so-called embellishments appear already in the Vedic texts, which, for all that, are not included in the category of poetry (*kāvya* —cf. note 3), i.e., are not regarded as belonging to *belles lettres*. Yāska, for example, discusses *upamā*, "simile" or "parable" in Vedic contexts, and we may remark that such similes or parables are repeatedly employed in the Pāli Buddhist canon, which is by no means sympathetic to any kind of artistry that can be thought of as an ornamentation for the sake of ornamentation. Gonda goes on to point out, and it is incontrovertibly true, that what we should now call ornaments (when we study "the Bible as literature") are stylistic phenomena in the sense that "the scriptural *style* is parabolic" by an inherent necessity, the burden of scripture being one that can be expressed only by analogies:

[7] The lotus wreath (PB XVI.4.1 ff., and XVIII.9.6) worn by Prajāpati for the supremacy (*śreṣṭhyā*), called *a śilpa*, work of art, regarded as his dearest possession and given by him to his son and successor Indra, who *thereby* becomes all-conquering, is certainly not "ornament" in the modern sense but equipment; cf. *sambhāra* = equipment (ŚB XIV.1.2.1, "whereinsoever anything of the Sacrifice is inherent, therewith he equips him [*sambharati*]"; "He equips the Mahavīra with its equipment").

[8] The commentators here and on RV I.35.4, I.126.4, and X.68.11 (where *krśana* =*suvarṇa*, golden, or *suvarṇam ābharaṇam*, golden ornament) offer no support whatever for the rendering of *krśana* as "pearl." It is, moreover, amulets of conch, and not of pearl oyster shell, that have been worn in India from time immemorial.

this style had function in the Vedic contexts likewise other than that of ornament. "Here, as in the literature of several other peoples, we have a sacred or ritual *Sondersprache*... different from the colloquial speech." At the same time, "These peculiarities of the sacral language may also have an aesthetic side.... Then they become figures of speech and when applied in excess they become *Spielerei* [baubles –Ed. trans.]."[9] *Alaṃkṛta*, in other words, having meant originally "made adequate," came finally to mean "embellished."

In the case of another Sanskrit word, *śubha*, of which the later meaning is "lovely," there may be cited the expression *śubhaḥ śilpin* from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, where the reference is certainly not to a craftsman personally "handsome," but to a "fine craftsman," and likewise the well-known benediction *śubham astu*, "May it be well," where *śubham* is rather the "good" than the beautiful as such. In the *Ṛg Veda* we have such expressions as "I furnish (*śumbhāmi*) Agni with prayers" (VIII.24.26), where for *śumbhāmi* might just as well have been said *alaṃkaromi* (not "I adorn him," but "I fit him out"); and *śumbhanto* (I.130.6), not "adorning" but "harnessing" a horse; in J V.129, *alaṃkata* is "fully equipped" (in coat of mail and turban, and with bow and arrows and sword). In RV I.130.6, it is Indra that is "harnessed" like a steed that is to race and win a prize, and it is obvious that in such a case the aptitude rather than the beauty of the gear must have been the primary consideration, and that although the charioteer must have enjoyed at the same time the "pleasure that perfects the operation," this pleasure must have been rather in the thing well made for its purpose, than in its mere appearance; it would be only under the more unreal conditions of a parade that the mere appearance might become an end in itself, and it is thus, in fact, that over-ornamented things are made only for show. This is a development that we are very familiar with in the history of armor (another sort of "harness"), of which the original life-saving purpose was preeminently practical, however elegant the resultant forms may have been in fact, but which in the end served no other purpose than that of display.

To avoid confusion, it must be pointed out that what we have referred to as the "utility" of a harness, or any other artifact, had never been, traditionally, a matter of merely functional adaptation;[10] on the

[9] Gonda, "The Meaning of the Word *'alaṃkāra,'*" p. 110.

[10] "Honesty" having been identified with spiritual (or intelligible) beauty, St. Thomas Aquinas remarks that "nothing incompatible with honesty can be simply and truly *useful*, since it follows that it is contrary to man's last end" (*Sum. Theol.* II-II.145.3 *ad 3*).

contrary, in every work of traditional art we can recognize Andrae's "polar balance of physical and metaphysical," the simultaneous satisfaction (*alaṃ-karaṇa*) of practical and spiritual requirements. So the harness is originally provided (rather than "decorated") with solar symbols, as if to say that the racing steed is the Sun (-horse) in a likeness, and the race itself an imitation of "what was done by the gods in the beginning."

A good example of the use of an "ornament" not as "millinery" but for its significance can be cited in ŚB III.5.1.19-20 where, because in the primordial sacrifice the Aṇgirases had accepted from the Ādityas the Sun as their sacrificial fee, so now a white horse is the fee for the performance of the corresponding Sadyaḥkrī Soma-sacrifice. This white horse is made to wear "a gold ornament (*rukma*), whereby it is made to be of the form of, or symbol (*rūpam*) of the Sun." This ornament must have been like the golden disk with twenty-one points or rays which is also worn by the sacrificer himself, and afterwards laid down on the altar to represent the Sun (ŚB VI.7.1.1-2, VII.1.2.10, VII.4.1.10). It is familiar that horses are even now sometimes "decorated" with ornaments of brass (a substitute for gold, the regular symbol of Truth, Sun, Light, Immortality, ŚB VI.7.1.2, etc.) of which the significance is manifestly solar; it is precisely such forms as these solar symbols that, when the contexts of life have been secularized, and meaning has been forgotten, survive as "superstitions"[11] and are regarded only as "art forms" or "ornaments," to be judged as good or bad in accordance, not with their truth, but with our likes or dislikes. If children have always been

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It is the intelligible aspect of the work of art that has to do with man's last end, its unintelligible aspect that serves his immediate needs, the "merely functional" artifact corresponding to "bread alone." In other words, an object devoid of all symbolic ornament, or of which the form itself is meaningless and therefore unintelligible, is not "simply and truly *useful"* but only physically serviceable, as is the trough to the pig. Perhaps we mean this when we think of mere utilities as "uninteresting" and fly for refuge to the fine or materially useless arts. It is nevertheless the measure of our unawareness that we consent to an environment consisting chiefly of *in*-significant artifacts.

[11] "Superstition ... a symbol which has continued in use after its original meaning has been forgotten.... The best cure for that is not misapplied invective against idolatry, but an exposition of the meaning of the symbol, so that men may again use it intelligently" (Marco Pallis, *Peaks and Lamas*, London, 1939, p. 379). "Every term that becomes an empty slogan as the result of fashion or repetition is born at some time from a definite concept, and its significance must be interpreted from that point of view" (P. O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, New York, 1943, p. 286). Our contemporary culture, from the point of view of these definitions, is preeminently "superstitious" and "unintelligent."

apt to play with useful things or miniature copies of useful things, for example carts, as toys, we ought perhaps to regard our own aestheticism as symptomatic of a second childhood; *we* do not grow up.

Enough of Sanskrit. The Greek word *cosmos* is primarily "order" (Skr. *ṛta*), whether with reference to the due order or arrangement of things, or to the world-order ("the most beautiful order given to things by God," *Sum. Theol.* I.25.6 *ad* 3);[12] and secondarily "ornament," whether of horses, women, men, or speech. The corresponding verb *cosmeō* is to "order or arrange," and secondarily to "equip, adorn, or dress," or, finally, with reference to the embellishment of oratory; and similarly *entuno*. Conversely, *kallunein* is not only to "beautify," but also to "brush out, sweep," etc. *Cosmēma* is an ornament or decoration, usually of dress. *Cosmētikos* is "skilled in ordering," *cosmētikē* the art of dress and ornament (in Plato, *Sophist* 226E, care of the body, a kind of katharsis, or purification), *cosmētikon* "cosmetic,"[13] *cosmētikērion* a dressing room. *Cosmopoiēsis* is architectural ornament; hence our designation of the Doric, etc. "orders." Again we see the connection between an original "order" and a later "ornament." In connection with "cosmetic" it may be remarked that we cannot understand the original intention of bodily ornaments (unguents, tattooing, jewelry, etc.) from our modern and aesthetic point of view. The Hindu woman feels herself undressed and disorderly without her jewels, which, however much she may be fond of them from other and "aesthetic" points of view, she regards as a necessary equipment, without which she cannot function as a woman (from Manu, III.55, "it appears that there existed a connection between the proper adornment of women and the prosperity of their male relatives," Gonda, *Bhūṣati*, p. 7)[14] To be seen without her gear would be more than a mere absence of decoration, it would be inauspicious, indecorous, and disrespectful, as if one should be present at some function in "undress," or have forgotten one's tie: it is only as a widow, and as such

[12] Cf. Hermes, *Lib.* VIII.3, "works of adornment."

[13] Cf. Skr. *añj*, to anoint, to shine, to be beautiful; *añjana*, ointment, cosmetic, embellishment.

[14] Cf. such terms as *rakṣabhūṣaṇa*, "apotropaic amulet" (*Suśruta* I.54.13); *maṇgalālaṃkṛta*, "wearing auspicious ornaments" (Kālidāsa, *Mālavikāgnimirta* I.14); and similarly *maṇgalāmātrabhuṣaṇa* (*Vikramorvaśī* III.12), cited by Gonda The bow and the sword which are Rāma's equipment, and in this sense "ornaments" in the original sense of the word, "are not for the sake of mere ornamentation or only to be worn" (*na ... bhūṣaṇāya ... na ... ābandhanārthāya*, *Rāmāyaṇa* II.23.30).

"inauspicious," that the woman abandons her ornaments. In ancient India or Egypt, in the same way, the use of cosmetics was assuredly not a matter of mere vanity, but much rather one of propriety. We can see this more easily, perhaps, in connection with hairdressing (*cosmocomēs* and also one of the senses of *ornare*); the putting of one's hair in order is primarily a matter of decorum, and therefore pleasing, not primarily or merely for the sake of pleasing. C*osmizo*, "clean," and *cosmetron*, "broom," recall the semantics of Chinese *shih* (9907), primarily to wipe or clean or be suitably dressed (the ideogram is composed of signs for "man" and "clothes"), and more generally to be decorated; Ch. *hsiu* (4661), a combination of *shih* with *san* = "paint brush," and means to put in order, prepare, regulate and cultivate.

The words "decoration" and "ornament," whether with reference to the embellishment of persons or of things, can be considered simultaneously in Latin and in English. O*rnare* is primarily to "fit out, furnish, provide with necessaries" (Harper) and only secondarily to "embellish," etc. O*rnamentum* is primarily "apparatus, accoutrement, equipment, trappings"[15] and secondarily "embellishment, jewel, trinket,"[16] etc., as well as rhetorical ornament (Skr. *alaṃkāra*); the word is used by Pliny to render *cosmos*. God's creation of living beings to occupy the already created world (as decoration "fills space") has always been called "the work of adornment" (cf. "The Mediaeval Theory of Beauty" [Chapter II above - Ed.], n. 31).

"Ornament" is primarily defined by Webster as "any adjunct or accessory (primarily for use . . .)"; so Cooper in the sixteenth century speaks of the "tackling or ornaments of a ship," and Malory of the "ornementys of an aulter."[17] Even now "the term 'ornaments' in

[15] "Trappings," from the same root as "drape" and *drapeau*, "flag," was originally a cloth spread over the back or saddle of a horse or other beast of burden but has acquired the inferior meaning of superficial or unnecessary ornament.

[16] "Trinket," by which we always understand some insignificant ornament, was originally a little knife, later carried as a mere ornament and so disparaged. We often refer to a trinket as a "charm," forgetting the connection of this word with *carmen* and "chant." The "charm" implied originally an enchantment; our words "charming" and "enchanting" have acquired their trivial and purely aesthetic values by a development parallel to that which has been discussed throughout the present article. It may be added that an "insignificant" ornament is literally one without a meaning; it is precisely in this sense that ornaments were *not* originally insignificant.

[17] Cf. RV I.170.4, "Let them furnish the altar" (*araṃ kṛṇvantu vedim*). "Whatever makes a thing befitting (*decentem*) is called 'decoration (*decor*),' whether it be in the

Ecclesiastical law is not confined, as by modern usage, to articles of decoration or embellishment, but it is used in the larger sense of the word 'ornamentum' (Privy Council Decision, 1857). Adornment is used by Burke with reference to the furnishing of the mind. *Decor*, "what is seemly . . . ornament . . . personal comeliness" (Harper) is already "ornament" (i.e., embellishment) as well as "adaptation" in the Middle Ages. But observe that "decor" as "that which serves to decorate, ornamental disposition of accessories" (Webster) is the near relative of "decorous" or "decent," meaning "suitable to a character or time, place and occasion" and to "decorum," i.e., "what is befitting . . . propriety" (Webster), just as *cosmēma* [decoration] is of *cosmiotēs* [decorum]. And, as Edmond Pottier says, "L'ornement, avant d'être ce qu'il est devenu aujourd'hui, avait été, avant tout, comme la parure même de l'homme, un instrument pratique, un moyen d'action qui procurait des avantages réels au possesseur" [Ornament, before being what it has become today, had been, above all, as the very adornment of man, a practical instrument, a means of action which brought real advantages to the possessor –Ed. trans.] (*Délegation en Perse*, XIII, C*éramique peinte de Suse*, Paris, 1912, p. 50).

The law of art in the matter of decoration could hardly have been better stated than by St. Augustine, who says that an ornamentation exceeding the bounds of responsibility to the content of the work is sophistry, i.e., an extravagance or superfluity. If this is an artistic sin, it is also a moral sin: "Even the shoemakers' and clothiers' arts stand in need of restraint, for they have lent their art to luxury, corrupting its necessity and artfully debasing art" (St. Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, tr. George Prevost, Oxford, 1851-1852, 50 a med.). Accordingly, "Since women may lawfully adorn themselves, whether to manifest what becomes (*decentiam*) their estate, or even by adding something thereto, in order to please their husbands, it follows that those who make such ornaments do not sin in the practice of their art, except insofar as they may perhaps contrive what is superfluous and fantastic" (*Sum. Theol.* II-II.169.2 *ad 4*). It need hardly be said that

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thing or externally adapted to it, as ornaments of clothing and jewels and the like. Hence 'decoration' is common to the beautiful and to the apt" (Ulrich of Strassburg, *De pulchro*, quoted in "The Mediaeval Theory of Beauty" [Chapter II above –Ed.]: as in the case of "the iron style that is made by the smith on the one hand that we may write with it, and on the other that we may take pleasure in it; and in its kind at the same time beautiful and adapted to our use" (St. Augustine, *Lib. de ver. rel.*, 39), between which ends there is no conflict; cf. the style illustrated in Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, 1908, fig. 129.

whatever applies to the ornamentation of persons also applies to the ornamentation of things, all of which are decorations, in the original sense of an equipment, of the person to whom they pertain. The condemnation is of an excess, and not of a richness of ornament. That "nothing can be useful unless it be honest" (Tully and St. Ambrose, endorsed by St. Thomas) rules out all pretentious art. The concurrence here of the laws of art with those of morals, despite their logical distinction, is remarkable.

We have said enough to suggest that it may be universally true that terms which now imply an ornamentation of persons or things for aesthetic reasons alone originally implied their proper equipment in the sense of a completion, without which satis-faction (*alaṃ-karaṇa*) neither persons nor things could have been thought of as efficient or "simply and truly useful," just as, apart from his at-tributes (*ā-bharaṇa*), Deity could not be thought of as functioning. The analogy is far reaching. Whatever is unornamented is said to be "naked." God, "taken naked of all ornament" is "unconditioned" or "unqualified" (*nirguṇa*): one, but inconceivable. Ornamented, He is endowed with qualities (*saguṇa*), which are manifold in their relations and intelligible. And however insignificant this qualification and this adaptation to finite effects may be when contrasted with His unity and infinity, the latter would be incomplete without them. In the same way, a person or thing apart from its appropriate ornaments ("in the subject or externally adapted to it") is valid as an idea, but not as species. Ornament is related to its subject as individual nature to essence: to abstract is to denature. Ornament is adjectival; and in the absence of any adjective, nothing referred to by any noun could have an individual *existence*, however it might be in principle. If, on the other hand, the subject is inappropriately or over-ornamented, so far from completing it, this restricts its efficiency,[18] and therefore its beauty, since the extent to which it is in act is the extent of its existence and the measure of its perfection as such-and-such a specified subject. Appropriate ornament is, then, essential to utility and beauty: in saying this, however, it must be remembered that ornament may be "in the subject" itself, or if not, must be something added to the subject in order that it may fulfill a given function.

[18] It may be remarked that in the animal world an excessive development of ornament usually preludes extinction ("The wages of sin is death"; sin, as always, being defined as "any departure from the order to the end").

To have thought of art as an essentially aesthetic value is a very modern development and a provincial view of art, born of a confusion between the (objective) beauty of order and the (subjectively) pleasant, and fathered by a preoccupation with pleasure. We certainly do not mean to say that man may not always have taken a sensitive pleasure in work and the products of work; far from this, "pleasure perfects the operation." We do mean to say that in asserting that "beauty has to do with cognition," Scholastic philosophy is affirming what has always and everywhere been true, however we may have ignored or may wish to ignore the truth—we, who like other animals know what we like, rather than like what we know. We do say that to explain the nature of primitive or folk art, or, to speak more accurately, of any traditional art, by an assumption of "decorative instincts" or "aesthetic purposes" is a pathetic fallacy, a deceptive projection of our own mentality upon another ground; that the traditional artist no more regarded his work with our romantic eyes than he was "fond of nature" in our sentimental way. We say that we have divorced the "satis-faction" of the artifact from the artifact itself, and made it seem to be the whole of art; that we no longer respect or feel our responsibility towards the burden (*gravitas*) of the work, but prostitute its thesis to an aisthesis; and that this is the sin of luxury. We appeal to the historian of art, and especially to the historian of ornament and the teacher of the "appreciation of art," to approach their material more objectively; and suggest to the "designer" that if all good ornament had in its beginning a necessary sense, it may be rather from a sense to communicate than from an intention to please that he should proceed.

Chapter IV

Ars sine scientia nihil

Ars sine scientia nihil ("art without science is nothing").[1] These words of the Parisian Master Jean Mignot, enunciated in connection with the building of the Cathedral of Milan in 1398, were his answer to an opinion then beginning to take shape, that *scientia est unum et ars aliud* ("science is one thing and art another"). For Mignot, the rhetoric of building involved a truth to be expressed in the work itself, while others had begun to think, as we now think, of houses, and even of God's house, only in terms of construction and effect. Mignot's *scientia* cannot have meant simply "engineering," for in that case his words would have been a truism, and no one could have questioned them; engineering, in those days, would have been called an art, and not a science, and would have been included in the *recta ratio factibilium* [principle of manufacture –author's trans.] or "art" by which we know how things can and should be made. His *scientia* must therefore have had to do with the reason (*ratio*), theme, content, or burden (*gravitas*) of the work to be done, rather than with its mere functioning. Art alone was not enough, but *sine scientia nihil*.[2]

In connection with poetry we have the homologous statement of Dante with reference to his *Commedia,* that "the whole work was undertaken not for a speculative but a practical end.... The purpose of the whole is to remove those who are living in this life from the state of wretchedness and to lead them to the state of blessedness" (*Ep. ad Can. Grand.*, 15 and 16). That is closely paralleled in Aśvaghoṣa's colophon to the *Saundarānanda*: "This poem, pregnant with the burden of Liberation, has been composed by me in the poetic manner, not for the sake of giving pleasure, but for the sake of giving peace." Giselbertus, sculptor of the Last Judgment at Autun, does not ask us to consider his arrangement of masses, or to admire his skill in the use of tools, but

[1] *Scientia autem artificis est causa artificiatorum; eo quod artifex operatur per suum intellectum* [Productive science is the cause of artifacts, so that the artist works through his intellect –Ed. trans.], *Sum. Theol.* I.14.8c.

[2] "If you take away science, how will you distinguish between the *artifex* [artist] and the *inscius* [ignorant]?" Cicero, *Academica* II.7.22; "*Architecti jam suo verbo rationem istam vocant*," [For architects summons rational order with their word –Ed. trans.] Augustine, *De ordine* II.34; it is the same for all arts, e.g., dance is rational, therefore its gestures are not merely graceful movements but also signs.

directs us to his theme, of which he says in the inscription, *Terreat hic terror quos terreus alligat error*, "Let this terror affright those whom terrestrial error holds in bondage."

And so, too, for music. Guido d'Arezzo distinguishes accordingly the true musician from the songster who is nothing but an artist:

> Musicorum et cantorum magna est distancia:
> Isti dicunt, illi sciunt quae componit musica.
> Nam qui canit quod non sapit, diffinitur bestia;
> Bestia non, qui non canit ante, sed usu;
> Non verum facit ars cantorem, sed documentum.[3]

That is, "between the true 'musicians' and the mere 'songsters,' the difference is vast: the latter vocalize, the former understand the music's composition. He who sings of what he savors not is termed a 'brute'; not brute is he who sings, not merely artfully, but *usefully;* it is not art alone, but the doctrine that makes the true 'singer.'"

The thought is like St. Augustine's, "not to enjoy what we should use"; pleasure, indeed, perfects the operation, but is not its end. And like Plato's, for whom the Muses are given to us "that we may use them intellectually (*meta noun*)[4] not as a source of irrational pleasure (*eph hēdonēn alogon*), but as an aid to the circling of the soul within us, of which the harmony was lost at birth, to help in restoring it to order and consent with itself" (*Timaeus* 47D, cf. 90D). The words *sciunt quae componit musica* [they understand the music's composition –Ed. trans.] are reminiscent of Quintilian's "Docti rationem componendi intelligunt, etiam indocti voluptatem" [the learned understand the logic of making, but the unlearned aim at pleasure –Ed. trans.] (IX.4.116); and these are an abbreviation of Plato, *Timaeus* 80B, where it is said that from the composition of sharp and deep sounds there results "pleasure to the

[3] Paul Henry Lang, in his *Music and Western Civilization* (New York, 1942), p. 87, accidentally rendered the penultimate line in our verse by "A brute by rote and not by art makes melody"; a version that overlooks the double negative, and misinterprets *usu,* which is not "by habit," but "usefully" or "profitably" *ōphelimōs.* Professor E. K. Rand has kindly pointed out to me that line 4 is metrically incomplete, and suggests *sapit usu*, i.e., "who, in practice, savors what is sung." Related material will be found in Plato, *Phaedrus* 245A; Rūmī, *Mathnawī* I.2770.

[4] The shifting of our interest from "pleasure" to "significance" involves what is, in fact, a *metanoia* which can be taken to mean either a "change of mind," or a turning away from mindless sensibility to Mind itself. Cf. Coomaraswamy, "On Being in One's Right Mind," 1942.

unintelligent, but to the intelligent that delight that is occasioned by the imitation of the divine harmony realized in mortal motions." Plato's "delight" (*euphrosunē*) with its festal connotation (cf. *Homeric Hymns* IV.482), corresponds to Guido's verb *sapit,* as in *sapientia,* defined by St. Thomas Aquinas as *scientia cum amore* [science with love –Ed. trans.]; this delight is, in fact, the "feast of reason." To one who plays his instrument with art *and* wisdom it will teach him such things as grace the mind; but to one who questions his instrument ignorantly and violently, it will only babble (*Homeric Hymns* IV.483). *Usu* may be compared to *usus* as the *jus et norma loquendi* [law and norm of speaking –Ed. trans.] (Horace, *Ars poetica*, 71, 72), and corresponds, I think, to a Platonic *ōphelimōs* [beneficially] = *frui, fruitio* and Thomist *uti* = *frui, fruitio* (*Sum. Theol.* I.39.8C).

That "art" is not enough recalls the words of Plato in *Phaedrus* 245A, where not merely art, but also inspiration is necessary, if the poetry is to amount to anything. Mignot's *scientia* and Guido's *documentum* are Dante's *dottrina* at which (and not at his art) he asks us to marvel (*Inferno* IX.61); and that *dottrina* is not his own but what "Amor (Sanctus Spiritus) dictates within me" (*Purgatorio* XXIV.52, 53). It is not the poet but "the God (Eros) himself that speaks" (Plato, *Ion* 534, 535); and not fantasy but truth, for "Omne verum, a quocumque dicatur, est a Spiritu Sancto" [Every truth, no matter by whom it is said, is from the Holy Spirit –Ed. trans.] (St. Ambrose on I Cor. 12:3); "Cathedram habet in caelo qui intus corda docet" [it has a seat in heaven, which teaches the heart interiorly –Ed. trans.] (St. Augustine, *In epist. Joannis ad parthos*); O Lord of the Voice, implant in me thy doctrine (*śrutam*), in me may it abide" (AV I.1.2).

That "to make the primordial truth intelligible, to make the unheard audible, to enunciate the primordial word, such is the task of art, or it is not art"[5]—not art, but *quia sine scientia, nihil* —has been the normal and oecumenical view of art. Mignot's conception of architecture, Guido's of music, and Dante's of poetry underlie the art, and notably the "ornament," of all other peoples and ages than our own—whose art

[5] Walter Andrae, "Keramik im Dienste der Weisheit," *Berichte der deutschen keramischen Gesellschaft* XVII (1936), p. 263. Cf. Gerhardt Hauptmann, "Dichten heisst, hinter Worten das Urwort erklingen lassen" [Poetry should be defined as such a use of words that there resounds in them the primordial Word –author's trans.]; and Sir George Birdwood, "Art, void of its supernatural typology, fails in its inherent artistic essence" (*Sva*, London, 1915, p. 296).

is "unintelligible."[6] Our private (*idiōtikos*) and sentimental (*pathētikos*) contrary heresy (i.e., view that we *prefer* to entertain) which makes of works of art an essentially sensational experience,[7] is stated in the very word "aesthetics," *aisthēsis* being nothing but the biological "irritability" that human beings share with plants and animals. The American Indian cannot understand how we "can like his songs and not share their spiritual content."[8] We are, indeed, just what Plato called "lovers of fine colors and sounds and all that art makes of these things that have so little to do with the nature of the beautiful itself" (*Republic* 476B). The truth remains, that "art is an intellectual virtue," "beauty has to do with cognition."[9] "Science renders the work beautiful; the will renders it useful; perseverance makes it lasting."[10] *Ars sine scientia nihil.*

[6] "It is inevitable that the artist should be unintelligible because his sensitive nature inspired by fascination, bewilderment, and excitement, expresses itself in the profound and intuitive terms of ineffable wonder. We live in an age of unintelligibility, as every age must be that is so largely characterized by conflict, maladjustment, and heretogeneity" (E. F. Rothschild); i.e., as Iredell Jenkins has expressed it, in a world of "impoverished reality."

[7] It was a tremendous discovery, how to excite emotions for their own sake" (Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making,* quoted with approval by Herbert Read in *Art and Society*, London, 1937, p. 84). Much more truly, Aldous Huxley calls our abuse of art "a form of masturbation" (*Ends and Means,* New York, 1937, p. 237): how otherwise could one describe the stimulation of emotions "for their own sake"?

[8] Mary Austin in H. J. Spinden, *Fine Art and the First Americans* (New York,1930, p. 5. No more can we understand those for whom the Scriptures are mere "literature."

[9] *Sum. Theol.* I.5.4 *ad* 1, I-II.27.1 *ad 3,* and I-II.57.3 and 4.

[10] St. Bonaventura, *De reductione artium ad theologiam* XIII.

CHAPTER V

The Meeting of Eyes[1]

In some portraits the eyes of the subject seem to be looking straight at the spectator, whether he faces the picture or moves to right or left of it. There are, for example, many representations of Christ in which his glance seems to hold the spectator wherever he is and to follow him insistently when he moves. Nicholas of Cusa had seen such representations at Nuremberg, Coblentz, and Brussels; a good example is the Head of Christ by Quentin Matsys, in Antwerp (Figure 1). The type seems to be of Byzantine origin.[2]

In an article entitled "The Apparent Direction of Eyes in a Portrait,"[3] W. H. Wollaston has discussed and explained the rather subtle conditions on which this phenomenon depends. It is an effect by no means wholly due to the drawing of the eyes themselves,[4] but also and even more depends on the drawing of the nose and other features. Wollaston points out that just as the needle of a compass seen from a little distance, and actually vertical in a perspective drawing, retains

[1] In the Indian Rhetoric of Love, the first condition of "Love in Separation," known as "Love's Beginning" (*pūrva rāga*), may be occasioned either by hearsay or by sight, and if by sight, either by seeing in a picture or by "vision eye to eye" (*sākṣāt darśaṇa*) the result is the first of the ten stages of love, that of "Longing" (*abhilāṣa*). So, for example, in the *Sāhitya Darpaṣa,* and the whole of the literature on rhetoric, and in the songs of the Vaiṣṇava Fidèles de l'amour.

I do not know of any explicit Indian reference to the exchange of glances as between a picture and the spectator, but in the *Arabian Nights* (Story of Prince Ahmed and the fairy Peri-Banu, R. F. Burton, *Suppl. Nights* III [1886], 427), it is said that there was in a temple at Besnagar, "a golden image in size and stature like unto a man of wondrous beauty; and so cunning was the workmanship that the face seemed to fix its eyes, two immense rubies of enormous value, upon all beholders no matter where they stood."

That God is all-seeing, or looks in all directions simultaneously, occurs throughout the literature. The Brahma "visibly present and not out of sight" (*sāksād-aparohṣāt*) is the immanent Breath and true Self (BU III.4); so that (as also in Plato) if the contemplative is to "see" the immanent deity his eye must be "turned round," con- or intro-verted (*āvṛttacakṣus,* KU IV.1).

[2] For the above and further references see E. Vansteenberghe, *Autour de la docte ignorance* (Münster, 1915), p. 37.

[3] *Philosophical Transactions,* Royal Society (London, 1824).

[4] In some types of primitive art, for example, the eye of a face in full profile may be drawn as if seen frontally, but this does not make it seem that it is looking at the spectator.

its apparently vertical position however much we change our point of view, but seems to move in order to do this, so the eyes of a portrait originally looking at the spectator in one position seem to move in order to regard him in another position. On the other hand, although the eyes themselves may have been drawn as if looking directly at the spectator, if the other features are out of drawing for this position of the eyes, then the effect of the features, and especially the nose, will be to make the picture seem to look in one fixed direction, away from the spectator, whatever his position. The strictly frontal position presents, of course, the simplest case, but it is not at all necessary that the position of the face should be strictly frontal if the eyes are so turned (aside in the subject) as to look directly at the spectator, and there is nothing in the rest of the drawing to contradict this appearance. Thus the essentials for the effect are (1) that the subject must have been originally represented as if looking directly at the artist, and (2) that nothing in the rest of the drawing must conflict with this appearance.

Nicholas of Cusa refers to icons of this kind, and in the *De visione Dei,* or *De icona* (A.D. 1453) he speaks of sending such a picture to the Abbot and the Brethren of Tegernsee. He makes the characteristic of the icon, as referred to above, the starting point of a Contemplatio in Caligine, or Vision of God *in tenebris,* beyond the "wall of the coincidence of contraries."[5] Of such pictures he says:

> Place it anywhere, say on the north wall of your Oratory; stand before it in a half-circle, not too close, and look at it. It will seem to each of you, whatever the position from which he looks, that it is as if he, and he alone, were being looked at.... So you will marvel, in the first place, how it can be that the icon looks at all of you and at each one of you.... Then let a brother, fixing his gaze upon the icon, move towards the west, and he will find that the glance of the icon moves ever with him; nor will it leave him if he returns to the east. He will marvel then at this motion without locomotion.... If he asks a brother to walk from east to west, keeping his eves on the icon,

[5] "The wall of the Paradise in which thou dwellest," he says, "is composite of the coincidence of contraries, and remains impenetrable for all who have not overcome the highest Spirit of Reason who keeps the gate" (*De visione Dei,* ch. 9). These "contraries" (past and future, good and evil, etc.), in the traditional symbolism of the Janua Coeli, are the two leaves or sides of the "Active Door," by which, as they "clash," the entrant may be crushed. The highest spirit of Reason must be overcome (cf. John 10:9 and JUB I.5) because all rational truth (cf. BU I.6.3 and *Īśā Up.* 15) is necessarily stated in terms of the contraries, of which the coincidence is suprarational. Liberation is from these "pairs" (*dvandvair vimuktaḥ*, BG XV.5).

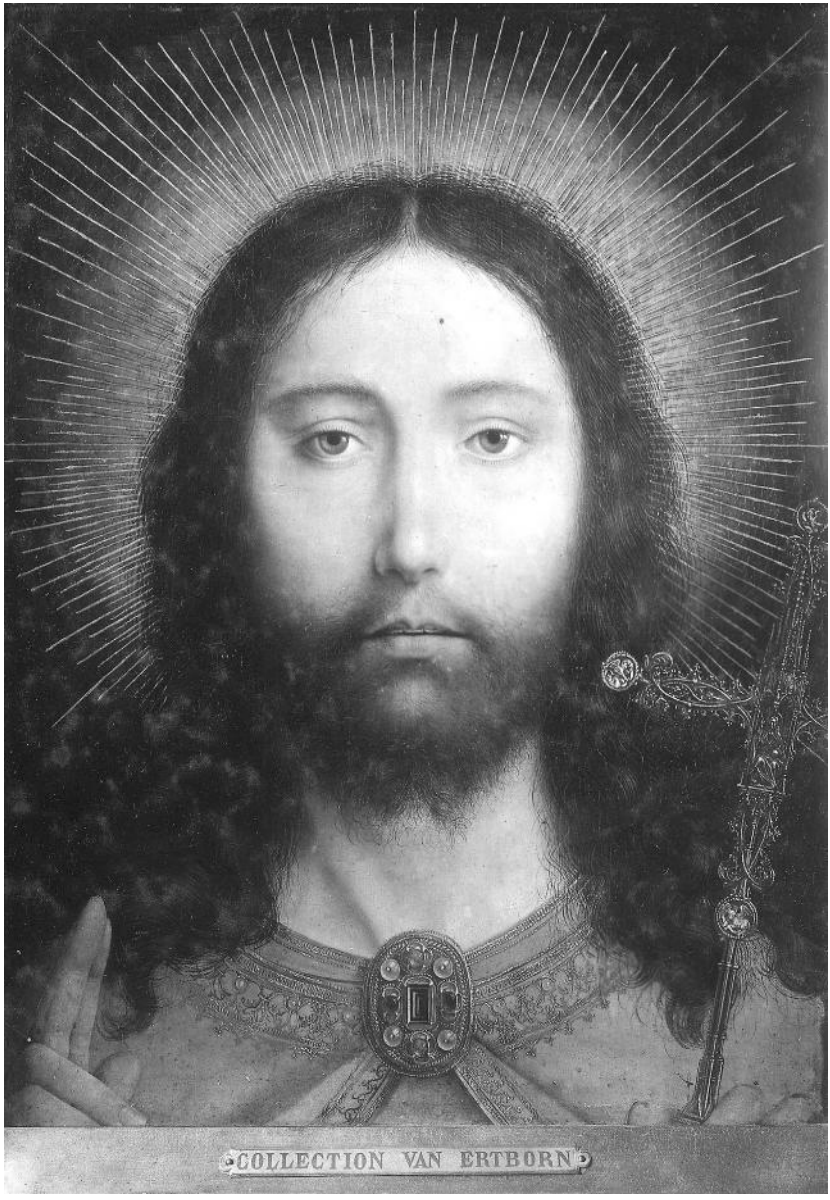

Figure 1. Quentin Matsys: *Christus Salvador Mundi.*

> while he himself moves eastwards, he will be told by the latter, when they meet, that the glance of the icon moves with him, and will believe him; and from this evidence will realize that the face follows everyone as he moves, even if the motions are contrary. He will see that the motionless face moves to east and west, northward or southward, in one direction and in all directions simultaneously.

We cannot, in the absence of further literary evidence, be certain that the effect was one that had been deliberately sought by the artist, and the result of a conscious art or rule. But it is an effect pertaining to the formal cause, viz. to the mental image in the artist's mind, and so necessarily reflects his implicit intention; if he has not imagined the divine eyes as looking at himself directly, they will not seem to look at any subsequent spectator directly. The effect, in other words, is not an accident, but a necessity of the iconography; if the eyes of an all-seeing God are to be iconostasized *truly* and *correctly,* they must appear to be all-seeing.

Nicholas of Cusa's description of the icon of Christ has a striking parallel in the *Dhammapada Atthakathā,* I.406: when the Buddha is preaching, to however large an audience, and whether to those standing before or behind him, it seems to each that "The Teacher is looking at me alone; he is preaching the Norm to me alone.' For the Teacher appears to be looking at each individual and to be conversing with each.... A Buddha seems to stand face to face with every individual, no matter where the individual may stand."

The effect in an icon is an example of the *integritas sive perfectio* [integrity or perfection –Ed. trans.] that St. Thomas Aquinas makes a condition of beauty, and of the *orthotēs*, *alētheia*, and *isotēs* (correctness, truth, and adequacy) with respect to the *hoion*, *idea*, and *dynamis* (suchness, form, and power) of the archetype that Plato insists upon in all iconography and can only be attained when the artist himself has seen the reality that he is to depict. Only to the extent that an artifact correctly represents its model can it be said to fulfill its purpose. In the present case (as in that of every artifact in proportion to its significance) the purpose of the icon is to be the support of a contemplation *(dhiyālamba)*. It may or may not also afford aesthetic pleasures; nor is there any evil in these pleasures as such, unless we think of them as the sole end of the work; in which case we become mere sybarites, lotus-eaters, and passive enjoyers of something that can only be understood from the point of view of its intended use. To adapt the words of Guido d'Arezzo, *Non verum facit ars artificem, sed documentum* [it is not art alone, but the doctrine that makes the true artist –Ed. trans.].

CHAPTER VI

Shaker Furniture

Shaker Furniture[1] emphasizes the spiritual significance of perfect craftsmanship and, as the author remarks, "the relationship between a way of life and a way of work invests the present study with special interest." And truly a humane interest, since here the way of life and way of work (*karma yoga* of the *Bhagavad Gītā*) are one and the same way; and as the *Bhagavad Gītā* likewise tells us in the same connection, "Man attains perfection by the intensity of his devotion to his own proper task," working, that is to say, not for himself or for his own glory, but only "for the good of the work to be done." "It is enough," as Marcus Aurelius says (VI.2), "to get the work done well." The Shaker way of life was one of order; an order or rule that may be compared to that of a monastic community. At the same time, "the idea of worship in work was at once a doctrine and a daily discipline.... The ideal was variously expressed that secular achievements should be as 'free from error' as conduct, that manual labor was a type of religious ritual, that godliness should illuminate life at every point."

In this they were better Christians than many others. All tradition has seen in the Master Craftsman of the Universe the exemplar of the human artist or "maker by art," and we are told to be "perfect, *even as* your Father in heaven is perfect." That the Shakers were doctrinally Perfectionists is the final explanation of the perfection of Shaker workmanship; or, as we might have said, of its "beauty." We say "beauty," despite the fact that the Shakers scorned the word in its worldly and luxurious applications, for it is a matter of bare fact that they who ruled that "beadings, mouldings, and cornices, which are merely for fancy, may not be made by Believers" were consistently better carpenters than are to be found in the world of unbelievers. In the light of mediaeval theory we cannot wonder at this; for in the perfection, order, and illumination which were made the proof of the good life we recognize precisely those qualities (*integritas sive perfectio, consonantia, claritas*) [integrity or perfection, harmony, clarity –Ed. trans.] which

[1] Edward Deming Andrews and Faith Andrews, *Shaker Furniture: The Craftsmanship of an American Communal Sect* (New Haven, 1937) [reprinted New York, 1979]. Cf. Edward Deming Andrews, *The Gift To Be Simple: Songs, Dances and Rituals of the American Shakers* (New York, 1940) [reprinted New York, 1967].

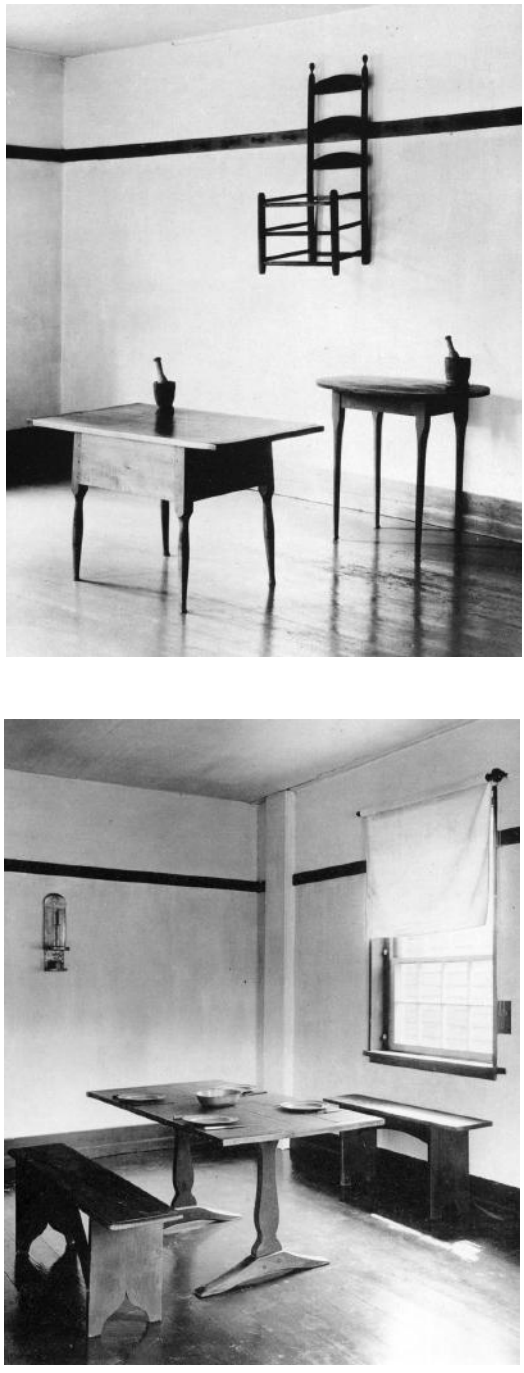

Figure 2. Shaker Furniture.

are for St. Thomas the "requisites of beauty" in things made by art. "The result was the elevation of hitherto uninspired, provincial joiners to the position of fine craftsmen, actuated by worthy traditions and a guildlike pride.... The peculiar correspondence between Shaker culture and Shaker artisanship should be seen as the result of the penetration of the spirit into all secular activity. Current in the United Society was the proverb: 'Every force evolves a form.'[2] ... The eventual result of this penetration of religion into the workshop, as we have noted, was the discarding of all values in design which attach to surface decoration in favor of the values inherent in form, in the harmonious relationship of parts, and the perfected unity of form."

Shaker art is, in fact, far more closely related to the perfection and severity of primitive and "savage" art (of which the Shakers probably knew nothing and which they would not have "understood") than are the "many shrewdly reticent modern creations" in which the outward aspects of primitive and functional art are consciously imitated. Shaker art was not in any sense a "crafty" or "mission style," deliberately "rustic," but one of the greatest refinement, that achieved "an effect of subdued elegance, even of delicacy ... at once precise and differentiated." One thing that made this possible was the fact that given the context in which the furniture was to be used, "the joiners were not forced to anticipate carelessness and abuse."

The style of Shaker furniture, like that of their costume, was impersonal; it was, indeed, one of the "millennial laws" that "No one should write or print his name on any article of manufacture, that others may hereafter know the work of his hands."[3] And this Shaker style was almost uniform from beginning to end; it is a collective, and not an individualistic expression. Originality and invention appear, not as a sequence of fashions or as an "aesthetic" phenomenon, but whenever there were new *uses* to be served; the Shaker system coincided with and did not resist "the historic transference of occupations from the home to the shop or small factory; and new industries were conducted on a scale requiring laborsaving devices and progressive methods. The versatility of

[2] Expressed more technically, this would read: Every form evolves a figure.

[3] Cf. Dh V.74, "'May it be known to both religious and profane that *This was my work*' ... That is a notion befitting an infant." In one of the Shaker hymns occur the lines:

> But now from my forehead I'll quickly erase
> The stamp of the Devil's great *I*.

This would have been in imitation of Christ's "I do nothing of myself."

the Shaker workmen is well illustrated by the countless tools invented for unprecedented techniques."

We cannot refrain from observing how closely the Shaker position corresponds to the mediaeval Christian in this matter of art. The founders of the Shaker order can hardly have read St. Thomas, yet it might have been one of themselves that had said that if ornament (*decor*) is made the chief end of a work, it is mortal sin, but if a secondary cause may be either quite in order or merely a venial fault; and that the artist is responsible as a man for whatever he undertakes to make, as well as responsible as an artist for making to the best of his ability (*Sum. Theol.* II-II.167.2C and II-II.169.2 *ad* 4): or that "Everything is said to be *good* insofar as it is perfect, for in that way only is it desirable.... The perfections of all things are so many similitudes of the divine being" (*ibid.* I.5.5C, I.6.1 *ad* 2)—"all things," of course, including even brooms and hoes and other "useful articles" made *secundum rectam rationem artis* [according to correct artistic reason –Ed. trans.]. The Shaker would have understood immediately what to the modern aesthetician seems obscure, Bonaventura's "light of a mechanical art."

It would, indeed, be perfectly possible to outline a Shaker theory of beauty in complete agreement with what we have often called the "normal view of art." We find, for example (pp. 20-21, 61-63), in Shaker writings that "God is the great artist or master-builder"; that only when all the parts of a house or a machine have been perfectly *ordered,* "then the beauty of the machinery and the wisdom of the artist are apparent"; that "order is the creation of beauty. It is heaven's first law [cf. Gr. *cosmos*, Skr. *ṛta*] and the protection of souls.... Beauty rests on utility"; and conversely, that "the falling away from any spiritual epoch has been marked by the ascendancy of the aesthetics [*sic*]." Most remarkable is the statement that that beauty is best which is "peculiar to the flower, or generative period" and not that "which belongs to the ripened fruit and grain."[4] Nor is the matter without an economic bearing. We treat "art" as a luxury, which the common man can hardly afford, and as something to be found in a museum rather than a home or business office: yet although Shaker furniture is of museum quality, "the New Lebanon trustees reported that the actual cost of furnishing one of our dwellings for the comfortable accommodations of 60 or 70 inmates would fall far short of the sum often expended in furnishing some single

[4] For the corresponding Indian doctrine of *ummīlana* (= *sphoṭa*, cf. vernacular *phūṭ-phūṭ*) and a fuller analysis of this conception, see Coomaraswamy, "The Technique and Theory of Indian Painting," 1934, n. 16, pp. 74-75.

parlors in the cities of New York and Albany." One is moved to ask whether our own "high standard of living" is really more than a high standard of paying, and whether any of us are really getting our money's worth. In the case of furniture, for example, we are certainly paying much more for things of inferior quality.

In all this there would appear to be something that has been overlooked by our modern culturalists who are engaged in the teaching of art and of art appreciation, and by our exponents of the doctrine of art as self-expression, in any case as an expression of emotions, or "feelings." The primary challenge put by this splendid book, a perfect example of expertise in the field of art history, may be stated in the form of a question: Is not the "mystic," after all, the only really "practical" man?

Our authors remark that "as compromises were made with principle, the crafts inevitably deteriorated." In spite of their awareness of this, the authors envisage the possibility of a "revival" of Shaker style:[5] the furniture "can be produced again, never as the inevitable expression of time and circumstance, yet still as something to satisfy the mind which is surfeited with over-ornamentation and mere display," produced—shall we say at Grand Rapids?—for "people with limited means but educated taste ... who will seek a union of practical convenience and quiet charm." In other words, a new outlet is to be provided for the bourgeois fantasy of "cult"-ure when other period furnitures have lost their "charm." The museums will undoubtedly be eager to assist the interior decorator. It does not seem to occur to anyone that things are only beautiful in the environment for which they were designed, or as the Shaker expressed it, when "adapted to condition" (p. 62). Shaker style was not a "fashion" determined by "taste," but a creative activity "adapted to condition."

Innumerable cultures, some of which we have destroyed, have been higher than our own: still, we do not rise to the level of Greek humanity by building imitation Parthenons, nor to that of the Middle Ages by living in pseudo-Gothic châteaux. To imitate Shaker furniture would be no proof of a creative virtue in ourselves: their austerity, imitated for our convenience, economic or aesthetic, becomes a luxury in us: their avoidance of ornament an interior "decoration" for us. We should rather say of the Shaker style *requiescat in pace* than attempt to copy it. It is a frank confession of insignificance to resign oneself to the merely servile activity of reproduction; all archaism is the proof of a

[5] In subsequent correspondence, Mr. Andrews informed me that he did not think such a revival feasible. It would in fact be "artsy-crafty."

deficiency. In "reproduction" nothing but the accidental appearance of a living culture can be evoked. If we were now such as the Shaker was, an art of our own, "adapted to condition," would be indeed essentially like, but assuredly accidentally unlike Shaker art. Unfortunately, we do not desire to be such as the Shaker was; we do not propose to "work as though we had a thousand years to live, and as though we were to die tomorrow" (p. 12). Just as we desire peace but not the things that make for peace, so we desire art but not the things that make for art. We put the cart before the horse. *Il pittore pinge sé stesso* [The painter paints himself, Leonardo da Vinci –Ed. trans.]; we have the art that we deserve. If the sight of it puts us to shame, it is with ourselves that the re-formation must begin. A drastic transvaluation of accepted values is required. With the re-formation of man, the arts of peace will take care of themselves.

CHAPTER VII

Literary Symbolism

Lo! Allah disdaineth not to coin the similitude even of a gnat.
Koran II.26.

Words are never meaningless by nature, though they can be used irrationally for merely aesthetic and nonartistic purposes: all words are by first intention signs or symbols of specific referents. However, in any analysis of meaning, we must distinguish the literal and categorical or historical significance of words from the allegorical meaning that inheres in their primary referents: for while words are signs of things, they can also be heard or read as symbols of what these things themselves imply. For what are called "practical" (shopkeeping) purposes the primary reference suffices; but when we are dealing with theory, the second reference becomes the important one. Thus, we all know what is meant when we are ordered, "raise your hand"; but when Dante writes "and therefore doth the scripture condescend to your capacity, assigning hand and foot to God, with other meaning ..." (*Paradiso* IV.43, cf. Philo, *De somniis* I.235), we perceive that in certain contexts "hand" means "power." In this way language becomes not merely indicative, but also expressive, and we realize that, as St. Bonaventura says, "it never expresses except by means of a likeness" (*nisi mediante specie, De reductione artium ad theologiam* 18). So Aristotle, "even when one thinks speculatively, one must have some mental picture with which to think" (*De anima* III.8). Such pictures are not themselves the objects of contemplation, but "supports of contemplation."

"Likeness," however, need not imply any visual resemblance; for in representing abstract ideas, the symbol is "imitating," in the sense that all art is "mimetic," something invisible. Just as when we say "the young man is a lion," so in all figures of thought, the validity of the image is one of true analogy, rather than verisimilitude; it is, as Plato says, not a mere resemblance (*homoiotēs*) but a real rightness or adequacy (*auto to ison*) that effectively reminds us of the intended referent (*Phaedo* 74 ff.): the Pythagorean position being that truth, rightness (*katorthōsis*, *recta ratio*) in a work of art is a matter of proportion (*analogia*, Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus dogmaticos* I.106); in other words, true "imitation" is not an arithmetical reproduction, "on the contrary, an image, if it is

to be in fact an 'image' of its model, must not be altogether 'like' it" (*Cratylus* 432B).

Adequate symbolism may be defined as the representation of a reality on a certain level of reference by a corresponding reality on another: as, for example, in Dante, "No object of sense in the whole world is more worthy to be made a type of God than the sun" (*Convito* III.12). No one will suppose that Dante was the first to regard the Sun as an adequate symbol of God. But there is no more common error than to attribute to an individual "poetic imagination" the use of what are really the traditional symbols and technical terms of a spiritual language that transcends all confusion of tongues and is not peculiar to any one time or place. For example, "a rose by any name (e.g., English or Chinese) will smell as sweet," or considered as a symbol may have a constant sense; but that it should be so depends upon the assumption that there are really analogous realities on different levels of reference, i.e., that the world is an explicit theophany, "as above, so below."[1] The traditional symbols, in other words are not "conventional" but "given" with the ideas to which they correspond; one makes, accordingly, a distinction between *le symbolisme qui sait* and *le symbolisme qui cherche* [the symbolism which knows and the symbolism which searches –Ed. trans.], the former being the universal language of tradition, and the latter that of the individual and self-expressive poets who are sometimes called "Symbolists."[2] Hence also the primary necessity of accuracy (*orthotēs*, *integritas*) in our iconography, whether in verbal or visual imagery.

It follows that if we are to understand what the expressive writing intends to communicate, we cannot take it only literally or historically, but must be ready to interpret it "hermeneutically." How often it happens that in some sequence of traditional books one reaches the point at

[1] Cf. *Mathnawī* I.3454 ff.

[2] A distinction "of the subjective symbol of psychological association from the symbol of precise meaning ... implies some understanding of the doctrine of analogy" (Walter Shewring in the *Weekly Review*, August 17, 1944). What is implied by "the doctrine of analogy" (or, in the Platonic sense "adequacy" (*isotēs*) is that "une réalité d'un certain ordre peut être représentée par une réalité d'un autre ordre, et celle-ci est alors un *symbole* de celle-là" [a reality of a certain order can be represented by a reality of another order, and the latter is thus a symbol of what it represents – Ed trans.], René Guénon, "Mythes, mystères et symboles," *Le Voile d'Isis,* XL, (1935), 386. In this sense a symbol is a "mystery," i.e., something to be understood (Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* II.6.15). "Ohne Symbole und Symbolik gibt es keine Religion" [There is no religion without symbols and symbolism –Ed. trans.] (H. Prinz, *Altorientalische Symbolik*, Berlin, 1915, p. 1).

which one questions whether such and such an author, whose account of a given episode is confused, has understood his material or is merely playing with it, somewhat as modern literary men play with their material when they write what are called "fairy tales," and to whom may be applied the words of Guido d'Arezzo, "Nam qui canit quod non sapit, diffinitur bestia." [He who sings of what he savors not is termed a brute – author trans.]. For as Plato long ago asked, "About what does the Sophist make one so eloquent?" (*Protagoras* 312E).

The problem presents itself to the historian of literature in connection with the stylistic sequences of myth, epic, romance, and modern novel and poetry whenever, as so often happens, he meets with recurring episodes or phrases, and similarly in connection with folklore. An all-too-common error is to suppose that the "true" or "original" form of a given story can be reconstructed by an elimination of its miraculous and supposedly "fanciful" or "poetic" elements. It is, however, precisely in these "marvels," for example in the miracles of Scripture, that the deepest truths of the legend inhere; philosophy, as Plato—whom Aristotle followed in this respect—affirms, beginning in wonder. The reader who has learned to think in terms of the traditional symbolisms will find himself furnished with unsuspected means of understanding, criticism, and delight, and with a standard by which he can distinguish the individual fancy of a littérateur from the knowing use of traditional formulae by a learned singer. He may come to realize that there is no connection of novelty with profundity; that when an author has made an idea his own he can employ it quite originally and inevitably, and with the same right as the man to whom it first presented itself, perhaps before the dawn of history.

Thus when Blake writes, "I give you the end of a golden string, Only wind it into a ball; It will lead you in at heaven's gate Built in Jerusalem's wall," he is using not a private terminology but one that can be traced back in Europe through Dante (*questi la terra in sè stringe, Paradiso* I.116) ["This binds the earth together" –Ed. trans.], the Gospels ("No man can come to me, except the Father ... draw him," John 6:44, cf. 12:32), Philo, and Plato (with his "one golden cord" that we human puppets should hold on to and be guided by, *Laws* 644) to Homer, where it is Zeus that can draw all things to himself by means of a golden cord (*Iliad* VIII.18 ff., cf. Plato, *Theatetus* 153). And it is not merely in Europe that the symbol of the "thread" has been current for more than two millennia; it is to be found in Islamic, Hindu, and Chinese contexts. Thus we read in Shams-i-Tabrīz, "He gave me the end of a thread.... 'Pull,' he said 'that I may pull: and break it not in the pulling,' " and in

Hāfiz, "Keep thy end of the thread, that he may keep his end"; in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* that the Sun is the fastening to which all things are attached by the thread of the spirit, while in the *Maitri Upaniṣad* the exaltation of the contemplative is compared to the ascent of a spider on its thread; Chuang-tzu tells us that our life is suspended from God as if by a thread, cut off when we die. All this is bound up with the symbolism of weaving and embroidery, the "rope trick," rope walking, fishing with a line and lassoing; and that of the rosary and the necklace, for, as the *Bhagavad Gītā* reminds us, "all things are strung on Him like rows of gems upon a thread."[3]

We can say with Blake, too, that "if the spectator could enter into these images, approaching them on the fiery chariot of contemplative thought ... then he would be happy." No one will suppose that Blake invented the "fiery chariot" or found it anywhere else than in the Old Testament; but some may not have remembered that the symbolism of the chariot is also used by Plato, and in the Indian and Chinese books. The horses are the sensitive powers of the soul, the body of the chariot our bodily vehicle, the rider the spirit. The symbol can therefore be regarded from two points of view; if the untamed horses are allowed to go where they will, no one can say where this will be; but if they are curbed by the driver, his intended destination will be reached. Thus, just as there are two "minds," divine and human, so there is a fiery chariot of the gods, and a human vehicle, one bound for heaven, the other for the attainment of human ends, "whatever these may be" (TS V.4.10.1). In other words, from one point of view, embodiment is a humiliation, and from another a royal procession. Let us consider only the first case here. Traditional punishments (e.g., crucifixion, impalement, flaying) are based on cosmic analogies. One of these punishments is that of the tumbril: whoever is, as a criminal, carted about the streets of a city loses his honor and all legal rights; the "cart" is a moving prison, the "carted man" (*rathita,* MU IV.4) a prisoner. That is why, in Chrétien's *Lancelot*, the Chevalier de la Charette shrinks from and delays to step into the cart; although it is to take him on the way to the fulfillment of his quest. In other words, the Solar Hero shrinks from his task, which is that of the liberation of the Psyche (Guenevere), who is imprisoned by a magician in a castle that lies beyond a river that can only be crossed by the "sword bridge." This bridge itself is another traditional symbol, by no means an

[3] For a summary account of the "thread-spirit" (*sūtrātman*) doctrine and some of its implications, see Coomaraswamy, "The Iconography of Dürer's 'Knots' and Leonardo's 'Concatenation,'" 1944.

invention of the storyteller, but the "Brig of Dread" and "razor-edged way" of Western folklore and Eastern scripture.[4] The "hesitation" corresponds to that of Agni to become the charioteer of the gods (RV X.51), the Buddha's well-known hesitation to set in motion the Wheel of the Law, and Christ's "may this cup be taken from me"; it is every man's hesitation, who will not take up his cross. And *that* is why Guenevere, even when Lancelot has crossed the sword bridge barefoot and has set her free, bitterly reproaches him for his short and seemingly trivial delay to mount the cart.

Such is the "understanding" of a traditional episode, which a knowing author has retold, not primarily to amuse but originally to instruct; the telling of stories only to amuse belongs to later ages in which the life of pleasure is preferred to that of activity or contemplation. In the same way, every genuine folk and fairy tale can be "understood," for the references are always metaphysical; the type of "The Two Magicians," for example, is a creation myth (cf. BU I.4.4, "she became a cow, he became a bull," etc.) ; John Barleycorn is the "dying god"; Snow-white's apple is "the fruit of the tree"; it is only with seven-league boots that one can traverse the seven worlds (like Agni and the Buddha); it is Psyche that the Hero rescues from the Dragon, and so forth. Later on, all these motifs fall into the hands of the writers of "romances," littérateurs, and in the end historians, and are no longer understood. That these formulae have been employed in the same way all over the world in the telling of what are really only variants and fragments of the one Urmythos of humanity implies the presence in certain kinds of literature of imaginative (iconographic) values far exceeding those of the belle-lettrist's fantasies, or the kinds of literature that are based on "observation"; if only because the myth is always true (or else is no true myth), while the "facts" are only true eventfully.[5]

[4] See D. L. Coomaraswamy, "The Perilous Bridge of Welfare," HJAS, VIII (1944).

[5] On the understanding of myths, cf. Coomaraswamy, "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Indra and Namuci," 1944. See also Edgar Dacqué, *Das verlorene Paradies* (Munich, 1938), arguing that myths represent the deepest knowledge that man has; and Murray Fowler, s.v. "Myth," in the *Dictionary of World Literature* (New York, 1943).

"Plato ... follows the light of reason in myth and figure when the dialectic stumbles" (W. M. Urban, *The Intelligible World*, New York, 1929, p. 171). "Myth ... is an essential element of Plato's philosophical style; and his philosophy cannot be understood apart from it" (John A. Stewart, *The Myths of Plato*, New York, 1905, p. 3). "Behind the myth are concealed the greatest realities, the original phenomena of the spiritual life.... It is high time that we stopped identifying myth with invention" (N. Berdyaev, *Freedom and the Spirit*, London, 1935, p. 70). "Men live by myths ... they are no mere poetic

We have pointed out that words have meaning simultaneously on more than one level of reference. All interpretation of scripture (in Europe notably from Philo to St. Thomas Aquinas) has rested upon this assumption: our mistake in the study of literature is to have overlooked that far more of this literature and these *contes* are really scriptural, and can only be criticized as such, than we supposed; an oversight that implies what is really an incorrect stylistic diagnosis. The twofold significance of words, literal and spiritual, can be cited in the word "Jerusalem" as used by Blake, above: "Jerusalem" being (1) an actual city in Palestine and (2) in its spiritual sense, Jerusalem the "golden," a heavenly city of the "imagination." And in this connection, too, as in the case of the "golden" thread, it must be remembered that the traditional language is precise: "gold" is not merely the element *Au* but the recognized symbol of light, life, immortality, and truth.

Many of the terms of traditional thinking survive as clichés in our everyday speech and contemporary literature, where, like other "superstitions," they have no longer any real meaning for us. Thus we speak of a "brilliant saying" or "shining wit," without awareness that such phrases rest upon an original conception of the coincidence of light and sound, and of an "intellectual light" that shines in all adequate imagery; we can hardly grasp what St. Bonaventura meant by "the light of a mechanical art." We ignore what is still the "dictionary meaning" of the word "inspired," and say "inspired by" when we mean "stimulated by" some concrete object. We use the one word "beam" in its two senses of "ray" and "timber" without realizing that these are related senses, coincident in the expression *rubus igneus* [burning bush], and that we are here "on the track of" (this itself is another expression which, like "hitting the mark," is of prehistoric antiquity) an original conception of the immanence of Fire in the "wood" of which the world is made. We say that "a little bird told me" not reflecting that the "language of birds" is a reference to "angelic communications." We say "self-possessed" and speak of "self-government," without realizing that (as was long ago pointed out by Plato) all such expressions imply that "there are two in us" and that in such cases the question still arises, which self shall be possessed or governed by which, the better by the worse, or vice versa. In order to comprehend the older literatures we must not overlook the precision with which all such expressions are employed; or, if we write

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invention" (F. Marti in *Review of Religion*, VII, 1942). It is unfortunate that nowadays we employ the word "myth" almost exclusively in the pejorative sense, which should properly be reserved for such pseudo-myths as those of "race."

ourselves, may learn to do so more clearly (again we find ourselves confronted by the coincidence of "light" with "meaning"—to "argue" being etymologically to "clarify") and intelligibly.

It is sometimes objected that the attribution of abstract meanings is only a later and subjective reading of meanings into symbols that were originally employed either only for purposes of factual communication or only for decorative and aesthetic reasons. Those who take up such a position may first of all be asked to prove that the "primitives," from whom we inherit so many of the forms of our highest thought (the symbolism of the Eucharist, for example, being cannibalistic), were really interested only in factual meanings or ever influenced only by aesthetic considerations. The anthropologists tell us otherwise, that in their lives "needs of the soul and body were satisfied together." They may be asked to consider such surviving cultures as that of the Amerindians, whose myths and art are certainly far more abstract than any form of story telling or painting of modern Europeans. They may be asked, Why was "primitive" or "geometric" art formally abstract, if not because it was required to express an abstract sense? They may be asked, Why, if not because it is speaking of something other than mere facts, is the scriptural style always (as Clement of Alexandria remarks) "parabolic"?

We agree, indeed, that nothing can be more dangerous than a subjective interpretation of the traditional symbols, whether verbal or visual. But it is no more suggested that the interpretation of symbols should be left to guesswork than that we should try to read Minoan script by guesswork. The study of the traditional language of symbols is not an easy discipline, primarily because we are no longer familiar with, or even interested in, the metaphysical content they are used to express; again, because the symbolic phrases, like individual words, can have more than one meaning, according to the context in which they are employed, though this does not imply that they can be given any meaning at random or arbitrarily. Negative symbols in particular bear contrasted values, one "bad," the other "good"; "nonbeing," for example, may represent the state of privation of that which has not yet attained to being, or, on the other hand, the freedom from limiting affirmations of that which transcends being. Whoever wishes to understand the real meaning of these figures of thought that are not merely figures of speech must have studied the very extensive literatures of many countries in which the meanings of symbols are explained, and must himself have learned to think in these terms. Only when it is found that a given symbol—for instance, the number "seven" (seas, heavens, worlds, motions, gifts, rags, breaths, etc.), or the notions "dust," "husk,"

"knot," "eye," "mirror," "bridge," "ship," "rope," "needle," "ladder," etc.—has a generically consistent series of values in a series of intelligible contexts widely distributed in time and space, can one safely "read" its meaning elsewhere, and recognize the stratification of literary sequences by means of the figures used in them. It is in this universal, and universally intelligible, language that the highest truths have been expressed.[6] But apart from this interest, alien to a majority of modern writers and critics, without this kind of knowledge, the historian and critic of literature and literary styles can only by guesswork distinguish between what, in a given author's work, is individual, and what is inherited and universal.

[6] "The metaphysical language of the Great Tradition is the only language that is really intelligible" (Urban, *The Intelligible World*, p. 471). Jacob Boehme, *Signatura rerum*, Preface: "a parabolical or magical phrase or dialect is the best and plainest habit or dress that mysteries can have to travel in up and down this wicked world."

CHAPTER VIII

Intention

My meaning is what I *intend* to convey, to communicate, to some other person. Now intentions are, of course, intentions of minds, and these intentions *presuppose* values.... Meanings and values are inseparable.

Wilbur M. Urban, *The Intelligible World* (New York, 1929), p. 190.

MESSRS. MONROE C. BEARDSLEY
and W. K. WIMSATT, Jr.

Gentlemen:

You, Sirs, in the *Dictionary of World Literature*, discussing "Intention," do not deny that an author may or may not succeed in his purpose, but do say that his success or failure, in this respect, are indemonstrable. You proceed to attack the criticism of a work of art in terms of the relation between intention and result; in the course of this attack you say that to pretend "that the author's aim can be detected internally in the work even where it is not realized... is merely a self-contradictory proposition"; and you conclude the paragraph as follows: "A work may indeed fall short of what the critic thinks should have been intended, or what the author was in the habit of doing, or what one might expect him to do, but there can be no evidence, internal or external, that the author had conceived something which he did not execute." In our subsequent correspondence you say that even if a criticism could be made in terms of the relation of purpose to result, this would be irrelevant, because the critic's main task is "to evaluate the work itself"; and you make it very clear that this "evaluation" has much more to do with "what the work ought to be" than with "what the author intended it to be." In the same connection you cite the case of a school teacher who proposes to correct a pupil's composition; the pupil maintains that what he wrote is what he "meant to say"; the teacher then says, "Well, if you meant to say so and so, all I can say is that you should not have meant it." You add that there are "good intentions and poor intentions," and that intention *per se* is no criterion of the *worth* of the poem.

I not only dissent from all but the last of these propositions, but also feel that you have not done justice to the principle of criticism that you attack; and, finally, that you confuse "criticism" with "evaluation," overlooking that "values" are present only in the end to which the

work is ordered, while "criticism" is supposed to be disinterested. My "intention" is to defend the method of criticism in terms of the ratio intention/result, which I should also state as that of concept/product or forma/figura or art in the artist/artifact. If, in the following paragraphs, I cite some of the older writers, it is not so much as authorities by whom the problem is to be settled for us, as it is to make it clear in what established sense the word "intention" has been used, and to give to the corresponding method of criticism at least its proper historical place.

In the Western world, criticism that takes account of intention begins, I think, with Plato. He says: "If we are to be connoisseurs of poems we must know in each case in what respect they do not miss their mark. For if one does not know the essence of the work, what it intends, and of what it is an image, he will hardly be able to decide whether its intention (*boulēsis*) has or has not found its mark. One who does not know what would be correct in it (but only knows what pleases him), will be unable to judge whether the poem is good or bad" (*Laws* 668C, with parenthesis from B). Here "intention" evidently covers "the whole meaning of the work"; both its truth, beauty, or perfection, and its efficacy or utility. The work is to be true to its model (the choice of a model does not arise at this point), and also adapted to its practical purpose—like St. Augustine's writing stylus, *et pulcher et aptus* [beautiful and fitting –Ed. trans.]. These two judgments by the critic (1) as an artist, and (2) as a consumer, can be logically distinguished, but they are of qualities that coincide in the work itself. They will be made as a single judgment in terms of "good" or "bad" by the critic who is not merely an artist or merely a consumer, but has been educated as he ought, and is a whole man. The distinction of meaning from use may, indeed, be considered "sophistic"; at any rate Plato demanded that works of art should provide for soul and body at one and the same time; and we may observe in passing that Sanskrit, a language that has no lack of precise terms, uses one word, *artha*, to denote both "meaning" and "use"; compare our word "force," which can be used to denote at the same time "meaning" and "cogency."

You, Sirs, say in our correspondence that you are "concerned only with poetic, dramatic, and literary works." Whatever I say is intended to apply to such works, but also to works of art of any kind, since I hold with Plato that "the productions of all arts are kinds of poetry ('making'), and their craftsmen are all poets" (*Symposium* 205C), and that the orator is just like all other craftsmen, since none of them works at random, but with a view to some end (*Gorgias* 503E). I cannot admit that different principles of criticism are applicable to different kinds

of art, but only that different kinds of knowledge are required if the common critical method is to be applied to works of art of different kinds.

The most general case possible of the judgment of a work of art in terms of the ratio of intention to result arises in connection with the judgment of the world itself. When God is said to have considered his finished work and found it "good," the judgment was surely made in these terms: what he had *willed*, that he had *done*. The ratio in this case is that of the *cosmos noētos* to the *cosmos aisthētikos*, invisible pattern to material imitation. In just the same way the human maker "sees within what he has to do without"; and if he finds his product satisfactory (Skr. *alaṃ-kṛta*, "ornamental" in the primary sense of "complemented"),[1] it can be only because it seems to have fulfilled his intention. You, Sirs, in your article and our correspondence have agreed that "in most cases the author understands his own work better than anyone else, and in this sense the more the critic's understanding approximates the author's, the better his criticism will be," and thus essentially with my own assertion that the critic should "so place himself at the original author's standpoint as to see and judge with his eyes."

If, on the other hand, the critic goes about to "evaluate" a work that actually fulfills its author's intention and promise, in terms of what he thinks it "should have been," it is not the work but the intention that he is criticizing. I shall agree with you that, in general, the critic has a right and even a duty to evaluate in this sense; it is, indeed, from just this point of view that Plato sets up his censorship (*Republic* 379, 401, 607, etc.). But this is his right and duty, not as a critic of art, but as a critic of morals; for the present we are considering only the work of art as such, and must not confuse art with prudence. In criticizing the work of art *as such*, the critic must not go behind it, to wish it had never been undertaken: his business as an art critic is to decide whether or not the artist has made a good job of the work he undertook to do. In any case, such a moral judgment is valid only if the intention is really open to moral objection, the critic being presumed to judge by higher standards than the artist. How impertinent a moral criticism can be when we are considering the work of an artist who is admittedly a nobleman (*kalos kagathos* in Plato's and Aristotle's sense) will be apparent if we consider a criticism of the world that is often expressed in the question, Why did not a good God make a world without evil? In this case the critic has completely misunderstood the artist's problem, and ignored the mate-

[1] Cf. Coomaraswamy, "Ornament" [Chapter III in this volume].

rial in which he works: not realizing that a world without alternatives would not have been a world at all, just as a poem made all of sound or wholly of silence would not be a "poem." An equally impertinent criticism of Dante has been made in the following terms: "It is only as the artist has clung fast to his greatness in sensual portrayal, without influence from the content of his work, that he is able to give the content whatever secondary value it possesses. The real significance of the Commedia today is that it is a work of art ... its meaning shifting steadily with time more and more away from the smallness, the narrowness of special pressures of its dogmatic significance.... Does the work of Dante instruct or maim today? He must be split and the artist rescued from the dogmatic first." I will not pillory the author of this effusion by mentioning his name, but only point out that in making such a criticism he is not judging the artist's work at all (his intention being to separate content from form), but only setting himself down as the artist's moral inferior.

At this point it may be helpful to refer to some specific examples of authors' own statements of their "intentions." Avencebrol says, in his *Fons Vitae* (I.9), "Nostra *intentio* fuit speculari de materia universali et forma universali" [Our intention was to speculate about the material universe and universal form –Ed. trans.]. Again (III.1) he asks, "Quae est *intentio* de qua debemus agere in hoc tractatu? " [What is the intention concerning which we ought to act in this tract? –Ed. trans.] and answers "Nostra *intentio* est invenire materiam et formam in substantiis simplicibus" [Our intention is to find matter and form in simple substances –Ed. trans.]. On the other hand, the disciple (here, in effect, the writer's "patron," critic, and reader) says, "Jam *promisisti* quod in hoc secundo tractatu loquereris de materia corporali... Ergo comple hoc et apertissime explana" (II.I) [You promised that in this second tract bodily matter would be discussed.... Therefore, fulfill this and explain it clearly –Ed. trans.]. Here the master's "promise" is surely adequate "external evidence" of his intention; and it is obvious that the master himself might either consider that he had actually fulfilled his promise in the extant work, or otherwise might have said, "I am afraid I come a little short of what I undertook." Or, in answer to some question put by the pupil, he might either say, "I have nothing to add, you must think it out for yourself," or "perhaps I did not make myself quite clear on that point." In the latter case an amended statement would not, as you suggest, imply that "the author has thought of something better to say," but that he has found a better way of expressing what he had originally intended. On his part, the disciple might have justly complained

if the master had actually failed to "fulfill his promise and very clearly set forth" the proposed matter. In much the same way, when Witelo, introducing his *Liber de Intelligentiis*, says: "Summa in hoc capitulo nostrae intentionis est, rerum naturalium difficiliora breviter colligere," etc. [The sum of our intention in this chapter is briefly to collect the more difficult (topics) about natural things –Ed. trans.], criticism will naturally be concerned, not with the propriety of the subject matter, but with the degree of the author's success in presenting it. As a matter of fact, Avencebrol goes on to say that the reader's proper business is "to remember what has been well said, and to correct what has been said less well, and so arrive at the truth."

Whenever, in fact, an author provides us with a preface, argument, or preamble, we are given a criterion by which to judge his performance. On the other hand, he may tell us *post factum* what was the intention of the work. When Dante says of the *Commedia* that "the purpose of the whole work is to remove those who are living in this life from the state of wretchedness and to lead them to the state of blessedness," or when Aśvaghoṣa at the end of his *Saundarānanda* tells us in so many words that the poem was "composed, not for the sake of giving pleasure, but for the sake of giving peace," such an advertisement is perfectly good "external evidence" of the author's meaning (unless we assume him to have been a fool or liar), and a fair warning that we are not to expect what Plato calls the "flattering form of rhetoric," but its true form, the sole end of which is "to lay hold upon the truth" (*Gorgias* 517A, *Phaedrus* 260E, etc.). Perhaps our authors in their wisdom foresaw the rise of such critics as Laurence Housman ("Poetry is not the thing said, but a way of saying it") or Gerard Manley Hopkins ("Poetry is speech framed for the contemplation of the mind by way of hearing or speech, framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above the interest of meaning") or Geoffrey Keynes (who regrets that Blake had ideas to express in his otherwise charming compositions) or Evgeniĭ Lampert (who advocates an "art for art's sake" in the interest of religion!).[2] Our authors, however, warn us to expect not figures of speech but figures of thought; we are not to look for *bons mots*, but for *mots justes*. Aśvaghoṣa's colophon is addressed to "other-minded hearers." It is quite likely that a modern critic will be "other-minded" than Dante or Aśvaghoṣa; but if such a critic proceeds to discuss the merits of the works merely in terms of his own or current prejudices and tastes,

[2] Cf. F.S.C. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West* (New York, 1946), pp. 305, 310.

whether moral or aesthetic, this is not, strictly speaking, a *literary* criticism.

You, Sirs, regard it as very difficult or even impossible to distinguish an author's intention from what he actually says. If, indeed, a work is faultless, then form and content will be such a unity that they can be separated only logically and not really. Criticism, however, never presupposes that a work is faultless, and I say that we can never find fault unless we can distinguish what the author meant to say from what he actually said. We can certainly do that in a minor way if we detect a slip of the pen; just as, also, in the case of a misprint we can distinguish what the author meant to say from what he is made to say. Or suppose an Englishman writing in French: the intelligent French reader may see very well what the author meant to say, however awkwardly he says it, and if he cannot, he can very well be called undiscriminating or uncritical.

However, it is not only with such minor faults that we are concerned, but rather with the detection of real internal conflict or inconsistency as between the matter and the form of the work. I assert that the critic cannot know if a thing has been well said if he does not know what was to be said. You, in correspondence, "deny that it is ever possible to prove from external evidence that the author intended the work to mean something that it doesn't actually mean." What then do we mean by "proof"? Outside of the field of pure mathematics, are there any absolute proofs? Do we not know that the "laws of science" on which we rely so implicitly are only statements of statistical probability? We do not *know* that the sun will rise tomorrow, but have sufficient reason to expect that it will; our life is governed by assurances, never by proofs. It is, then, quibbling to assert that there can be no external proof of an author's intention. It is quite true that in our university disciplines of the history of art, the appreciation of art, and comparative literature, aesthetic pre-occupations (matters of taste) stand in the way of an objective criticism; where we are taught to regard aesthetic surfaces as ends in themselves we are not being taught to understand their reasons. "Experts understand the logic of the composition, the untrained, on the other hand, what pleasure it affords."[3] Thus the critic's indirection is a consequence of the imperfection of the disciplines in which it

[3] Quintilian IX.4.116. This is directly based on Plato, *Timaeus* 80B, and I have rendered Quintilian's *etiam* by "on the other hand," with reference to Plato's *de* and because the sense demands the contrast. In this case the *Timaeus* context provides us with adequate external evidence of Quintilian's intention. Cf. P. O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* (New York, 1943), p. 119.

is assumed that art is an affair of feelings and personalities, where the traditional criticism had assumed that "art is an intellectual virtue" and that what we now regard as figures of speech or as "ornaments" are really, or were originally, figures of thought.

I say, then, that the critic *can* know what was in the author's mind, if he wants to, and within the limits of what is ordinarily meant by certainty, or "right opinion." But this implies work, and not a mere sensibility. "Wer den Dichter will verstehen, muss in Dichters Lande gehen" [Whoever wants to understand the poet must go into the poet's land – Goethe. Ed. trans.]. What "land" is that? Not necessarily, though often advantageously, a physical territory, but still another world of character and another spiritual environment. To begin with, the critic must both know[4] the author's subject and delight in it—*sine desiderio mens non intelligit* [without delight mind does not understand –Ed. trans.] —yes, and believe in it—*crede ut intelligas* [believe so that you may understand –Ed. trans.]. It is laughable if one who is ignorant of and indifferent to, if not scornful of, metaphysics, and unfamiliar with its figures of thought, proceeds to criticize "Dante as literature" or calls the Brāhmaṇas "inane" or "unintelligible." Is it not inconceivable that a "good" translation of Plato could be made by any nominalist, or by anyone not so vitally interested in his doctrine as sometimes to be able even to "read between the lines" of what is actually said? Is it not just this that Dante demands when he says,

> O voi, che avete gl'intelletti sani,
> Mirate la dottrina, che s'asconde
> Sotto il velame degli versi strani?[5]

I assert, from personal experience, that one can so identify oneself with a subject and point of view that one can foresee what will be said next, and even make deductions which one afterwards meets with as explicit statements in some other part of the book or in a work belonging to the same school of thought.[6] If, in fact, one cannot do this,

[4] "Are written words of any use except to remind him who knows the matter about which they are written?" (*Phaedrus* 275D).

[5] [O you possessed of sound intelligence,/Understand the doctrine which lies hidden/ Beneath the veil of the mysterious verses –Ed. trans.] *Inferno* IX.61–63. Cf. RV I.164.39, "What shall one do with the verse, if he knows not *That?*" And *Mathnawī* VI.67-80.

[6] Cf. Cicero, *Academica* II.23: *vixisse cum iis equidem videor*—"(Socrates and Plato), I seem to have actually lived with them."

textual emendation would be possible only on grammatical or metrical grounds. I fully agree that interpretation in terms of what an author "must have thought" can be very dangerous. But when? Only if the critic has identified, not himself with the author, but the author with himself, and is really telling us not what the author must have meant but what he would have liked the author to mean, i.e., what in his opinion the author "ought to have meant." This last is a matter about which a literary critic, as such, can hold no views, because he is setting about to criticize an existing work, and not its antecedent causes. If the critic does presume to tell us what an author ought to have meant, this is a condemnation of the author's intentions, which existed before the work was made accessible to anyone. We can, and have a right to, criticize intentions; but we cannot criticize an actual performance *ante factum*.

Finally, in our correspondence you, Sirs, say that your terms "evaluation" and "worth," "should" and "ought" refer "not to moral oughts but to aesthetic oughts." Here, I think, we have a very good example of the case in which a writer's intention is one thing, and the meaning conveyed by what he actually says is another. For consider your own example of the schoolteacher: it is only as a moral instructor that she can tell a pupil that, "You should not have meant what you meant to say." As a literary critic she could only have said, "You have not clearly expressed what you wanted to say." As to that, she can form a sound judgment in terms of intention and result; for if she is a good teacher she not only knows the pupil well, but will be able to understand him when he explains to her just what it was that he meant to say.

On the other hand, if she tells him what he "ought not to mean" ("naughty, naughty!"), that amounts to a criticism of what the Japanese call "dangerous thoughts," and belongs to the same prudential field that would be involved if she had told him what he "ought not to do"; for thinking is a form of action, and not a making until the thought is clothed in a material vehicle, for example of sound if the thought is expressed in a poem, or of pigment if in a painting. Now I fully agree with you that "intention *per se*" is no criterion of the worth of a poem (even if "worth" is to be taken amorally), in the same way that a good intention is no guarantee of actual good conduct; in both cases there must be not only a will, but also the power to realize the purpose. On the other hand, an evil intention need not result in a poor work of art; if it miscarries, it can be ridiculed or ignored; if it succeeds, the artist (whether a pornographer or a skillful murderer) is liable to punishment. A dictator's strategy or oratory is not necessarily bad as such merely

because we disapprove of his aims; it may, in fact, be much better than ours, however excellent our own intentions; and if it is worse, we cannot call him a bad man on that account, but only a bad soldier or poor speaker.

All making or doing has reasons or ends; but in either case there may, for a great variety of reasons, be a failure to hit the mark. It would be absurd to pretend that we do not know what the archer intends,[7] or to say that we must not call him a poor shooter if he misses. The "sin" (properly defined as "any departure from the order to the end") may be either artistic or moral. In the present discussion, I think, our common intention was to consider only artistic virtue or error. It is precisely from this point of view that I cannot understand your terms "what the work of art ought to be," or "should be" as an "ought" to be distinguished from the gerundive—*faciendum*—implied in the author's intention to produce a work that shall be as good as possible *of its kind*. He cannot have in view to produce a work that is simply "beautiful" or "good," because all making by art is occasional and can be directed only to particular and not to universal ends.[8] The only possible literary criticism of an already existing and extant work is one in terms of the ratio of intention to result. No other form of criticism can be called objective, because there are no degrees of perfection, and we cannot say that one work of art, as such, is worth more than another, if both are perfect in their kind. We can, however, go behind the work of art itself, as if it were not yet extant, to inquire whether or not it ought ever to have been undertaken at all, and so also decide whether or not it is worth preserving. That may be, and I hold that it is, a very proper inquiry[9];

[7] Cf. *Paradiso* XIII.105.

[8] "The artist's intention is (*artifex intendit*) to give his work the best possible arrangement, not indefinitely, but with respect to a given end—if the agent were not determinate to some given effect, it would not do one thing rather than another" (*Sum. Theol.* I.91.3 and II-I.1.2). To say that the artist does not know what it is he wants to do "until he has finally succeeded in doing what he wants to do" (W. F. Tomlin in *Purpose*, XI, 1939, p. 46) is an *ahetuvāda* [no-cause doctrine –author's trans.] that would stultify all rational effort and that could only be justified by a purely mechanical theory of inspiration or automatism that excludes the possibility of intelligent co-operation on the artist's part. So far from this, it is, as Aristotle says, the end (*telos*) that in all making determines the procedure (*Physics*, II.2.194ab; II.9.22a). Cf. Leonardo's views in A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy* (Oxford, 1940), pp. 36-37.

[9] S. L. Bethell in the *New English Weekly*, for September 30, 1943, very justly points out that "as literary works express, not 'literary values' but just 'values,' technical criticism must be supplemented by value-judgments, and the latter cannot validly be made without reference to theological or philosophical categories": and I am

but it is not literary criticism nor the criticism of any work of art *qua* work of art; it is a criticism of the author's intentions.

glad that you, Sirs, really make this point, although you deny your *intention* to do so.

Addendum: "When I say *intendo in hoc* [I intend in this –Ed. trans.] this means a direction towards something as to its last end, in which it 'intends' to rest and with which it desires to be united," St. Bonaventura, *II Sent.*, d.38, a.2, 2.2; concl. II.892b

CHAPTER IX

Imitation, Expression, and Participation

Pistoumetha de pros tous tethaumakotas ek tōn meteilapsotōn
[Against doubters we cite the fact of participation –MacKenna trans.]
—Plotinus, *Enneads* VI.6.7.

As Iredell Jenkins has pointed out[1], the modern view that "art is expression" has added nothing to the older and once universal (e.g., Greek and Indian) doctrine that "art is imitation," but only translates the notion of "imitation, born of philosophical realism, into the language and thought of metaphysical nominalism"; and "since nominalism destroys the revelation doctrine, the first tendency of modern theory is to deprive beauty of any cognitive significance."[2] The older view had been that the work of art is the demonstration of the invisible form that remains in the artist, whether human or divine;[3] that beauty has to do with cognition;[4] and that art is an intellectual virtue.[5]

While Jenkins' proposition is very true, so far as expressionism is concerned, it will be our intention to point out that in the catholic (and not only Roman Catholic) view of art, *imitation*, *expression*, and *participation* are three predications of the essential nature of art; not three different or conflicting, but three interpenetrating and coincident definitions of art, which is these three in one.

The notion of "imitation," (*mimēsis*, *anukṛti*, *pratimā*, etc.) will be so familiar to every student of art as to need only brief documentation.

[1] "Imitation and Expression in Art," in the *Journal* of *Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, V (1942). Cf. J. C. La Drière, "Expression," in the *Dictionary of World Literature* (New York, 1943), and R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford, 1944), pp. 61–62 (on participation and imitation).

[2] "Sinnvolle Form, in der Physisches and Metaphysisches ursprünglich polarisch sich die Waage hielten, wird auf dem Wege zu uns her mehr und mehr entleert; wir sagen dann: sie sei 'Ornament.'" [The sensible forms, in which there was at first a polar balance of the physical and metaphysical, have been more and more voided of content on their way down to us; so we say, this is an "ornament" – author's trans.] (Walter Andrae, *Die ionische Säule: Bauform oder Symbol?* Berlin, 1933, p. 65). See also Coomaraswamy, "Ornament" [Chapter III in this volume].

[3] Rom. I:20; Meister Eckhart, *Expositio sancti evangelii secundum Johannem*, etc.

[4] *Sum. Theol.* I.5.4 *ad* 1, I-II.27.1 *ad* 3.

[5] *Ibid.*, I-II.57.3 and 4.

That in our philosophic context imitation does not mean "counterfeiting" is brought out in the dictionary definition: imitation is "the relation of an object of sense to its idea; ... imaginative embodiment of the ideal form"; form being "the essential nature of a thing ... kind or species as distinguished from matter, which distinguishes it as an individual; formative principle; formal cause" (Webster). Imagination is the conception of the idea in an imitable form.[6] Without a pattern (*paradeigma*, exemplar), indeed, nothing could be made except by mere chance. Hence the instruction given to Moses, "Lo, make all things according to the pattern which was shewed to thee on the mount."[7] "Assuming that a beautiful imitation could never be produced unless from a beautiful pattern, and that no sensible object (*aisthēton*, "aesthetic surface") could be faultless unless it were made in the likeness of an archetype visible only to the intellect, God, when He willed to create the visible world, first fully formed the intelligible world, in order that He might have the use of a pattern wholly divine and incorporeal":[8] "The will of God beheld that beauteous world and imitated it."[9]

Now unless we are making "copies of copies," which is not what we mean by "creative art,"[10] the pattern is likewise "within you,"[11] and remains there as the standard by which the "imitation" must be finally judged.[12] For Plato then, and traditionally, all the arts without exception

[6] "Idea dicitur similitudo rei cognitae," St. Bonaventura, *I Sent.*, d.35, a.unic., q.1c. We cannot entertain an idea except in a likeness; and therefore cannot think without words or other images.

[7] Exod. 25:40, Heb. 8:5. "Ascendere in montem, id est, in eminentiam mentis" [To ascend the mountain, that is, to eminence of mind –Ed. trans.], St. Bonaventura, *De dec. praeceptis* II.

[8] Philo, *De opificio* 16, *De aeternitate mundi* 15; cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 28AB and *Republic* 601. For the "world-picture" (Sumerian *gish-ghar*, Skr. *jagaccitra*, Gr. *noētos cosmos*, etc.), innumerable references could be cited. Throughout our literature the operations of the divine and human demiurges are treated as strictly analogous, with only this main difference that God gives form to absolutely formless, and man to relatively informal matter; and the act of imagination is a vital operation, as the word "concept" implies.

[9] Hermes, *Lib.* I.8B, cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 29AB. The human artist "imitates nature (Natura naturans, Creatrix Universalis, Deus) in her manner of operation," but one who makes only copies of copies (imitating Natura naturata) is unlike God, since in this case there is no "free" but only the "servile" operation. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* II.2.194a.20.

[10] Plato, *Republic* 601.

[11] Philo, *De opificio* 17 ff., and St. Augustine, Meister Eckhart, etc., *passim.*

[12] *Laws* 667D ff., etc.

are "imitative";[13] this "all" includes such arts as those of government and hunting no less those of painting and sculpture. And true "imitation" is not a matter of illusory resemblance (*homoiotēs*) but of proportion, true analogy, or adequacy (*auto to ison*, i.e., *kat' analogian*) by which we are reminded[14] of the intended referent;[15] in other words, it is a matter of "adequate symbolism." The work of art and its archetype are different things, but "likeness in different things is with respect to some quality common to both."[16] Such likeness (*sādṛśya*) is the foundation of painting;[17] the term is defined in logic as the "possession of many common qualities by different things";[18] while in rhetoric, the typical example is "the young man is a lion."

Likeness (*similitudo*) may be of three kinds, either (1) absolute, and then amounting to sameness, which cannot be either in nature or works of art, because no two things can be alike in all respects and still be two, i.e., perfect likeness would amount to identity, (2) imitative or analogical likeness, *mutatis mutandis*, and judged by comparison, e.g, the likeness of a man in stone, and (3) expressive likeness, in which the imitation is neither identical with, nor comparable to the original but is an adequate symbol and reminder of that which it represents, and to be judged only by its truth, or accuracy (*orthotēs*, *integritas*); the best example is that of the words that are "images" of things.[19] But imitative

[13] *Republic* 392C, etc.

[14] *Phaedo* 74F: Argument by analogy is metaphysically valid proof when, and only when, a true analogy is adduced. The validity of symbolism depends upon the assumption that there are corresponding realities on all levels of reference—"as above, so below." Hence the distinction of *le symbolisme qui sait* from *le symbolisme qui cherche* [the symbolism which knows from the symbolism which searches –Ed. trans.]. This is, essentially, the distinction of induction (dialectic) from deduction (syllogism): the latter merely "deducing from the image what it contains," the former "using the image to obtain what the image does not contain" (Alphonse Gratry, *Logic* [La Salle, Ill., 1944], IV.7; cf. KU II.10, "by means of what is never the same obtaining that which is always the same").

[15] *Phaedo* 74, *Laws* 667D ff.

[16] Boethius, *De differentiis topicis*, III, cited by St. Bonaventura, *De scientia Christi*, 2.C.

[17] *Viṣṇudharmottaram* XLII.48.

[18] S. N. Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1922), I, 318.

[19] Plato, *Sophist* 234C. Plato assumes that the significant purpose of the work of art is to remind us of that which, whether itself concrete or abstract, is not presently, or is never, perceptible; and that is part of the doctrine that "what we call learning is really remembering" (*Phaedo* 72 ff., *Meno* 81 ff.). The function of reminding does not depend upon visual resemblance, but on the adequacy of the representation: for example, an

and expressive are not mutually exclusive categories; both are images, and both expressive in that they make known their model.

The preceding analysis is based upon St. Bonventura's,[20] who makes frequent use of the phrase *similitudo expressiva* [expressive likeness –Ed. trans.]. The inseparability of imitation and expression appears again in his observation that while speech is expressive, or communicative, "it never expresses except by means of a likeness" (*nisi mediante specie*, *De reductione artium ad theologian*: 18), i.e., figuratively. In all serious communication, indeed, the figures of speech are figures of thought (cf. Quintilian IX.4.117); and the same applies in the case of visible iconography, in which accuracy is not subordinated to our tastes, but rather is it we ourselves who should have learned to like only what is true. Etymologically, "heresy" is what we "choose" to think; i.e., private (*idiōtikos*) opinion.

But in saying with St. Bonaventura that art is expressive at the same time that it imitates, an important reservation must be made, a reservation analogous to that implied in Plato's fundamental question: about *what* would the sophist make us so eloquent?[21] and his repeated condemnation of those who imitate "anything and everything."[22] When St. Bonaventura speaks of the orator as expressing "what he has in him" (*per sermonen exprimere quod habet apud se* [through speech to express what he has in him –Ed. trans.], *De reductione artium ad theologian* 4), this means giving expression to some idea that he has entertained and made his own, so that it can come forth from within him originally: it does *not* mean what is involved in our expressionism (viz. "in any form of art ... the theory or practice of expressing one's inner, or subjective,

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object or the picture of an object that has been used by someone may suffice to remind us of him. It is precisely from that point of view that representations of the tree under which or throne upon which the Buddha sat can function as adequate representations of himself (*Mahāvaṃsa* I.69, etc.); the same considerations underlie the cult of bodily or any other "relics." Whereas we think that an object should be represented in art "for its own sake" and regardless of associated ideas, the tradition assumes that the symbol exists for the sake of its referent, i.e., that the meaning of the work is more important than its looks. Our worship of the symbols themselves is, of course, idolatrous.

[20] Citations in J. M. Bissen, *L'Exemplarisme divin selon Saint Bonaventure* (Paris, 1929), ch. I. I have also used St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.* I.4.3, and *Summa contra gentiles* I.29. The factors of "likeness" are rarely considered in modern works on the theory of art.

[21] *Protagoras* 312E.

[22] *Republic* 396-398, etc.

emotions and sensations" [Webster]), hardly to be distinguished from exhibitionism.

Art is, then, both imitative and expressive of its themes, by which it is informed, or else would be informal, and therefore not art. That there is in the work of art something like a real presence of its theme brings us to our last step. Lévy-Bruhl[23] and others have attributed to the "primitive mentality" of savages what he calls the notion of a "mystic participation" of the symbol or representation in its referent, tending towards such an identification as we make when we see our own likeness and say, "that's me." On this basis the savage does not like to tell his name or have his portrait taken, because by means of the name or portrait he is accessible, and may therefore be injured by one who can get at him by these means; and it is certainly true that the criminal whose name is known and whose likeness is available can be more easily apprehended than would otherwise be the case. The fact is that "participation" (which need not be called "mystic," by which I suppose that Lévy-Bruhl means "mysterious") is not in any special sense a savage idea or peculiar to the "primitive mentality," but much rather a metaphysical and theological proposition.[24] We find already in Plato[25]

[23] For criticism of Lévy-Bruhl see O. Leroy, *La Raison primitive* (Paris, 1927); J. Przyluski, *La Participation* (Paris, 1940); W. Schmidt, *Origin and Growth* of *Religion*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1935), pp. 133-134; and Coomaraswamy, "Primitive Mentality" [Chapter XV in this volume – Ed.].

[24] "Et Plato posuit quod homo materialis est homo ... per participationem" [And Plato claimed that material man is man ... through participation –Ed. trans.] (*Sum. Theol.* I.18.4; cf. I.44.1, i.e., in the Being of God, in whose "image and likeness" the man was made. St. Thomas is quoting Aristotle, *Physics* IV.2.3, where the latter says that in the *Timaeus* (51A) Plato equated *hulē* (primary matter, void space, chaos) with *to metalēptikon* (that which can participate, viz. in form).

[25] *Phaedo* 100D; cf. *Republic* 476D. The doctrine was later expounded by Dionysius, *De div. nom.* IV.5, "pulchrum quidem esse dicimus quod participat pulchritudinem." [we call it beautiful because it participates in beauty –Ed. trans.]. St. Thomas comments: "Pulchritudo enim creaturae nihil est aliud quam similitudo divinae pulchritudinis in rebus participata" [The creature's beauty is naught else but a likeness of divine beauty participated in by things – author's trans.]. In the same way, of course, the human artist's product participates in its formal cause, the pattern in the artist's mind.

The notion of participation appears to be "irrational" and will be resisted only if we suppose that the product participates in its cause materially, and not formally; or, in other words, if we suppose that the form participated in is divided up into parts and distributed in the participants. On the contrary, that which is participated in is always a total presence. Words, for example, are images (Plato, *Sophist* 234C); and if to use homologous words, or synonyms, is called a "participation" (*metalepsis*, *Theatetus* 173B, *Republic* 539D), it is because the different words are imitations, expressions, and par-

the doctrine that if anything is beautiful in its kind, this is not because of its color or shape, but because it participates (*metechei*) in "that," viz. the absolute, Beauty, which is a presence (*parousia*) to it and with which it has something in common (*koinonia*). So also creatures, while they are alive, "participate" in immortality.[26] So that even an imperfect likeness (as all must be) "participates" in that which it resembles.[27] These propositions are combined in the words "the being of all things is derived from the Divine Beauty."[28] In the language of exemplarism, that Beauty is "the single form that is the form of very different things."[29] In this sense every "form" is protean, in that it can enter into innumerable natures.

Some notion of the manner in which a form, or idea, can be said to be *in* a representation of it may be had if we consider a straight line: we cannot say truly that the straight line itself "is" the shortest distance between two points, but only that it is a picture, imitation or expression of that shortest distance; yet it is evident that the line coincides with the shortest distance between its extremities, and that by this presence the line "participates" in its referent.[30] Even if we think of space as curved, and the shortest distance therefore actually an arc, the straight line, a reality in the field of plane geometry, is still an adequate symbol of its idea, which it need not resemble, but must express. Symbols are projections of their referents, which are in them in the same sense that our three dimensional face is reflected in the plane mirror.

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ticipations of one and the same idea, apart from which they would not be words, but only sounds.

Participation can be made easier to understand by the analogy of the projection of a lantern slide on screens of various materials. It would be ridiculous to say that the form of the transparency, conveyed by the "image-bearing light," is not in the picture seen by the audience, or even to deny that "this" picture is "that" picture; for we see "the same picture" in the slide and on the screen; but equally ridiculous to suppose that any of the material of the transparency is in what the audience sees.

When Christ said "this is my body," body and bread were manifestly and materially distinct; but it was "not bread alone" of which the disciples partook. Conversely, those who find in Dante's "strange verses" only "literature," letting their theory escape them, are actually living by sound alone, and are of the sort that Plato ridicules as "lovers of fine sounds."

[26] RV I.164.21

[27] *Sum. Theol.* I.4.3.

[28] Aquinas, *De pulchro et bono*, in *Opera omnia*, Op.VII.4, I.5 (Parma, 1864).

[29] Meister Eckhart, Evans ed., I, 211.

[30] All discourse consists in "calling something by the name of another, because of its participation in the effect of this other (*koinonia pathematos*)," Plato, *Sophist* 252B.

So also in the painted portrait, my form is there, *in* the actual shape, but not my nature, which is of flesh and not of pigment. The portrait is also "like" the artist ("Il pittore pinge se stesso"),[31] so that in making an attribution we say that "That looks like, or smacks of, Donatello," the model having been my form, indeed, but as the artist conceived it.[32] For nothing can be known, except in the mode of the knower. Even the straight line bears the imprint of the draughtsman, but this is less apparent, because the actual form is simpler. In any case, the more perfect the artist becomes, the less will his work be recognizable as "his"; only when he is no longer anyone, can he see the shortest distance, or my real form, directly and as it is.

Symbols are projections or shadows of their forms (cf. n. 19), in the same way that the body is an image of the soul, which is called its form, and as words are images (*eikonas*, *Cratylus* 439A; *eidola*, *Sophist* 234C) of things. The form is in the work of art as its "content," but we shall miss it if we consider only the aesthetic surfaces and our own sensitive reactions to them, just as we may miss the soul when we dissect the body and cannot lay our hands upon it. And so, assuming that we are not merely playboys, Dante and Aśvaghoṣa ask us to admire, not their art, but the *doctrine* of which their "strange" or "poetic" verses are only the vehicle. Our exaggerated valuation of "literature" is as much a symptom of our sentimentality as is our tendency to substitute ethics or religion. "For he who sings what he does not understand is defined as a beast.[33] ... Skill does not truly make a singer, but the pattern

[31] [The painter paints himself –Ed. trans.] Leonardo da Vinci; for Indian parallels see Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation* of *Nature in Art*, 2nd ed., 1935, n. 7.

[32] From this consideration it follows that imitation, expression, and participation are always and can be only of an invisible form, however realistic the artist's intention may be; for he can never know or see things as they "are," because of their inconstancy, but only as he imagines them, and it is of this phantasm and not of any *thing* that his work is a copy. Icons, as Plato points out (*Laws* 931A) are representations not of the "visible gods" (Helios, etc.), but of those invisible (Apollo, Zeus, etc.) Cf. *Republic* 510DE; *Timaeus*, 51E, 92; *Philebus* 62B.

[33] Skr. *paśu*, an animal or animal man whose behavior is guided, not by reason, but only by "estimative knowledge," i.e., pleasure-pain motives, likes and dislikes, or, in other words, "aesthetic reactions."

In connection with our divorce of art from human values, and our insistence upon *aesthetic* appreciation and denial of the *significance* of beauty, Emmanuel Chapman has very pertinently asked: "On what philosophical grounds can we oppose Vittorio Mussolini's 'exceptionally good fun' at the sight of torn human and animal flesh exfoliating like roses in the Ethiopian sunlight? Does not this 'good fun' follow with an implacable logic, as implacable as a bomb following the law of gravity, if beauty is regarded only as

does."[34]

As soon as we begin to operate with the straight line, referred to above, we transubstantiate it; that is, we treat it, and it becomes for us, *as if*[35] it were nothing actually concrete or tangible, but simply the shortest distance between two points, a form that really exists only in the intellect; we could not use it *intellectually* in any other way, however handsome it may be;[36] the line itself, like any other symbol, is only the support of contemplation, and if we merely see its elegance, we are not using it, but making a fetish of it. That is what the "aesthetic approach" to works of art involves.

We are still familiar with the notion of a transubstantiation only in the case of the Eucharistic meal in its Christian form; here, by ritual acts, i.e., by the sacerdotal art, with the priest as officiating artist, the bread is made to be the body of the God; yet no one maintains that the carbohydrates are turned into proteins, or denies that they are digested like any other carbohydrates, for that would mean that we thought of the mystical body as a thing actually cut up into pieces of flesh; and yet the bread is changed in that it is no longer mere bread, but now bread with a meaning, with which meaning or quality we can therefore com-

a name for the pleasure we feel, as merely subjective, a quality projected or imputed by the mind, and having no reference to things, no foundation whatsoever in existence? Is it not further the logical consequence of the fatal separation of beauty from reason? ... The bitter failures in the history of aesthetics are there to show that the starting-point can never be any subjective, *a priori* principle from which a closed system is induced" ("Beauty and the War," *Journal* of *Philosophy*, XXXIX, 1942, 495).

It is true that there are no timeless, but only everlasting, values; but unless and until our contingent life has been reduced to the eternal now (of which we can have no sensible experience), every attempt to isolate knowing from valuation (as in the love of art "for art's sake") must have destructive, and even murderous or suicidal consequences; "vile curiosity" and the "love of fine colors and sounds" are the basic motives of the sadist.

34 Guido d'Arezzo, ca. A.D. 1000; cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 265A.

35 *The Philosophy of "As If,"* about which H. Vaihinger wrote a book with the subtitle *A System* of *the Theoretical, Practical and Religious Fictions of Mankind*, (English ed., London, 1942), is really of immemorial antiquity. We meet with it in Plato's distinction of probable truth or opinion from truth itself, and in the Indian distinction of relative knowledge (*avidyā*, ignorance) from knowledge (*vidyā*) itself. It is taken for granted in the doctrine of multiple meaning and in the *via negativa* in which all relative truths are ultimately denied because of their limited validity. The "philosophy of 'as if'" is markedly developed in Meister Eckhart, who says that "that man never gets to the underlying truth who stops at the enjoyment of its symbol," and that he himself has "always before my mind this little word *quasi*, 'like'" (Evans ed., I, 186, 213). The "philosophy of 'as if'" is implicit in many uses of *hōsper* (e.g., Hermes, *Lib.* X.7), and Skr. *iva*.

36 Cf. Plato, *Republic* 510DE.

municate by assimilation, the bread now feeding both body and soul at one and the same time. That works of art thus nourish, or should nourish, body and soul at one and the same time has been, as we have often pointed out, the normal position from the Stone Age onwards; the utility, as such, being endowed with meaning either ritually or as well by its ornamentation, i.e., "equipment."[37] Insofar as our environment, both natural and artificial, is still significant to us, we are still "primitive mentalities"; but insofar as life has lost its meaning for us, it is pretended that we have "progressed." From this "advanced" position those whose thinking is done for them by such scholars as Lévy-Bruhl or Sir James Frazer, the behaviorists whose nourishment is "bread alone"—"the husks that the swine did eat"—are able to look down with unbecoming pride on the minority whose world is still a world of meanings.[38]

We have tried to show above that there is nothing extraordinary, but rather something normal and proper to human nature, in the notion that a symbol participates in its referent or archetype. And this brings us to the words of Aristotle, which seem to have been overlooked by our anthropologists and theorists of art: he maintains, with reference to the Platonic conception of art as imitation, and with particular reference to the view that things exist in their plurality by participation in (*methexis*) the forms after which they are named,[39] that to say that they exist "by

[37] Cf. Coomaraswamy, "Ornament" [Chapter III in this volume - Ed.]. We say above "either ritually or by ornamentation" only because these operations are now, and according to our way of thinking, unrelated: but the artist was once a priest, "chaque occupation est un sacerdoce" [each occupation is a priesthood --Ed. trans.] (A. M. Hocart, *Les Castes*, Paris, 1938); and in the Christian Sacrifice the use of the "ornaments of the altar" is still a part of the rite, of which their making was the beginning.

[38] The distinction of meaning from art, so that what were originally symbols become "art forms," and what were figures of thought, merely figures of speech (e.g., "self-control," no longer based on an awareness that *duo sunt in homine* [there are two in man –Ed. trans.], viz. the driver and the team) is merely a special case of the aimlessness asserted by the behavioristic interpretation of life. On the modern "philosophy of meaninglessness ... accepted only at the suggestion of the passions" see Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (New York, 1937), pp. 273-277, and I. Jenkins, "The Postulate of an Impoverished Reality" in *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXIX (1942), 533. For the opposition of the linguistic (i.e., intellectual) and the *aesthetic* (i.e., sentimental) conceptions of art, see W. Deonna, "*Primitivisme et classicisme, les deux faces de l'histoire de l'art*" BAHA, IV (1937); like so many of our contemporaries, for whom the life of the instincts is all-sufficient, Deonna sees in the "progress" from an art of ideas to an art of sensations a favorable "evolution." Just as for Whitehead "it was a tremendous discovery—how to excite emotions for their own sake!"

[39] That things can be called after the names of the things impressed upon them is rather well illustrated by the reference of J. Gregory to "coins called by the name of their

imitation," or exist "by participation," is no more than a use of different words to say the same thing.[40]

Hence we say, and in so doing say nothing new, that "art is imitation, expression, and participation." At the same time we cannot help asking: What, if anything, has been added to our understanding of art in modern times? We rather presume that something has been deducted. Our term "aesthetics" and conviction that art is essentially an affair of the sensibilities and emotions rank us with the ignorant, if we admit

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Expresses, as . . . with Pollux, *kai ekaleito bous hoti bous eikōn enteturomenon*, from the figure of an ox imprinted," *Notes and Observations upon Several Passages in Scripture* (London, 1684). Any absolute distinction of the symbol from its referent implies that the symbol is not what Plato means by a "true name," but arbitrarily and conventionally chosen. But symbols are not regarded thus, traditionally; one says that the house *is* the universe in a likeness, rather than that it is a likeness *of* the universe. So in the ritual drama, the performer becomes the deity whose actions he imitates, and only returns to himself when the rite is relinquished: "enthusiasm" meaning that the deity is in him, that he is *entheos* (this is not an etymology).

All that may be nonsense to the rationalist, who lives in a meaningless world; but the end is not yet.

[40] *Metaphysics* I.6.4. There can be little doubt that Aristotle had in mind *Timaeus* 51A, where Plato connects *aphomoioō* [I am like –Ed. trans.] with *metalambanō* [I participate –Ed. trans.]. That the one implies the other is also the opinion to which Socrates assents in *Parmenides* 132E, "That by participation in which (*metechonta*) 'like' things are like (*homoia*), will be their real 'form,' I suppose? Most assuredly." It is not, however, by their "likeness" that things participate in their form, but (as we learn elsewhere) by their proportion or adequacy (*isotēs*), i.e., truth of the analogy; a visual likeness of anything to its form or archetype being impossible because the model is invisible; so that, for example, in theology, while it can be said that man is "like" God, it cannot be said that God is "like" man.

Aristotle also says that "thought thinks itself through participation (*metalēpsis*) in its object" (*Metaphysics* XII.7.8). "For participation is only a special case of the problem of communion, of the symbolizing of one thing with another, of mimicry" (R. C. Taliaferro, foreword to Thomas Taylor, *Timaeus and Critias*, New York, 1944, p. 14).

For the sake of Indian readers it may be added that "imitation" is Skr. *anukaraṇa* ("making according to"), and "participation" (*pratilabha* or *bhakti*); and that like Greek in the time of Plato and Aristotle, Sanskrit has no exact equivalent for "expression"; for Greek and Sanskrit both, an idea is rather "manifested" (*dēloō*, Skr. *pra-kāś*, *vy-añj*, *vy-ā-khyā*) than "expressed"; in both languages words that mean to "speak" and to "shine" have common roots (cf. our "shining wit," "illustration," "clarify," "declare," and "argument"). Form (*eidos* as *idea*) [form as idea –Ed. trans.] and presentation (*phainomenon*) are *nāma* (name, quiddity) and *rūpa* (shape, appearance, body); or in the special case of verbal expressions, *artha* (meaning, value), *prayojana* (use), and *śabda* (sound); the former being the intellectual (*mānasa*, Gr. *noētos*) and the latter the tangible or aesthetic (*spṛśya*, *dṛśya*, Gr. *aisthētikos*, *horatos*) apprehensions.

Quintilian's "Docti rationem componendi intelligunt, etiam indocti voluptatem![41]

[41] [The learned understand the principle of artistic composition, but the ignorant receive only pleasure –Ed. trans.] Quintilian IX.4.117, based on Plato, *Timaeus* 80B, where the "composition" is of shrill and deep sound, and this "furnishes pleasure to the unintelligent, and to the intelligent that intellectual delight which is caused by the imitation of the divine harmony manifested in mortal motions" (R. G. Bury's translation, LCL).

CHAPTER X

The Intellectual Operation in Indian Art

The *Śukranītisāra* IV.70-71,[1] defines the initial procedure of the Indian imager: he is to be expert in contemplative vision (*yoga-dhyāna*), for which the canonical prescriptions provide the basis, and only in this way, and not by direct observation, are the required results to be attained. The whole procedure may be summed up in the words "when the visualization has been realized, set to work" (*dhyātvā kuryāt*, *ibid.* VII.74), or "when the model has been conceived, set down on the wall what was visualized" (*cintayet pramāṇaṃ; tad-dhyātaṃ bhittau niveśayet*, *Abhilaṣitārthacintāmaṇi*, I.3.158).[2] The distinction and sequence of these two acts had long since been recognized in connection with the sacrificial work (*karma*) of the edification of the Fire-Altar, where, whenever the builders are at a loss, they are told to "contemplate" (*cetayadhvam*), i.e., "direct the will towards the structure" (*citim icchata*), and it is "because they saw them contemplatively" (*cetayamānā apaśyan*) that the "structures" (*citayaḥ*) are so called.[3] These two stages in procedure are the same as the *actus primus* and *actus secundus*, the "free" and "servile" parts of the artist's operation, in terms of Scholastic theory.[4]

[1] Translated in Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, 1934, pp. 113–117.

[2] Cf. also *Atthasālinī* 203 (in the PTS edition, p. 64), "A mental concept (*citta-saññā*) arises in the mind of the painter, 'Such and such forms should be made in such and such ways.' ... Conceiving (*cincetvā*) 'Above this form, let this be; below, this; on either side, this'—so it is that by mental operation (*cintitena kammena*) the other painted forms come into being."

[3] ŚB VI.2.3.9, etc., with hermeneutic assimilation of √*ci* (edify) and √*cit* (contemplate, visualize).

[4] On the "two operations," see Coomaraswamy, *Why Exhibit Works of Art?* 1943, pp. 33-37. What is meant is admirably stated by Philo in *De vita Mosis* II. 74-76, respecting the "tabernacle ... the construction of which was set forth to Moses on the mount by divine pronouncements. He saw with the soul's eye the immaterial forms (*ideai*) of the material things that were to be made, and these forms were to be reproduced as sensible imitations, as it were, of the archetypal graph and intelligible patterns.... So the type of the pattern was secretly impressed upon the mind of the Prophet as a thing secretly painted and molded in invisible forms without material; and then the finished work was wrought after that type by the artist's imposition of those impressions on the severally appropriate material substances." In mythological terms, the two operations are those of Athena and Hephaistos, who co-operate, and from whom all men derive their knowl-

I have shown elsewhere[5] that the same procedure is taken for granted as well in secular as in hieratic art. It is, however, in connection with the Buddhist hieratic prescriptions (*sādhana*, *dhyāna mantram*) that the most detailed expositions of the primary act are to be found; and these are of such interest and significance that it seems desirable to publish a complete and careful rendering of one of the longest available examples of such a text, annotated by citations from others. We proceed accordingly with the *Kiṃcit-Vistara-Tārā Sādhana*,[6] no. 98 in the *Sādhanamālā*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, no. XXVI, pp. 200-206.

KIṂCIT-VISTARA-TĀRĀ-SĀDHANA

Having first of all washed his hands and feet, etc., and being purified, the officiant (*mantrī*) is to be comfortably seated in a solitary place that is strewn with fragrant flowers, pervaded by pleasant scents, and agreeable to himself. Conceiving in his own heart (*svahṛdaye …vicintya*) the moon's orb as developed from the primal sound (*prathama-svarapariṇatam*, i.e., "evoked from the letter A"),[7] let him visualize

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edge of the arts (*Homeric Hymns* XX; Plato, *Protagoras* 321D and *Statesman* 274C, *Critias* 109C, 112B). Athena, the mind-born daughter of Zeus, "gives grace to work" (*Greek Anthology* VI.205), while Hephaistos is the lame smith; and there can be no doubt that she is that *sophia* which (like the corresponding Skr. *kauśalyā* and Hebrew *hochmā*) was originally the "cunning" or knowledge of the skilled craftsman, and only by analogy "wisdom" in any and every sense of the word; she is the *scientia* that makes work beautiful, he the *ars* that makes it useful—and *ars sine scientia nihil* [art without science is nothing –Ed. trans.] (cf. *Cratylus* 407, *Philebus* 16C, *Euthyphro* 11E, and the image of Minerva (Athena) jointly with Roma weaving a cloak on no mortal loom in Claudian, *Stilicho* II.330). But our distinctions of fine from applied art, art from work and meaning from utility, have banished Athena from the factory to the ivory tower and reduced Hephaistos to the status of the "base mechanics" (*banausikoi*) whose manual dexterity is their only asset, so that we do not think of them as men but call them "hands."

[5] "The Technique and Theory of Indian Painting," 1934, pp. 59-80.

[6] This Sādhana has also been translated, but with some abbreviation, by B. Bhattacharya, *Buddhist Iconography* (London, 1924), pp. 169 ff. Buddhist methods of visualization are discussed by Giuseppe Tucci in *Indo-Tibetica*, III, *Templi del Tibet occidentale e il loro simbolismo artistico* (Rome, 1935); see especially §25, "Metodi e significato dell' evocazione tantrica," p. 97.

[7] For a beginning in this way, cf. Sādhana no. 280 (Yamāntaka), where the operator (*bhāvakaḥ*, "maker to become"), having first performed the purificatory ablutions, "realizes in his own heart the syllable Yam in black, within a moon originating from the letter A" (*ākā-raja-ja-candre kṛṣṇa-yaṃ kāraṃ vibhāvya*).

The syllable seen is always the nasalized initial syllable of the name of the deity to be

(*paśyet*) therein a beautiful blue lotus, within its filaments the moon's unspotted orb, and thereon the yellow seed-syllable Tāṃ. Then, with the sheafs of lustrous rays, that proceed (*niḥsṛtya*) from that yellow seed-syllable Tāṃ, rays that dispel the world's dark mystery throughout its ten directions and that find out the indefinite limits of the extension of the universe; making all these to shine downwards (*tān sarvān avabhāsya*); and leading forth (*ānīya*)[8] the countless and measureless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas whose abode is there; these (Buddhas and Bodhisattvas) are established (*avasthā-pyante*) on the background of space, or ether (*ākāśadeśe*).[9]

After performing a great office (*mahatīṃ pūjāṃ kṛtvā*) unto all these vast compassionate Buddhas and Bodhisattvas established on the background of space, by means of celestial flowers, incense, scent, garlands, unguents, powders, ascetic garb, umbrellas, bells, banner, and so forth, he should make a confession of sin, as follows: "Whatever sinful act I may have done in the course of my wandering in this beginningless vortex, whether of body or mind, or have caused to be committed or have consented to, all these I confess."

And having thus confessed,[10] and also made admission of the fault that consists in things that have been left undone, he should

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represented. For a general idea of the form in which the initial visualization is conceived, see Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 1935, pl. xiii, fig. 2, or some of the reproductions in Arthur Avalon, tr., *The Serpent Power* (Madras, 1924). For the manner in which the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are thought of as deduced or led forth from the emanated rays, cf. Bhattacharya, *Buddhist Iconography*, fig. 52.

The whole process, in which the motion of a sound precedes that of any visible form, follows the traditional concept of creation by an uttered Word; cf. *Sum. Theol.* I.45.6, referring to the procedure of the artist *per verbum in intellectu conceptum* [through the word conceived in his intellect –Ed. trans.].

[8] *Ā-nī*, to "lead hitherward," is commonly used of irrigation, either literally, or metaphorically with respect to a conduction of powers from the *Fons Vitae* [Fountain of Life –Ed. trans.]. Near equivalents [in Greek and Latin] are *eksēgeomai* (in "exegesis") and *educere*. Perhaps we need a word *eduction* or *adduction* by which to refer to the acquisition of knowledge by intuition or speculation.

[9] Backgrounds of infinite space are highly characteristic of the painted Buddha and Bodhisattva epiphanies, in which the main figure rises up like a sun from behind the distant mountains, or descends on curling clouds, or is surrounded by a golden glory. In Western hieratic art the use of gold backgrounds has a similar significance, gold being the recognized symbol of ether, light, life, and immortality.

[10] It may appear to the reader at first sight that the religious exercises that are described have little connection with art. They are of real significance in this connection, however, precisely because 1) the immaterial office of personal devotions is actually the same as the imaginative procedure of the artist, with only this distinction, that the latter subse-

make an Endorsement of Merit, as follows: "I endorse the proficiency (*kuśalam*) of the Sugatas, Pratyekas, Śrāvakas, and Jinas, and their sons the Bodhisattvas, and that of the spheres of the Angels and of Brahmā, in its entirety." Then comes the Taking of Refuge in the Three Jewels: "I take refuge in the Buddha, for so long as the Bodhi-circle endures; I take refuge in the Norm, for so long as the Bodhi-circle endures: I take refuge in the Congregation, for so long as the Bodhi-circle endures." Then comes the act of Adhesion to the Way: "It is for me to adhere to the Way that was revealed by the Tathāgatas, and to none other." Then the Prayer: "May the blessed Tathāgatas and their children (the Bodhisattvas), who have accomplished the world's purpose since its first beginning, stand by and effect my total despiration" (*māṃ parinirvāntu*). Then the petition: "May the blessed Tathāgatas indoctrinate me with incomparable expositions of the Norm, of such sort that beings in the world-vortex may be liberated from the bondage of becoming (*bhava-bandhanāt nirmuktāḥ*) full soon." Then he should make an everlasting Assignment of Merit (*puṇya-pariṇāma*): "Whatever root of proficiency (*kuśalam*) has arisen by performance of the seven extraordinary offices (*pūjāḥ*) and by confession of sin, all that I devote to the attainment of Total Awakening (*saṃyak-sambodhaye*)." Or he recites the verses pertinent to the seven extraordinary offices: "All sins I confess, and I gladly consent to the good deeds of others. I take refuge in the Blessed One, and in the Three Jewels of the True Norm, to the end that I may not linger in the state of birth. I adhere to that way and designate the Holy Discipline (*śubha-vidhīn*) to the attainment of full Awakening." As soon as he has celebrated (*vidhāya*) the sevenfold extraordinary office, he should pronounce the formula of dismissal (*visarjayet*): "Oṃ, Āḥ, Muḥ."

Thereupon he should effect (*bhāvayet*) the Fourfold Brahma-rapture (*catur-brahma-vihāram*) of Love, Compassion, Cheerfulness, and Equanimity (*maitrī*, *karunā*, *muditā*, *upekṣā*) by stages (*krameṇa*) as follows: "What is Love? Its character is that of the fondness for an only son that is natural to all beings; or its similitude is that of sympathy in the welfare and happiness (of others). And what is Compassion? It is the desire from the Triple Ill (*tridukhāt*) and the causes of Ill; or this is Compassion, to say 'I shall remove from the pain of the Triple Ill those born beings whose abode is in the iron dwelling of the world-vortex that is aglow in the great fire of the Triple Ill'; or it is the wish to lift up

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quently proceeds to manufacture, and 2) the nature of the exercises themselves reveals the state of mind in which the formation of images takes place.

from the ocean of the world-vortex the beings that are suffering there from the pain of the Triple Ill. Cheerfulness is of this kind: Cheerfulness is a sense of perfect happiness; or Cheerfulness is the confident hope of bringing it to pass that every being in the world-vortex shall attain to the yet unforeseen Buddhahood; or it is the mental attraction felt by all of these beings towards the enjoyment and possession of these virtuosities. What is Equanimity? Equanimity is the accomplishment of a great good for all born beings, whether they be good or evil, by the removal of whatever obstacles stand in the way of their kindly behavior; or Equanimity is a spontaneous affection for all other beings without respect of any personal interest in their friendly conduct; or Equanimity is an indifference to the eight mundane categories of gain and loss, fame and disgrace, blame or praise, pleasure and pain, and so forth, and to all works of supererogation."

Having realized the Fourfold Brahma-rapture, he should effect (*bhāvayet*) the fundamentally Immaterial Nature of all Principles (*sarva-dharma-prakṛti-pariśuddhatām*). For all the principles are fundamentally immaterial by nature, and he too should manifest (*āmukhīkuryāt*): "I am fundamentally immaterial, etc...." This fundamental Immateriality of all Principles is to be established by the incantation "Oṃ, the principles are all immaterial by nature, I am by nature immaterial." If now all the principles are naturally immaterial, what can have brought forth the world-vortex (*saṃsāram*)? It arises in the covering up (of the immateriality of the principles) by the dust of the notions of subject and object, and so forth. How this may be removed is by realization of the True Way; thereby it is destroyed. So the fundamental Immateriality of all Principles is perfected.

When the realization of the fundamental Immateriality of all Principles has been effected, he should develop (*vibhāvayet*) the Emptiness of all Principles (*sarva-dharma-śūnyatām*). Emptiness is like this: let one conceive, "Whatever is in motion or at rest (i.e., the whole phenomenal world) is essentially nothing but the manifested order of what is without duality when the mind is stripped of all conceptual extensions such as the notion of subject and object." He should establish this very Emptiness by the incantation: "Oṃ, I am essentially, in my nature of adamantine intelligence, the Emptiness."

Then he should realize the Blessed Āryatārā, as proceeding from the yellow seed-syllable Tāṃ, upon the spotless orb of the moon that is in the filaments of the full-blown lotus within the lunar orb originally established in the heart. He should conceive (*cintayet*) her to be of deep black color, two-armed, with a smiling face, proficient in every

Figure 3. *The Gracious Manifestation of the Devī.*

virtue, without defect of any kind whatever, adorned with ornaments of heavenly gems, pearls, and jewels, her twin breasts decorated with lovely garlands in hundredfold series, her two arms decked with heavenly bracelets and bangles, her loins beautified with glittering series of girdles of flawless gems, her two ankles beautified by golden anklets set with divers gems, her hair entwined with fragrant wreaths of Pārijāta and such like flowers, her head with a resplendent jeweled full-reclining figure of the Blessed Tathāgata Amoghasiddhi, a radiant and most seductive similitude, extremely youthful, with eyes of the blue of the autumn lotus, her body robed in heavenly garments, seated in Arddhaparyaṇka pose, within a circle of white rays on a white lotus large as any cartwheel, her right hand in the sign of generosity, and holding in her left a full-blown blue lotus. Let him develop (*vibhāvayet*) this likeness of our Blessed Lady as long as he desires.

Thereupon our Blessed Lady is led forth out of space or ether (*akāśāt ānīyate*) in her intelligible aspect (*jñāna-sattva-rūpa*), by means of the countless sheafs of rays, illumining the Three Worlds, that proceed from the yellow seed-syllable Tāṃ within the filaments of the lotus in the moon of which the orb was established in the heart, and from that Blessed Lady (as above described). Leading her forth (*ānīya*), and establishing her on the background of space (*ākāśadeśe api avasthāpya*), he is to make an offering at that Blessed Lady's feet, with scented water and fragrant flowers in a jeweled vessel, welcoming her with heavenly flowers, incense, scents, garlands, unguents, powders, cloths, umbrella, bells, banner, and so forth, and should worship (*pūjayet*) her in all manner of wise. Repeating his worship again and again, and with lauds, he should display the finger sign (*mudrāṃ darśayet*) ... of a full-blown lotus. After he has gratified our Blessed Lady's intelligible aspect with this finger sign, he is to perform (*bhāvayet*) the incantation of our Blessed Lady in her contingent aspect (*samaya-sattva-rūpatā*) and is to liberate (*adhimuñcet*) the non-duality of these (two aspects). Thereupon the rays proceeding from the seed-syllable Tāṃ that is upon the spotless orb of the moon within the filaments of the blue lotus in the lunar orb—rays that illumine the ten quarters of the Three Worlds, that are of unlimited range, and proper to Lady Tārā—remove the poverty and other ills of being existent therein, by means of a rain of jewels, and content them with the nectar of the doctrine of the Momentaneous Nonessentiality, and so forth (*kṣaṇika-nairātmādi*), of all things.[11]

[11] Momentaneity and Nonessentiality; i.e., that existence (whether that of our own empirical selves or that of any other thing) is not a continuity but a succession of unique instants

When he has thus accomplished the divers need of the world, and has evolved the cosmic aspect of Tārā (*vīsvam api tārārūpaṃ niṣpādya*), he should realize again (*punaḥ ... bhāvayet*) for so long as fatigue does not prevail (*yāvat khedo na jāyate tāvat*)[12] whatever has come to be in the yellow seed-syllable Tāṃ, in the stages of expansion and contraction (*sphuraṇa-saṃharaṇa-krameṇa*). If he breaks away from this realization (*bhāvanātaḥ khinno*)[13] he should mutter an incantation (*mantraṃ japet*), in which case the incantation is: *Oṃ tāre tuttāre ture svahā.* This is the king of incantations, of mighty power; it is honored, worshiped, and endorsed, by all the Tathāgatas.

Breaking off the contemplation (*dhyānāt vyutthito*), and when he has seen the mundane aspect of Tārā (*jagat-tārā-rupaṃ dṛṣṭvā*),[14] he should experience at will the consciousness of his own identity with the Blessed Lady (*bhagavaty ahaṃkāreṇa yaheṣṭaṃ viharet*).[15] The

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of consciousness (Skr. *anitya*, Gr. *panta rhei*) and that none of these things is a "self" or has selfhood. Bhattacharya misrenders *kṣaṇika* by "temporary"; the Nonessentiality is not momentary in the temporal sense, but rather the true now or momentaneity of eternity. The Buddha's omniscience is called "momentary" in the same sense. On the "momentaneousness of all contingent things" see *Abhidharmakośa* IV.2-3, and L. de la Vallée Poussin, "Notes sur le 'moment' ou *kṣaṇa* des bouddhistes," *Rocznik Orjentalistyczny*, VIII (1931).

12 In the *Divyāvadāna*, p. 547, it is *kheda*, "lassitude" or "weariness," that prevents Rudrāyaṇa's painters from grasping the Buddha's likeness; and this *kheda* is of the same sort as the "laxity of contemplation" (*śithila samādhi*) that accounts for the portrait painter's failure in the *Mālavikāgnimitra* of Kālidās, II.2. The remedy is Sādhana no. 280, "if he is wearied, he should mutter an incantation" (*khede to mantraṃ japet*).

13 In Sādhana no. 44, *-nyayena.* These expressions do not mean "eliminating all fluctuation," but imply a repeated operation with alternate development and involution of the forms in accordance with their visual ontology; cf. *Śilparatna* XLVI.39, "repeatedly recalling" (*smṛtvā smṛtvā punaḥ punaḥ*). All these instructions imply that the image is to be made as definite as possible, it must be firmly adhered to, never allowed to slip or waver.

14 In Sādhana no. 88, *dhyānāt khinno mantraṃ japet;* with the same meaning; *dhyāna* and *bhāvana*, "contemplation" and "making become" being interchangeable. Whether the *samaya-sattva*, *viśva*, and *jagat* aspects are to be regarded as the same or as successively developed modes of the likeness of Tārā is not perfectly clear.

15 A self-identification with the forms evoked may be assumed throughout. In many cases we find *ātmānam*, "himself," in explicit connection with the injunctive *bhāvayet* or participle *vicintya.* For example, *ātmānaṃ siṃhanāda-lokeśvara-rūpaṃ bhāvayet*, "he should realize himself in the form of the Bodhisattva Siṃhanāda Lokeśvara, the Lord of the World with the Lion's Roar"; *ātmānaṃ ... mahākālam bhāvayet*, "he should realize himself as Mahākāla"; *trailokya bhaṭṭārakam ... ātmānaṃ bhāvayet*, "he should realize himself as Trailokyavijaya Bhaṭṭāraka" (Bhattacharya, *Buddhist Iconography*, pp. 36, 121, 146); "for a long time" (*ciram*) in the intelligible aspect of Yamāntaka, Sādhana no. 280; *jambhalaṃ bhāvayet*, *jambhala eva bhavati*, "he should realize (himself as)

longed-for Great Proficiencies fall at the practitioner's feet (*bhāvayataḥ ... caraṇyoḥ*); what can I say of the other Proficiencies? these come of themselves. Whoever realizes (*bhāvayet*) our Blessed Lady in a solitary mountain cave, he indeed sees her face to face (*pratyakṣata eva tāṃ paśyati*):[16] the Blessed Lady herself bestows upon him his very respiration and all else. What more can be said? She puts the very Buddhahood, so hard to win, in the very palm of his hand. Such is the whole Sādhana of the Kiṃcit-Vistara-Tārā.

The Sādhana translated above, differs only from others in the *Sadhanamālā* in its greater than average length and detail. The whole process is primarily one of worship, and need not necessarily be followed by the embodiment of the visualized likeness in physical material; but where the making of an actual image is intended, it is the

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Jambhala, and verily becomes Jambhala."

Bhāvayet is the causative form of *bhū*, to "become," and more or less synonymous with *cit*, "think" and *dhyai*, "contemplate," all with a creative sense; cf. Meister Eckhart's "He *thinks* them, and behold, they are." It is far from insignificant, inasmuch as the act of imagination is a conception and a vital operation, that *bhāvayati*, "makes become," in the sense of begetting and bringing forth, can be said of the parents of a child, both before and after birth AĀ II.5). For *bhū* as "making become" in Pali texts, see C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *To Become or Not to Become* (London, 1937), ch. 9. *Bhavati*, "becomes," is commonly used as early as the *Ṛg Veda* with reference to the successive assumption of particular forms corresponding to specific functions, e.g. V.3.1, "Thou, Agni, becomest Mitra when kindled"; cf. Exod. 3:14, where the well-known "I am that I am" (so in the Greek text) reads "I become what I become (Heb. *Ehyeh asher Ehyeh*)."

In the present text, *bhagavaty ahaṃkāreṇa* is literally "having the Blessed Lady for his "I." In the same way, in a Sādhana excerpted by A. Foucher (*L'Iconographie bouddhique de l'Inde*, Paris, 1900, II, p. 10, n. 2), we have *tato dṛḍhāhaṃkāraṃ kuryāt; ya bhagavatī prajñāpāramitā so'haṃ; yo'haṃ sa bhagavatī prajñā*—"Let him make a strict identification: 'What the Blessed Lady Prajñāpāramitā is, that am I; what I am, the Blessed Lady Prajñāpāramitā is.'"

These are not merely artistic requirements, but metaphysical. They go back to the formulae of the *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads*, "That art thou" (*tat tvam asi*), and "I am he" (*so'haṃ asmi*); and moreover, the last end of the work of art is the same as its beginning, for its function as a support of contemplation (*ālambanam*, *dhiyālambanam*) is to enable the *rasika* to identify himself in the same way with the archetype of which the painting is an image.

[16] In Sādhana no. 44, *pratyakṣam ābhāti*, "appears before his eyes." This appearance becomes the *sādhaka's* model, to be imitated in the first place personally, and in the second place in the work of art. The manner in which such a manifestation appears "before his eyes" is illustrated in the Rajput painting reproduced in Figure 3.

Ābhāti (*ā-bhā*, "shine hitherward") corresponds to *ābhāsa* as "painting" discussed in Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, ch. 6.

inevitable preliminary. Even if the artist actually works from a sketch or under verbal instruction, as sometimes happens, this only means that the *actus primus* and *actus secundus* are divided between two persons (cf. note 4); the fundamental nature of the representation, in all the details of its composition and coloring, and as regards the strictly ideal character of its integration, is in any case determined by and can only be understood in the light of the mental operation, the *actus primus* by which the given theme is made to assume a definite form in the mind of the artist, or was originally made to take shape in the mind of some artist; this form being that of the theme itself, and not the likeness of anything seen or known objectively. In other words, what the Sādhana supplies is the detailed sequence according to which the formal cause or pattern of the work to be done is developed from its germ, from the mere hint of what is required; this hint itself corresponding to the requirement of the patron, which is the final cause, while the efficient and material causes are brought into play only if and when the artist proceeds to servile operation, the act of "imitation," "similitude being with respect to the form."

Before we relinquish the present consideration of the *actus primus* in Oriental art, reference must be made to another way in which the derivation of the formal image is commonly accounted for. It is assumed that upon an intellectual or angelic level of reference the forms of things are intellectually emanated and have an immediate existence of their own. When this is mythologically formulated, such a level of reference becomes a "heaven" above. Then the artist, commissioned here, is thought of as seeking his model there. When, for example (*Mahāvaṃsa*, Ch. XXVII), a palace is to be built, the architect is said to make his way to heaven; and making a sketch of what he sees there, he returns to earth and carries out this design in the materials at his disposal. So "it is in imitation of the angelic works of art that any work of art is accomplished here" (AB VI.27). This is a mythological formula obviously equivalent in significance to the more psychological account in the Sādhanas. And here also it is easy to find extra-Indian parallels; for example, Plotinus, where he says that all music is "an earthly representation of the music that there is in the rhythm of the ideal world," and "the crafts such as building and carpentry which give us matter in wrought forms may be said, in that they draw on pattern, to take their principles from that realm and from the thinking there."[17] And this, indeed, it is that accounts for the essential characteristics of

[17] Plotinus, *Enneads* V.9.11.

the wrought forms; if the Zohar[18] tells us of the Tabernacle that "all its individual parts were formed in the pattern of that above," this tallies with Tertullian, who says of the cherubim and seraphim figured in the exemplum of the Ark, that because they are not in the likeness of anything on earth, they do not offend against the interdiction of idolatry; "they are not found in that form of similitude in reference to which the prohibition was given."[19]

The emphasis that is laid upon the strict self-identification of the artist with the imagined form should be especially noted. Otherwise stated, this means that he does not understand what he wants to express by means of any idea external to himself. Nor, indeed, can anything be rightly expressed which does not proceed from within, moved by its form. Alike from the Indian and Scholastic point of view, understanding depends upon an assimilation of knower and known; this is indeed the divine manner of understanding, in which the knower is the known. *Per contra*, the distinction of subject from object is the primary condition of ignorance, or imperfect knowledge, for nothing is known essentially except as it exists in consciousness; everything else is supposition. Hence the Scholastic and Indian definitions of perfect understanding as involving *adaequatio rei et intellectus* [conformity of reality and intellect –Ed. trans.], or *tad-ākāratā*; cf. Gilson, "Toute connaissance est, en effet, au sens fort du terme, une assimilation. L'acte par lequel une intelligence s'empare d'un objet pour en appréhender la nature suppose que cette intelligence se rend semblable à cet objet, qu'elle en revêt momentanément la forme, et c'est parce qu'elle peut en quelque sorte tout devenir qu'elle peut également tout connaître" [All knowledge is in fact an assimilation, in the strongest sense of the term. The act by which an intelligence seizes an object in order to apprehend its nature presupposes that this intelligence makes itself similar to this object, whose form it takes on momentarily; and it is because it can become everything, in a sense, that it can likewise know everything –Ed. trans.].[20] It follows that the artist must really have been

[18] Depending upon Exod. 25:40, "Lo, make all things in accordance with the pattern that was shown thee upon the mount."

[19] *Contra Marcionem* II.22. In the same way, for all his iconoclasm, Philo takes an iconography of the Cherubim, and that of the Brazen Serpent, for granted.

[20] E. Gilson, *La Philosophie de St. Bonaventure* (Paris, 1924), p.146. It would be preferable to say "c'est parce qu'elle est tout qu'elle peut également tout connaître" [it is because it is everything that it can also know everything –Ed. trans.], in accordance with the view that Man—not "this man"—is the exemplar and effectively the demiurge of

whatever he is to represent. Dante sums up the whole matter from the mediaeval point of view when he says, "he who would paint a figure, if he cannot be it, cannot paint it," or as he otherwise expresses it, "no painter can portray any figure, if he have not first of all made himself such as the figure ought to be."[21] Given the value that we nowadays attach to observation and experiment as being the only valid grounds of knowledge, it is difficult for us to take these words as literally and simply as they are intended. Yet there is nothing fanciful in them; nor is the point of view an exceptional one.[22] It is rather our own empiricism that is, humanly speaking, exceptional, and that may be at fault. Ching Hao, for example, in the tenth century, is expressing the same point of view when he says of the "subtle" painter (the highest type of the human artist) that he "first experiences in imagination the instincts and passions of all things that exist in heaven and earth; then, in a manner appropriate to the subject, the natural forms flow spontaneously from his hand." The closest parallels to our Indian texts occur, however, in Plotinus: "Every mental act is accompanied by an image ... fixed and like a picture of the thought.... The Reason-Principle—the revealer, the bridge between the concept and the image-taking faculty—exhibits the

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all things; meaning, of course, by "Man," that human nature which has nothing to do with time, for this is anything but an individually solipsist point of view. It is not that the knower and known are mutually modified by the fact of observation, but that there is nothing knowable apart from the act of knowledge.

21 *Convito*, Canzone IV. 53-54 and IV.105-106.

22 A remarkable approximation to this point of view may be cited from Sir James Jeans' presidential address to the British Association, 1934: "Nature ... is not the object of the subject-object relation, but the relation itself. There is, in fact, no clear-cut division between the subject and the object; they form an indivisible whole which now becomes nature. This thesis finds its final expression in the wave parable, which tells us that nature consists of waves and that these are of the general quality of waves of knowledge, or of absence of knowledge, in our own minds.... If ever we are to know the true nature of waves, these waves must consist of something we already have in our own minds. ... The external world is essentially of the same nature as mental ideas." These remarks are tantamount to an exposition of the Vedantic and Buddhist theory of the conceptuality of all phenomena, where nature and art alike are regarded as projections of mental concepts (*citta-samjñā*) and as belonging to a strictly mental order of experience (*citta-mātra*) without substantial existence apart from the act (*vṛtti*) of consciousness.

The artist is from more than one point of view a yogin; and the object of contemplation is to transcend the "dust of the notion of subject and object" in the unified experience of the synthesis of knower and known—"assimilating the knower with the to-be-known, as it was in the original nature, and in that likeness attaining that end that was appointed by the gods for men, as being best both as for this present and for the time to come," Plato, *Timaeus* 90D; cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII 9.3-5.

concept as in a mirror," and "in contemplative vision, especially when it is vivid, we are not at the time aware of our own personality; we are in possession of ourselves, but the activity is towards the object of vision with which the thinker becomes identified; he has made himself over as matter to be shaped; he takes ideal form under the action of the vision, while remaining potentially himself."[23]

When we reflect that mediaeval rhetoric, that is to say the preoccupations with which the patron and artist alike approached the activity of making things, stems from Plotinus, through Augustine, Dionysius, and Eriugena to Eckhart, it will not surprise us that mediaeval Christian art should have been so much like Indian in kind; it is only after the thirteenth century that Christian art, though it deals nominally with the same themes, is altogether changed in essence, its properly symbolic language and ideal references being now obscured by statements of observed fact and the intrusion of the artist's personality. On the other hand, in the art that we are considering, the theme is all in all, the artist merely the means to an end; the patron and the artist have a common interest, but it is not in one another. Here, in the words of the *Laṇkāvatāra Sūtra*, the picture is not in the colors, neither has it any concrete existence elsewhere. The picture is like a dream, the aesthetic surfaces merely its vehicle, and anyone who regarded these aesthetic surfaces themselves as constituting the art would have been thought of as an idolater and sybarite. Our modern attitude to art is actually fetishistic; we prefer the symbol to the reality; for us the picture is in the colors, the colors are the picture. To say that the work of art is its own meaning is the same as to say that it has no meaning, and in fact there are many modern aestheticians who assert explicitly that art is unintelligible.

We have thus before us two diametrically opposed contentions of the function of the work of art: one of the work of art as a thing provided by the artist to serve as the occasion of a pleasurable sensory experience, the other of the work of art as providing the support for an intellectual operation to be performed by the spectator. The former point of view may suffice to explain the origin of the modern work and

[23] Plotinus IV.3.30 and IV.2. "There is no sense of distance or separation from the thing.... All the activities of the self are loosed in enjoyment, unanimous in a single activity which breaks through the framework of aspects enclosing our ordinary rational activity, and which experiences, for a moment or longer, a reality that is really possessed. Now is the mind most alive, and at peace, the thing is present, held and delighted in" (Thomas Gilby, *Poetical Experience*, London, 1934, pp. 78-79, paraphrasing *Sum. Theol.* I-II.4.3 *ad* 1).

for its appreciation, but it neither explains nor enables us to make any but a decorative use of the mediaeval or Oriental works, which are not merely surfaces, but have intelligible references. We may elect for our own purposes to adhere to the contemporary point of view and the modern kind of art, and may decide to acquire examples of the other kind in the same way that a magpie collects materials with which to adorn its nest. At the same time in fact, however, we also pretend to study and aspire to understand the works of this other kind that are assembled in our homes and museums. And this we cannot do without taking into account their final and formal causes; how can we judge of anything without first knowing what purpose it was intended to serve, and what was its maker's intention? It is, for example, only the logic of their iconography that can explain the composition of the Oriental works, only the manner in which the model is conceived that can explain the representation that is not in any sense optically plausible or made as if to function biologically.

We must, in fact, begin by approaching these works as if they were not works of art in our sense, and for this purpose it will be a good plan to begin our study without regard to the quality of the works selected for study, even perhaps deliberately choosing poor or provincial examples, wishing to know what kind of art this is before we proceed to eliminate what is not good of its kind; for it is only when we know what is being said that we shall be in a position to know whether it has been well said, or perhaps so poorly expressed as not really to have been said at all.

It is not altogether without reason that C. G. Jung has drawn a parallel between the "artistic" productions of his pathological patients and the mandalas of Eastern art.[24] He asks his patients "actually to paint what they have seen in dream or fantasy… To paint what we see before us is a different matter from painting what we see within." Although these productions are sometimes "beautiful" (see the examples reproduced in *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, Pls. 1–10), Jung treats them as "wholly worthless according to the test of serious art. It is even essential that no such value be allowed them for otherwise my patients might imagine themselves to be artists, and this would spoil the good effects of the exercise. It is not a question of art[25]—or rather it should not be

[24] R. Wilhelm and C. G. Jung, *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (London, 1932), C. G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (London, 1933), ch. 3. On Jung's interpretation see Andre Préau, *La Fleur d'or et le taoisme sans Tao* (Paris, 1931).

[25] I.e., not of "art for art's sake," but "for good use."

a question of art --but of something more, something other than mere art: namely the living effect upon the patient himself—some kind of centering process—a process which brings into being a new center of equilibrium." This corresponds to the Indian conception of the work of art as a "means of re-integration" (*saṃskaraṇa*).[26] It is true, of course, as Jung freely admits, that none of the European mandalas achieves "the conventionally and traditionally established harmony and completeness of the Eastern mandala."

The Eastern diagrams are, in fact, finished products of a sophisticated culture; they are created, not by the disintegrated patient as in Jung's cases, but rather by the psychological specialist himself for his own use or that of others whose state of mental discipline is already above rather than below the average level. We have here to do with an art that has "fixed ends in view and ascertained means of operation." In what is thus a professional and conscious product we naturally find the qualities of beauty highly developed, viz. those of unity, order, and clarity; we can, if we insist upon doing so, regard these products as works of decorative art, and use them accordingly. But if we limit our response in this way, not taking any account of the manner and purpose of their production, we cannot claim to be understanding them; they are not explicable in terms of technique and material, it is rather the art in the artist which determines the development of the technique and the choice of material, and in any case it is the meaning and logical relations of the parts that determines their arrangement, or what we call composition. After the form has once been conceived, the artist performing the servile operation cannot alter it to better please his taste or ours, and never had any intention to do so. It is, therefore, that we maintain that no approach to Oriental art that does not take full account of all its purposes, and of the specific process by which these purposes were achieved, can pretend to adequacy. This will apply as much in the case of the minor arts as in that of the major arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Oriental art cannot be isolated from life and studied *in vacuo;* we can only be said to have understood it when we have, at least for the time being, so far identified ourselves with its premises as to fully consent to it, taking its kind for granted in just the same way that we take a modern fashion for granted; until we do this, the forms of oriental art will always seem to us arbitrary or at the least exotic or curious, and this would be the measure of our misunderstanding, for

[26] AB VI.27, ŚB VI.1.2.29, etc. *Saṃskaraṇa* is also an integration and a "sacrament"; the operation is a rite.

it was none of these things in the eyes of those for whom it was made and who knew how to use it. The man who still worships the Buddhist image in its shrine has in many respects a better understanding of Buddhist art than the man who looks at the same image in a museum, as an object of "fine art."

Just as for Plato the patron is the judge of art in its most important aspect, that of use, so we still say that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating."

CHAPTER XI

The Nature of Buddhist Art

He is not himself brought into being in images presented through our senses,
but He presents all things to us in such images.
Hermes, *Lib.* V.1b

In order to understand the nature of the Buddha image and its meaning for a Buddhist we must, to begin with, reconstruct its environment, trace its ancestry, and remodel our own personality. We must forget that we are looking at "art" in a museum, and see the image in its place in a Buddhist church or as part of a sculptured rock wall; and having seen it, receive it as an image of what we are ourselves potentially. Remember that we are pilgrims come from some great distance to see God; that what we see will depend upon ourselves. We are to see, not the likeness made by hands, but its transcendental archetype; we are to take part in a communion. We have heard the spoken Word, and remember that "He who sees the Word, sees Me"; we are to see this Word, not now in an audible but in a visible and tangible form. In the words of a Chinese inscription, "When we behold the precious characteristics, it is as though the whole and very person of the Buddha were present in majesty.... The Vulture Peak is before our eyes; Nāgarahāra is present. There is a rain of precious flowers that robs the very clouds of color; a celestial music is heard, enough to silence the sound of ten thousand flutes. When we consider the perfection of the Body of the Word, the eight perils are avoided; when we hear the teaching of the Mighty Intellect, the seventh heaven is reached" (E. Chavannes, *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale*, 3 vols., Paris, 1909-1913, I, 340). The image is of one Awakened: and for our awakening, who are still asleep. The objective methods of "science" will not suffice; there can be no understanding without assimilation; to understand is to have been born again.

The epithet "Awakened" (Buddha) evokes in our minds today the concept of an historical figure, the personal discoverer of an ethical, psychological, contemplative, and monastic Way of salvation from the infection of death: which Way extends hence toward a last and beatific End, which is variously referred to as a Reversion, Despiration, or Release, indescribable in terms of being or nonbeing considered as

incompatible alternatives, but certainly not an empirical existence nor an annihilation. The Buddha "is"; but he "cannot be taken hold of."

In the developed Buddhist art with which we are now mainly concerned, we take for granted the predominance of the central figure of a "Founder" in a form that can only be described, although with important reservations, as anthropomorphic. If we take account of the manner in which this usually monastic but sometimes royal figure is sharply distinguished from its human environment, for example, by the nimbus or by the lotus support, or similarly take account of the "mythical" character of the life itself as described in the early texts, we generally say that the man who is spoken of as "Thus-come" (Tathāgata) or as the "Wake" (Buddha) has been "deified," and presume that miraculous elements have been combined with the historical nucleus and introduced into the representations for edifying purposes. We hardly realize that "Buddhism" has roots that can be traced backward for millennia; and that though the Buddha's doctrines are in the proper sense of the word original, they are scarcely in any sense novel; nor that this applies with equal force to the problems of Buddhist art, which are not in reality those of Buddhist art in particular, but rather those of Indian art in a Buddhist application and, in the last analysis, the problems of art universally. It would be possible, for example, to discuss the whole problem of iconoclasm in purely Indian terms; and we shall in fact have something to say about it, in making the nature and genesis of the anthropomorphic image the main theme of this introduction.

If "Buddhism" (we use quotations because the connotation is so vast) is a heterodox doctrine in the sense that it apparently rejects the impersonal authority of the Vedas and substitutes or seems to substitute for this the authority of an historically spoken Word, it is nevertheless becoming more apparent every day that the content of Buddhism and Buddhist art are far more orthodox than was at first imagined, and orthodox not only in a Vedic sense, but even universally. For example, the famous formula, *anicca*, *anattā*, *dukkha*, "Impermanence, Nonspirit, Suffering," does not, as was once believed, involve a denial of the Spirit (*ātman*), but asserts that the soul-and-body or individuality (*nāma-rūpa*, *atta-bhāva*, *saviññāna-kāya*) of man are passable, mutable, and above all to be sharply distinguished from the Spirit. *Anattā* does not assert that "there is no Spirit" or "Spiritual-essence," but that "this (empirical self, *Leibseele*) is not my Spirit," *na me so attā*, a formula constantly repeated in the Pali texts. It is in almost the same words that the Upaniṣads assert that "what is other than the Spirit is a misery" (*ato anyad ārtam*) and that "this (its station) is not the Spirit, no indeed: the

Spirit is naught that can be taken hold of, naught perishable, etc." (*sa eṣa neti nety ātmā agrihyo… aśiryaḥ*, etc., BU III.4.1 and 9.26). This is the greatest of all distinctions, apart from which there can be no intelligence of man's last end; and we find it insisted upon, accordingly, in all orthodox traditions for example, by St. Paul when he says, "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" (Heb. 4:12).

We have traced elsewhere[1] the Vedic sources and universal values of Buddhist symbolism, and shall presently discuss the nature of symbolism itself. Here it will suffice to add that the Vedic and Buddhist, or equally Vedic and Vaiṣṇava or Vedic and Jaina scriptures, taken together in continuity, enunciate the dual doctrine, which is also a Christian doctrine, of an eternal and a temporal birth; if the former alone is expounded in the *Ṛg Veda*, the Buddha's historical nativity is in reality the story of the aeonic manifestation of Agni—*Noster Deus ignis consumens est* [Our God is a consuming fire –Ed. trans.]—compressed "as if" into the span of a single existence. The "going forth" from the household to the homeless life is the ritual transference of Agni from the household to the sacrificial altar; if the Vedic prophets are forever tracking the Hidden Light by the traces of its footsteps, it is literally and iconographically true that the Buddhist also makes the *vestigium pedis* [foot-print] his guide; and if Agni in the Vedic texts, as also in the Old Testament, is a "Pillar of Fire," the Buddha is repeatedly represented as such at Amarāvatī. We need hardly say that, from our point of view, to speak of the "lives" of the Buddha or Christ as "mythical" is but to enhance their timeless significance.[2]

We naturally overlook the fact that the central problem of Buddhist art, of which a solution is essential to any real understanding, is not a problem of styles, but of how it came about that the Buddha has been represented at all in an anthropomorphic form: which is almost the same thing as to ask why indeed the Great King of Glory should have veiled his person in mendicant robes—*Cur Deus homo?* [why God

[1] Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 1935, and "Some Sources of Buddhist Iconography," 1945.

[2] To speak of an event as *essentially* mythical is by no means to deny the possibility, but rather to assert the necessity of an *accidental*—i.e., historical—eventuation; it is in this way that the eternal and temporal nativities are related. To say "that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets" is not to render a narrative suspect but only to refer the fact to its principle. Our intention is to point out that the more eminent truth of the myth does not stand or fall by the truth or error of the historical narrative in which the principle is exemplified.

became man –Ed. trans.]. The Buddhist answer is, of course, that the assumption of a human nature is motivated by a divine compassion, and is in itself a manifestation of the Buddha's perfect virtuosity (*kosalla*, *kauśalya*) in the use of convenient means (*upāya*): it is expressly stated of the Buddha that it belongs to his skill to reveal himself in accordance with the nature of those who perceive him. It had indeed already been realized in the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas that "His names are in agreement with his aspect" and that "as He is approached, such He becomes" (*yathopāsate tad eva bhavati*, ŚB X.5.2.20); as St. Augustine, cited with approval by St. Thomas, expresses it, *factus est Deus homo ut homo fieret Deus* [God made man in order that man might become God –Ed. trans.].

The notion of a Creator working *per artem*, common to the Christian and all other orthodox ontologies, already implies an artist in possession of his art, the foremeasure (*pramāṇa*) and providence (*prajñā*) according to which all things are to be measured out; there is, in fact, the closest possible analogy between the "factitious body" (*nirmāṇa-kāya*[3]) or "measure" (*nimitta*) of the living Buddha, and the image of the Great Person which the artist literally "measures out" (*nirmāti*) to be a substitute for the actual presence. The Buddha is, in fact, born of a Mother (*mātṛ*) whose name is Māyā (Nature, Art, or "Magic" in Boehme's sense of "Creatrix"), with a derivation in each case from *mā*, to "measure"; cf. *prati-mā* "image," *pra-māṇa*, "criterion," and *tāla-māna*, "iconometry."[4] There is, in other words, a virtual identification of a natural with

[3] The expression *nirmāṇa-kāya* is evidently derived from JB III.261–263. Here the Devas have undertaken a sacrificial session, but before doing so propose to discard "whatever is crude in our Spirit (*tad yad eṣāṃ krūram ātmana āsīt*, i.e., whatever are its possibilities of physical manifestation), and to measure it out (*tan nirmimāmahai*—i.e., fashion it)." Accordingly, "they measured it out (*nirmāya*) and put what had thus been wiped off (*sammārjam*) in two bowls (*śarāvayoḥ*, i.e., heaven and earth).... Thence was born the mild Deva ... it was verily Agni that was born.... He said, 'Why have ye brought me to birth?' They answered, 'To keep watch' (*aupa-dṛṣṭrāya;* cf. ŚB III.4.2.5, *aupadṛṣṭā*, and Sāyaṇa on RV X.27.13, *āloka karaṇāya*." Here, then, Agni's embodiment in the worlds is already a *nirmāṇa-kāya*. That Agni is to keep watch corresponds, on the one hand, to the Vedic conception of the Sun as the "Eye of the Devas" and, on the other, to that of the Buddha as the "Eye in the World" (*cakkhuṃ loke*) in the Pali texts, and to Christ as *Theou … omma* [eye of God –Ed. trans.] (*Greek Anthology* I.19). Cf. Coomaraswamy, "Nirmāṇa-kāya," 1938.

[4] The origin of the name of the Buddha's mother, Māyā (*maia*, *metis*, Sophia), can be followed backward from *Lalita Vistara* XXVII.12 through AV VIII.9.5 to RV III.29.11, "This, O Agni, is thy cosmic womb, whence thou hast shone forth.... Metered in the mother (*yad amimīta mātari*)—Mātariśvān"; cf. X.5.3, "Having measured out the Babe

an intellectual, metrical, and evocative generation.[5] The birth is literally an evocation; the Child is begotten, in accordance with a constantly repeated Brāhmaṇa formula, "by Intellect upon the Voice," which intercourse is symbolized in the rite; the artist works, as St. Thomas expresses it, "by a word *conceived* in intellect." We must not overlook, then, that there is also a third and verbal image, that of the doctrine, coequal in significance with the images in flesh or stone: "He who sees the Word sees Me" (S III.120). These visible and audible images are alike in their information, and differ only in their accidents. Each depicts the same essence in a likeness; neither is an imitation of another—the image in stone, for example, not an imitation of the image in flesh, but each directly an "imitation" (*anukṛti*, mimesis) of the unspoken Word, an image of the "Body of the Word" or "Brahma-body" or "Principle," which cannot be represented as it *is* because of its perfect simplicity.

It was not, however, until the beginning of the Christian era, five centuries after the Great Total-Despiration (*mahā parinibbāna*), that the Buddha was actually represented in a human form. In more general terms, it was not until then (with certain exceptions, some of which date back as far as the third millennium B.C., and despite the fact that the *Ṛg Veda* freely makes use of a verbal imagery in anthropomorphic terms) that any widespread development of an anthropomorphic iconography can be recognized at all. The older Indian art is essentially "aniconic," that is, it makes use only of geometrical, vegetable, or theriomorphic symbols as supports of contemplation, just as in early Christian art. An artistic inability to represent the human figure cannot be invoked by way of explanation in either case; not only had human figures already been represented very skillfully in the third millennium B.C., but, as we know, the type of the human figure had been employed with great effect from the third century B.C. onwards (and no doubt much earlier

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(*mitvā śiśum*)," and TS 1V.2.10.3, "born as a steed in the midst of the waters."

[5] Observe, in this connection, that in John 1:3-4, the Latin *quad factum est* [that which was made –Ed. trans.] represents the Greek *ho gegonen* (Skr. *jatām*, cf. Philo, *Aet.* 15, *ergon de kai engonon* [work and offspring –Ed. trans.]. "The teaching of our school is that anything known or born is an image. They say that in begetting his only-begotten Son, the Father is producing his own image" (Meister Eckhart, Evans ed., I, 258).

It is from the same point of view, that of the doctrine of ideas, that for St. Thomas, "Art imitates nature [i.e., Natura naturans, Creatrix universalis, Deus] in her manner of operation" (*Sum. Theo.* I.117.1C), and that Augustine "appuie plus nettement [que Plotin] sur la même origine de la nature [Natura naturata] et des oeuvres d'art, *l'origine en Dieu*" [stresses more clearly {than Plotinus} that nature {Natura naturata} and works of art have the same origin, *in God* –Ed. trans.] (K. Svoboda, *L'Esthétique de saint Augustin et ses sources*, Brno, 1933, p. 115).

in impermanent material), *except* to represent the Buddha in his last incarnation, where even at birth and before the Great Awakening he is represented only by footprints, or generally by such symbols as the Tree or Wheel.

In order to approach the problem at all we must relegate to an altogether subordinate place our predilection for the human figure, inherited from late classical cultures, and must, to the extent that we are able, identify ourselves with the unanimous mentality of the Indian artist and patron both as it had been before, and as it had come to be when a necessity was actually felt for the representation of what we think of as the "deified" Buddha (although the fact that he cannot be regarded as a man among others, but rather as "the form of humanity that has nothing to do with time," is plainly enough set forth in the Pali texts). Above all, must we refrain from assuming that what was an inevitable step, and one already foreshadowed by the "historicity" of the life, must be interpreted in terms of spiritual progress. We must realize that this step, of which an unforeseen result was the provision for us of such aesthetic pleasures as everyone must derive from Buddhist art, may have been itself much rather a concession to intellectually lower levels of reference than any evidence of an increased profundity of vision. We must remember that an abstract art is adapted to contemplative uses and implies a gnosis; an anthropomorphic art evokes a religious emotion, and corresponds rather to prayer than to contemplation. If the development of an art can be justified as answering to new needs, it must not be overlooked that to speak of a want is to speak of a deficiency in him who wants: the more one is, the less one wants. We ought not, then, to think so much of a deficiency of plastic art in aniconic rituals as of the adequacy of the purely abstract formulae and the proficiency of those who could make use of purely symbolic representations.

The aniconic character of Vedic ritual and early Buddhist art was, then, a matter of choice. Not only is the position iconoclastic in fact, but we can hardly fail to recognize a far-reaching iconoclastic tendency in such words as those of the *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, IV.18.6: "The Brahman is not what one thinks with the mind (*yam manasā na manute*), but, as they say, is that whereby there is a mention, or concept (*yenāhur manomatam*): know that That alone is Brahman, not what men worship here (*nedaṃ yad idam upāsate*)." At the same time, the Upaniṣads distinguish clearly between the Brahman in a likeness and the Brahman not in any likeness, mortal and immortal (*mūrtaṃ cāmūrtaṃ ca martyaṃ cāmṛtaṃ ca*, BU II.3.1, where it may be noted that one of the regular designations of an image is precisely *mūrti*); and between the

concept by which one distinctly remembers and the lightning-flash at which one can only exclaim (Kena Up. IV.4–5). The distinction is that of Eckhart and Ruysbroeck between the knowledge of God *creaturlicher wise*, *creatuerlikerwijs* and *âne mittel*, *âne wise*, *sonder middel*, *sonder wise* [according to the way proper to humankind and (a way) without means or method –Ed. trans.], and involves the universal doctrine of the single essence and two natures. It is clear that these texts and their implied doctrine are tantamount to a justification both of an iconography and of iconoclasm. It is the immediate value of an image to serve as the support of a contemplation leading to an understanding of the exterior operation and proximate Brahman, the Buddhist Sambhogakāya: it is only of the interior operation and ultimate Brahman, Buddhist Dharmakāya, Tattva, Tathatā, or Nirvāṇa, that it can be said that "*This* Brahman is silence."[6]

No one whose life is still an active one, no one still spiritually under the Sun and still perfectible, no one who still proposes to understand in terms of subject and object, no one who still is anyone, can pretend to have outgrown all need of means. It is not a question of the virtually "infinite possibilities of the simple soul" (A. C. Bouquet, *The Real Presence*, Cambridge, 1928, p. 85), which it would be absurd to deny, but one of *how* these potentialities can be reduced to act. One is astounded at the multitude of those who advocate the "direct" approach to God, as if the end of the road could be reached without a wayfaring, and who forget that an immediate vision can be only theirs in whom "the mind has been demented," to employ a significant expression common to Eckhart, the Upaniṣads, and Buddhism.

The *present* problem is not, then, one of the propriety or impropriety of the use of supports of contemplation, but of what sort the most appropriate and efficacious supports of contemplation must be,

[6] A traditional saying quoted by Śaṇkara on *Brahma Sūtra* III.2.17. Cf. the Hermetic "Then only will you see it, when you cannot speak of it; for the knowledge of it is deep silence, and suppression of all the senses" (Hermes, *Lib.* X.6). Just as for the Upaniṣads the ultimate Brahman is a principle "about which further questions cannot be asked" (BU III.6), so the Buddha consistently refuses to discuss the quiddity of Nibbāna. In the words of Erigena, "God does not know what He Himself is, because He is not any what," and of Maimonides, "by affirming anything of God, you are removed from Him." The Upaniṣads and Buddhism offer no exception to the universal rule of the employment side by side of the *via affirmativa* and *via remotionis* [way of affirmation and way of negation - Ed. trans.]. There is nothing peculiarly Indian, and still less peculiarly Buddhist, in the view that we cannot know what we may become, which "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard" (I. Cor. 2:9). In the meantime, the function of the image bodily, verbal, or plastic, or in any other way symbolic, is mediatory. See also Coomaraswamy, "The Vedic Doctrine of 'Silence.'"

and of the art of making use of them. For us, the work of art both exists and operates on an altogether human, visible, and tangible level of reference; we do not, as Dante requires that we should, "marvel at the doctrine that hides itself behind (*s'asconde sotto*) the veil of the strange verses" (*Inferno* IX.61); the verses are enough for us. It is otherwise in a traditional art, where the object is merely a point of departure and a signpost inviting the spectator to the performance of an act directed toward that form for the sake of which the picture exists at all. The spectator is not so much to be "pleased" as to be "transported": to see as the artist is required to have seen before he took up brush or chisel; to see the Buddha in the image rather than an image of the Buddha. It is a matter of *penetration*, in the most technical senses of the term (cf. Muṇḍ. Up. II.2.3): the variegated presentation in colors is merely a conceptual exteriorization of what in itself is a perfectly simple brilliance—"Just as it is an effect of the presence or absence of dust in a garment that the color is either clear or motley, so it is the effect of the presence or absence of a penetration into Release (*āvedha-vaśān muktau*) that the Gnosis is either clear or motley. That one alludes to the profundity of the Buddhas on the Unsullied Plane in terms of iconographic characteristics, stances, and acts (*lakṣaṇa-sthāna-karmasu*) is a mere painting in colors on space."[7] Or again, and with reference equally to verbal and visual imagery, the Buddha is made to say that the metaphorical expression "is adduced by way of illustration ... because of the great infirmity of babes ... I teach as does the master painter or his pupil who disposes his colors for the sake of a picture, which picture is not

[7] See Sylvain Lévi's edition of the *Mahāyāna Sutrālaṃkāra* of Asaṇga, 2 vols. (Paris, 1907, 1911), I, 39-40; II, 77-78. Lévi has not quite understood *lakṣaṇa-sthāna;* the reference is to the descriptive iconography of narrative and visual art. In *A Survey of Painting in the Deccan* (London, 1937), pp. 27 and 203, n. 31, Stella Kramrisch has mistaken the bearing of the passage: "to paint with colors on space" is a proverbial expression implying "to attempt the impossible" or "effort made in vain," as, for example, in M I.127, where it is pointed out that a man cannot paint in colors on space, because "space is without form or indication." What Asaṇga is saying is that to think of any representation of the transcendent Principle as it is in itself is no more than an idle dream; the representation has a merely temporary value, comparable to that of the ethical raft in the well-known parable (M 1.135).

It is, nevertheless, as the Sādhanas express it, against a background of "space in the heart" that the picture "not in the colors" must be imagined, just as also Śaṇkarācārya's "world-picture" (the intelligible cosmos seen in the *speculum aeternum*) is "painted by the Spirit on the canvas of the Spirit." And because the picture has been thus imagined as an appearance manifested over against an *infinite* ground, the picture (of Amida, for example) painted in actual colors and on canvas stands out against an analogous background of *indefinite* extent.

to be found in the colors, nor in the ground, nor in the environment. It is only to make it attractive to[8] creatures that the picture is contrived in color: what is literally taught is impertinent; the Principle eludes the letter.[9] In taking up a stand amongst things,[10] what I really teach is the Principle as understood by the Contemplatives:[11] a spiritual-reversion evading every form of thought. What I teach is not a doctrine for babes, but for the Sons of the Conqueror. And just as whatever I may see in a diversified manner has no real being, so is the pictorial doctrine communicated in a manner irrelevant. Whatever is not adapted to such and such persons as are to be taught cannot be called a 'teaching.' ... The Buddhas indoctrinate beings according to their mental capacity."[12] That is as much as to say with St. Paul, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (I Cor. 3:2): "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age" (Heb. 5:14).

It is only one who *has* attained to an immediate Gnosis that can afford to dispense with theology, ritual, and imagery: the Comprehensor has found what the Wayfarer is still in search of. This has too often been misinterpreted to mean that something is deliberately withheld from those who are to depend on means, or even that means are dispensed to them as if with intent to keep them in ignorance; there are those who ask for a sort of universal compulsory education in the mysteries, supposing that a mystery is nothing but a communicable, although hitherto uncommunicated, secret and nothing different in kind from the themes of profane instruction. So far from this, it is of the essence of a mystery, and above all of the *mysterium magnum* [great mystery –Ed. trans.], that

[8] *Karṣaṇārthāya*: the notion coincides with the Platonic and Scholastic concept of the *summoning* quality of beauty. Cf. *Mathnawī* I.2770, "The picture's smiling appearance is for your sake; in order that by means of that picture the reality may be established."

[9] "Eludes" is precisely Dante's "s'asconde sotto" [hides itself beneath –Ed. trans.]. "Speech does not attain to truth; but mind (*nous* = *manas*) has mighty power, and when it has been led some distance on its way by speech, it attains to truth" (Hermes I. 185).

[10] I.e., in being born, and consequently in using material figures, speaking parabolically, etc.

[11] *Tattvaṃ yogīnām*: cf. RV X.85.4, "Of whom the Brahmans understand as Soma, none ever tastes, none tastes who dwells on earth," and AB VII.31, "It is metaphysically (*parōkṣeṇa*) that he obtains the drinking of Soma, it is not literally (*pratyakṣam*) partaken of by him."

[12] *Laṇkāvatāra Sūtra* II.112-114.

it cannot be communicated, but only realized:[13] all that can be communicated are its external supports or symbolic expressions; the Great Work must be done by everyone for himself. The words attributed to the Buddha above are in no way contradictory of the principle of the open hand (*varada mudrā*) or expository hand (*vyākhyāna mudrā*). The Buddha is never ineloquent: the solar gates are not there to exclude, but to admit; no one can be excluded by anyone but himself. The Way has been charted in detail by every Forerunner, who *is* the Way; what lies at the end of the road is not revealed, even by those who have reached it, because it cannot be told and does not appear: the Principle is not in any likeness.

Of what sort are, then, the most appropriate and efficacious supports of contemplation? It would scarcely be possible to cite an authoritative Indian text condemning explicitly the use of anthropomorphic as distinguished from aniconic images. There is, however, one Buddhist source, that of the *Kālinga-bodhi Jātaka*, in which what must have been the early position is still clearly reflected. The Buddha is asked by what kind of hallow, shrine, or symbol (*cetiya*)[14] he can properly be represented

[13] "This sort of thing cannot be taught, my son; but God, when he so wills, recalls it to our memory" (Hermes, *Lib.* XIII.2).

[14] *Cetiya*, *caitya*, are generally derived from *ci*, "to pile up," originally used in particular connection with the building of a fire-altar or funeral pile, and this is not without its significance in connection with the fact to be discussed below that the Buddha image really inherits the values of the Vedic altar. But as the Jātaka itself makes clear, a *caitya* is by no means necessarily a stūpa nor anything constructed, but a symbolic substitute of any sort to be *regarded as* the Buddha in his absence. There must be assumed at least a hermeneutic connection of *ci*, "to edify," with the closely related roots *ci* and *cit*, to regard, consider, know, and think of or contemplate; it is, for example, in this sense that *cetyaḥ* is used in RV VI.1.5, "Thou, O Agni, our means-of-crossing-over, *art-to-be-known-as* man's eternal refuge and father and mother," all of which epithets have, moreover, been applied also to the Buddha. In ŚB VI.2.3.9 it is explicit that *citi* ("platform," √*ci*) is so called because of having been "seen in meditation" (*cetayamāna*, √*cit*). The fires "within you," of which the external altar fires are only the supports, are "intellectually piled," or "wisdom-piled" (*manasācitaḥ*, *vidyācitaḥ*, √*ci*, ŚB X.5.3.3 and 12). Cf. "*Cetiya*" in Coomaraswamy, "Some Pāli Words," 1939, with further references; and Coomaraswamy, *"Prāṇa-citi,"* 1943.

The assimilation of *ci* to *cit*, in connection with an operation of which the main purpose is to "build up" the sacrificer himself, whole and complete, has a striking parallel in the semantic development of "edify," the "edifice" having been originally a hearth (*aedes*) and the cognate Greek and Sanskrit roots *aido* and *idh*, to kindle. The hearth, which is an altar as much as a fireplace, establishes the home (as in ŚB VII.1.1 and 4). So just as *aedes* becomes "house," so "to edify" is in a more general sense "to build," the

in his absence. The answer is that he can properly be represented by a Bodhi tree[15] (a *paribhoga-cetiya*, Mhv I.69), whether during his lifetime or after the Despiration, or by bodily relics after his Decease; the "indicative" (*uddesika*)[16] iconography of an anthropomorphic image is condemned as "groundless and conceptual, or conventional" (*avatthukam manamattakam*). It will be seen that the wording corresponds to that of the Brāhmaṇa as cited above: *manamattakam* = *manomatam*.

Before we proceed to ask how it could have been that an anthropomorphic image was accepted after all, we must eliminate certain considerations extraneous to the problem. It must be realized, in the first place, that although an iconoclastic problem is present, it was as a matter of convenience, and without reference to any supposed pos-

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meaning "to build up spiritually" preserving the originally sacred values of the hearth. Also parallel to "edify" and *idh* is the Pāli *samuttejati*, literally "sets on fire" by means of an "edifying" discourse (D II.109, etc.), no doubt with ultimate reference to the "internal Agnihotra" in which the heart becomes the hearth (ŚB X.5.3.12, ŚA X; S I.169).

[15] This is not, of course, an exclusively Buddhist position. The Vedas already speak of a Great Yakṣa (Brahman) moving on the waters in a fiery flowing at the center of the universe in the likeness of a Tree (AV X.7.32), and this Burning Bush, the Single Fig, is called in the Upaniṣads the "one Awakener" (*eka sambodhayitṛ*) and everlasting support of the contemplation of Brahman (*dhiyālamba*, MU VII.11). In ŚA XI.2 the spirant Brahman is "as it were a great green tree, standing with its roots moistened." Cf. Mhv I.69.

[16] Cf. Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, pp. 4-6. I now render *uddesika* by "indicative" in view of the discussion by Louis de la Vallée Poussin in HJAS II (1937), 281-282. From the passage which he cites in the *Yogaśāstra* of Asaṇga it is clear that the *uddiśya* means "indicative of the Buddha"; the examples given of such indicative symbols are "stūpa, building, and ancient or modern shrine." If it was only later that *uddesika cetiya* came also to mean "Buddha image" (*tathāgata paṭimā*), this would mean that the Jātaka takes no account at all of Buddha images; alternatively, Buddha images must be held to have been deprecated with other indicative symbols as "arbitrary." The pejorative sense of *anudissati*, "points at," may be noted in D II.354. The net result, that Buddha images were either ignored, or condemned, suffices for our purposes, the demonstration of the trace of an originally aniconic attitude.

The Buddhist iconoclastic position is curiously like that of Sextus Empiricus (*Adversus dogmaticos* II.146 ff.), who distinguishes "commemorative" (*hupmnestikon*) from "indicative" (*endeiktikon*) signs and rejects the latter on the ground that the former are, or have been seen, in intimate association with the things of which they remind us, while for the latter there is no way of demonstrating that they mean what they are said to mean. One may honor the memory of the human teacher that was, but it was and still is only in the Dhamma, his doctrine, that he can really be seen; cf. the story of Vakkali's excessive attachment to the Buddha's visible form, cited in Coomaraswamy, *"Saṃvega*: Aesthetic Shock" [Chapter XII in this volume – Ed.]. At the same time, it must not be overlooked that while Sextus Empiricus is a sceptic even in the modern sense, the Buddhist is *not a* "nothing-morist."

sibility of a real localization[17] or fetishism that the advent of the image can be said to have been "postponed," and also as a matter of convenience that the image was realized when a need had been felt for it; and in the second place, that the resort to an anthropomorphic imagery by no means implies any such humanistic or naturalistic interests as those which led to the subordination of form to figure in European art after the Middle Ages, or in Greek art after the sixth century B.C. The question of localization has been fundamentally misunderstood. If it is practically true that "the omnipresent Spirit *is* where it acts or where we are *attending* to it" (Bouquet, *The Real Presence*, p. 84), it is equally true that this "where" is *wherever* there is posited a center or duly set up an image or other symbol: the symbol can even be carried about from place to place. Not that the Spirit is therefore in one place more than another or can be carried about, but that we and our supports of contemplation (*dhiyā-lamba*) are necessarily in some one place or another. If the use of the symbol is to function mediately as a bridge between the world of local position and a "world" that cannot be traversed or described in terms of size, it is sufficiently evident that the hither end of such a bridge must be somewhere, and in fact wherever our edification begins: procedure is from the known to the unknown; it is the other end of the bridge that has no position.

By fetishism we understand an attribution to the physically tangible symbol of values that really belong to its referent or, in other words, a confusion of actual with essential form. It is a fetishism of this sort that the Buddhist texts deprecate when they employ the metaphor of the finger pointing to the moon, and ridicule the man who either will not

[17] The question is one at the same time of localization and temporality. In modern Indian personal devotions it is typical to make use of an image of clay temporarily consecrated and discarded after use, when the Presence has been dismissed; in the same way the Christian church becomes the house of God specifically only after consecration and, if formally deconsecrated, can be used for any secular purpose without offense. The rite, like the temporal Nativity, is necessarily eventful; the temporal event can take place *anywhere*, just because its reference is to an intemporal omnipresence. In any case, it is not a question of contradiction as between a "God extended in space" (Bouquet, *The Real Presence*, p. 52) and a special presence at a given point in space; extension in space is already a localization in the same sense that procession is an apparent motion. Of a God "in whom we live and move and have our being" we cannot say that He is in space as we are, but much rather that He is the "space" in which we are. But all Scripture employs a language in terms of time and space, adapted to our capacity; it is not only the visual image that must be shattered if this is to be avoided. The iconoclast does not always realize all the implications of his ideal: it cannot be said of anyone who still knows who he is that all his idols have been broken.

or cannot see anything but the finger. The modern aesthetic approach makes fetishes of traditional works of art precisely in this sense. Our own attitude is indeed so naturally and obstinately fetishistic that we are shocked to find and unwilling to believe that it is taken for granted in Buddhism that "those who consider the earthen images, do not honor the clay as such, but without regard to them in this respect, honor the Immortals designated" (*amarasaṃjñā*, *Divyāvadāna*, ch. 26). Plato in the same way distinguishes "soulless images" from the "ensouled gods" that they represent; "and yet we believe that when we worship the images, the gods are kindly and well-disposed towards us" (*Laws* 931A). So in Christian practice "honor is paid, not to the colors or the art, but to the prototype" (St. Basil, *De spir. sanct.* c. 18, cited in the *Hermeneia* of Athos), and "we make images of the Holy Beings to commemorate and honor *them"* (Epiphanius, Fr. 2), cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* IV.3.11. "How bold it is to embody the bodiless! Nevertheless, the icon conducts us to the intellectual recollection of the Celestials" (*Greek Anthology* I.33).

As regards the second point, it will suffice to say that "anthropomorphic" in the sense in which this word is appropriate to Indian images does not import "naturalistic"; the Buddha image is not in any sense a portrait, but a symbol; nor indeed are there any Indian images of any deity that do not proclaim by their very constitution that "this is not the likeness of a man"; the image is devoid of any semblance of organic structure; it is not a reflection of anything that has been physically seen, but an intelligible form or formula. Even the canons of proportion differ for gods and men.[18]

Even at the present day there survives in India a widespread use of geometrical devices (*yantra*) or other aniconic symbols as the chosen supports of contemplation. If, in the last analysis, the intellectual has always preferred the use of abstract and algebraical or vegetable or theriomorphic or even natural symbols, one cannot but be reminded of the position of Dionysius, to whom it likewise appeared more fitting that divine truths should be expounded by means of images of a less rather than a more noble type in themselves (the noblest type in itself being that of humanity): "For then," as St. Thomas follows, "it is clear that

[18] The image in pigment or stone, "indicative" of the Buddha, is as much an image of (and as little in the nature of) the god "whose image it is" as is the image in flesh or in words: each is "a sensible god in the likeness of the intelligible god" (*eikōn tou noētou [theou] theos aisthētos*, Plato, *Timaeus* 92). We need not shrink from the implied identification of the *aparinibbuto* [unfinished, i. e. living –Ed. trans.] Tathāgata with *ho cosmous houtos* [this cosmos –Ed. trans.], in the sense that the universe is his *body*.

these things are not literal descriptions of divine truths, which might have been open to doubt had they been expressed under the figure of nobler bodies, especially for those who could think of nothing nobler than bodies" (*Sum. Theol.* I.1.9). What the Buddha anticipated was not that the figure in stone could ever have been worshiped literally as such, but that he might come to be thought of as a man, who denied of himself that he was "either a man, or a god, or a daimon," as one amongst others, and had not in fact "become anyone." He prognosticated precisely such a humanistic interpretation of the "life" as that which leads the modern scholar to attempt to disengage a "historical nucleus" by the elimination of all "mythical elements," and to repudiate any attribution of omniscience to him to whom the designation "Eye in the World" was appropriate. It is just those "who can think of nothing nobler than bodies"[19] who in modern times have discovered in the incarnate Deity, Christian or Buddhist, nothing but the man; and to these we can only say that this "his manhood is a hindrance so long as they cling to it with mortal pleasure" (Eckhart).

The iconolatrous position developed in India from the beginning of the Christian era onward is apparently in contradiction of that which has been inferred in the *Kālinga-bodhi Jātaka*. It is, however, the iconoclastic position, that of Strzygowski's "Mazdaean" and "Northern" art, that still determined the abstract and symbolic nature of the anthropomorphic image and can be said to account for the fact that a naturalistic development had never taken place in India until the idea of representation was borrowed from Europe in the seventeenth century. The fact that the *Śukranītisāra* condemns portraiture at the same time that it extols the making of divine images very well illustrates how the Indian consciousness has been aware of what has been called "the ignominy implicit in representational art"—an ignominy closely related to that of an obsession with the historical point of view, to which in India the mythical has always been preferred. The parallels between the Indian and Christian artistic development are so close that both can be described in the same words. If, as Benjamin Rowland justly remarks, "With the sculptures of Hadda and the contemporary

[19] A remarkable anticipation of the Renaissance point of view. "Coming events cast their *shadows* before." "Through familiarity with bodies one may very easily, though very hurtfully, come to believe that all things are corporeal" (St. Augustine, *Contra academicos* XVII.38); one may, as Plutarch said, being so preoccupied with obvious "fact" as to overlook the "reality," confuse Apollo with Helios (*Moralia* 393D, 400D, 433D), "the sun whom all men see" with "the Sun whom few know with the mind" (AV X.8.14).

decoration of the monasteries at Jaulian (Taxila), the Gandhāra school properly so-called is at an end. Counter currents of influence from the workshops of Central and Eastern India have almost transformed the Indo-Greek Buddha image into the ideal norm for the representation of Sakyamuni that prevailed at Mathura and Sarnath and Ajanta,"[20] it can only have been because a sense of the unsuitability of any would-be humanistic style had been felt; an idea of the "Buddha type" had already been formed, "but the Hellenistic ideal of representation, the engrained, debased, and commonplace naturalism of a millennium, was incapable of achieving it. Hence the excessive rarity [in India proper] of the Greek type of Christ [Buddha], and the prompt substitution of the Semitic [Indian]."[21] A further parallel can be pointed out in the effects of the European iconoclasm on the nature of Byzantine art: "The chief outcome of the controversy was the formulation of a rigid iconography, which sufficed to prevent, once and for all, any back-sliding towards meaningless naturalism. The picture, the human representation, was designed henceforth as an illustration of Reality, and as a vehicle of the deepest human emotions.... In this elevation of art to its highest function, though at the price of the artist's freedom, the iconodule defence, raised by the controversy to a high philosophical level, also played a part..." This was the chief iconodule contention: that pictures, like statues to Plotinus [IV.3.11], were an effective means of communication with the extra-terrestrial universe.[22] ... The concern of the artist was to evoke, through his pictures, not this world, but the other ... that he [the beholder] might attain, through the reminder of these events, actual communion during life on earth with that firmament of divine arbitration of which the Latin Church taught only the post-human expectation."[23] These distinctions of the Byzantine from the Roman point of view are analogous to the differences between the Mahāyāna

[20] "A Revised Chronology of Gandhāra Sculpture," *Art Bulletin*, XVIII (1936), 400.

[21] Adapted from Robert Byron and David Talbot Rice, *The Birth of Western Painting* (London, 1930), p. 56, by addition of words in brackets.

[22] "In these outlines, my son, I have drawn a likeness (*eikōn*) of God for you, as far as that is possible; and, if you gaze upon this likeness with the eyes of your heart (*kardias opthalmois*), Islamic *'ayn-i-qalbī*), then, my son, believe me, you will find the upward path; or rather, the sight itself will guide you on your way" (Hermes, *Lib.* IV.11b; cf. Hermes, *Asclepius* III.37f.).

[23] Byron and Rice, *Birth of Western Painting*, pp. 67, 78. It was, in both cases, a matter of the recognition and endorsement of an older and originally neither Christian nor Buddhist, but universally solar, iconography and symbolism, rather than one of the invention of an iconography *ad hoc*.

and Hīnayāna point of view, and between the more or less didactic art of Sāñcī and the epiphanies of Bamiyān, Ajaṇṭā, and Lung Men.

We do not know whether or not the deprecation of an "indicative" (*uddesika*) likeness which we have cited from the Jātaka is intended to refer to the old lists of *lakkhaṇas*, or thirty-two major and eighty minor iconographic peculiarities of the "Great Person." It must certainly have been in accordance with these prescriptions that a mental image of the Buddha had been entertained before any other image had been made; and equally certain that the validity of the images themselves has always been held to rest upon an accurate rendering of these peculiarities, or such of them as could be realized in any wrought material. For the Buddhist, iconography is art; that art by which he works. The iconography is at once the truth and the beauty of the work: truth, because this is the imitable form of the ideas to be expressed, and beauty because of the coincidence of beauty with accuracy, the Scholastic *integratio sive perfectio* [integrity or perfection –Ed. trans.], and in the sense in which a mathematical equation can be "elegant." As a Chinese inscription puts it, "I have sculptured a marvelous beauty … all of the iconographic peculiarities have been sublimely displayed" (Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, I.i.448). In the traditional view of art there is no beauty that can be divided from intelligibility; no splendor but the *splendor veritatis* [splendor of the true – Ed. trans].

The authenticity and legitimate heredity of Buddha images are established by reference to what are supposed to have been originals created in the Buddha's own lifetime, and either actually or virtually by the Buddha himself, in accordance with what has been said above with respect to an iconometric manifestation. The capacities of the artist exercised at empirical levels of reference have not sufficed for the dual operation of imagination and execution. The Buddha "cannot be apprehended"; what has been required is not an observation, but a vision. One is reminded of the fact that certain Christian images have been regarded in much the same way as "not made by hands" (*acheiropoietai*). It is of no importance from the present point of view that the legends of the first images cannot be interpreted as records of historical fact: what is important for us is that the authentication of the images themselves is not historical but ideal. Either the artist is transported to a heaven to take note there of the Buddha's appearance, and afterwards uses this model, or the Buddha himself projects the "shadow" or outlines of his likeness (*nimitta*), which the painters cannot grasp, but must fill in with colors,

and animate[24] by the addition of a written "word," so that all is done "as prescribed" (*yathā saṃdiṣṭam*, *Divyāvadāna*, ch. 27); or finally, the image is made by an artist who, after the work has been done, reveals himself to have been in fact the future Buddha Maitreya.[25]

Interpreted thus, the iconography can no longer be thought of as a groundless product of conventional realization or idealization, but becomes an ascertainment; the form is not of human invention, but revealed and "seen" in the same sense that the Vedic incantations are thought of as having been revealed and "heard." There can be no distinction in principle of vision from audition. And as nothing can be said to have been intelligibly uttered unless in certain terms, so nothing can be said to have been revealed unless in some form.[26] All that can be thought of as prior to formulation is without form and not in any likeness; the meaning and its vehicle can only be thought of as having been concreated. And this implies that whatever validity attaches to the meaning attaches also to the symbols in which it is expressed; if the latter are in any way less inevitable than the former, the intended meaning will not have been conveyed, but betrayed.

We need hardly add that all that is said in the preceding paragraph has to do with the art in the artist, which is already an expression in terms, or idea in an imitable form, and holds good irrespective of whether or not any mimetic word has actually been spoken aloud or any image actually made in stone or pigment; if it is not historically true that any tangible image of the Buddha had been made before the beginning

[24] We deliberately say "animate" because the inscription of an essential text (usually the formula *ye dharmā*, etc.) or the enclosure of a written text within the body of a metal or wooden image implies an eloquence, and it is far more literally than might be supposed that the words of a Chinese inscription, "the artist painted a *speaking* likeness" (Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, I, 497), are to be understood. We have to alter only very slightly the Buddha's words, "He who sees the Word, sees Me," to make them read, "He who sees my Image, hears my Word."

[25] Samuel Beal, *Hsüan-tsang, Si-yu-ki; Buddhist Records of the Western World* (London, 1884) II, 121.

[26] We must avoid an artificial distinction of "terms" from "forms." The symbol may be verbal, visual, dramatic, or even alimentary; the use of material is inevitable. It is not the kind of material that matters. It is with perfect logic that the Buddhist treats the verbal and the visual imagery alike; "How could the Luminous Personality be demonstrated otherwise than by a representation of colors and iconographic peculiarities? How could the mystery be communicated without a resort to speech and dogma?" The sculptured figures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas "furnish knowledgeable men with a means of raising themselves to the perfection of truth" (Chinese inscriptions, Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, I, 501, 393).

of the Christian era, it is equally certain that an essential image not made by hands had been conceived, and even verbally stated, in terms of the thirty-two major and eighty minor peculiarities of the "Great Person"; when the first image was to be made, there already existed the "ascertained means of operation." If, at last, the artist made a corresponding figure in stone or pigment, he was only doing what the Indian imager has always done, and in accordance with such familiar instructions as that of the *Abhilaśitārthacintāmaṇi*, where the painter is told to "Put down on the wall what has been seen in contemplation (*tad dhyātam bhittau niveśayet*)." Even for Alfred Foucher, who held that the earliest Buddha images are those of the school of Gandhāra and the product of a collaboration between the Hellenistic artist and the Indian Buddhist patron, the prescription or concept of the work to be done was Indian; the Hellenistic artist performing only the servile operation, the Indian patron remaining responsible for the free act of imagination.[27] The sculptors of Mathurā, on the other hand, had at their command not only the visual image of the "Great Person" as defined in the Pāli texts, but also the tradition of the standing types of the colossal Yakṣas of the latter centuries B. C., and for the seated figure also a tradition of which the beginning must have antedated the Śiva types of the Indus Valley culture of the third millennium B. C. The Buddha image came into being because a need had been felt for it, and not because a need had been felt for "art."

The practice of an art is not traditionally, as it is for us, a secular activity, or even a matter of affective "inspiration," but a metaphysical rite; it is not only the first images that are formally of superhuman origin. No distinction can be drawn between art and contemplation. The artist is first of all required to remove himself from human to celestial levels of apperception; at this level and in a state of unification, no longer having in view anything external to himself, he sees and realizes, that is to say becomes, what he is afterwards to represent in wrought material. This identification of the artist with the imitable form of the idea to be expressed is repeatedly insisted upon in the Indian books, and answers to the Scholastic assumption as stated in the words of Dante, "no painter

[27] We are more inclined to agree with Rowland that "the Gandhāra school came into existence only shortly before the accession of Kanishka in the second century of the Christian era" ("A Revised Chronology of Gandhāra Sculpture," p. 399), thus either making the earliest Gandhāran images and those of Mathurā almost contemporary, or giving some priority to the latter.

can paint a figure if he have not first of all made himself such as the figure ought to be."

The later artist is not, then, imitating the visual aspect or style of the first images, which he may never have seen, but their form; the authenticity of the later images does not depend upon an accidental knowledge (such as that by which our "modern Gothic" is built) but upon a return to the source in quite another sense. It is just this that is so clearly expressed in the legend of Udāyana's Buddha image, which is said to have flown through the air to Khotān (Beal, *Hsüan-tsang*, II, 322) and thus established the legitimacy of the lineage of Central Asian and Chinese iconography.[28] "Flight through the air" is always a technicality implying an independence of local position and ability to attain to whatever desired plane of apperception: a form or idea is "winged" in precisely the sense that, like the Spirit, it is wherever it operates or is entertained and cannot be a private property. What the legend tells is not that an image of stone or wood flew through the air; it tells us, nevertheless, that the Khotanese artist saw what Udāyana's artist had seen, the essential form of the first image: that same form which Udāyana's artist had seen before he returned to earth and took up the chisel or brush.

A distinction must then be very clearly drawn between an archaistic procedure, which involves no more than the servile operation of copying, and the repeated entertainment of one and the same form or idea in a manner determined by the mode or constitution of the knower, which is the free operation of the artist whose style is his own. The distinction is that of an academic from a traditional school of art, the former systematic, the latter consistent. That "Art has fixed ends and ascertained means of operation" asserts an immutability of the idea in its imitable form—that the sun, for example, is *always* an adequate symbol of the Light of lights—but is not in any way a contradiction of another Scholastic dictum, that "To be properly expressed, a thing must proceed from within, moved by its form." It is because there is an endless *renewal* of the imaginative act that the artist's interior operation is properly spoken of as "free"; and the evidence of this freedom exists in the fact of a stylistic sequence always observable in a traditional art, followed from generation to generation; it is the academician that repeats the forms of "classic" orders like a parrot. The traditional artist is always expressing, not indeed his superficial "personality," but himself, having

[28] For an image called "Udāyana's" at Lung Men, see Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, I, 392, and Paul Mus, "Le Buddha paré," BÉFEO, XXVIII (1928), 249.

made himself that which he is to express, and literally *devoting* himself to the good of the work to be done. What he has to say remains the same. But he speaks in the stylistic language of his own time, and were it otherwise would remain ineloquent, for, to repeat the words of the *Laṇkāvatāra Sūtra* already cited, "Whatever is not adapted to the such and such persons as are to be taught, cannot be called a 'teaching.'"

It is not only the artist, but also the patron who *devotes* himself, not merely by the gift of his "substance" to defray the cost of operation, but also in a ritual, symbolical, and spiritual sense, just as the Christian who is not merely a spectator of the Mass but participates in what is enacted, sacrifices himself. It is the merit of Paul Mus to have recognized for the first time that the essential values of the Vedic sacrifice are inherited and survive in the later iconolatry; the royal patron, for example, donates precisely his own weight of gold to be made into an image, which image is also made at the same time in accordance with an ascertained canon or proportion and employs as modulus a measure taken from his own person; and when the image has been made, offers to it himself and his family, afterwards to be redeemed at a great price. It is in just the same way that the statue of the patron is literally built into the Vedic altar, and that the sacrificer himself is offered up upon the altar—"That sacrificial fire knows that 'He has come to give himself to me'" (*paridāṃ me*, ŚB II.4.1.11). As Mus expresses it, "It is, in fact, well known that the construction of the fire-altar is a veiled personal sacrifice. The sacrificer *dies*, and it is only upon this condition that he reaches heaven: at the same time, this is only a temporary death, and the altar, identified with the sacrificer, is his substitute. We freely recognize an analogous significance in the identification of the king with the Buddha, and in particular in the manufacture of statues in which the fusion of the personalities is materially effected. It is less a question of apotheosis than of *devotio*. The king gives himself to the Buddha, projects his person into him, at the same time that his mortal body becomes the earthly 'trace' of its divine model.... The artistic activity of India, as we have indicated, has always exhibited the trace of the fact that the first Brahmanical work of art was an altar in which the patron, or in other words the sacrificer, was united with his deity" (Mus, "Le Buddha paré," 1929, pp. 92, 94). If the deity assumes a human form, it is in order that the man, for his part, may put on the likeness of divinity, which he does metaphysically and as if to anticipate his future glorification. The inadequacy of the worship of any principle as other than oneself or proper spiritual essence is strongly emphasized in the Upaniṣads; and it may be called an established principle of Indian thought that "Only by becoming God can one worship

Him" (*devo bhūtvā devaṃ yajet*): it is only to one who can say, "I am the Light, Thyself," that the answer is given, "Enter thou, for what thou art I am, and what I am thou art" (JUB III.14).[29] The work of art is a devotional rite.

If the original artist and patron are thus devoted to and literally absorbed in the idea of the work to be done, which the artist executes and for which the patron pays, we have also to consider the nature of the act to be performed by those others for whose sake the work has also been done, among whom may be reckoned ourselves: the donor's inscriptions almost always indicating that the work has been undertaken not only for the donor's benefit or that of his ancestors, but also for that of "all beings." This will be more than a matter of mere aesthetic appreciation: our judgment, if it is to be the "perfection of art," that is, a consummation in use, must involve a reproduction. Or to put it in other words, if it is by their ideas that we judge of what things ought to be like, this holds good as much *post factum* as *a priori*. In order to understand the work we must stand where the patron and artist stood and we must have done as they did; we cannot depend upon the mere reactions of "our own unintelligent nerve ends." The judgment of an image is a contemplation, and as such can only be consummated in an assimilation. A transformation of our nature is required. It is in the same sense that Mencius says that to grasp the true meanings of words requires not so much a dictionary or a knowledge of epistemology as a rectification of personality. The *Amitāyur-Dhyāna Sūtra* is explicit: if you ask *how* is one to behold the Buddha, the answer is that you have done so only when the thirty-two major and eighty minor characteristics (i.e., of the iconography) have been assumed in your own heart: it is your own heart that becomes the Buddha and is the Buddha (SBE, XLIX, 178). It is in the same sense that the words of an inscription at Lung Men are to be understood: "It is as if the summit of the mountain has been reached and the river traced to its source: the fruition is accomplished, and one rests upon the Principle" (Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, p. 514). The aesthetic surfaces are by no means terminal values, but an invitation to a picture of which the visible traces are only a projection, and to a mystery that evades the letter of the spoken word.

The reader may be inclined to protest that we have been speaking of religion rather than of art: we say, on the contrary, of a religious art.

[29] "If then you do not make yourself equal to God, you cannot apprehend God; for like is known by like" (Hermes, *Lib.* XI.2.20b). "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). Cf. Coomaraswamy, "The 'E' at Delphi," 1941.

One can speak of a "reduction of art to theology" (St. Bonaventura) just because in the traditional synthesis plastic art is as much as any literary form a part of the art of knowing God. The aesthetic experience empathetically realized and cognitive experience intuitively realized can be logically distinguished, but are simultaneous in the whole or holy man who does not merely feel but also understands. It is not at all that the value of beauty is minimized, but that the occasional beauty of the artifact is referred to a formal cause in which it exists more eminently; there is a transubstantiation of the image, in which there is nothing taken away from the participant, but something added.

All that has been said above applies as much to the literary narrative of the Buddha's "life" as to the iconographic representation of his "appearance"; just as the latter is not a portrait but a symbol, so the former is not a record of facts but a myth. The supernatural iconography is an integral part of the image, as are the miracles of the life; both are essential elements rather than accidental or adventitious accretions introduced for the sake of "effect."

We have no intention to explain away the miracles by a psychological analysis, any more than we propose to consider the art in its merely affective aspects. As regards the historicity of miracles, there is, of course, a fundamental divergence between the rationalist and traditional positions. The actual demonstration of a magical effect would upset the rationalist's entire philosophy: his "faith" would be destroyed if the sun should stand still at noon or a man walk on the water. For the traditionalist, on the other hand, magic is a science, but an inferior science about which he feels no curiosity; the possibility of magical procedure is taken for granted, but regarded only as illustrating, and by no means as proving, the principles on which the exercise of powers depends.

It matters very little from the present point of view which of these positions we assume. Rationalist and fundamentalist fall together into the pit of an exclusively literal interpretation. Actually to discuss the historicity or possibility of a given miracle is far beside the main point, that of significance. We can, however, illustrate by a glaring example how the rationalistic, far more than the credulous point of view, can inhibit an understanding of the true intention of the work. The *Sukhāvatī-Vyūha* speaks of Buddhas as "covering with their tongue the world in which they teach"; just as in RV VIII.72.18 Agni's tongue—the priestly *voice*—"touches heaven." What Burnouf has to say in this connection is almost unbelievable: "This is an example of the incredible stupidities that can result from an addiction to the supernatural. ... To

speak of a sticking out of the tongue, and as the climax of the ridiculous also to speak of the vast number of assistant teachers who do the like in the Buddha's presence, is a flight of the imagination scarcely to be paralleled in European superstition. It would seem as though Northern Buddhists had been punished for their taste for the marvelous by the absurdity of their own inventions."[30] *Voilà le crétinisme scientifique dans toute sa béatitude!* [Here is scientific stupidity in all its blissfulness! –Ed. trans.].[31] Contrast, however, what St. Thomas Aquinas has to say in a similar connection: "The tongue of an angel is called metaphorically the angel's power, whereby he manifests his mental concept.... The intellectual operation of an angel abstracts from *here and now*.... Hence in the angelic speech, local distance is no impediment" (*Sum. Theol.* I.107.1 and 4).

We alluded above to a "flight through the air" of Udāyana's Buddha image from India to Khotān, which image became in fact, as Chavannes observes, the prototype of many others fashioned in Central Asia. We repeat, in the first place, that the very existence of an "Udāyana's image" made in the Buddha's lifetime is of the highest improbability. In the second place, what is really meant by "aerial flight" and "disappearance"? The ordinary Sanskrit expression for "to vanish" is *antar-dhānaṃ gam*, literally to "go-interior-position." In the *Kālinga-bodhi Jātaka*, flight through the air depends upon an "investiture of the body in the garment of contemplation" (*jhāna veṭhanena*). As Mus has very aptly remarked in another connection, "Tout le miracle résulte donc d'une disposition intime" [the whole miracle results from an inner predisposition –Ed. trans.] ("Le Buddha paré," p. 435). It is not, then, a matter of physical translocation that is involved, but literally one of concentration; the attainment of a center that is omnipresent, and not a local motion. It is altogether a matter of "being in the Spirit," as this expression is used by St. Paul: that Spirit (*ātman*) of whom it is said that "seated, he fares afar, recumbent he goes everywhere" (KU II.21).[32] Of what importance

[30] *Le Lotus de la bonne loi* (Paris, 1925), p. 417.

[31] L. Zeigler, *Überlieferung* (1936), p. 183. One cannot wonder that some Indians have referred to European scholarship as a crime. At the same time, the modern Indian scholar is capable of similar banalities. We have in mind Professor K. Chaṭṭopādhyāya, who considers RV X.71.4, where it is a question both of the audition and the vision of the Voice (vāc), proof of a knowledge of writing in the Vedic period—an example of intellectual myopia at least as dense as Burnouf's.

[32] Hermes, *Lib.* XI.2.19: "All bodies are subject to movement; but that which is incorporeal is motionless, and the things situated in it have no movement.... Bid your soul travel to any land you choose, and sooner than you can bid it go, it will be there ... it has

in such a context can be a discussion of the possibility or impossibility of an actual levitation or translocation? What is implied by the designation "mover-at-will" (*kāmācārin*) is the condition of one who, being in the Spirit, no longer needs to move at all in order to be anywhere. Nor can any distinction be made between the possible intellect and the ideas it entertains *in adaequatione rei et intellectus* [in conformity of reality and the intellect –Ed. trans.]: to speak of an intellectual omnipresence is to speak of an omnipresence of the forms or ideas which have no objective existence apart from the universal intellect that entertains them. The legend does not refer to the physical transference of a material image, but to the universality of an immutable form that can be seen as well by the Khotanese as by the Indian contemplative; where the historian of art would see what is called the "influence" of Indian on Central Asian art, the legend asserts an independent imagination of the same form. It will be seen that we have not had in view to explain away the miracle, but to point out that the marvel is one of interior disposition, and that the power of aerial flight is nothing like an airplane's, but has to do with the extension of consciousness to other than physical levels of reference and, in fact, to the "summit of contingent being."[33]

Consider another case, that of "walking on the water,"[34] a power attributed to some, alike in the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Taoist, and very likely many other traditions. We do infer that such a thing can be done, but are not at all curious as to whether it was or was not done upon a given occasion; that we leave to those who suppose that the Vedic Bhujyu was actually picked up from the physical ocean by a passing "tramp." The matter of interest is one of significance. What does it mean that this power has been universally attributed to the deity or

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not moved as one moves from place to place, but it *is* there. Bid it fly up to heaven, and it will have no need of wings." RV VI.9.5: "Mind (*manas*, *Gr. nous*) is the swiftest of birds"; PB XIV.1.13: "The Comprehensor is winged (*yo vai vidvāṇsas te pakṣiṇaḥ*)."

[33] For man is a being of divine nature ... and what is more than all besides, he mounts to heaven without quitting the earth; to so vast a distance can he put forth his power" (Hermes, *Lib.* X.24b).

[34] For the history of the symbol see W. Norman Brown, *Indian and Christian Miracles of Walking on the Water* (Chicago, 1928), and Arthur Waley, *The Way and Its Power* (London, 1934), p. 118. The form of the Hermetic statements, "But from the Light there came forth a holy Word (*logos* = *śabda brahman*, *uktha*) which took its stand upon the watery substance ... [earth and water] were kept in motion, by reason of the spiritual (*pneumatikos* = *ātmanvat*) Word which moved upon the face of the water" (Hermes, *Lib.* I.8b, 5b), although perhaps dependent on Genesis, is especially significant in its use of the expression "took its stand"; cf. *adhitiṣṭhati*, as predicated of the *ātman* in the Upaniṣads, *passim*.

others in his likeness? To speak of a motion at will on the face of the waters is to speak of a being all in act, that is, to speak of the operation of a principle wherein all potentiality of manifestation has been reduced to act. In all traditions "the waters" stand for universal possibility.

The direct connection between the symbolic myth and mythical symbol can nowhere be illustrated better than in this context. For if the Buddha is invariably represented iconographically as supported by a lotus, his feet never touching any physical or local earth, it is because it is the idiosyncrasy of the lotus flower or leaf to be at rest upon the waters; the flower or leaf is universally, and not in any local sense, a ground on which the Buddha's feet are firmly planted. In other words, all cosmic, and not merely some or all terrestrial, possibilities are at his command. The ultimate support of the lotus can also be represented as a stem identical with the axis of the universe, rooted in a universal depth and inflorescent at all levels of reference, and if in Brahmanical art this stem springs from the navel of Nārāyaṇa, the central ground of the Godhead recumbent on the face of the waters, and bears in its flower the figure of Brahmā (with whom the Buddha is virtually identified), the universality of this symbolism is sufficiently evident in the Stem of Jesse and in the symbolic representation of the Christian Theotokos by the rose. The expression *rose des vents*, a compass card, and Dante's "quant' è la larghezza di questa rosa nell' estreme foglie" [how great must be this Rose's width in its remotest petals -C. Langdon trans. - Ed.] (*Paradiso* XXX.116-117) illustrate the correspondence of rose and lotus in their spatial aspects: cf. MU VI.2, where the petals of the lotus are the points of the compass: directions, that is, of indefinite extension. We need hardly say that the universality and consistent precision of an adequate symbolism do not preclude an adaptability to local conditions and do not depend on the identification of botanical species.[35]

Now this significance of the lotus to which we have referred is inseparably bound up with the problem of Buddhist representation in plastic art. If we take the mythical symbol literally, as the modern Indian artist has sometimes done, we get a picture of what is no longer formally but figuratively a man supported by what is no longer a ground in principle but by what A. Foucher calls "the frail cup of a flower"

[35] For a fuller discussion of the lotus, see Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, 1935. Cf. the Egyptian representations of Horus on the lotus, of which Plutarch says that "they do not believe that the sun rises as a new-born babe from the lotus, but they portray the rising of the sun in this manner to show darkly (*ainittomenoi*) that his birth is a kindling (*anapsis*) from the waters" (*Moralia* 355C), even as Agni is born.

(in "On the Iconography of the Buddha's Nativity," *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, 1934, p. 13); the picture is reduced to absurdity, and we expect the "man" to fall into the "water" at any moment. The correspondence of the aesthetic surfaces to the picture not in the colors has been destroyed; the picture is no longer beautiful, however skillfully executed, precisely because it has been robbed of meaning. It is a case in point of the principle that beauty cannot be divided from truth, but is an aspect of truth.

It has been a fundamental error of modern interpretation to have thought of Buddhist symbolism both as *sui generis* and as conventional, in the sense that Esperanto can be called a conventional language. That is what symbols seem to *us* to be, who are accustomed to the "symbolism," or rather "expressionism," of poets and artists who speak individually in terms of their own choice, which terms are often obscure but are nevertheless sometimes taken over into current usage. It is from these points of view that Foucher can think that he is "able to observe retrospectively the old image-maker's increasingly bold attempts," and opines that elephants "naturally came to take their stand on lotuses ... a kind of specific detail subsequently added ... the superstition of precedent alone prevented them from going further" (*ibid.*). Had he remembered that the Vedic Agni is born in and supported by a lotus, he would surely have asked, "How could man have imagined that a fire could have been kindled on the frail cup of a flower in the midst of the waters?" He does protest, in fact, that "Had not the lotus filled from the beginning all the available space, no one would ever have dreamt of using the frail cup of a flower as a support for an adult human being" (*Ibid.*).[36]

This is to remove the symbols altogether from their traditional context and values and to see in an art of ideas merely an idealizing art. The modern view of symbols is, in fact, bound up with the modern theory of a "natural religion," invoked by some in explanation of the "evolution" of all religions and by others in explanation of all but the Christian religion. But from the point of view of the tradition itself, Brahmanism

[36] That "the lotus filled from the beginning all the available space" is for Foucher merely a fact of iconography and in this sense a "superstitious precedent." The words are true, however, in this far deeper and more original sense—that *in the beginning there was no other space*, and as it was in the beginning it is now and ever shall be because the lotus is the symbol and image of all spatial extension, as stated explicitly in MU VI.2, "What is the lotus and of what sort? What this lotus is is Space, forsooth; the four quarters and four inter-quarters are its constituent petals." The "precedent" is primarily metaphysical and cosmic, and *therefore also* iconographic.

is a revealed religion, that is to say, a doctrine of supernatural origin; a revelation, then, in terms of an adequate symbolism, whether verbal or visual, in the same sense that Plato speaks of the first Denominator as a "more than human Power" and of the names given in the beginning as necessarily "true names." Whatever we think of this,[37] the fact remains that symbolism is of an immemorial antiquity, an antiquity as great as that of "folklore" itself; many of the Vedic symbols, that of the tracking of the Hidden Light by its footprints, for example, imply a hunting culture antecedent to the beginning of agriculture. The commonest word for "Way," Skr. *mārga*, Pāli Buddhist *magga*, derives from a root *mṛg* "to hunt," and implies a "following in the tracks of." In any case, the Indus Valley peoples, three thousand years B. C., already made use of "symbols, such as the *svastika*, that India has never relinquished. Dare we think that the spirituality of Indian art is as ancient as the Indus civilization? If so, we may never hope to penetrate the secret of its origin" (W. Norman Brown, in *Asia*. May 1937. p. 385).

Symbolism is a language and a precise form of thought; a hieratic and a metaphysical language and not a language determined by somatic or psychological categories. Its foundation is in the analogical correspondence of all orders of reality and states of being or levels of reference; it is because "This world is in the image of that, and vice versa" (AB VIII.2, and KU IV.10) that it can be said *Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei.* [The heavens declare the glory of God. Psalm 19, King James version - Ed.]

The nature of an adequate symbolism could hardly be better stated than in the words "the parabolical (Skr. *parōkṣa*) sense is contained in the literal (Skr. *pratyakṣa*)." On the other hand, "The sensible forms, in which there was at first a polar balance of physical and metaphysical, have been more and more voided of content on their way down to us: so we say, This is an 'ornament'" (W. Andrae, *Die ionische Säule*, Berlin, 1933, p. 65). It becomes, then, a question of the restoration of signifi-

[37] The notions of a "revelation" and Philosophia Perennis (Augustine's "Wisdom uncreate, the same now as it ever was, and the same to be for evermore," *Confessions* IX.10) are, of course, anathema to the modern scholar. He prefers to say that the Vedic hymns "contain the rudiments of a far higher species of thought than these early poets could have dreamt of... thought which has become final for all time in India, and even outside of India" (Maurice Bloomfield, *The Religion of the Veda*, New York, 1908, p. 63). It is true that the writer has here in mind an evolution of thought, but just how *does* the Vedic poet formulate "a far higher species of thought than he could have dreamt of"? It is as much as to say that man accomplished what man cannot do. But it is rather unlikely that Bloomfield really meant to support a doctrine of verbal inspiration.

cance to forms that we have come to think of as merely ornamental. We cannot take up here the problems of symbolic methodology, except to say that what we have most to avoid is a subjective interpretation, and most to desire is a subjective realization. For the meanings of symbols we must rely on the explicit statements of authoritative texts, on comparative usage, and on that of those who still employ the traditional symbols as the customary form of their thought and daily conversation.[38]

Our present concern is not, however, so much with the methodology of symbolic exegesis as with the general nature of a typically symbolic art. We have spoken above of a transubstantiation, and the word has also been properly used by Stella Kramrisch in speaking of art of the Gupta period and that of Ajaṇṭā in particular, with reference to the coincidence in it of sensuous and spiritual values. Our primary error when we consider the Eucharist is to suppose that the notion of a transubstantiation represents any but a normally human point of view. To say that this is not merely bread but also and more eminently the body of God is the same as to say that a word is not merely a sound but also and more eminently a meaning: it is with perfect consistence that a sentimental and materialistic generation not only ridicules the Eucharistic transubstantiation, but also insists that the whole of any work of art subsists in its aesthetic surfaces, poetry consisting, for example, in a conjunction of pleasurable or interesting sounds rather than in a logically ordered sequence of sounds with meanings.[39] It is from the same point of view that man is interpreted only as a psychophysical being, and not as a divine image, and for the same reason that we laugh at the "divinity of kings." That we no longer admit an argument by analogy does not represent an intellectual progress; we have merely lost the art of analogical procedure or, in other words, ritual procedure. Symbolism[40] is a calculus in the same sense that an adequate analogy is proof.

In the Eucharistic sacrament, whether Christian, Mexican, or Hindu, bread and wine are "charged with meaning" (Bouquet, *The Real Presence*, p. 77): God is a meaning. The Vedic incantation (*brahman*) is physically a sound but superaudibly *the* Brahman. To the "primitive" man, first and foremost a metaphysician and only later on a philosopher and psychologist, to this man who, like the angels, had fewer ideas

[38] See Coomaraswamy, "The Rape of a Nagi: An Indian Gupta Seal," 1937.

[39] Sentimentality and materialism, if not in every respect synonymous, coincide in the subject. Man in search of spirit has become Jung's "modern man in search of a soul" who discovers ... spiritualism and psychology.

[40] Webster, "any process of reasoning by means of symbols."

and used less means than we, it had been inconceivable that anything, whether natural or artificial, could have a use or value only and not also a meaning; this man literally could not have understood our distinction of sacred from profane or of spiritual from material values; he did not live by bread alone. It had not occurred to him that there could be such a thing as an industry without art, or the practice of any art that was not at the same time a rite, a going on with what had been done by God in the beginning. *Per contra*, the modern man is a disintegrated personality, no longer the child of heaven and earth, but altogether of the earth. It is this that makes it so difficult for us to enter into the spirit of Christian, Hindu or Buddhist art in which the values taken for granted are spiritual and only the means are physical and psychological. The whole purpose of the ritual is to effect a translation, not only of the object, but of the man himself to another and no longer peripheral but central level of reference. Let us consider a very simple case, in which, however, our fictitious distinctions of barbarism from civilization must be discarded. That neolithic man already called his celts and arrowheads "thunderbolts" is preserved in the memory of the folk throughout the world. When Śaṇkarācarya exclaimed, "I have learnt concentration from the maker of arrows," he may well have meant more than to say, "I have learnt from the sight of this man, so completely forgetful of himself in his concern for the good of the work to be done, what it means to 'make the mind one-pointed.'" He may also have had in mind what the initiated artisan and initiated archer[41] had been made aware of in the Lesser Mysteries, that an arrow made by hands is transubstantially the point of that bolt with which the Solar Hero and Sun of Men first smote the Dragon and pillared apart heaven and earth, creating an environment and dispelling the darkness literally with a *shaft* of light. Not that anybody need have thought that the man-made object had actually "fallen from heaven," but that the "arrow feathered with the solar eagle's feathers and sharpened by incantations" had been made to be not merely a thing of wood and iron, but at the same time, metaphysically, of another sort.[42] It is in the same way that the warrior, also an initiate, conceived himself to be not merely a man, but also in the image of the wielder of the bolt, the Thundersmiter himself. In the same way, the Crusader's sword was not merely a piece of iron or steel, but also a shard detached from the Cross

[41] See Coomaraswamy, "The Symbolism of Archery," 1943. It is said that the last company of French archers was dissolved by Clemenceau, who objected to their possession of a "secret."

[42] For the cult and transubstantiation of weapons, cf. RV VI.47 and 75, and ŚB I.2.4.

of Light; and for him, *in hoc signo vinces* [in this sign you will conquer -Ed. trans.] had neither exclusively a practical nor only a "magical" value; actually to strike the heathen foeman and to bring light into darkness were of the essence of a single act. It belonged to the secret of Chivalry, Asiatic and European, to realize oneself as—that is, metaphysically, to *be*—a kinsman of the Sun, a rider on a winged stallion or in a chariot of fire, and girded with very lightning. This was an imitation of God in the likeness of a "mighty man of war."

We could have illustrated the same principles in connection with any of the other arts than that of war; those, for example, of carpentry or weaving, agriculture, hunting, or medicine, or even in connection with such games as checkers—where the pawn that reaches the "farther shore" becomes a crowned king and is significantly called to this day in the Indian vernacular a "mover-at-will" (*kāmācārin*, already in the Upaniṣads the technical designation of the liberated man in whom the spiritual rebirth has been accomplished). The same holds good for all the activities of life, interpreted as a ritual performed in imitation of what was done in the beginning. This point of view in connection with sexual acts, sacrificially interpreted in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, is, for example, essential to any understanding of the Tantric and Lamaistic Buddhist iconographies, or equally of the Krishna myths and their representation in art; the point of view survives in our own expression, "the sacrament of marriage." The bivalence of an image that has been ritually quickened by the invocation of Deity and by the "Gift of Eyes" is of the same kind. In the same way relics are deposited in a stūpa and called its "life" (*jīvita*); the stūpa being, like the Christian altar and church, at once an embodiment and the tomb of the dying God. A formal presence of the altogether despirated Buddha, *Deus absconditus*, is thus provided for on earth: the veritable tomb in which the Buddha, himself a Nāga,[43] really lives, is *ab intra*, and guarded by Nāgas; the cult establishes a link between the outward facts and inward reality for the sake of those who are not yet "dead and buried in the Godhead." We indeed speak, although only rhetorically, of the "life" of a work of art; but this is only a

[43] The Buddha is sometimes referred to as a Nāga. In M I.32, the *arhats* Mogallāna and Sāriputra are called "a pair of Great Serpents" (*mahānāgā*); at I.144-145, the Nāga found at the bottom of an ant hill (considered as if a *stūpa*) is called a "signification of the monk in whom the foul issues have been eradicated"; in Sn 522, "Nāga" is defined as one "who does not cling to anything and is released" (*sabatta na sajjati vimutto*). Parallels abound on Greek soil, where the dead and deified hero is constantly represented as a snake within a conical tomb, and the chthonic aspect of Zeus Meilichios is similarly ophidian.

folk memory and literally a "superstition" of what was once a deliberate animation metaphysically realized.

From the traditional point of view, the world itself, together with all things done or made in a manner conformable to the cosmic pattern, is a theophany: a valid source of information because itself in-formed. Only those things are ugly and ineloquent which are informal or deformed (*apratirūpa*). Transubstantiation is the rule: symbols, images, myths, relics, and masks are all alike perceptible to sense, but also intelligible when "taken out of their sense." In the dogmatic language of revelation and of ritual procedure this general language is reduced to a formulated science for the purposes of communication and transmission. It is more necessary that the doctrine should be transmitted forever, for the sake of those that have ears to hear—"such souls as are of strength to see"—than possible that everyone who plays a part in the transmission should also be a Comprehensor; and hence there is an adaptation in terms of folklore and fairy tale for popular transmission as well as a formulation in hieratic languages for sacerdotal transmission, and finally also an initiatory transmission in the Mysteries. It is equally true with respect to all of these transmissions that "Whereas in every other science things are signified by words, this science has the property, that the things signified by words have themselves also a signification.... The parabolical sense is contained in the literal" (*Sum. Theol.* I.1.10); that "Scripture, in one and the same sentence, while it describes a fact, reveals a mystery" (St. Gregory, *Moralia* XX.1, in Migne, *Series latina*).

It is only in this way that the formality of the whole of traditional art and ritual, Christian, Buddhist, or other, can and must be understood; all of this art has been an applied art, never an art for art's sake; the values of use and meaning are prior to those of ornament. Aesthetic virtues, adequate relations of masses, and so forth, survive in the "art forms" even when their meaning has been forgotten; the "literary" values of Scripture and the "musical" values of liturgy hold, for example, even for the "nothing-morist" (Skr. *nāstika*).[44] No doubt, our "feelings" about works of art can be psychologically or even chemically explained, and

[44] *Nāstika*, one "who thinks 'there is naught beyond this world' *ayaṃ loko nāsti para iti mānī*." (KU II.6), not realizing that "there is not only this much, but another than this *aitāvad enā anyad asti*" (RV X.31.8). If Buddhists themselves have sometimes been regarded as *nāstikas*, this has been because *anattā* has been misunderstood to mean "there is no Spirit"; the true Buddhist position is that it is only of "what is not the Spirit (*anattā; na me so attā*)," only of "life under these conditions," that it can be said that "there is [for the *arahant*] now no more (*nāparam*)," (S III.118). Cf. "Natthika," in "Some Pāli Words."

those who wish may rest content with knowing what they like and how they like it. But the serious student of the history of art, whose business is to explain the genesis of forms and to judge of achievements without respect to preferences of his own, must also know what the artist was trying to do or, in other words, what the patron wanted.

We may have to admit that it is beyond the competence of the rationalist, as such, to understand Buddhist art. On the other hand, we are far from maintaining that in order to understand one must be a Buddhist in any specific sense; there are plenty of professing Buddhists and professing Christians who have not the least idea what Buddhist or Christian art is all about. What we mean is that in order to understand one must be not merely a sensitive man, but also a spiritual man; and not merely a spiritual, but also a sensitive man. One must have learned that an access to reality cannot be had by making a choice between matter and spirit considered as things unlike in all respects, but rather by seeing in things material and sensible a formal likeness to spiritual prototypes of which the senses can give no direct report.[45] It is not a question of religion versus science, but of a reality on different levels of reference, or better, perhaps, of different orders of reality, not mutually exclusive.

[45] The nature and use of "images" as supports of contemplation is nowhere more briefly or better stated than in *Republic* 510DE ("he who uses the visible forms and talks about them is not really thinking of them, but of those things of which they are the image"), a passage which may have been the source of St. Basil's well-known formula that "the respect that is paid to the image passes over to its archetype" (*De spiritu sancto* [Migne, *Series graeca*, Vol. 32], C. 18; cf. Epiphanius, Fr. 2).

CHAPTER XII

Saṃvega: Aesthetic Shock

The Pāli word *saṃvega* is often used to denote the shock or wonder that may be felt when the perception of a work of art becomes a serious experience. In other contexts the root *vij*, with or without the intensive prefix *sam*, or other prefixes such as *pra*, "forth," implies a swift recoil from or trembling at something feared. For example, the rivers freed from the Dragon, "rush forth" (*pra vivijre,* RV X.111.9), Tvaṣṭṛ "quakes" (*vevijyate*) at Indra's wrath (RV I.80.14), men "tremble" (*saṃvijante*) at the roar of a lion (AV VIII.7.15), birds "are in tremor" at the sight of a falcon (AV V.21.6); a woman "trembles" (*saṃvijjati*) and shows agitation (*saṃvegam āpajjati*) at the sight of her father-in-law, and so does a monk who forgets the Buddha (M I.186); a good horse aware of the whip is "inflamed and agitated" (*ātāpino saṃvegino*, Dh 144); and as a horse is "cut" by the lash, so may the good man be "troubled" (*saṃvijjati*) and show agitation (*saṃvega*) at the sight of sickness or death, "because of which agitation he pays close heed, and both physically verifies the ultimate truth (*parama-saccam*, the 'moral')[1] and presciently penetrates it" (A II.116). "I will proclaim," the Buddha says, "the cause of my dismay (*saṃvegam*), wherefore I trembled (*saṃvijitaṃ mayā*): it was when I saw peoples floundering like fish when ponds dry up, when I beheld man's strife with man, that I felt fear" (or "horror"), and so it went "until I saw the evil barb that festers in men's hearts" (Sn 935–938).[2]

The emotional stimulus of painful themes may be evoked deliberately when the will or mind (*citta*) is sluggish, "then he stirs it up (*saṃvejeti*) by a consideration of the Eight Emotional Themes" (*aṭṭha-saṃvega-vatthūni*) (birth, old age, sickness, death, and sufferings arising in four other ways); in the resulting state of distress, he then "gladdens[3]

[1] The ultimate significance (*paramārtha-satyam*) as distinguished (*viññātam*) from the mere facts in which it is exemplified (see PB X.12.5, XIX.6.1; and CU VII.16.17 with Śaṇkarācārya's commentary).

[2] We also feel the horror; but do *we* see the barb when we consider Picasso's *Guernica*, or have we "desired peace, but not the things that make for peace"? For the most part, our "aesthetic" approach stands between us and the content of the work of art, of which only the surface interests us.

[3] A learned preacher's discourse is said to convince (*samādapeti*), inflame (*samuttejeti*)

(or thrills, *sampahaṇseti*, Skr. *hṛṣ*, 'rejoice' etc.) it by the recollection of the Buddha, the Eternal Law, and the Communion of Monks, when it is in need of such gladdening" (Vis 135). A poignant realization of the transience of natural beauty may have the same effect: in the *Yuvañjaya Jātaka*, the Crown Prince (*uparājā*) "one day early in the morning mounted his splendid chariot and went out in all his great splendor to disport himself in the park. He saw on the treetops, the tips of the grasses, the ends of the branches, on every spider's web and thread, and on the points of the rushes, dewdrops hanging like so many strings of pearls." He learns from his charioteer that that is what men call "dew." When he returns in the evening the dew has vanished. The charioteer tells him that that is what happens when the sun rises. When the Prince hears this, he is "deeply moved" (*saṃvegappatto hutvā*), and he realizes that "the living constitution of such as we are is just like these drops of dew;[4] I must be rid of disease, old age and death; I must take leave of my parents, and turn to the life of a wandering monk." And so it was that "using as support of contemplation simply a dewdrop (*ussāvabindum eva ārammaṇaṃ katvā*) he realized that the Three Modes of Becoming (Conative, Formal, and Informal) are so many blazing fires.... Even as the dewdrop on blades of grass when the sun gets up, such is the life of men" (J IV.120-122).

Here it is a thing lovely in itself that provides the initial stimulus to reflection, but it is not so much the beautiful thing as it is the perception of its evanescence that induces recollection. On the other hand, the "shock" or "thrill" need not involve a recoil, but may be one of supersensual delight. For example, the cultivation of the Seven Factors of Awakening (to Truth), accompanied by the notion of the Arrest (of the vicious causes of all pathological conditions), of which the seventh is an Impartiality (*upekhā*)[5] that issues in Deliverance (*vossagga* = *avasarga*), "conduces to great profit, great ease, a great thrill (*mahā saṃvega*) and great glee" (S V.134).

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and gladden (*sampahaṇseti*) the congregation of monks (S II.280). *Saṃvega* is the distressful emotion at failure to attain *upekhā*, M I.186; *dhamma-saṃvegam is* "thrilled with righteous awe," *Therīgāthā* 211.

[4] The dewdrop is here, as are other symbols elsewhere, a "support of contemplation" (*dhiyālamba*). The whole passage, with its keen perception of natural beauty and of its lesson, anticipates the point of view that is characteristic for Zen Buddhism. For the comparison of life to a dewdrop (*ussāva-bindu*), cf. A IV.136-137.

[5] The *upekkhaka* (*upa* + √*īkṣ*) corresponds to the *prekṣaka* (*pra* + √*īkṣ*) of MU II.7, i.e., the divine and impartial "looker on" at the drama of which all the world, our "selves" included, is the stage.

In it there is "much radical intellection, leading to the full-awakening aspect of delight" (*pīti*) or "contentment (*tuṭṭhi*) with the flavor (*rasa*) of the chosen support of contemplation that has been grasped"; body and mind are flooded or suffused; but this joyous emotion, aftereffect of the shock, is a disturbance proper only to the earlier phases of contemplation, and is superseded by equanimity (Vis 135-145).

We are told that Brother Vakkali spent his days in gazing at the beauty of the Buddha's person. The Buddha, however, would have him understand that not he who sees his body, sees himself, but "only he who sees the Dhamma, sees Me"; he realizes that Vakkali will never wake up (*na ... bujjhissati*) unless he gets a shock (*saṃvegan ālabhitva*); and so forbids Vakkali to follow him. Vakkali seeks to throw himself down from a mountain peak. To prevent this, the Buddha appears to him in a vision, saying, "Fear not, but come (*ehi*), and I shall lift you up." At this, Vakkali is filled with delight (*pīti*); to reach the Master, he springs into the air[6] and, pondering as he goes, he "discards the joyful emotion" and attains the final goal of Arahatta before he descends to earth at the Buddha's feet (DhA IV.118f.). It will be seen that the transition from shock (that of the ban) to delight (that of the vision), and from delight to understanding, is clearly presented. Vakkali, at last, is no longer "attached" to the visual and more or less "idolatrous" experience; the aesthetic support of contemplation is not an end in itself, but only an index, and becomes a snare if misused.[7]

[6] On levitation (lightness), see Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, 1943, n. 269, to which much might be added. Other cases of levitation occasioned by delight in the Buddha as support of contemplation occur in Vis 143-144; the same experience enables the experient to walk on the water (J II.111). A related association of ideas leads us to speak of being "carried away" or "transported" by joy. In Matthew 14:27-28, the words "Be not afraid ... Come" are identical with the Pali *ehi, mā bhayi* in the DhA context.

[7] "O take heed, lest thou misconceive me in human shape" (Rūmī, *Dīvān*, Ode XXV). Similarly, Meister Eckhart, "To them his [Christ's] manhood is a hindrance so long as they still cling to it with mortal pleasure"; and "That man never gets to the underlying truth who stops at the enjoyment of its symbol" (Evans ed., I, 186,187; cf. p. 194), and St. Augustine, "it seems that the disciples were engrossed by the human form of the Lord Christ, and as men were held to the man by a human affection. But he wished them to have a divine affection, and thus to make them, from being carnal, spiritual.... Therefore he said to them, I send you a gift by which you will be made spiritual, namely, the gift of the Holy Ghost.... You will indeed cease from being carnal, if the form of the flesh be removed from your eyes, so that the form of God may be implanted in your hearts" (*Sermo* CCLXX.2). The "form" of the Buddha that he wished Vakkali to see, rather than that of the flesh, was, of course, that of the Dhamma, "which he who sees, sees Me" (S III.120). St. Augustine's words parallel those of the *Prema Sāgara*, chs. 48 and 49, where Śrī Krishna, having departed, sends Udho with the message to the milkmaids at

So far, then, *saṃvega* is a state of shock, agitation, fear, awe, wonder, or delight induced by some physically or mentally poignant experience. It is a state of feeling, but always more than a merely physical reaction. The "shock" is essentially one of the realization of the implications of what are strictly speaking only the aesthetic surfaces of phenomena that may be liked or disliked as such. The complete experience transcends this condition of "irritability."

It will not, then, surprise us to find that it is not only in connection with natural objects (such as the dewdrop) or events (such as death) but also in connection with works of art, and in fact whenever or wherever perception (*aisthēsis*) leads to a serious experience, that we are really shaken. So we read that "the man of learning (*paṇḍito* = *doctor*) cannot but be deeply stirred (*saṃvijjetheva*, i.e., *saṃvegaṃ kareyya*) by stirring situations (*saṃvejanīyesu ṭhānesu*). So may an ardent master monk, putting all things to the test of prescience, living the life of peace, and not puffed up, but one whose will has been given its quietus, attain to the wearing out of Ill": there are, in fact, two things that conduce to a monk's well-being, contentment, and spiritual continence, viz. his radical premise, and "the thrill that should be felt in thrilling situations" (Itiv 30). We see from this text (and from S V.134, cited above) that the "thrill" (*saṃvega*), experienced under suitable conditions, if it can still in some sense be thought of as an emotion, is by no means merely an interested aesthetic response, but much rather what we so awkwardly term the delight of a "disinterested aesthetic contemplation"—a contradiction in terms, but "you know what I mean."

Now there are, in particular, "four sightly places whereat the believing clansman should be deeply moved (*cattāri kula-puttassa dassanīyāni saṃvejanīyāni ṭhānāni*); they are those four in which the layman can say 'here the Buddha was born!' 'here he attained to the Total Awakening, and was altogether the Wake!' 'here did he first set agoing the incomparable Wheel of the Law!' and 'here was he despirated, with the despiration (*nibbāna*) that leaves no residuum (of occasion of becoming)!' ... And there will come to these places believers, monks and sisters, and layfolk, men and women, and so say ... and those of these who die in the course of their pilgrimage to such monuments (*cetiya*), in serenity of will (*pasanna-cittā*) will be regenerated after death in the happy heaven-world" (D II.141, 142, cf. A I.136, II.120).

Brindāban that they are no longer to think of him as a man, but as God, ever immanently present in themselves, and never absent.

As the words *dassanīya* (*darśaṅīya*), "sightly," "sight-worthy," commonly applied to visible works of art (as *śravaṇīya*, "worth hearing" is said of audible works), and *cetiya*,[8] "monument," imply, and as we also know from abundant literary and archaeological evidence, these four sacred places or stations were marked by monuments, e.g., the still extant Wheel of the Law set up on a pillar in the Deer Park at Benares on the site of the first preaching. Furthermore, as we also know, these pilgrim stations could be substituted by similar monuments set up elsewhere, or even constructed on such a small scale as to be kept in a private chapel or carried about, to be similarly used as supports of contemplation. The net result is, then, that icons (whether "aniconic," as at first, or "anthropomorphic," somewhat later), serving as reminders of the great moments of the Buddha's life and participating in his essence, are to be regarded as "stations," at the sight of which a "shock" or "thrill" may and should be experienced by monk or layman.

Saṃvega, then, refers to the experience that may be felt in the presence of a work of art when we are struck by it, as a horse may be struck by a whip. It is, however, assumed that, like the good horse, we are more or less trained, and hence that more than a merely physical shock is involved; the blow has a *meaning* for us, and the realization of that meaning, in which nothing of the physical sensation survives, is still a part of the shock. These two phases of the shock are, indeed, normally felt together as parts of an instant experience; but they can be logically distinguished, and since there is nothing peculiarly artistic in the mere sensibility that all men and animals share, it is with the latter aspect of the shock that we are chiefly concerned. In either phase, the external signs of the experience may be emotional, but while the signs may be alike, the conditions they express are unlike. In the first phase, there is really a disturbance, in the second there is the experience of a peace that cannot be described as an emotion in the sense that fear and love or hate are emotions. It is for this reason that Indian rhetoricians have always hesitated to reckon "Peace" (*śānti*) as a "flavor" (*rasa*) in one category with the other "flavors."

In the deepest experience that can be induced by a work of art (or other reminder), our very being is shaken (*saṃvijita*) to its roots. The "Tasting of the Flavor" that is no longer any one flavor is, as the *Sāhitya Darpaṇa* puts it, "the very twin brother of the tasting of God";

[8] On the different kinds *of cetiya,* and their function as substitutes for the visible presence of the *Deus absconditus,* see the *Kālinga-bodhi Jātaka* (J IV.228) and Coomaraswamy, "The Nature of Buddhist Art" [Chapter XI in this volume – Ed.].

it involves, as the word "disinterested" implies, a self-naughting—a *semetipsa liquescere*—and it is for this reason that it can be described as "dreadful," even though we could not wish to avoid it. For example, it is of this experience that Eric Gill writes that "At the first impact I was so moved by the [Gregorian] chant ... as to be almost frightened.... This was something alive ... I knew infallibly that God existed and was a living God" (*Autobiography*, London, 1940, p. 187). I have myself been completely dissolved and broken up by the same music, and had the same experience when reading aloud Plato's *Phaedo*. That cannot have been an "aesthetic" emotion, such as could have been felt in the presence of some insignificant work of art, but represents the shock of conviction that only an intellectual art can deliver, the body blow that is delivered by any perfect and therefore convincing statement of truth. On the other hand, realism in religious art is only disgusting and not at all moving, and what is commonly called pathos in art generally makes one laugh. The point is that a liability to be overcome by the truth has nothing to do with sentimentality; it is well known that the mathematician can be overcome in this way, when he finds a perfect expression that subsumes innumerable separate observations. But this shock can be felt only if we have learned to recognize truth when we see it. Consider, for example, Plotinus' overwhelming words, "Do you mean to say that they have seen God and do not remember him? Ah no, it is that they see him now and always. *Memory* is for those who have forgotten" (Plotinus, IV.4.6). To feel the full force of this "thunderbolt" (*vajra*)[9] one must have had at least an inkling of what is involved in the Platonic and Indian doctrine of Recollection.[10] In the question, "did He who made the lamb make thee?" there is an incomparably harder blow than there is in "only God can make a tree," which could as well have been said of a flea or a cutworm. With Socrates, "we cannot give the name of 'art' to anything irrational" (*Gorgias* 465A); nor with the Buddhist think of any but significant works of art as "stations where the shock of awe should be felt."

[9] "The 'thunderbolt' is a hard saying that hits you in the eye (*vajraṃ pratyakṣaniṣṭhuram*)," *Daśarūpa* I.64; cf. Plutarch, *Pericles* 8, *keraunon en glōssē pherein* [to bear a thunderbolt on the tongue –Ed. trans.], and St. Augustine's "O axe, hewing the rock!"

[10] Cf. *Meno* 81C and *Phaedrus* 248C; CU VII.26.1 (*ātmanaḥ smarah*); also Coomaraswamy, "Recollection, Indian and Platonic" 1944. "Not all who perceive with the eyes the sensible products of art are affected alike by the same object, but if they know it for the outward portrayal of an archetype subsisting in intuition, *their hearts are shaken* (*thorubountai*, literally 'are troubled') and they recapture memory of that Original ..." Plotinus, II.9.16.

CHAPTER XIII

An Early Passage On Indian Painting

The Universe is the product of Thought, or Creative Imagination. "From yonder Ether only He, Brahma, awakens This, the measure of (His) thinking (*cetā-mātram*)…the confluence is just a thought" (*cittam eva hi saṃsāram*,[1] MU VI. 17 and 34.3). In other words, its reality, to be distinguished from its appearance, is that of "the world-picture (*jagac-citra*) painted by the Supreme Self or Spirit (*paramātman*) on the canvas of Itself, in the sight of which it takes a great delight" Śaṇkarācārya, *Svātma nirūpāṇa*, 95). This "delight" is, indeed, implied by the word *cittam* itself, which, like *manas*, has a conative as well as a cognitive sense, as in our own expression "to have a mind to," i.e. "want to," or conversely when "never mind" enjoins indifference. It is only when the mind is at rest that it does not will. On the one hand, the concept of the "world-picture" involves the Platonic distinction of intelligible and sensible worlds—one "there," one "here," as both Greek and Sanskrit idioms express it, but to be reunited within you—and on the other, that of a divine creation *per artem et ex voluntate* [through art and from will –Ed. trans.]. It is the latter concept that concerns us here, for as in other traditions, so in India, the human artist's operation is assimilated to that of the divine Nature. Hence the interest of the passage discussed below, in which, by means of a play on the words *citta*, mind, and *citta* (in Sanskrit, *citra*) both thought and art are seen as acts of creative imagination.

The text occurs in the *Atthasālinī*, para 203, p. 64; in the translation, p. 86. The passage consists of an answer to the question, "How does the mind (*citta*) produce its divers effects?" with a play on the

[1] It must not be overlooked that while this is a "solipsist" position, in the literal sense of the word, it is not so in the individualistic sense in which the term "solipsism" is generally used. In that creative and immanent aspect or moiety (*aṃśa,* Gr. *moira*) that intelligizes (*cetanaś cetanānāṃ*, KU V. 13, *cetā-mātraḥ*, MU II.5) "the One God is the sole thinker" (*cetā kevalaḥ*, Śvet. Up. VI.11). There is, therefore, only one world, the product of a thinking that anticipates it, and objectively and really presented to our senses; and by no means a plurality of worlds of which the *esse est percipi nobis* [the being is our perception –Ed. trans.]. The human artist's creations are analogous; they would never exist, objectively and concretely, had not the artist first imagined and willed them.

Saṃsāra, literally con-fluence, is the whole way of the perceptible world, all that can be named or sensed (*nāmarūpe*), Meister Eckhart's "storm of the world's flow," St. James' and the Buddhist "wheel of becoming" (*ho troxos tēs geneseōs*, Skr. *bhava-cakra*).

words *citta*, mind, and *citta*, painting; the answer is, "Just as the painter by his imagination (*cintetvā*) creates the appearance of many forms and colors in a picture (*citta*)." To a large degree the translation misses the point and confuses the issue: thus, the use of the word "artistic" is indefinite, and does not bring out the parallel between the general activity of consciousness and the special functioning of aesthetic intuition. As to the meaning of the interesting term *caraṇa* which designates pictures of a particular kind, we can only be sure that a picture so called was fully colored and contained many figures or forms, of which apparently the most important were first set down, and then served as a guide for the remainder of the composition (no other text shows us the painter in the act of considering his composition); but it is almost certain that *caraṇa-citta* represents the Buddhist equivalent of the better known term *yamapaṭa*.[2] The aesthetic theory, that the creative activity intuition, *citta-saññā*) is completed before any physical act is undertaken, is entirely parallel to Croce's.[3] The passage as a whole reminds one of the sixth chapter of the *Pañcadaśi*,[4] in which an ignorant belief in the reality

[2] See my "Picture Showmen" in *Indian Historical Quarterly* V, 1929. In Buddhist practice these traveling shows might have illustrated such texts as the *Lakkhaṇa Sutta*, SN., II. 254 f. (S III,128, note 1, mentioning "The Rake's Progress," implies that the Commentary speaks of pictures of this sort, such as were usually exhibited by picture showmen). A *Dulva* text informs us that scenes from the *Devadūta Sūtra* are to be painted in monastery bathrooms and sudatoria, and this Sūtra is actually a description of the kingdom of Yama, where evil-doers are punished (see Lalou, M., *La décoration des monastères bouddhiques*, Revue des arts asiatiques V, 1928). Incidentally, it may be observed that the sculptures of the hidden basement of Borobuḍūr, illustrating the *Karmavibhaṅga* (Levi, S., *The Karmavibhaṅga illustrated in the sculptures of the buried basement of the Barabuḍur*, Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology, for 1929) are of this kind, and these might well be described as *aticitta*, multifarious. It is, moreover, pictures of just this kind that the Bhikkhus might have been expected to be familiar with.

A related reference will be found in the *Therāgāthā*, 1129, where evidently *cāraṇika* = *caraṇa citta*, and *dassaha* is the showman who, as the Commentary (quoted in *Psalms of the Brethren* [*Therīgāthā*], p. 419) explains, displays *tantam-bhavam*, which I take to be the thread or sequence of existences, a meaning appropriate to the usual theme of these showmen's pictures (cf. *prajā-tantu*, line of descendants, Taittirīya Brahmāṇa and Bhagavata Purāṇa ; and *sūtram…prajāḥ*, AV., X, 8, 37-38, the thread on which off-spring are strung ; *santānaka*, "lineage," *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, I. 8).

C*araṇa* has also the sense of "conduct," and this meaning would be equally or more appropriate, since the pictures in question deal with deeds and their reward.

[3] Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic*, translation by Douglas Ainslie, New York, 1909, pp. 82-84. From another point of view, the importance of the mental image, as a necessary preliminary to execution, is stressed in the *Śukranītisāra*, IV, 70-71.

[4] The text is edited by Venis in the Pandit, N. S., VI, 1884, pp. 489-491.

of phenomena is likened to the purely conventional interpretation of the painted garments in a picture as material in the same sense that the cloth on which the picture is painted is "material," in both cases, and also in the *Mahāyāna Sūtrālaṃkāra* of Asaṇga, XIII, 17, the mental origin of appearances is illustrated by a comparison with painting.

I now offer a translation of the *Atthasālinī* passage, and have tried to make it so literal and unambiguous as to reduce to a minimum the necessity for a discussion of single words:

(In reply to the question "How does the mind produce its divers effects?") : "By the process of depicting (*cittakaraṇatā*).[5] There is no kind of decorative art (*citta-kamma*) in the world more various-and-pictorial (*cittatara*) than painting (*citta*). And therein is there anything so multifarious (*aticitta*) as the kind of painting called *caraṇa* ? A mental concept (*cittasaññā*) raises (*uppajjati*) in the (mind of the) painters (*cittakārāṇam*)[6] of such a work, that 'Such and such forms (*rūpāni*) should be made (*kātabbāni*)[7] in such and such ways.' In accordance with this mental concept (*cittasaññā*), by the art of the brush (*lekhā*), priming (*gahaṇa*,[8] literally "taking hold"), coloring (*rañjaṇa*), adding high lights (*ujjotana*), and shading (*vattana*),[9] etc., duly performed, the

[5] More freely, but hardly in Buddhist language, "by imagining, which alone contracts and identifies into variety that which in reality is One, or empirically, Is Not." I have used the word "depicting" deliberately as representing equally well a mental activity, and that of the painter at work; allusions to pictures painted with the brush of the mind on the walls of the heart are not uncommon in classical Sanskrit, e.g. *Viddhaśālabhañjikā*, I.16.

[6] The plural may imply the co-operation of several painters on one work, as in later times; or may be simply a casual wording.

[7] *Kāta*, "done," or "made," occurs elsewhere as equivalent to *likhita*, e.g. *Divyāvādāna*, 300, where a Wheel of Life is depicted in the hall of a *dvāra-koṣṭhaka;* also *Therīgāthā*, verses 255 and 293 (*kata*).

[8] "Priming" is a guess. The *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra*, LXXI,14 has *bhūmi-bandhana* as the second of the "eight limbs" of painting; the *Śilparatna*, LXIV, 34, has *dhavalita*, "whitened," i.e. primed. The *Viṣṇudharmottara*, III, 41,14, has *avalipta*. In the *Pañcadaśi*, VI, 3, the stages mentioned are only four, the canvas (*paṭa*) being *dhautā*, washed or blank; *ghaṭṭitaḥ*, smoothed; *lāñchitaḥ*, drawn upon; and *rañjitaḥ*, colored.

[9] I do not know the term *ujjotana* elsewhere, but the meaning seems to be evident. *Vattana*, not rendered by the PTS translators, presumably corresponds to *vartanā* in the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, III, 43, 82, where the good painting is said to have *vartanā* in all its parts, a picture that has *vartanā* in one part and not in another is bad, while one without any *vartanā* is middling; *ibid.*, III, 43, 5 and 6, three forms of *vartanā*, viz. *patrā*, *āhāirikā*, and *bindujā* are defined, as "like the veining of a leaf," "subtle," and "with upright brush." In the *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra*, LXXI,14, *vartanā* is the sixth of the "eight limbs" of painting. The word means giving life, actuality, also moving forward,

finished paintings (*cittakiriyā*) arise (*uppajjanti*); thus in the kind of painting known as *caraṇa* there results a certain many-colored form (*vicittarūpa*); then, thinking (*cintetvā*) 'Above this form (*rūpa*), let this be; underneath, this; on both sides, this,' thus it is that according to the operation of the mind (*cintitena kammena*) the remaining painted forms (*cittarūpāni*) (likewise) come to be.

"Thus all the various (*vicitta*) kinds of art (*sippa*) whatsoever in the world are produced by the mind. And because of its capacity to produce various effects in action, the mind (*citta*) is itself a depicting (*citta*)—indeed, it is even more various-and-pictorial (*cittatara*) than painting (*citta*), because in the latter the conception is not perfectly realized (while the pictures made by the mind are faultless). So the Blessed One has said 'O Bhikkhus, have you seen a painting of the kind called *caraṇa*?' 'Yea, Lord.' 'Bhikkhus, that *caraṇa* painting was conceived by the mind. Indeed, Bhikkhus, the mind is even more various-and-pictorial (*cittatara*) than that *caraṇa*-painting.'"

The translations of *caraṇa*-painting by "masterpiece" or "show-piece" in S III.128 import a meaning foreign to the original. The Commentary on S III.151, *caraṇam nāma cittan*, explains there "there are Brahman heretics who, having prepared a canvas booth (*paṭa-koṭṭhaka*), and painting (*lekhapitvā*) therein representations of all kinds of happiness and misery connected with existence in heaven or hell, take this picture and travel about (*vi-caranti*), pointing out: If you do this, you will get this; if you do that, you will get that." In other words, *caraṇa-citta* is an itinerant painting, a traveling exhibition, dealing with a great variety of subjects. Inasmuch as such paintings dealt with the circumstances of the future life they are commonly called also *yama-paṭa*, Yama being the ruler of the dead.[10]

Ujjotana and *vattana* as interpreted above correspond exactly to what is found at Ajaṇṭā. As remarked by Goloubew, "On a dit que les décorateurs d'Ajaṇṭā ignoraient l'emploi des ombres. C'est inexact. En réalité, ces artistes ombraient à la façon des peintres gréco-romains

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turning, hence perhaps "rounding," "giving relief"; in the *Kirātārjunīya*, X, 12, *alaktaka vartanā*, we have the simple sense of "applying color," viz., lac pigment to the soles of the feet ; similarly in the *Udayasundarīkathā* of Soḍḍhala, text p. 100, *citreṇa vartitā* means only "painted"; cf. *vartikā*, paint-brush. Kramrisch, *Viṣhṇudharmottara*, ed. 2, p. 59, renders as "shading," and this would be acceptable in logical sequence to *ujjotana*, if we understand by shading, that kind of darkening of the receding areas, or modeling in tone, which is actually found in oriental painting and serves to give to the forms an effect of relief and solidity, but has nothing to do with the effects of light (chiaroscuro).

[10] [See Footnote 2 above –Ed.]

et syriens. L'arête du nez, le modelé des paupières mi-closes, le creux des tempes, la saillie de la lèvre inférieure sont indiqués au moyen de teintes foncées, tandis que des rehauts discrets accusent les contours des oreilles, le dessin des narines, la forme du front. Dans les représentations féminines, des demi-teintes à peine perceptibles font ressortir la rondeur pléthorique des seins et la souplesse molle des hanches."[11]

[11] Goloubew, V., *Ajanta, les peintures de la première grotte*, 1927, pp. 21-22 (*Ars Asiatica* X). [It has been said that the painters of Ajaṇṭa were ignorant of the use of shading. This is not accurate. In reality these artists used shading in the manner of the Greco-Roman and Syrian painters. The bridge of the nose, the finely-modeled half-closed eyelids, the hollow of the temples, the protruding of the lower lip are indicated by means of dark tints, while subtle light tints accentuate the contours of the ears, the outline of the nostrils, the shape of the forehead. In depictions of women, barely perceptible muted colors bring out the full roundness of the breasts and the soft litheness of the hips –Ed. trans.]. Cf. remarks by Binyon, in Yazdani, G., *Ajanta*, Pt. I, 1931, p. xv; also Chapter XIV in this volume.

CHAPTER XIV

Some References To Pictorial Relief

Painting, thought of as an imitation, reflection, or shadow of a "model," is often called deceptive; in the *Maitri Upaniṣad*, IV.2, sensible phenomena are compared to a "painted wall, falsely delighting the mind."[1] A conspicuous aspect of this illusionistic effect is apparent in the fact that while the painted surface itself is flat, yet by the painter's art we see it in three dimensions. In this sense, indeed, sculpture, low relief, and painting can be regarded as three species of one genus, in which there is representation of relief (*Śilparatna*, I.46.1 f.).

The object of the present note is to call attention to four late Classical and several Indian references in which the representation of relief in painting is spoken of in almost identical terms. In most of these contexts the reference seems to be to the representation of relief by lights and darks, rather than to any kind of linear perspective. We by no means assume a borrowing of the wordings, although the dates might permit it, but rather assume that the old manner of painting from the mental image and therefore in abstract light must have affected the spectator similarly everywhere.

Vitruvius (1st century B.C.) says that "Agatharchus, in Athens, when Aeschylus was bringing out a tragedy, painted a scene, and left a commentary about it. This led Democritus and Anaxagoras to write on the same subject, showing how, given a center in a definite place, the line should naturally correspond with due regard to the point of sight and the divergence of the visual rays, so that by this deception a faithful representation of the appearance of buildings might be given in painted scenery, and so that, though all is drawn on a vertical flat facade, some parts may seem to be withdrawing, and others to be standing out in front."[2] Longinus (probably 1st century A.D.) says that in painting, "though the high lights and shadows lie side by side in the same plane, yet the high lights spring to the eye and seem not only to stand out but to be much nearer"[3] (O*n the Sublime*, XVII.2). Similarly, and perhaps

[1] The comparison is valid, because all appearances must be, logically, appearances of something other than the appearance itself; if this were not implicit, we should speak of the "presences" rather than of appearances.

[2] M. H. Morgan, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, Cambridge, 1926, p. 198.

[3] I.e., nearer to the spectator than the darker parts of the picture seem to be.

about the same time, Hermes Trismegistus (*Lib.* XI. ii. 17 A)[4] has "for instance, in pictures we see the mountain-tops standing out high, though the picture itself is smooth and flat." Sextus Empiricus (2nd century A.D.), discussing the distinction of the senses from one another, remarks that "to the eye, paintings seem to have depressions and elevations, but not so to the touch" (*Pyrrhonism*, I.92).

In the *Mahāyāna Sūtrālaṃkāra* of Asaṇga, XIII.17 (4th century A.D.) we find "there is no relief in a painting, and yet we see it there." In the *Laṇkāvatāra Sūtra*[5] a painted surface is referred to as "seen in relief, although really without relief." In Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā*, VI.13,14 (about 5th century) we find the vivid metaphor of the spectator's eyes actually "stumbling over the relief." In Hemacandra's *Triśaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritra*, I. 1. 360 (12th century) a man whose eyes are fastened to the (probably painted) forms of beautiful women, etc., is said to stumble, as if the hem of his garment had caught on a hedge; in the same author's *Kāvyānuśāsana*, text p. 7, "the man of discernment distinguishes real from unreal, just as the connoisseur of painting distinguishes the level areas from those in relief." In the *Hitopadeśa*, Fable VI (12th century or earlier) there occurs the verse, "ingenious men can make ups and downs appear on an even surface." Somewhat earlier the *Viṣṇudharmottaram*, III.43, 21, in a chapter on painting, had enunciated that "he can be called a master of painting who can bring out the distinctions of what is raised from what is depressed." V. Raghavan[6] cites from Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* II.292 a passage to the effect that where there is relief in a picture, this is the representation of mountains, etc., although there is no unevenness in the picture itself. The medieval and late treatises on painting give instructions for the representation of relief in painting by means of lights and darks.[7]

[4] Scott, *Hermetica*, I. 219.

[5] *Bib. Otaniensis*, Nanjio ed., Kyoto, 1923, p. 91.

[6] "Some Sanskrit Texts on Painting," Indian Historical Quarterly IX, no. 4 (Dec. 1933), p. 899 and *Addendum*, p. 1041.

[7] Some of the Indian texts mentioned above are discussed in my "Technique and Theory of Indian Painting," *Technical Studies*, III, 1934, 75-77 and *Transformation of Nature in Art*, 1935, pp. 20, 103 and notes 23 and 67. Cf. *Vita Apollonius* II, xx (p. 169).

CHAPTER XV

Primitive Mentality

The myth is not my own, I had it from my mother.
Euripides, fr. 488

There is, perhaps, no subject that has been more extensively investigated and more prejudicially misunderstood by the modern scientist than that of folklore. By "folklore" we mean that whole and consistent body of culture which has been handed down, not in books but by word of mouth and in practice, from time beyond the reach of historical research, in the form of legends, fairy tales, ballads, games, toys, crafts, medicine, agriculture, and other rites, and forms of social organization, especially those that we call "tribal." This is a cultural complex independent of national and even racial boundaries, and of remarkable similarity throughout the world;[1] in other words, a culture of extraordinary vitality. The material of folklore differs from that of exoteric "religion," to which it may be in a kind of opposition—as it is in a quite different way to "science"[2]—by its more intellectual and less moralistic content,

[1] "The metaphysical notions of man may be reduced to a few types which are of universal distribution" (Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, New York, 1927, p.156; "The great myths of mankind are almost monotonously alike in their fundamental aspects" (D. C. Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan*, London, 1938, p. 90). The pattern of the lives of heroes is universal (Lord Raglan, *The Hero*, London, 1936). From all over the world more than three hundred versions of a single tale had already been collected fifty years ago (M. R. Cox, C*inderella*, London, 1893). All peoples have legends of the original unity of Sky and Earth, their separation, and their marriage. "Clapping Rocks" are Navajo and Eskimo as well as Greek. The patterns of *Himmelfahrten* [the celestial ascensions –Ed. trans.] and the types of the active *Wunderthor* [miraculous God Thor –Ed. trans.] are everywhere alike.

[2] The opposition of religion to folklore is often a kind of rivalry set up as between a new dispensation and an older tradition, the gods of the older cult becoming the evil spirits of the newer. The opposition of science to the content of both folklore and religion is based upon the view that "such knowledge as is not empirical is meaningless." The most ludicrous, and pathetic, situation appears when, as happened not long ago in England, the Church joins hands with science in proposing to withhold fairy tales from children as being untrue; it might have reflected that those who can make of mythology and fairy lore nothing but literature will do the same with scripture. "Men live by myths ... they are no mere poetic invention" (Fritz Marti, "Religion, Philosophy, and the College," in *Review of Religion*, VII, 1942, 41). "La mémoire collective conserve ... des symboles archaïques d'essence purement métaphysique" [the collective memory conserves ... the

and more obviously and essentially by its adaptation to vernacular transmission:[3] on the one hand, as cited above, "the myth is not my own, *I had it from my mother*," and on the other, "the passage from a traditional mythology to 'religion' is a humanistic decadence."[4]

The content of folklore is metaphysical. Our failure to recognize this is primarily due to our own abysmal ignorance of metaphysics and of its technical terms. We observe, for example, that the primitive craftsman leaves in his work something unfinished, and that the primitive mother dislikes to hear the beauty of her child unduly praised; it is "tempting Providence," and may lead to disaster. That seems like nonsense to us. And yet there survives in our vernacular the explanation of the principle involved: the craftsman leaves something undone in his work for the same reason that the words "to be finished" may mean either to be perfected or to die.[5] Perfection is death: when a thing has been altogether fulfilled, when all has been done that was to be done, potentiality altogether reduced to act (*kṛtakṛtyaḥ*), that is the end: those whom the gods love die young. This is not what the workman desired for his work, nor the mother for her child. It can very well be that the workman or the peasant mother is no longer conscious of the meaning

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archaic symbols which are in essence purely metaphysical –Ed. trans.] (M. Eliade in *Zalmoxis*, II, 1939, 78). "Religious philosophy is always bound up with myths and cannot break free from them without destroying itself and abandoning its task" (N. Berdyaev, *Freedom and the Spirit*, London, 1935, p. 69). Cf. E. Dacqué, *Das verlorene Paradies* (Munich, 1940).

[3] The words "adaptation to vernacular transmission" should be noted. Scripture recorded in a sacred language is not thus adapted; and a totally different result is obtained when scriptures originally written in such a sacred language are made accessible to the "untaught manyfolk" by translation, and subjected to an incompetent "free examination." In the first case, there is a faithful transmission of material that is always intelligible, although not necessarily always completely understood; in the second, misunderstandings are inevitable. In this connection it may be remarked that "literacy," nowadays thought of as almost synonymous with "education," is actually of far greater importance from an industrial than from a cultural point of view. What an illiterate Indian or American Indian peasant knows and understands would be entirely beyond the comprehension of the compulsorily educated product of the American public schools.

[4] J. Evola, *Rivolta contra il mondo moderno*, Milan, 1934, p.374 n. 12. "For the primitives, the mythical world really existed. Or rather it still exists" (Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *L'expérience mystique et les symboles chez les primitifs*, Paris, 1938, p. 295). One might add that it will exist forever in the eternal now of the Truth, unaffected by the truth or error of history. A myth is true now, or was never true at all.

[5] Just as Sanskrit *parinirvāna* is both "to be completely despirated" and "to be perfected" (cf. Coomaraswamy, "Some Pāli Words"). The Buddha's *parinibbāna* is a "finish" in both senses.

of a precaution that may have become a mere superstition; but assuredly we, who call ourselves anthropologists, should have been able to understand what was the idea which alone could have given rise to such a superstition, and ought to have asked ourselves whether or not the peasant by his actual observance of the precaution is not defending himself from a dangerous suggestion to which we, who have made of our existence a more tightly closed system, may be immune.

As a matter of fact, the destruction of superstitions invariably involves, in one sense or another, the premature death of the folk, or in any case the impoverishment of their lives.[6] To take a typical case, that of the Australian aborigines, D. F. Thompson, who has recently studied their remarkable initiatory symbols, observes that their "mythology supports the belief in a ritual or supernatural visitation that comes upon those who disregard or disobey the law of the old men. When this belief in the old men and their power—which, under tribal conditions, I have never known to be abused—dies, or declines, as it does with 'civilization,' chaos and racial death follow immediately."[7] The world's museums are filled with the traditional arts of innumerable peoples whose culture has been destroyed by the sinister power of our industrial civilization: peoples who have been forced to abandon their own highly developed and beautiful techniques and significant designs in order to preserve their very lives by working as hired laborers at the production

[6] The life of "civilized" people has already been impoverished; its influence can only tend to impoverish those whom it reaches. The "white man's burden," of which he speaks with so much unction, is the burden of death. For the poverty of "civilized" peoples, cf. I. Jenkins, "The Postulate of an Impoverished Reality," *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXIX, 1942, 533 ff.; Eric Meissner, *Germany in Peril* (London, 1942), pp. 41, 42: Floryan Znaniecki, as quoted by A. J. Krzesinski, *Is Modern Culture Doomed?* (New York, 1942), p. 54, n. 8; W. Andrae, *Die ionischie Säule: Bauform oder Symbol?* (Berlin, 1933), p. 65 —"*mehr und mehr entleert*" [more and more voided –author's trans.].

[7] *Illustrated London News*, February 25, 1939. A traditional civilization presupposes a correspondence of the man's most intimate nature with his particular vocation (see René Guénon, "Initiation and the Crafts," JISOA, VI, 1938, 163-168). The forcible disruption of this harmony poisons the very springs of life and creates innumerable maladjustments and sufferings. The representative of "civilization" cannot realize this, because the very idea of vocation has lost its meaning and become for him a "superstition"; the "civilized" man, being himself a kind of economic slave, can be put, or puts himself, to any kind of work that material advantage seems to demand or that social ambition suggests, in total disregard for his individual character, and cannot understand that to rob a man of his hereditary vocation is precisely to take away his "living" in a far more profound than merely economic sense.

of raw materials.[8] At the same time, modern scholars, with some honorable exceptions,[9] have as little understood the content of folklore as did the early missionaries understand what they thought of only as the "beastly devices of the heathen"; Sir J. G. Frazer, for example, whose life has been devoted to the study of all the ramifications of folk belief and popular rites, has only to say at the end of it all, in a tone of lofty superiority, that he was "led on, step by step, into surveying, as from some spectacular height, some Pisgah of the mind, a great part of the human race; I was beguiled, as by some subtle enchanter, into indicting what I cannot but regard as a dark, a tragic chronicle of human error and folly, of fruitless endeavor, wasted time and blighted hopes"[10]—words that sound much more like an indictment of modern European civilization than a criticism of any savage society!

[8] See Coomaraswamy, "Notes on Savage Art," and "Symptom, Diagnosis, and Regimen" [Chapters XVI and XVII in this volume - Ed.]; cf. Thomas Harrisson, *Savage Civilization* (New York, 1937).

[9] E.g., Paul Radin, *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (New York, 1927); Wilhelm Schmidt, *Origin and Growth of Religion*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1935), and *High Gods in North America* (Oxford, 1933); Karl von Spiess, *Marksteine der Volkskunst* (1937), and *Vom Wesen der Volkskunst* (1926); Konrad Th. Preuss, *Lehrbuch der Völkerkunde* (Stuttgart, 1939), to mention only those best known to me. C. G. Jung is put out of court by his interpretation of symbols as psychological phenomena, an avowed and deliberate exclusion of all metaphysical significance.

[10] *Aftermath* (London, 1936), preface. Olivier Leroy, *La Raison primitive, essai de réfutation de la théorie du prélogisme* (Paris, 1927), n. 18, remarks that Lévy-Bruhl "fut aiguillé sur les recherches ethnologiques par la lecture du *Golden Bough*. Aucun ethnologue, aucun historien des religions, me contredira si je dis que c'était un périlleux début." [Lévy-Bruhl was steered towards ethnological research by reading *The Golden Bough*. No ethnologist, no historian of religions will contradict me if I say that this was a dangerous beginning - Ed. trans.]. Again, "la notion que Lévy-Bruhl se fait du 'primitif' a été écartée par tous les ethnographes ... son peu de curiosité des sauvages a scandalisé les ethnographes" [Lévy-Bruhl's conception of the 'primitive' has been rejected by all ethnographers ... his lack of curiosity about primitive peoples appalled the ethnographers" –Ed. trans.]. (J. Monneret, *La Poésie moderne et le sacré*, Paris, 1945, pp. 193, 195). The very title of his book, *How Natives Think*, betrays him. If he had known *what* "natives" think (i.e., about Europeans), he might have been surprised.

Another exhibition of the superiority complex will be found in the concluding pages of Sidney Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (London, 1909-1910); his view that when "the relics of primeval ignorance and archaic speculation" have been discarded, the world's "great stories" will survive, is both absurd and sentimental, and rests on the assumption that beauty can be divorced from the truth in which it originates, and a notion that the only end of "literature" is to amuse. *The Golden Bough* is a glorified doctor's thesis. Frazer's only survival value will be documentary; his lucubrations will be forgotten.

The distinctive characteristic of a traditional society is order.[11] The life of the community as a whole and that of the individual, whatever his special function may be, conforms to recognized patterns, of which no one questions the validity: the criminal is the man who does not *know* how to behave, rather than a man who is unwilling to behave.[12] But such an unwillingness is very rare, where education and public opinion tend to make whatever ought not to be done simply ridiculous, and where, also, the concept of vocation involves a corresponding professional honor. Belief is an aristocratic virtue: "unbelief is for the mob." In other words, the traditional society is a unanimous society, and as such unlike a proletarian and individualistic society, in which the major problems of conduct are decided by the tyranny of a majority and the minor problems by each individual for himself, and there is no real agreement, but only conformity or nonconformity.

It is often supposed that in a traditional society, or under tribal or clan conditions, which are those in which a culture of the folk flourished most, the individual is arbitrarily compelled to conform to the patterns of life that he actually follows. It would be truer to say that under these conditions the individual is devoid of social ambition. It is very far from true that in traditional societies the individual is regimented: it is only in democracies, soviets, and dictatorships that a way of life is imposed upon the individual from without.[13] In the unanimous

[11] "What we mean by a normal civilization is one that rests on principles, in the true sense of this word, and one in which all is ordered and in a hierarchy consistent with these principles, so that everything is seen to be the application and extension of a purely and essentially intellectual or metaphysical doctrine: that is what we mean when we speak of a 'traditional civilization'" (René Guénon, *Orient et occident*, Paris, 1930, p. 235).

[12] Sin, Skr. *apāraddha*, "missing the mark," any departure from "the order to the end," is a sort of clumsiness due to want of skill. There is a ritual of life, and what matters in the performance of a rite is that whatever is done should be done correctly, in "good form." What is not important is how one *feels* about the work to be done or life to be lived: all such feelings being tendentious and self-referent. But if, over and above the *correct* performance of the rite or any action, one also understands its form, if all one's actions are conscious and not merely instinctive reactions provoked by pleasure or pain, whether anticipated or felt, this awareness of the underlying principles is immediately dispositive to spiritual freedom. In other words, wherever the action itself is correct, the action itself is symbolic and provides a discipline, or path, by following which the final goal must be reached; on the other hand, whoever acts informally has opinions of his own and, "knowing what he likes," is limiting his person to the measure of his individuality.

[13] A democracy is a government of all by a majority of proletarians; a soviet, a govern-

society the way of life is self-imposed in the sense that "fate lies in the created causes themselves," and this is one of the many ways in which the order of the traditional society conforms to the order of nature: it is in the unanimous societies that the possibility of self-realization—that is, the possibility of transcending the limitations of individuality—is best provided for. It is, in fact, for the sake of such a self-realization that the tradition itself is perpetuated. It is here, as Jules Romains has said, that we find "the richest possible variety of individual states of consciousness, in a harmony made valuable by its richness and density,"[14] words that are peculiarly applicable, for example, to Hindu society. In the various kinds of proletarian government, on the other hand, we meet always with the intention to achieve a rigid and inflexible uniformity; all the forces of "education,"[15] for example, are directed to this end. It is a national, rather than a cultural type that is constructed, and to this one type everyone is expected to conform, at the price of being considered a peculiar person or even a traitor. It is of England that the Earl of Portsmouth remarks, "it is the wealth and genius of variety amongst

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ment by a small group of proletarians; and a dictatorship, a government by a single proletarian. In the traditional and unanimous society there is a government by a hereditary aristocracy, the function of which is to maintain an existing order, based on eternal principles, rather than to impose the views or arbitrary will (in the most technical sense of the words, a *tyrannical* will) of any "party" or "interest."

The "liberal" theory of class warfare takes it for granted that there can be no common interest of different classes, which must oppress or be oppressed by one another; the classical theories of government are based on a concept of impartial justice. What majority rule means in practice is a government in terms of an unstable "balance of power"; and this involves a kind of internal warfare that corresponds exactly to the international wars that result from the effort to maintain balances of power on a still larger scale.

[14] "The stronger and more intense the social is, the less it is oppressive and external" (G. Gurvitch, "Mass, Community, Communion," *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXVIII, 1941, 488). "In a mediaeval feudalism and imperialism, or any other civilization of the traditional type, unity and hierarchy can co-exist with a maximum of individual independence, liberty, affirmation, and constitution" (Evola, *Rivolta*, p. 112). But: "Hereditary service is quite incompatible with the industrialism of today, and that is why the system of caste is always painted in such dark colors" (A. M. Hocart, *Les Castes*, Paris, 1938, p. 238).

[15] "Compulsory education, whatever its practical use may be, cannot be ranked among the civilizing forces of this world" (Meissner, *Germany in Peril*, p. 73). Education in a primitive society is not compulsory, but inevitable; just because the past is there "present, experienced and felt as an effective part of daily life, not just taught by schoolmasters" (*idem*). For the typically modern man, to have "broken with the past" is an end in itself; any change is a meliorative "progress," and education is typically iconoclastic.

our people, both in character and hand, that needs to be rescued now":[16] what could not be said of the United States! The explanation of this difference is to be found in the fact that the order that is imposed on the individual from without in any form of proletarian government is a *systematic* order, not a "form" but a cut and dried "formula," and generally speaking a pattern of life that has been conceived by a single individual or some school of academic thinkers ("Marxists," for example); while the pattern to which the traditional society is conformed by its own nature, being a metaphysical pattern, is a consistent but not a systematic form, and can therefore provide for the realization of many more possibilities and for the functioning of many more kinds of individual character than can be included within the limits of any system.

The actual unity of folklore represents on the popular level precisely what the orthodoxy of an elite represents in a relatively learned environment. The relation between the popular and the learned metaphysics is, moreover, analogous to and partly identical with that of the lesser to the greater mysteries. To a very large extent both employ one and the same symbols, which are taken more literally in the one case, and in the other understood parabolically; for example, the "giants" and "heroes" of popular legend are the titans and gods of the more learned mythology, the seven-league boots of the hero correspond to the strides of an Agni or a Buddha, and "Tom Thumb" is no other than the Son whom Eckhart describes as "small, but so puissant." *So long as the material of folklore is transmitted, so long is the ground available on which the superstructure of full initiatory understanding can be built.*

Let us now consider the "primitive mentality" that so many anthropologists have studied: the mentality, that is, which manifests itself in such normal types of society as we have been considering, and to which we have referred as "traditional." Two closely connected questions must first be disposed of. In the first place, is there such a thing as a "primitive" or "alogical" mentality distinct from that of civilized and scientific man? It has been taken for granted by the older "animists" that human nature is a constant, so that "if we were in the position of the primitives, our mind being what it is now, we should think and act as they do."[17] On the other hand, for anthropologists and psychologists of the type of Lévy-Bruhl, there can be recognized an almost specific distinc-

[16] G.V.W. Portsmouth, *Alternative to Death* (London, 1943), p. 30.

[17] G. Davy, "Psychologie des primitifs d'après Lévy-Bruhl," *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique*, XXVII (1931), 112.

tion between the primitive mentality and ours.[18] The explanation of the possibility of disagreement in such a matter has much to do with the belief in progress, by which, in fact, all our conceptions of the history of civilization are distorted.[19] It is too readily taken for granted that we have progressed, and that any contemporary savage society in all respects fairly represents the so-called primitive mentality, and overlooked that many characteristics of this mentality can be studied at home as well as or better than in any African jungle: the point of view of the Christian or Hindu, for example, is in many ways nearer to that of the "savage" than to that of the modern bourgeoisie. What real distinction of two mentalities can be made is, in fact, the distinction of a modern from a mediaeval or oriental mentality; and this is not a specific distinction, but one of sickness from health. It has been said of Lévy-Bruhl that he is a past

[18] For a general refutation of "prélogisme," see Leroy, *La Raison primitive*, and W. Schmidt, *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, pp. 133, 134. Leroy, for example, in discussing the "participation" of kingship in divinity, remarks that all that Lévy-Bruhl and Frazer have done is to call this notion "primitive" because it occurs in primitive societies, and these societies "primitive" because they entertain this primitive idea. Lévy-Bruhl's theories are now quite generally discredited, and most anthropologists and psychologists hold that the mental equipment of primitive man was exactly the same as our own. Cf. Radin, *Primitive Man as Philosopher*, p. 373, "in capacity for logical and symbolical thought, there is no difference between civilized and primitive man," and as cited by Schmidt, *Origin and Growth of Religion*, pp. 202, 203; and Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, p. 156.

[19] Cf. D. B. Zema on "Progress," in the *Dictionary of World Literature* (New York, 1943); and René Guénon, *East and West* (London, 1941), ch. 1, "Civilization and Progress." The latter remarks: "The civilization of the modern West appears in history as a veritable anomaly: among all those which are known to us more or less completely, this civilization is the only one which has developed along purely material lines, and this monstrous development, whose beginning coincides with the so-called Renaissance, has been accompanied, as indeed it was fated to be, by a corresponding intellectual *regress*." Cf. Meissner, *Germany in Peril*, pp. 10–11: "The shortest way of stating the case is this: during the last centuries a vast majority of Christian men have lost their homes in every sense of the word. The number of those cast out into the wilderness of a dehumanized society is steadily increasing . . . the time might come and be nearer than we think, when the ant-heap of society, worked out to full perfection, deserves only one verdict: *unfit for men."* Cf. Gerald Heard, *Man the Master* (New York, 1941), p. 25, "By civilized men we now mean industrialized men, mechanical societies.... Any other conduct . . . is the behavior of an ignorant, simple savage. To have arrived at this picture of reality is to be truly advanced, progressive, civilized." "In our present generation of primary and almost exclusive emphasis on mechanics and engineering or economics, understanding of people no longer exists, or at best only in very rare cases. In fact we do not want to know each other as men.... That is just what got us into this monstrous war" (W. F. Sands in *Commonweal*, April 20, 1945).

master in opening up what is to us "an almost inconceivable" world: as if there were none amongst us to whom the mentality reflected in our own immediate environment were not equally "inconceivable."

We shall consider, then, the "primitive mentality" as described, very often accurately enough, by Lévy-Bruhl and other psychologist-anthropologists. It is characterized in the first place by a "collective ideation";[20] ideas are held in common, whereas in a civilized group, everyone entertains ideas of his own.[21] Infinitely varied as it may be in detail, the folk literature, for example, has to do with the lives of heroes, all of whom meet with essentially the same adventures and exhibit the same qualities. It is not for one moment realized that a possession of ideas in common does not necessarily imply the "collective origination" of these ideas. It is argued that what is true for the primitive mentality is unrelated to experience, i.e., to such "logical" experience as ours. Yet it is "true" to what the primitive "experiences." The criticism implied, for such it is, is exactly parallel to the art historian's who criticizes primitive art as not being "true to nature"; and to that of the historian of literature who demands from literature a psychoanalysis of individual character. The primitive was not interested in such trivialities, but thought in

[20] The anthropologist's "collective ideation" is nothing but the unanimism of traditional societies that has been discussed above; but with this important distinction, that the anthropologist means to imply by his "collective ideation" not merely the common possession of ideas, but also the "collective origination" of these ideas: the assumption being that there really are such things as popular creations and spontaneous inventions of the masses (and as René Guénon has remarked, "the connection of this point of view with the democratic prejudice is obvious"). Actually, "the literature of the folk is not their own production, but comes down to them from above ... the folktale is never of popular origin" (Lord Raglan, *The Hero*, p. 145).

[21] In a normal society one no more "thinks for oneself" than one has a private arithmetic [cf. Augustine, *De ordine* II.48]. In a proletarian culture one does not think at all, but only entertains a variety of prejudices, for the most part of journalistic and propagandistic origin, though treasured as one's "own opinions." A traditional culture presumes an entertainment of ideas, in which a private property is impossible. "Where the God (*sc*. Eros) is our teacher, we all come to think alike" (Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* XVII.3); "What really binds men together is their culture—the ideas and standards they have in common" (Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, Boston, 1934, p. 16). In other words, religion and culture are normally indivisible: and where everyone thinks for himself, there is no society (*sāhitya*) but only an aggregate. The *common* and divine Reason is the criterion of truth, "but most men live as though they possessed a private intelligence of their own" (Heracleitus, *Fragment* 92). "Insofar as we participate in the memory of that [common and divine] Reason, we speak truth, but whenever we are thinking for ourselves (*idiasōmen*) we lie" (Sextus Empiricus, on Heracleitus, in *Adversus dogmaticos* I.131-134).

types. This, moreover, was his means of "education"; for the type can be imitated, whereas the individual can only be mimicked.

The next and most famous characteristic of the primitive mentality has been called "participation," or more specifically, "mystical participation." A thing is not only what it is visibly, but also what it represents. Natural or artificial objects are not for the primitive, as they can be for us, arbitrary symbols of some other and higher reality, but actual manifestations of this reality:[22] the eagle or the lion, for example, is not so much a symbol or image *of* the Sun as it *is* the Sun in a likeness (the form being more important than the nature in which it may be manifested); and in the same way every house *is* the world in a likeness, and every altar situated at the center of the earth; it is only because we are more interested in what things are than in what they mean, more interested in particular facts than in universal ideas, that this is inconceivable to us. Descent from a totem animal is not, then, what it appears to the anthropologist, a literal absurdity, but a descent from the Sun, the Progenitor and Prajāpati of all, in that form in which he revealed himself, whether in vision or in dream, to the founder of the clan. The same reasoning validates the Eucharistic meal; the Father-Progenitor is sacrificed and partaken of by his descendants, in the flesh of the sacred animal: "This is my body, take and eat."[23] So that, as Lévy-Bruhl

[22] Cf. "The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.... When thou seest an Eagle, thou seest a portion of Genius" (William Blake). "The sacrificial horse is a symbol (*rūpa*) of Prajāpati, and consubstantial with Prajāpati (*prājāpatya*)," so that what is said to the horse is said to Prajāpati "face to face" (*sākṣāt*), and so "verily he wins Him visibly" (*sākṣāt*, TS V.7.1.2). "One day I witnessed a Rāmlilā performance. I saw the performers to be actual Sitā, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Hanumān, and Bibhiṣana. Then I worshiped the actors and actresses, who played those parts" (Śrī Rāmakrishna). "The child lives in the reality of his imagery, as did the men of early prehistoric time" (R. R. Schmidt, *Dawn of the Human Mind*, London, 1936, p. 7), but the aesthete in the actuality of the fetish!

[23] In the statement, "in some cases we cannot easily tell whether the native thinks that he is in the actual presence of some (usually invisible) being, or that of a symbol" (Lévy-Bruhl, *L'expérience mystique*, p. 206), "we" can only refer to such profane mentalities as are intended by our authors when they speak of "civilized" or "emancipated" man or of themselves. It would not be true for a learned Catholic or Hindu to say that "this peculiarity of the symbols of the primitives creates a great difficulty for us," and one wonders why our authors are so much puzzled by the "savage," and not by the contemporary metaphysician. More truly, one does not wonder: it is because it is assumed that wisdom was born with *us*, and that the savage does not distinguish between appearance and reality; it is because we choose to describe the primitive religious cults as a "worship of nature"—we who are nature worshipers indeed, and to whom the words of Plutarch are preeminently applicable, viz. that men have been so blinded by their powers of observation that they can no longer distinguish between Apollo and the Sun, the reality

says of such symbols, "very often it is not their purpose to 'represent' their prototype to the eye, but to facilitate a participation," and that "if it is their essential function to 'represent,' in the full sense of the word, invisible beings or objects, and to make their presence effective, it follows that they are not necessarily reproductions or likenesses of these beings or objects."[24] The purpose of primitive art, being entirely different from the aesthetic or decorative intentions of the modern "artist" (for whom the ancient motifs survive only as meaningless "art forms"), explains its abstract character. "We civilized men have lost the Paradise of the 'Soul of primitive imagery [*Urbildseele*].' We no longer live among the shapes which we had fashioned within: we have become mere spectators, reflecting them from without."[25]

The superior intellectuality of primitive and "folk" art is often confessed, even by those who regard the "emancipation" of art from its linguistic and communicative functions as a desirable progress. Thus W. Deonna writes, "Le primitivisme exprime par l'art les idées," but l'art "évolue ... vers un naturalisme progressif," no longer representing things "telles qu'on les conçoit" [I would rather say, "telles qu'on les comprend"], but "telles qu'on les voit"; thus substituting "la réalité" for 'l'abstraction"; and that evolution, "de l'idéalisme vers un naturalisme" in which "la forme [*sc.* la figure] tend à prédominer sur l'idée," is what the Greek genius, "plus artiste que tous les autres," finally accomplished.[26]

To have lost the art of thinking in images is precisely to have lost the proper linguistic of metaphysics and to have descended to the

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and the phenomenon.

[24] Lévy-Bruhl, *L'expérience mystique*, pp. 174, 180. Lévy-Bruhl appears to have been quite ignorant of the Platonic-Aristotelian-Christian doctrine of the "participation" of things in their formal causes. His own words, "not necessarily ... likenesses," are notably illogical, since he is speaking of "invisible" prototypes, and it is evident that these invisibles have no appearance that could be visually imitated, but only a character of which there can be a representation by means of adequate (*isos*) symbols; cf. Rom. I:20, "invisible things . . . being understood by the things that are made."

[25] Schmidt, *Dawn of the Human Mind*, p. 7.

[26] ["Primitivism expresses ideas through art," but "art has evolved ... towards a progressive naturalism," no longer representing things "as they are conceived" {I would rather say, "as they are understood"}, but "as they are seen"; thus substituting "reality" for "abstraction"; and that evolution, "of idealism towards a naturalism" in which the form {*sc.* the figure} tends to predominate over the idea," is what the Greek genius, "more artistic than all the others," finally accomplished. - Ed. trans.]. W. Deonna, "Primitivisme et classicisme," BAHA, IV, no. 10 (1937). For the same facts but a contrary conclusion see A. Gleizes, *Vers une Conscience plastique, la forme et l'histoire* (Paris, 1932).

verbal logic of "philosophy." The truth is that the content of such an "abstract," or rather "principial," form as the Neolithic sun-wheel (in which we see only an evidence of the "worship of natural forces," or at most a "personification" of these forces), or that of the corresponding circle with center and radii or rays, is so rich that it could only be fully expounded in many volumes, and embodies implications which can only with difficulty if at all be expressed in words; the very nature of primitive and folk art is the immediate proof of its essentially intellectual content. Nor does this only apply to the diagrammatic representations: there was actually nothing made for use that had not a meaning as well as an application: "The needs of the body and the spirit are satisfied together";[27] "le physique et le spirituel ne sont pas encore séparés,"[28] "meaningful form, in which the physical and metaphysical originally formed a counterbalancing polarity, is increasingly depleted in its transmission to us; we say then that it is 'ornament.'"[29] What we call "inventions" are nothing but the application of known metaphysical principles to practical ends; and that is why tradition always refers the fundamental inventions to an ancestral culture hero (always, in the last analysis, a descent of the Sun), that is to say, to a primordial revelation.

In these applications, however utilitarian their purpose, there was no need whatever to sacrifice the clarity of the original significance of the symbolic form: on the contrary, the aptitude and beauty of the artifact at the same time express and depend upon the form that underlies it. We can see this very clearly, for example, in the case of such an ancient invention as that of the "safety pin," which is simply an adaptation of a still older invention, that of the straight pin or needle having at one end a head, ring, or eye and at the other a point; a form that as a "pin" directly penetrates and fastens materials together, and as a "needle" fastens them together by leaving behind it as its "trace" a thread that originates from its eye. In the safety pin, the originally straight stem of

[27] Schmidt, *Dawn of the Human Mind*, p. 167. Was "primitive man" already a Platonist, or was Plato a primitive man when he spoke of those arts as legitimate "that will at the same time care for the bodies and the souls of your citizens" (*Republic* 409E-410A), and said that "the one means of salvation from these evils is neither to exercise the soul without the body nor the body without the soul" (*Timaeus* 88BC)?

[28] Hocart, *Les Castes*, p. 63. ["The physical and the spiritual are not yet separated" –Ed. trans.]. Under these conditions, "Chaque occupation était un sacerdoce" (p. 27). ["Every vocation was a priesthood" –Ed. trans.]

[29] Andrae, *Die ionische Säule*, p. 65.

the pin or needle is bent upon itself so that its point passes back again through the "eye" and is held there securely, at the same time that it fastens whatever material it has penetrated.[30]

Whoever is acquainted with the technical language of initiatory symbolism (in the present case, the language of the "lesser mysteries" of the crafts) will recognize at once that the straight pin or needle is a symbol of generation, and the safety pin a symbol of regeneration. The safety pin is, moreover, the equivalent of the button, which fastens things together and is attached to them by means of a thread which passes through and again returns to its perforations, which correspond to the eye of the needle. The significance of the metal pin, and that of the thread left behind by the needle (whether or not secured to a button that corresponds to the eye of the needle) is the same: it is that of the "thread-spirit" (*sūtrātman*) by which the Sun connects all things to himself and fastens them; he is the primordial embroiderer and tailor, by whom the tissue of the universe, to which our garments are analogous, is woven on a living thread.[31]

For the metaphysician it is inconceivable that forms such as this, which express a given doctrine with mathematical precision, could have been "invented" without a knowledge of their significance. The anthropologist, it is true, will believe that such meanings are merely "read into" the forms by the sophisticated symbolist (one might as well pretend that a mathematical formula could have been discovered by chance). But that a safety pin or button is meaningless, and merely a convenience for us, is simply the evidence of our profane ignorance and of the fact that such forms have been "more and more voided of content [*entleert*] on their way down to us" (Andrae); the scholar of art is not "reading into" these intelligible forms an arbitrary meaning, but simply reading their meaning, for this is their "form" or "life," and

[30] It is noteworthy that the word *fibule* (fibula) in French surgical language means *suture*.

[31] "The Sun is the fastening (*āsañjanam*, one might even say "button") to whom these worlds are linked by means of the quarters. . . . He strings these worlds to Himself by a thread; the thread is the Gale of the Spirit" (ŚB VI.1.17 and VIII.7.3.10). Cf. AV IX.8.38, and BG VII.7, "All 'this' is strung on Me like a row of gems on a thread." For the "thread-spirit" doctrine, cf. also Homer, *Iliad* VIII.18 ff.; Plato, *Theatetus* 153 and *Laws* 644; Plutarch, *Moralia* 393 ff.; Hermes, *Libellus* XVI.5.7; John 12:32; Dante, *Paradiso* I.116; Rūmī, *Dīvān*, Ode XXVIII, "He gave me the end of a thread…"; Blake, "I give you the end of a golden string.... " We still speak of living substances as "tissues." See also Coomaraswamy, "The Iconography of Dürer's 'Knots' and Leonardo's 'Concatenation,'" 1944, and "Spiritual Paternity and the Puppet-Complex," 1945.

present in them regardless of whether or not the individual artists of a given period, or we, have known it or not. In the present case the proof that the meaning of the safety pin had been understood can be pointed to in the fact that the heads or eyes of prehistoric fibulae are regularly decorated with a repertoire of distinctly solar symbols.[32]

Inasmuch as the symbolic arts of the folk do not propose to tell us what things are like but, by their allusions, intend to refer to the ideas implied by these things, we may describe them as having an algebraic (rather than "abstract") quality, and in this respect as differing essentially from the veridical and realistic purposes of a profane and arithmetical art, of which the intentions are to tell us what things are like, to express the artist's personality, and to evoke an emotional reaction. We do not call folk art "abstract" because the forms are not arrived at by a process of omission; nor do we call it "conventional," since its forms have not been arrived at by experiment and agreement; nor do we call it "decorative" in the modern sense of the word, since it is not meaningless;[33] it is properly speaking a principial art, and supernatural rather than naturalistic. The nature of folk art is, then, itself the sufficient demonstration of its intellectuality: it is, indeed, a "divine inheritance." We illustrate in Figures 4 and 5 two examples of folk art and one

Figure 4. Sarmatian (?) Ornament.

of bourgeois art. The characteristic informality, insignificance, and ugliness of the latter will be obvious. Figure 4 is a Sarmatian "ornament,"[34]

[32] See Christopher Blinkenberg, *Fibules grècques et orientales*, Copenhagen, 1926. The ornamentation of these fibulae forms a veritable encyclopedia of solar symbols.

[33] See Coomaraswamy, "Ornament" [Chapter III in this volume - Ed.].

[34] Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

probably a horse trapping. There is a central six-spoked wheel, around which revolve four equine protomas, also wheel-marked, forming a whorl or *svastika;* and it is abundantly clear that this is a representation of the divine "procession," the revolution of the Supernal Sun in a four-horsed and four-wheeled chariot; a representation such as this has a content evidently far exceeding that of later pictorial representations

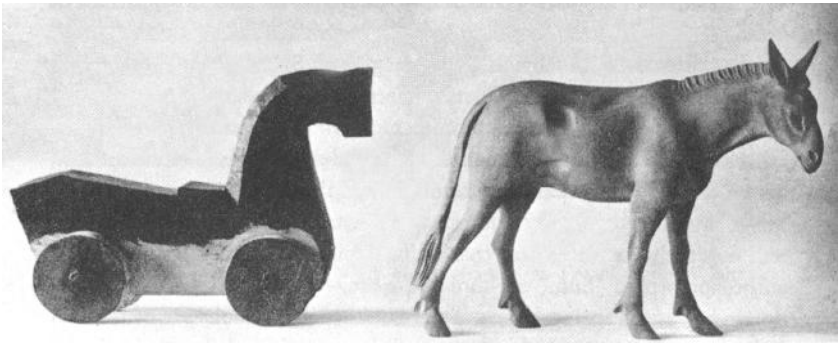

Figure 5. Horse and Donkey: Folk Art and Bourgeois Art.

of an anthropomorphic "Sun," or human athlete, riding in a chariot actually drawn by four prancing horses. The two other illustrations are of modern Indian wooden toys: in the first case we recognize a metaphysical and formal art, and a type that can be paralleled throughout a millennial tradition, while in the latter the effect of European influence has led the artist not to "imitate nature in her manner of operation," but simply to imitate nature in her appearances; if either of these kinds of art can be called "naïve," it is certainly not the traditional art of the folk!

The characteristic pronouncements of anthropologists on the "primitive mentality," of which a few may be cited, are often very remarkable, and may be said to represent not what the writers have intended, the description of an inferior type of consciousness and experience, but one intrinsically superior to that of "civilized" man, and approximating to that which we are accustomed to think of as "primordial." For example, "The primitive mind experienced life as a whole.... Art was not for the delectation of the senses."[35] Dr. Macalister

[35] Earl Baldwin Smith, *Egyptian Architecture* (New York, 1938), p. 27. "It was a tremendous discovery—how to excite emotions for their own sake" (A. N. Whitehead). Was it really? "No, not even if all the men and horses in the world, by their pursuit of pleasure, proclaim that such is the criterion" (Plato, *Philebus* 67)!

actually compares what he calls the "Ascent of Man" to Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, not realizing that the poem is the description of the descent or materialization of consciousness.[36] Schmidt remarks that "In 'heathenish' popular customs, in the 'superstitions' of our folk, the spiritual adventures of prehistoric times, the imagery of primitive insight are living still; *a divine inheritance*. . . . Originally every type of soul and mind corresponds to the physiological organism proper to it. . . . The world is conceived as being partner with the living being, which is unconscious of its individuality; as being an essential portion of the Ego; and it is represented as being affected by human exertion and sufferings.... Nature-man lives his life in images. He grasps it in his conception as a series of realities. His visions are therefore not only real; they form his objective insight into a higher world.... The talent, in the man of understanding, is only obstructed, more or less. Artistic natures, poets, painters, sculptors, musicians, seers, who see God face to face, remain all their lives eidetically rooted in their creations. In them there lives the folk-soul of dissolving images in their most perfect creative form.... Natural man, to whom vision and thought are identical....The man of magic ... is still standing in a present world which includes the whole of primeval time.... [On the other hand] the emancipated man, vehicle of a soul ... differentiates the original magical somato-psychic unity.... Outward and Inward, World and Ego, become a duality in the consciousness."[37] Could one say more in support of the late John

[36] Preface to Schmidt, *Dawn of the Human Mind*. The customary virtual identification of the "childhood of humanity" with the childhood of the individual, that of the mind of Cro-Magnon man with his "fully developed forehead" (Schmidt, p. 209), with that of the still subhuman child, is illogical. "Since we are forced to believe that the race of man is of one species, it follows that man everywhere has an equally long history behind him" (Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, p. 18). That the child can in certain respects be used as an adequate symbol of the primordial state, in the sense that "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," is quite another matter.

[37] Schmidt, *Dawn of the Human Mind*, pp. 1, 13, 89, 126, 212 ff.; italics mine. The final sentence contrasts poignantly with Plato's famous prayer, "grant to me that I may become beautiful within, and that my outward and my inner man may be in fond accord" (*Phaedrus* 278C); cf. BG VI.5 and 6, on friendship or enmity between the empirical and the essential "self." Schmidt is referring, of course, to the clear distinction of subject from object which ordinary "knowledge" presupposes; it is precisely this kind of "knowing" that is, from the standpoint of traditional metaphysics, an *ignorance*, and morally an "original sin" of which the wages are death (Gen. 3); cf. Coomaraswamy, "The Intellectual Operation in Indian Art" [Chapter X in this volume - Ed.], n. 20.

The remarkable expressions of Schmidt are tantamount to the definition of the modern, civilized "man of understanding" as an atrophied personality, out of touch with his environment. That he also envisages this as an *ascent* of man can only mean that he

Lodge's proposition, "From the Stone Age until now, *quelle dégringolade*"? [what a decline –Ed. trans.].

If it is difficult for us to understand the primitive belief in the efficacy of symbolic rites, it is largely because of our limited knowledge of the prolongations of the personality, which forces us to think in terms of a purely physical causality. We overlook that while we may believe that the anticipatory rite has no physical effect in the desired direction, the rite itself is the formal expression of a will directed to this end, and that this will, released by the performance of the rite, is also an effective force, by which the environment in its totality must be to some extent affected. In any case, the preliminary rite of "mimetic magic" is an enactment of the "formal cause" of the subsequent operation, whether it be the art of agriculture or that of war that is in question, and the artist has a right to expect that the actual operation, if carried out on this plan, will be successful. What seems strange to us, however, is that for the primitive mentality the rite is a "prefiguration," not merely in the sense of a pattern of action to be followed, but in the sense of an anticipation in which the future becomes a virtually already existent reality, so that "the primitives feel that the future event is actually present": the action of the force released is immediate, "and if its effects appear after some time it is nevertheless imagined—or, rather, in their case, felt—as immediately produced."[38] Lévy-Bruhl goes on to point out very justly that all this implies a conception of time and space that is not in our sense of the word "rational": one in which both past and future, cause and effect, coincide in a present experience. If we choose to call this an "unpractical" position, we must not forget that at the same time "the primitives constantly make use of the real connection between cause and effect ... they often display an ingenuity that implies a very accurate observation of this connection."[39]

Now it is impossible not to be struck by the fact that it is precisely a state of being in which "everywhere and every when is focused" (Dante), that is for the theologian and the metaphysician "divine": that at this level of reference "all states of being, seen in principle, *are* simul-

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regards the "seers, who see God face to face" and in whom the folk soul survives, as belonging to a strictly atavistic and inferior type of humanity, and thinks of the "divine inheritance" as something to be gotten rid of as soon as possible.

[38] Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *La Mentalité primitive* (Paris, 1922), pp. 88, 290. The problem of the use of apparently ineffectual rites for the attainment of purely practical ends is reasonably discussed by Radin, *Primitive Man as Philosopher*, pp.15-18.

[39] Lévy-Bruhl, *La Mentalité primitive*, p. 92.

taneous in the eternal now," and that "he who cannot escape from the standpoint of temporal succession so as to see all things in their simultaneity is incapable of the least conception of the metaphysical order."[40] We say that what seems to "us" irrational in the life of "savages," and may be unpractical, since it unfits them to compete with our material force, represents the vestiges of a primordial state of metaphysical understanding, and that if the savage himself is, generally speaking, no longer a comprehensor of his own "divine inheritance," this ignorance on his part is no more shameful than ours who do not recognize the intrinsic nature of his "lore," and understand it no better than he does. We do not say that the modern savage exemplifies the "primordial state" itself, but that his beliefs, and the whole content of folklore, bear witness to such a state. We say that the truly primitive man—"before the Fall"—was not by any means a philosopher or scientist but, by all means, a metaphysical being, in full possession of the *forma humanitatis* (as we are only very partially); that, in the excellent phrase of Baldwin Smith, he "experienced life as a whole."

Nor can it be said that the "primitives" are always unconscious of the sources of their heritage. For example, "Dr. Malinowski has insisted on the fact that, in the native Trobriand way of thinking, magic, agrarian or other, is not a human invention. From time immemorial, it forms a part of the inheritance which is handed down from generation to generation. Like the social institutions proper, it was created in the age of the myth, by the heroes who were the founders of civilization. Hence its sacred character. Hence also its efficacy."[41] Far more rarely, an archaeologist such as Andrae has the courage to express as his own belief that "when we sound the archetype, the ultimate origin of the form, then we find that it is anchored in the highest, not the lowest," and to affirm that "the sensible forms [of art], in which there was at first a polar balance of physical and metaphysical, have been more and more voided of content on their way down to us."[42]

The mention of the Trobriand Islanders above leads us to refer to one more type of what appears at first sight to imply an almost incredible want of observation. The Trobriand Islanders, and some Australians, are reported to be unaware of the causal connection between sexual intercourse and procreation; they are said to believe that spirit-children

[40] René Guénon, *La Métaphysique orientale* (Paris, 1939), pp. 15, 17.

[41] Lévy-Bruhl, *L'expérience mystique*, p. 295.

[42] Andrae, *Die ionische Saüle*, "Schlusswort." [Andrae's Schlusswort (Closing Words) are translated by Coomaraswamy, Chapter XVIII in this volume – Ed.]

enter the wombs of women on appropriate occasions, and that sexual intercourse alone is not a determinant of birth.[43] It is, indeed, implausible that the natives, "whose aboriginal endowment is quite as good as any European's, if not better,"[44] are unaware of any connection whatever between sexual intercourse and pregnancy. On the other hand, it is clear that their interest is not in what may be called the mediate causes of pregnancy, but in its first cause.[45] Their position is essentially identical with that of the universal tradition for which reproduction depends on the activating presence of what the mythologist calls a "fertility spirit" or "progenitive deity," and is in fact the Divine Eros, the Indian Kāmadeva and Gandharva, the spiritual Sun of RV I.115.1, the life of all and source of all being; it is upon *his* "connection with the field"[46] that life is transmitted, as it is by the human "sower" that

[43] M. F. Ashley Montagu, C*oming into Being among the Australian Aborigines* (London, 1937); B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages* (London, 1929). Cf. Coomaraswamy, "Spiritual Paternity and the Puppet-Complex," 1945.

[44] Montagu, C*oming into Being.*

[45] "God, the master of all generative power" (Hermes, *Asclepius* III.21); "the power of generation belongs to God" (*Sum. Theol.* I.45.5); "ex quo omnis paternitas in coelis et terra nominatur" (Eph. 3:15) ["of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named"—King James version –Ed.]. In Gaelic incantations (see A. Carmichael, C*armina gadelica*, Edinburgh, 1928), Christ and the Virgin Mary are continually invoked as progenitive deities, givers of increase in cattle or man; the phrasings are almost verbally identical with those of RV VII.102.2, "Who puts the seed in the plants, the cows, the mares, the women, Parjanya." "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your father, which is in heaven" (Matt. 23:9).

[46] "The Sun is the *ātman* of all that is motionless or mobile," RV I.115.1. "Whatsoever living thing is born, whether motionless or mobile, know that it is from the union of the Knower of the Field and the Field itself," BG XIII.26. "It is inasmuch as He 'kisses' (breathes on) all his children that each can say 'I am,'" ŚB VII.3.2.12; "Light is the progenitive power" TS VII.1.1.1 ; cf. John 1:4, "the life was the light of men"; "when the father thus actually emits him as seed into the womb, it is really the sun that emits him as seed into the womb," JUB III.10.4. Further references to solar paternity will be found in ŚB I.7.2.11 (Sun and Earth parents of all born beings); Dante, *Paradiso* XXII.116 (Sun "the father of each mortal life"); St. Bonaventura, *De reductione artium ad theologiam*, 21; *Mathnawī* I.3775; Plutarch, *Moralia* 368C, *phōs … gonimon* [generative light –Ed. trans.].

In connection with the "Knower of the Field" it may be remarked that his "conjunction" (*samyoga*) with the "Field" is not merely cognitive but erotic: Skr. *jñā* in its sense of "to recognize as one's own," or "possess," corresponding to Latin *gnoscere* and English "know" in the Biblical expression "Jacob knew his wife." Now the solar manner of "knowing" (in any sense) is by means of his rays, which are emitted by the "Eye"; and hence in the ritual in which the priest represents Prajāpati (the Sun as Father-Progenitor), he formally "looked at" the sacrificer's wife, "for insemination"; a metaphysical rite

the elements of the corporeal vehicle of life are planted in *his* "field." So that as the *Majjhima Nikāya*, I.265–266, expresses it, three things are required for conception, viz. conjunction of father and mother, the mother's period, and the presence of the Gandharva:[47] of which the two first may be called dispositive and the third an essential cause. We see now the meaning of the words of BU III.9.28.5, "Say not 'from semen,' but 'from what is alive [in the semen]'": "It is the Provident Spirit [*prajñātman*, i.e., the Sun] that grasps and erects the flesh" (Kauṣ. Up. III.3); "The power of the soul, which is in the semen through the spirit enclosed therein, fashions the body" (*Sum. Theol.* III.32.11). Thus, in believing with Schiller that "it is the Spirit that fashions the body for itself" (*Wallenstein*, III.13), the "primitive" is in agreement with a unanimous tradition and with Christian doctrine: "Spiritus est qui vivificat: caro non prodest quicquam" ("it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing," John 6:63).[48]

It will be seen that the Trobriander view that sexual intercourse alone is not a determinant of conception but only its occasion, and that "spirit-children" enter the womb, is essentially identical with the metaphysical doctrine of the philosophers and theologians. The notion that "old folklore ideas" are taken over into scriptural contexts, which are thus contaminated by the popular superstitions, reverses the order of events; the reality is that the folklore ideas are the form in which metaphysical doctrines are received by the people and transmitted by them. In its popular form, a given doctrine may not always have been understood, but for so long as the formula is faithfully transmitted it remains understandable; "superstitions," for the most part, are no mere delusions, but formulae of which the meaning has been forgotten and are therefore called meaningless—often, indeed, because the doctrine itself has been forgotten.

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that the anthropologist would call a piece of "fertility magic." See also Coomaraswamy, "The Sun-kiss," 1940.

47 For "to be present," the Pāli equivalent of Skr. *praty-upasthā*, "to stand upon," is employed; and this is the traditional expression, in accordance with which the Spirit is said to "take its stand upon" the bodily vehicle, which is accordingly referred to as its *adhiṣṭhānam*, "standing ground" or "platform." Gandharva, originally the Divine Eros, and Sun.

48 That St. John is speaking with reference to a regeneration by no means excludes application to any generation; for as exegetical theory insists, the literal sense of the words of scripture is also always true, and is the vehicle of the transcendental significance.

Aristotle's doctrine that "Man and the Sun generate man" (*Physics* II.2),[49] that of JUB III.10.4 and that of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, may be said to combine the scientific and the metaphysical theories of the origin of life: and this very well illustrates the fact that the scientific and metaphysical points of view are by no means contradictory, but rather complementary. The weakness of the scientific position is not that the empirical facts are devoid of interest or utility, but that these facts are thought of as a refutation of the intellectual doctrine. Actually, our discovery of chromosomes does not in any way account for the origin of life, but only tells us more about its mechanism. The metaphysician may, like the primitive, be incurious about the scientific facts; he cannot be disconcerted by them, for they can at the most show that God moves "in an even more mysterious way than we had hitherto supposed."

We have touched upon only a very few of the "motifs" of folklore. The main point that we have wished to bring out is that the whole body of these motifs represent a consistent tissue of interrelated intellectual doctrines belonging to a primordial wisdom rather than to a primitive science; and that for this wisdom it would be almost impossible to conceive a popular, or even in any common sense of the term, a human origin. The life of the popular wisdom extends backward to a point at which it becomes indistinguishable from the primordial tradition itself, the traces of which we are more familiar with in the sacerdotal and royal arts; and it is in this sense, and by no means with any "democratic" implications, that the lore of the people, expressed in their culture, is really the word of God—*Vox populi vox Dei* [the voice of the people is the voice of God –Ed. trans.].[50]

[49] To which correspond also the words of a Gaelic incantation, "from the bosom of the God of life, and the courses together," (Carmichael, *Carmina gadelica*, II, 119). In Egypt, similarly, "Life was an emanation of progenitive light and the creative word.... The Sun, Râ, was the creator above all others, and the means of his creative power were his eye, the 'Eye of Horus,' and his voice, the 'voice of heaven, the bolt'"; the Pharaoh was regarded as having been born, quite literally, of the Sun and a human mother (Alexandre Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, Paris, 1902, pp. 40, 41).

[50] The misunderstanding of the folk is accidental rather than essential; because they are not sceptical, nor moralistic, "by faith they understand." On the other hand, the literary artist (Andersen, Tennyson, etc.) who does not scruple to modify his narrative for aesthetic or moral reasons, often distorts it (cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* 358F, on "the unestablished first thoughts of poets and littérateurs"); and so, in the transition "from ritual to romance" we often have to ask, "how far did such and such an author really understand his material?"

CHAPTER XVI

Notes On "Savage" Art

"For the primeval man, in whom dwelt Thought, this Universe was all a Temple; Life everywhere a Worship."

—Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present,* Ch. 12

"What has New Guinea to offer to the eye of the artist and the lover of fine work?"[1] "It is clear that art in New Guinea is not divorced from daily life; for a proper understanding of the native wood-carving on buildings alone it is essential to take account of the system of agricultural economics, the chieftainship, the clan organization, the village arrangements, the totemic ideas, and the ritual practices of the people ... the general principle of tribal art as an expression of complex social values is of basic importance." "What is the position of the native artist in relation to his conformity to the local style?" "In nearly all 'savage' art the artist is essentially and foremost a craftsman. The things that he makes ... are meant to be used by someone ... the fact that things are so often made by a man for his own use, or to the direct order of a client, not merely in the hope of attracting a purchaser, tends to keep the artist close to the forms which experience has proved will work.... The superior craftsman receives his meed of admiration and reward, but there is no self-conscious separation of himself and his products from the utilitarian sphere of life, no divorce of the artist from his public, no 'man in the street' who regards the pure aesthetic of his tribe as an esoteric mystery. Mystery there may be, as regards craft secrets, handed down in families and reinforced with magic spells, but this is a feature of the general culture of the tribe, in which the ordinary citizen has his own share of private rights and privileges. There is on the other hand no vaguely communistic sense of working for the public good. There is a sense of responsibility to others, and incentive to do good work, but these are motivated by personal pride, social rivalry and a desire for economic gain. An interesting fact is that this deference to traditional style and to the opinions of others has not seemed to inhibit the artist. It is as if freed from the necessity of always having to create something of novel design in order to capture the public attention he could concentrate on

[1] *Art and Life in New Guinea.* By Raymond Firth, London and New York, The Studio Publications, 1936, 126 pp.; many illustrations.

the development of variations within the traditional bounds and on the refinement of his technique. Certain it is that when the culture of these people has been disturbed by European influence, in nearly every case the quality of their art has begun to fall off ... even though by European agencies the craftsmen are provided with much more efficient tools than before. Though new elements of design are introduced, in wood-carvings, for example, the work becomes flatter, less bold, the relief is lower, the execution is more careless and the more difficult types of design and of handicraft tend to disappear."

Dr. Raymond Firth goes on to discuss the character of the art in connection with the modern "appreciation" of abstract art and interest in the psycho-analysis of art—"The Freudian dogma of equating the savage with the child is taken as sufficient, the primitive is alleged to be free from the shackles which hamper civilized man, and to be capable of expressing directly in his art his instinctive impulses. The issue is not so simple. A Sepik mask is of course the product of an individual mentality, with many elements interwoven. But it is not simply the projection of a crude unconscious upon the material. It is largely the overt expression of conscious adherence to a cultural tradition which embodies a style of workmanship, a specifically enjoined manner of representing religious and social ideas. At the present time Surrealism appears to be psychologically very interesting[2] but aesthetically negligible, and it is doubtful if it can ever add anything to our understanding of primitive art. In fact, objects of native workmanship in such a context are robbed of their true meaning and are endowed with an alien set of values." One could not have a better illustration than is provided by Dr. Firth of the superiority of the anthropological to the psychological and aesthetic approaches to an unfamiliar art. The distinction has been admirably defined by Herbert Spinden.[3] "The appraisal of primitive specimens by esthetes and by ethnologists discloses different principles of criticism. The esthetic interest is often limited to what a piece of Negro sculpture, for instance, does to a white man's eye, how it stirs his emotions and imagination, what it has to offer in demonstration of new shapes and planes to persons skilled in the technique of wood carving.... The field worker, on the other hand . . . has been interested... in statements of the native artists concerning use and meaning.[4] ... The difference in

[2] I.e., as pathology is interesting to the patient who is "enjoying poor health."

[3] *Brooklyn Museum Quarterly*, October, 1935, pp. 168, 169.

[4] Cf. Margaret Mead, "Art and Reality from the Standpoint of Cultural Anthropology," *College Art Journal*, II, 1943, p. 119.

these two lines of interest is quite understandable and amounts to this: is the art of primitive people to be regarded as a white man's oyster or a black man's culture?"

In the same way for the art of the Marquesas Islands.[5] "En fait, on ne saurait, aux îles Marquises, séparer les manifestations esthétiques des indigènes de la trame entière de leur civilisation; on ne peut pas considérer leurs arts comme des phénomènes indépendants" [In fact in the Marquesas Islands, it would be inconceivable to separate the aesthetic manifestations of the native people from the entire fabric of their civilization; one cannot consider their arts as independent phenomena - Ed. trans.]. If we also bear in mind the physical beauty and perfect health of the South Sea islander before the coming of white men, one cannot but marvel at the impertinence and irrelevance of our psychological and aesthetic interpretations of their art; it would appear that such approaches are as far as possible removed from our pretended ideal of scientific objectivity.

Here in the Marquesas Islands there survived in full force the conception of manufacture as a rite, consciously imitative of the formative work of the Father by whom the earthly, feminine material was given form in the beginning, When the work was begun, a chorus of old men or women "psalmodiaient les incantations sacrées relatant la génèse et la croissance du monde et des hommes.... S'agissait-il de construire une maison? Les matériaux personnifiés étaient invités à collaborer .... Construisait-on une pirogue? On récapitulait le processus d'un bout à l'autre, exactement tel que l'avait suivi Motuhaiki, le premier constructeur de pirogues.... La psalmodie se termine en conférant solennellement son nom à chaque partie de la pirogue.... Ces incantations causatives passaient pour être non moins importantes que le travail proprement dit.[6] En outre . . . il était indispensable d'isoler l'ouvrage de toute influence contaminatrice, afin de conserver intacte l'atmosphère surnaturelle engendrée par l'incantation. Aussi élevait-on une maison spéciale pour y exécuter le travail. Elle était clôturée de *tapu*.... Les ouvriers et leurs aides, logeant et travaillant dans ce local sacré, se con-

[5] *L'Art des Îles Marquises.* By Willowdean C. Handy, with an Introduction by E. S. Craighill Handy. Paris, Les Éditions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1938. 55 pp.; 24 outline figures and 19 collotype plates.

[6] On singing at one's work, once universal, but hardly possible in industrial societies, cf. St. Augustine, *De op. monach.* c. 21, where he says that monks who labor manually "can sing divine hymns even while working with their hands, like the craftsmen who lend their tongues to the telling of tales, without withdrawing their hands from their work."

sacrait de tout coeur et très solennellement à l'ouvrage entrepris, en se concentrant sur cette tâche unique, et en fermant autant que possible leurs sens aux distractions du monde extérieur ... ils ... observaient une continence rigoureuse pendant toute la durée du travail; ils faisaient même leur propre cuisine, afin d'éviter que les mains non consacrées ne touchassent à leur nourriture" [a chorus of old men or women chanted the sacred incantations relating the genesis and growth of the world and man.... Was it a question of building a house? The personified materials were invited to collaborate.... Was one making a dugout canoe? One recapitulated the process exactly as it was done by Motuhaiki, the first maker of dugout canoes.... The chanting ends in formally conferring to each part of the canoe its name.... These causative incantations were considered to be no less important than the work itself. Moreover... it was indispensable to isolate the work from all contaminating influences, in order to preserve intact the supernatural atmosphere engendered by the incantation. Therefore a special house was built in order to do the work. It was circumscribed by taboos.... The workers and their assistants lived and worked in this sacred place, devoting themselves wholeheartedly and very solemnly to the work undertaken, concentrating themselves on this unique task, and closing as far as possible their senses to the distractions of the outside world... they... observed a rigorous continence the duration of the work; they even made their own meals, in order to avoid unconsecrated hands touching their food –Ed. trans.]. At the close of the operation both artist and artifact had to be formally desecrated and thus returned from this "niveau transcendant" [transcendant level –Ed. trans.] to that of secular activities. Even the minor arts were thus practiced in a sacred precinct. In all this it is perfectly clear that just as in India (and elsewhere) the artist operated as an initiated yogin, only returning to his worldly self when the task had been completed; there is an inseparable linking together of art and sacrifice. This whole theory of artistic creation belongs to a universal metaphysic, and is in all its details of no less importance than are the formal designs themselves for a research in origins.

We cannot fail to connect the character of the art itself with the conditions under which it was produced. We must not misunderstand these conditions. Strange as it may appear to us, "au milieu de cette atmosphère religieuse, les arts et les métiers s'exerçaient dans un esprit très sain, très naturel, nullement bondieusard. Tout travail était une entreprise communale, exigeant la coopération de beaucoup d'hommes de la tribu; ils y participaient dans un esprit de fête.... Si étrangères que nous puissent paraître les conventions de la magie, du *tapu*, et du travail

communal, nous pouvons toutefois en estimer les avantages pratiques. Le système avait pour effet d'établir une règle de travail; un effort concentré, soutenu depuis le commencement de la fabrication jusqu'à son achèvement était suivi d'un repos et d'une détente. Tout étant disposé pour le mieux en vue de son travail, l'artisan n'était détourné de son activité par aucun effort extérieur, par aucune distraction:[7] sa profession reconnue comme partie intégrante de l'activité communale lui assurait la sécurité économique et un rang honoré au sein de la tribu; et, sans discuter l'efficace de la magie, nous devons reconnaître l'excellence de l'éducation professionelle, qui permettait à l'artiste de se représenter exactement son oeuvre avant d'en entreprendre l'exécution.... Les procédés de tout art étant rituellement determinés, et les dessins particuliers fixés par la tradition, la capacité d'un artiste se mesurait essentiellement à l'exactitude de son savoir et de son exécution.... Même de nos jours, alors que les incantations sont interdites (!)[8] et oubliées, et que l'on embrouille le nom et l'application des dessins, il arrive que l'artisan, si peu entouré, si peu encouragé qu'il soit, jette une écuelle au rebut parce que ces outils grossiers — les moitiés d'une paire de ciseaux — ont devié et gâté la perfection de l'ouvrage. L'obligation d'une mémoire sûre et d'une main exercée a fait que la perfection technique demeure l'idéal de l'artisan des Marquises.[9]... Formés à l'école pratique de l'apprentissage, ces maîtres recevaient le titre de *tuhuna* avec le suffix de leur art à chacun.... Beaucoup d'entre eux, très versatiles, connaissaient plusieurs arts, ou même tous les arts, et on leur donnait le titre de *tuhuna nui*, grand maître. Ces professions étaient accessibles à n'importe quel homme, et certaines d'entre elles aux femmes également.... Les ouvrages de ces *tuhuna* très habiles embellissaient les objets les plus ordinaires de la vie courante non moins que les parures les plus estimées ou les symboles les plus vénérés. Chaque foyer était en mesure de subvenir au moins en partie à son équipement, et grâce à une pratique perfectionnée de l'échange des cadeaux, il pouvait acquérir toute espèce d'objet fabriqué dans l'archipel" [in the midst of this religious atmosphere, the arts and crafts were practiced with a very healthy and very natural spirit, without excessive religiosity. All work was a communal enterprise, requiring the cooperation of many men of the tribe;

[7] In other words, they are "men of leisure" (*schole*), or "scholars" in Plato's original sense of the word, *Republic* 370B.

[8] By the ignorant and barbarous agents of "civilization," like those who have here in America attempted to suppress the ritual arts of the American Indians.

[9] Just as was still the case in Ceylon thirty years ago.

they participated in it in a festive spirit.... Strange as the conventions of magic, taboo and communal work may seem to us, we are nevertheless able to appreciate their practical advantages. The system had the effect of establishing a work rule such that a concentrated effort, sustained from the beginning of the construction until its completion, was followed by a period of rest and relaxation. Everything was arranged to ensure the best outcome in regard to the artisan's work, who was not diverted from his activity by any outside endeavor or distraction; his profession, recognized as an integral part of the communal work, assured him economic security and an honored place within the tribe; and, while avoiding any discussion of the efficacy of magic, we must recognize the excellence of his professional education, which allowed the artist to imagine his work in detail before undertaking its execution.... Because the techniques of every art were ritually determined and the particular designs were fixed by tradition, the ability of an artist was principally measured by the accuracy of his knowledge and his execution.... Even nowadays when incantations are forbidden and forgotten and when the name and the use of the designs are confused, it can happen that an artisan, if given a little attention and encouragement, will throw away a bowl because his simple tool, which is one half a pair of scissors, went astray and spoiled the perfection of the piece. The necessity of a sure memory and a practiced hand ensured that technical perfection would remain the ideal of the craftsman of the Marquises.... After being trained through the applied schooling of apprenticeship, these masters received the title of *tuhuna,* which was followed by the suffix of their respective arts. Many of them were very versatile and knew several arts, or even all of the arts, and to these one gave the title of *tuhuna-nui,* grand master. These professions were accessible to any man, and some to women as well.... The work of these very skilful *tuhuna* beautified the most ordinary objects of everyday life just as much as the most valued jewelry or the most venerated symbols. Each home was able to provide, at least to some extent, for its own outfitting, and thanks to a sophisticated practice of the exchange of gifts, it could acquire any type of object manufactured in the archipelago –Ed. trans.].

It is rather difficult to see in what respect ways and purposes of living such as these could have been improved upon, whether from the standpoint of the producer or that of the consumer, both of whom were equally interested in the quality of the product: or in what respect these conditions of living were not incomparably superior to any of those accepted by the industrial democracies or totalitarian imperialisms of today; nor can these reflections be dissociated from a disconcerting rec-

ollection of the fact that in the Marquesas Islands, "toute leur technique fait partie de leurs relations avec le surnaturel" [their whole technique was part of their relationship with the supernatural –Ed. trans.].

But in 1842 the French took possession of the islands: their culture was doomed; and now, as Mr. Handy remarks "les insulaires qui étaient jadis les plus beaux et les plus virils de la Polynésie tropicale, et qui pouvaient compter quelque 75.000 âmes, ne sont plus qu'une poignée d'hommes" [the islanders who formerly were the most beautiful and the most virile of tropical Polynesia and who could count some 75,000 souls, are no more than a handful of men –Ed. trans.] and Mrs. Handy continues "Bien que les aspects extérieurs de leur culture se soient presque effacés sous l'action dévastatrice de l'homme blanc, il n'empêche pas que beaucoup d'insulaires des Marquises, pris individuellement, sont encore aujourdhui l'incarnation même de ces idées qui engendrèrent une sculpture impressionante et un art décoratif plein de verdeur au temps de leur vitalité passée" [although the outward aspects of their culture have been nearly wiped out by the devastating activity of the white man, this does not prevent a great many of the Marquesas islanders, taken individually, from still being today the living incarnation of ideas which can still generate impressive sculpture and a vigorous decorative art, even at this time of their now-past vitality –Ed. trans.]. Thus if anything survives, it is *in spite of* all those modern activities that are sometimes spoken of as "educational" and "civilizing." The Marquesas islanders would be less than men if it could not even now be said of them that "ils méprisent les institutions étrangères, qu'elles soient administratives, commerciales, ou religieuses" [they scorned foreign institutions, whether these be administrative, commercial, or religious –Ed. trans.][10]

In the same way "Pueblo arts are ritual arts, their motivation is religious. If this motivation lapses, the arts will lapse; for the only substitute motivation in sight is commercial gain."[11] As a reviewer comments, apparently harmless and useful innovations such as irrigation, wasteland clearing or new house sites may involve the disintegration of Pueblo culture. Peoples, indeed, "progress" (in the current and immoral sense of the word) at their peril, and usually realize, only when all is lost, that they have sold a birthright for a mess of pottage. And what a "mess"

[10] "Die polynesische Kultur ist auf den Marquesas mit dem Jahr 1900 praehistorisch geworden" [The Polynesian culture has become prehistoric in 1900 in the Marquesas Islands –Ed. trans.] (Karl von den Steinen, *Die Marquesaner and threr Kunst*, 1925, p. 35).

[11] Elsie Parsons, *Pueblo Indian Religion*, 1935, p. 1142.

if nothing but "the American standard of living" is to take the place of their culture, with its religious motivation.

Writing about the New Hebrides, Tom Harrisson says:[12] "No man is unable to carve, dance and tell stories. The impulse to art form is tradition, via ritual (and religion). The object of art form is the satisfaction[13] of function or of ritual.... Intangible things co-operate in every effort of making. A man does not carve a bird figure; he partakes in the carving.[14]

"The art of dancing is, in their own view, the highest.... Dancing is not done independent of ritual. Music is used almost exclusively with dancing, not as a thing in itself.[15]

"Songs are a form of story-telling. Words are a native art with an intricate circular pattern. The lay-out and content in the thousand myths which every child learns (often word perfect, and one story may last hours) are a whole library . . . the hearers are held in a web of spun words.... The natives easily learn to write after white impact. They regard it as a curious and useless performance. They say: 'Cannot a man remember and speak?'[16]

"Tools are of the simplest. These unscientists have not sought better ones. For centuries that was their success, in slow growth from firm roots. Stone implements imposed their simplicity upon the things made. The Hebridean seldom greatly elaborates material objects; he reserves that for ideas, for dances and drawings in the sand.[17] . . . He contemplates inwards. . . .

"Children are educated by listening and watching.... They learn to make the many intricate labyrinths of continuous line drawing in sand,

[12] *Savage Civilization*, London, 1937, pp. 45, 161, 351 f.

[13] Cf. *alaṃkāra*, "ornament," discussed in Chapter III in this volume.

[14] On "participation," see Chapter IX in this volume.

[15] Cf. W. Spies and B. de Zoete, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (New York, 1939) (one of the best accounts of an "unspoilt" and "normal" culture that has ever been written), also my "Am I my Brother's Keeper?" and "Bugbear of Literacy," published in *Asia and the Americas*, 1943 and 1944 [both collected in *Am I My Brother's Keeper?* (New York, 1947); English edition titled *The Bugbear of Literacy* (London, 1949, reprinted 1979) – Ed.].

[16] Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 275 "For this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not exercise their memory. . . they will read many things without instruction, and will therefore seem to know many things."

[17] For reproductions of these wonderful drawings see A. B. Deacon, "Geometrical Drawings from the Islands of the New Hebrides," in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXIV, 1934, and some republished in Tom Harrisson's *Savage Civilization.*

which are so necessary to knowledge now and hereafter. These must be learnt to perfection, with their stories and certainties—none may forget."

What has *our* civilization done for these people? "Most observers agree that native savagery was increased by white impact": "an unbreakable hatred for the white survives today in Malekula."

CHAPTER XVII

Symptom, Diagnosis, and Regimen

Outstanding characteristics of our world in a state of chaos are disorder, uncertainty, sentimentality, and despair. Our comfortable faith in progress has been shaken, and we are no longer quite sure that man can live by bread alone. It is a world of "impoverished reality," one in which we go on living as if life were an end in itself and had no meaning. As artists and students of art, and as museum curators, we are a part of this world and partly responsible for it. Our point of view is one of its symptoms—a sinister word, for symptoms imply disease. Nevertheless, they provide a basis for diagnosis, our only resort when prognosis has been neglected. Let us describe the symptoms, ask of what morbid condition they are an index, and prescribe a remedy.

Symptomatic abnormalities in our collegiate point of view include the assumption that art is essentially an aesthetic, that is, sensational and emotional, behavior, a passion suffered rather than an act performed; our dominating interest in style, and indifference to the truth and meaning of works of art; the importance we attach to the artist's personality; the notion that the artist is a special kind of man, rather than that every man is a special kind of artist; the distinction we make between fine art and applied art; and the idea that the nature to which art must be true is not Creative Nature, but our own immediate environment, and more especially, ourselves.

Within and outside the classrooms, we misuse terms, such as "form," "ornament," "inspiration," and even "art." Our naturalistic preoccupations and historical prejudice make it impossible for us to penetrate the arts of the folk and of primitive man, whose designs we admire but whose meanings we ignore because the abstract terms of the myth are enigmatic to our empirical approach. Our artists are "emancipated" from any obligation to the eternal verities, and have abandoned to tradesmen the satisfaction of present needs. Our abstract art is not an iconography of transcendental forms, but the realistic picture of a disintegrated mentality. Our boasted standard of living is qualitatively magnificent. And what is, perhaps, the most significant symptom and evidence of our malady is the fact that we have destroyed the vocational and artistic foundations of whatever traditional cultures our touch has infected.

We call these symptoms abnormal because, when seen in their historical and worldwide perspective, the assumptions of which they are a consequence are actually peculiar, and in almost every detail opposed to those of other cultures, and notably those whose works we most admire. That we can admire Romanesque building—an "architecture without drainage"—at the same time that we despise the mind of the "Dark Ages" is anomalous; we do not see that it may be the fault of our mentality that ours is a "drainage without architecture."

All these symptoms point to a deep-seated sickness: primarily, the diagnosis must be that of ignorance. By that, of course, we do not mean an ignorance of the facts, with which our minds are cluttered, but an ignorance of the principles to which all operations can be reduced, and must be reduced if they are to be understood. Ours is a nominalist culture; nothing is "real" for us that we cannot grasp with our hands or otherwise "observe." We train the artist, not to think, but to observe; ours is "a rancor contemptuous of immortality." In the train of this fundamental ignorance follow egotism (*cogito ergo sum, ahaṃkāra*, *oiēsis*), greed, irresponsibility, and the notion that work is an evil and culture a fruit of idleness, miscalled "leisure." The Greeks very properly distinguished "leisure" (*scholē*) from a "cessation" (*pausis*); but we, who confuse these two, and find the notion of a "work of leisure," i.e., one requiring our undivided attention (Plato, *Republic* 370B), very strange, are also right in calling our holidays "vacations," *vacances*, i.e., times of emptiness.

Our malady, moreover, is one of schizophrenia. We are apt to ask about a work of art two *separate* questions, "What is it for?" and "What does it mean?" That is to divide shape from form, symbol from reference, and agriculture from culture. Primitive man, whose handiwork displays a "polar balance of physical and metaphysical," could not have asked these separate questions. Even today the American Indian cannot understand why his songs and ritual should interest us, if we cannot use their spiritual content. Plato considered unworthy of free men, and would have excluded from his ideal state, the practice of any art that served only the needs of the body. And until we demand of the artist and the manufacturer, who are naturally one and the same man, products designed to serve the needs of the body and the soul at one and the same time, the artist will remain a playboy, the manufacturer a caterer, and the workman a snob wanting nothing better than a larger share of the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table.

Now for the regimen. To administer a medicine may take courage when the doctor's business depends on the patient's good will. To ques-

tion the validity of the distinction of fine from applied art, or of the artist from the craftsman, is to question the validity of "that monster of modern growth, the financial-commercial state" on which both artist and teacher now depend for their livelihood. Nevertheless, in addressing a body of educators and curators, one must insist upon their responsibility for the teaching of truth about the nature of art and the social function of the artist.

This will involve, among other things, a repudiation of the view that art is in any special sense an aesthetic experience. Aesthetic reactions are nothing more than the biologist's "irritability," which we share with the amoeba. For so long as we make of art a merely aesthetic experience or can speak seriously of a "disinterested aesthetic contemplation," it will be absurd to think of art as pertaining to the "higher things of life." The artist's function is not simply to please, but to present an ought-to-be-known in such a manner as to please when seen or heard, and so expressed as to be convincing. We must make it clear that it is not the artist, but the man, who has both the right and the duty to choose the theme; that the artist has no license to say anything not in itself worth saying, however eloquently; that it is only by his wisdom as a man that he can know what is worth saying or making. Art is a kind of knowledge by which we know *how* to do our work (*Sum. Theol.* I.2.57.3), but it does not tell us *what* we need, and therefore ought, to make. So there must be a censorship of manufacture; and if we repudiate a censorship by "guardians" it remains for us to teach our pupils, whether manufacturers or consumers, that it is their responsibility to exercise a collective censorship, not only of qualities, but of kinds of manufacture as well.[1]

Our obligation demands at the same time a radical change of method in our interpretation of the language of art. No one will deny that art is a means of communication by signs or symbols. Our current methods of analysis are interpretations of these signs in their inverted sense, that is, as psychological expressions, as if the artist had nothing better to do than to make an exhibition of himself to his neighbor or of his neighbor to himself. But personalities are interesting only to their owners, or, at most, to a narrow circle of friends; and it is not the voice of the artist but the voice of the monument, the demonstration of a *quod erat demonstrandum* [that which was to be shown], that we want to hear.[2]

[1] "The crucial error is that of holding that nothing is any more important than anything else, that there can be no order of goods, and no order in the intellectual realm," R. M. Hutchins, *Education for Freedom* (Baton Rouge, La., 1943), p. 26.

[2] "Une pensée a guidé la main de l'artisan ou de l'artiste: pensée d'utilité ... pensée

The art historian is less of a whole man than the anthropologist. The former is all too often indifferent to themes, while the latter is looking for something that is neither in the work of art as if in a place, nor in the artist as a private property, but to which the work of art is a pointer. For him, the signs, constituting the language of a significant art, are full of meanings; in the first place, injunctive, moving us to do this or that, and in the second place, speculative, that is, referent of the activity to its principle. To expect any less than this of the artist is to build him an ivory tower. Such a habitation may suit him for the moment; but in times of stress we may no longer be able to afford such luxuries; and if he stays in his tower, enjoying his irresponsibility, and should even die of neglect, he may be unlamented and unsung. For if the artist cannot be interested in something greater than himself or his art, if the patron does not demand of him products well and truly made for the good use of the whole man, there is little prospect that art will ever again affect the lives of more than that infinitesimal fraction of the population that cares about the sort of art we have, and no doubt, deserve. There can be no restoration of art to its rightful position as the principle of order governing the production of utilities short of a change of mind on the part of both artist and consumer, sufficient to bring about a reorganization of society on the basis of vocation, that form in which, as Plato said, "more will be done, and better done, and more easily than in any other way."

religieuse … ce que l'archéologue cherche dans le monument, c'est l'expression d'une pensée." [A thought has guided the hand of the artisan or the artist: a practical thought … a religious thought … what the archeologist searches for in the monument is the expression of a thought –Ed. trans.] G. de Jerphanion, *La Voix des monuments* (Paris, 1930), pp. 10-16).

CHAPTER XVIII

The Life of Symbols

by Walter Andrae

translated by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy[1]

In order to bring the realm of the spiritual and the divine within the range of perception, humanity is driven to adopt a point of view in which it loses the immediate union with the divine and the immediate vision of the spiritual. Then it tries to embody in a tangible or otherwise perceptible form, to materialize let us say, what is intangible, and imperceptible. It makes symbols, written characters, and cult images of earthly substance, and sees in them and through them the spiritual and divine substance that has no likeness and could not otherwise be seen.

It is by no means the case that symbols and likenesses arise in the course of a higher development of spirituality in men. On the contrary they draw nigh as means of rescue when there is a decline in our divinity and spirituality. So it was that Jesus Christ gave out in parables the treasures of the divine kingdom to a declining, not to an advancing humanity, for his own and for all future ages. In the same way, in pre-Christian times, the visible symbols, the images of the great mysteries and experiences, provided a remedy for the indigence of the soul in the time of the decline.

It is only when one has acquired the habit of this way of looking at things that symbols and images can be understood; not when we are habituated to the narrower way which always brings us back to an investigation of the outward and formal aspects of symbols and images and makes us value them the more, the more complicated or fully evolved they are. This formalistic method always leads into a vacuum. Here we are dealing only with the end, not with the beginning, and what we find in this end is always something hard and opaque, which opens up no further glimpse of the way. And it is only by such a glimpse of the spiritual that the ultimate goal can be reached, whatever the means or methods of research that may be resorted to. When we sound the archetype, the ultimate origin of the form, then we find that it is anchored in the highest, not the lowest. This does not mean that we moderns must

[1] Translation of the Schlusswort [Conclusion] to Walter Andrae, *Die ionische Säule, Bauform oder Symbol,* Berlin, 1933. This translation was originally published in *The Modern Review*, February, 1935.

needs lose ourselves in irrelevant speculation, for everyone of us can experience microcosmically in his own life and body the fact that he has wandered from the highest and that the longer he learns to feel a hunger and thirst for symbol and likeness the more deeply he feels it,—that is if he only retains the power to guard himself against that inner hardening and petrifaction, in which we are all, alas, in danger of being lost.

The formalistic method can indeed only be justified the farther we move away from the archetypes to the present day. The sensible forms, in which there was at first a polar balance of the physical and metaphysical, have been more and more voided of content on their way down to us; so we say, this is an "ornament." That indeed can be treated and investigated in the formalistic manner. And that is what has happened constantly as regards all traditional ornament, not excepting the "ornament" so-called that is represented by the beautiful pattern of the Ionic capital. Scholars, like Puchstein in his researches, could hardly have done otherwise.

He for whom this conception of the origin of ornament seems strange, should study for once the representations of the whole fourth and third millennia B. C. in Egypt and Mesopotamia, contrasting them with such "ornaments" as are properly so-called in our modern sense. It will hardly happen that even one such can be found there. Whatever may seem to be such, is a drastically indispensable technical form, or it is an expressive form, the picture of a spiritual truth. Even the so-called ornament of the pottery painting and engraving that ranges back to the neolithic in Mesopotamia and elsewhere is for the most part controlled by technical and symbolic necessity. Research should deal with the problem, upon what plane of spirituality they must rest or have originated in; for in the domain of creation and life, it is by no means the case that everything lies on one and the same level. In a craft like that of pottery, now so little valued, but which once, as being the oldest of the arts, enjoyed the highest favor, we should expect to and do indeed meet with forms and symbols proper to a plane other than that of the field of "architecture" and "sculpture."

He who marvels that a formal symbol can remain alive not only for millennia, but that, as we shall yet learn, that it can spring into life again after an interruption of thousands of years, should remind himself that the power from the spiritual world, which forms one part of the symbol, is eternal; (and that only) the other part is material, earthly, and impermanent. Unseen by earthly eyes, the spiritual is able to survive in the smallest movements and traces, revealing itself only to the penetrating glance of one who looks deep, as has been our experience in the

case of the forms of the Ionic column. Then it becomes an indifferent problem, whether the ancients, in our case the early Ionians, were aware of the whole content of the ancient symbol of humanity, which the East had bestowed on them, or whether or not they wanted to carry over only some part of that content into their formula. Conscious or unconscious, willed or unwilled, is not the question here. It is the spiritual power that here knows and wills, and manifests itself when and where its due time has come.

From that moment when the deep symbolic meaning of the Ionic column was forgotten, when it was changed into "architecture" and "art," its truthfulness was at an end. Then there came out of it an "architectural form," and "art form"; it became an element of construction, a form without any legitimate function. We learnt this even before the discovery of "modern realism," and it is a service that the latter has rendered, to have dispensed with what had nothing more to tell. But there we merely compromised with the ignorance and stupidity of our times. Sensitive students of ancient art already felt and still feel that illegitimacy in the decaying branches of Greek art, in Hellenistic and especially in Roman art, where what is holy in the symbols is more and more overlaid by the abundance and exaggeration of the large and small parts of the form and the costliness of the material. With the submergence of the old wisdom of the Mysteries, the understanding of this noble symbol of a higher humanity grew less and less. A new kind of spiritual attitude, and a new kind of holy symbol grew up into the Christian world out of the now barren soil of the Oriental, Hellenistic and Roman forest of forms, and subsequently, in the time of the Renaissance and Humanism, by a revivification of Hellenistic and Roman forms, built up for itself on this basis a new spiritual attitude, viz. one of service in the temple of its own self-conscious beauty, that of aesthetic humanism.

Was the Ionic column therefore dead, because its living meaning had been lost, because it was denied that it was the image of a spiritual truth? I think not. Goethe has rightly expressed it. Inviolate, never annihilated by any power or any age, this immemorial form of the "Ring-bundle"[2] lives on and still reproduces itself. To all appearance hidden away for centuries and millennia, its course flows on, and appears, when the time comes, in new light and with new value. Someday humanity, hungry for a concise and integral expression of itself, will take hold of

[2] Ed. note: The ring-bundle was a symbolic architectural form from ancient Mesopotamia made of bundled reeds forming a ring at one end. According to Andrae, the double ring-bundle is the source of the volute of the Ionian column.

this inviolate and holy form again, and therewith attain to those powers of which it stands in need, to the biunity and to its own superstructure, to the perfecting of the all too earthly in the freedom of the spiritual worlds.

Perhaps we may be allowed a glance into the future. What is their significance for our day of all the investigations of the noble forms of antiquity and of all their identification in our museums, if not as guides, indispensable to life, on the way through ourselves and onward into the future? If the Greeks already called the crowns of leaves upon their stelae, columns, and entablatures a *kyma,* that is "relic of the past," and handed them on with a never dying awe, even though the primeval significance of these crowns had been diluted, we ourselves can learn from that to penetrate our own being with the noble forms, and to saturate the creative patterns with the feeling of our own day. Again the call is uttered to formative men in general and the creative artist in particular: Maintain the transparency of the material, that it may be saturated with the spirit. He can obey this command only if he maintains his own transparency, and that is the rock on which most of us are apt to break. Each and everyone reaches a point in his life when he begins to stiffen and—either stiffens in fact or must by superhuman effort recover for himself what he possessed undiminished in his childhood but was more and more taken from him in youth: so that the doors of the spiritual world may open to him, and the spirit find its way into body and soul.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORT TITLES

A	*The Book of the Gradual Sayings* (*Aṇguttara-Nikāya*), ed. F. L. Woodward and E. M. Hare, 5 vols., London, 1932-1939 (PTS).
AĀ	*Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, ed. A. B. Keith, Oxford, 1909.
AB	(= *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*). *Rigveda Brahmanas: The Aitareya and Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda*, ed. A. B. Keith, Cambridge, Mass., 1920 (HOS XXV).
Abhidharmakośa	*L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, tr. Louis de la Vallée-Poussin, 6 vols., Paris, 1923-1931.
Abhinaya Darpaṇa	*The Mirror of Gesture: Being the Abhinaya Darpaṇa of Nandikeśvara*, ed. A. K. Coomaraswamy, with Gopala Kristnaya Duggirala, Cambridge, Mass., 1917.
Ait. Up.	(=*Aitareya Upaniṣad*). In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed. R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., rev., London, 1931.
Anugitā	*The Bhagavadgîtâ, with the Sanatsugâtîya, and the Anugîtâ*, ed. Kâshinâth Trimbak Telang, Oxford, 1882 (SBE VIII).
Aquinas	1. *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, doctoris angelici, Opera omnia ad fidem optimarum editionum accurato recognita*. 25 vols. Parma, 1852-1872. 2. See also *Sum. Theol.* below.
Aristotle	1. *De anima*, tr. W. S. Hett (LCL). 2. *The Metaphysics*, tr. Hugh Tredennick (LCL). 3. *The Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. H. Rackham (LCL). 4. *The Physics*, tr. Francis M. Cornford (LCL). 5. *The Poetics*, tr. W. Hamilton Fyfe (LCL).

Arthaśāstra	*Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra*, ed. R. Shamasastry, 2nd ed., Mysore, 1923
Āryabhata	*Āryabhaṭīya*, tr. Walter Eugene Clark, Chicago, 1930.
AV	1. *Atharva Veda*, ed, W. D. Whitney and C. R. Lanman, Cambridge, Mass., 1905 (HOS VII, VIII). 2. *The Hymns of the Atharva-Veda*, ed. R.T.H. Griffith, 2 vols., 2nd ed., Benares, 1916–1917.
Avicenna	*Metaphysices compendium*, Rome, 1926.
Avencebrol	(Solomon Ibn Gabirol) *Fons Vitae*, see *Fountain of Life*, tr. Alfred B. Jacob, Philadelphia, 1954.
BAHA	*Bulletin de l'Office Internationale des Instituts d'Archéologie et d'Histoire d'Art*.
Baudhāyana Dh. Sū	*Das Baudhāyana-Dharmasūtra*, ed. Eugen Hultzsch, Leipzig, 1922.
BD	*The Bṛhad Devatā of Śaunaka*, ed. A. A. Macdonell, Cambridge, Mass., 1904 (HOS VI).
BÉFEO	*Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* (Hanoi).
BG	*The Bhagavad Gītā*, ed. Swami Nikhilananda, New York, 1944.
Boethius	*The Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand (LCL).
BU	(= *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed. R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., London, 1931.
Chuang-tzu	*Chuang Tzu: Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer*, ed. H. A. Giles, London, 1889.
Cicero	1. *Academica*, tr. H. Rackham (LCL). 2. *Brutus*, tr. G. L. Hendrickson (LCL). 3. *De natura deorum*, tr. H. Rackham (LCL).

	4. *De officiis*, tr. Walter Miller (LCL). 5. *Pro Publio Quinctio*, tr. John Henry Freese (LCL). 6. *Tusculan Disputations*, tr. J. E. King (LCL).
Claudian, *Stilicho*	*On Stilicho's Consulship*, tr. Maurice Platnauer, London and Cambridge, Mass., 1956.
Clement	1. *Miscellanies*, tr. F.J.A. Hart and J. B. Mayor, London, 1902. 2. *The Clementine Homilies*, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. XVII, Edinburgh, 1870.
CU	(= *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed. R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., London, 1931.
D	(= *Dīgha-Nikāya*) *Dialogues of the Buddha*, ed. T. W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, 3 vols., London, 1899-1921 (PTS).
DA	(= *Dīgha-Nikāya Atthakathā*) *The Sumaṇgalavilāsinī: Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya*, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter (vol. I), and W. Stede (vols. II and III), London, 1886-1932 (PTS).
Damascene	St. John of Damascus. See Migne, PG, Vols. 94-96.
Dante	1. *Convito* (1529); facsimile edition, Rome, 1932. *Dante and his Convito: A Study with Translations*, W. M. Rossetti, London, 1910. 2. *Dantis Alighieri Epistolae: The Letters of Dante*, ed. P. Toynbee, Oxford, 1966. 3. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, tr. Charles Eliot Norton, 3 vols., Boston and New York, 1895–1897.
Daśarūpa	*The Daśarūpa: a Treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy*, tr. G.C.O. Haas, New York, 1912.
Dh	*The Dhammapada*, ed. S. Radhakrishnan, London 1950.

DhA	(= *Dhammapada Atthakathā*) *Dhammapada Commentary*, ed. H. C. Norman, 4 vols., 1906–1914 (PTS).
Dionysius	1. *De coelesti hierarchia*, see *La Hiérarchie céleste*, ed. G. Heil and M. de Gandillac, Paris, 1958 (*Sources chrétiennes* LVIII). 2. *De divinis nominibus* and *De mystica theologia*, see *The Divine Names* and *The Mystical Theology*, ed. C. E. Rolt, London, 1920. 3. Epistles, see *Saint Denys L'Aréopagite*, *Oeuvres*, ed. Mgr. Darboy, Paris, 1932.
Divyāvadāna	*Divyāvadāna*, ed. E. B. Cowell and R. A. Neil, Cambridge, 1886.
Dpv	*Dipavamsa*, ed. H. Oldenberg, London, 1879.
Epiphanius	*Epiphanius* (*Ancoratus and Panarion*), ed. K. Holl, Leipzig, 1915-1933.
Erigena	John Scotus Erigena. See Migne, PL, Vol. 122.
Euripides	1. *Euripides*, tr. A. S. Way (LCL). 2. *Fragments* in Nauck.
Greek Anthology	*The Greek Anthology*, tr. W. R. Paton (LCL),
Haṃsa Up.	(= *Haṃsa Upaniṣad*) In *Thirty Minor Upanishads*, tr. K. Nārāyaṇasvāmi, Madras, 1914.
Heracleitus, Fr.	*Heracliti Ephesi Reliquiae*, ed. Ingram Bywater, Oxford, 1877 (see modern editions by G. S. Kirk and Philip Wheelwright).
Hermes	*Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*, ed. W. Scott, 4 vols., 1924-1936.
Hesiod	*Theogony* and *Works and Days*, tr. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (LCL).

Hippocrates	*Works*, tr. W.H.S. Jones (LCL).
HJAS	*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*.
Homer	*The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, tr. A. T. Murray (LCL).
Homeric Hymns	*Homeric Hymns*, tr. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (LCL).
Horace	*Epistula ad Pisones* (= *Ars Poetica*), tr. H. Rushton Fairclough (LCL).
HOS	Harvard Oriental Series.
IPEX	*Jahrbuch für prähistorische and ethnographische Kunst*.
Īśā Up.	(= *Īśā*, or *Īśavāsya*, *Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed. R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., London, 1931.
Itiv	(= *Itivuttaka*) *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, Part II: Udāna: Verses of Uplift, and Itivuttaka: As It Was Said*, ed. F. L. Woodward, London, 1935 (PTS).
J	*The Jātaka, or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*, ed. E. B. Cowell, 6 vols., Cambridge, 1895-1907.
Jacob Boehme	1. *Signatura rerum*, see *The Signature of All Things, and Other Writings*, new ed., London, 1969 (includes *Of the Supersensual Life* and *The Way from Darkness to True Illumination*). 2. *Six Theosophic Points, and Other Writings*, ed. J. R. Earle, Ann Arbor, 1958. 3. *The Way to Christ*, new ed., London, 1964.
Jāmī	*Lawā'ih, A Treatise on Sufism*, ed. E. H. Whinfield and M. M. Kazvini, London, 1906.
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*.
JB	1. *The Jaiminīya-Brahma of the* Samveda, ed. R. Vira and L. Chandra, Nagpur, 1954 (Sanskrit).

	2. *Das Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl*, text and German translation by W. Caland, Amsterdam, 1919.
JISOA	*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*
Jan van Ruysbroeck	*The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage; The Sparkling Stone; The Book of Supreme Truth*, tr. C. A. Wynschenk, ed. Evelyn Underhill, London, 1914.
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
JUB	(= *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*) *The Jaiminīya or Talavakāra Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, ed. H. Oertel, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XVI (1896), 79–260.
Kaus. Up.	(= *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed. R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., London, 1931.
KB	*Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa. Rigveda Brahmanas: The Aitareya and Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda*, ed. A. B. Keith, Cambridge, Mass., 1920 (HOS XXV).
Kena Up.	(= *Kena Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed. R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., London, 1931.
KhA	(= *Khuddakapāṭha*) *The Minor Readings*, *The First Book of the Minor Collection* (*Khuddakanikāya*), ed. Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli, London, 1960 (PTS).
Kindred Sayings	See S
KSS	(*Kathā-Sarit-Sāgara*) *Kathāsaritsāgara*, ed. C. H. Tawney, Calcutta, 1880—1887; 2nd ed., 1924.
KU	1. (= *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed. R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., London, 1931. 2. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, ed. Joseph N. Rawson, Oxford, 1934.
Vistara	*Lalita Vistara*, ed. S. Lefmann, 2 vols., Halle, 1902—1908.

Laṇkâvatāra Sūtra	*Laṇkâvatāra Sūtra*, ed. Bunyiu Nanjio, Kyoto, 1923.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library.
Lucian	*De Syria Dea*, tr. A. M. Harmon (LCL).
M	(= *Majjhima-Nikāya*) *The Middle Length Sayings* (*Majjhima-Nikāya*), ed. I. B. Horner, 3 vols., London, 1954-1959 (PTS).
Mahavamsa	See Mhv.
Maṇḍ. Up	(= *Maṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed. R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., London, 1931.
Manu	(=*Mānava Dharmaśāstra*) *The Laws of Manu*, ed. G. Bühler, Oxford, 1886 (SBE XXV).
Marcus Aurelius	*Marcus Aurelius*, tr. C. R. Haines (LCL).
Mathnawī	*The Mathnawí of Jalálu'ddín Rúmí*, ed. R. A. Nicholson, 8 vols., Leiden and London, 1925–1940.
Meister Eckhart	1. *Meister Eckhart*, ed. F. Pfeiffer, 4th ed., Göttingen, 1924 (mediaeval German text). 2. *Meister Eckhart*, ed. C. de B. Evans, 2 vols., London, 1924–1931 (English).
MFA Bulletin	*Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston.
Mhv	*The Mahāvaṃsa, or The Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, ed. W. Geiger, London, 1908 (PTS).
Migne	Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus* 1. [P. G.] *Series Graeca*, Paris, 1857–1866, 161 vols. 2. [P. L.] *Series Latina*, Paris, 1844–1880, 221 vols.
Mil	(= *Milinda Pañho*) *The Questions of King Milinda*, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids, 2 vols., Oxford, 1890 (SBE XXXV, XXXVI).

Mīmaṃsā Nyāya Prakaśa	*The Mīmamsā Nyāya Prakaśa of Āpadeva*, ed. F. Edgerton, New Haven, 1929.
MU	(= *Maitri Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed. R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., London, 1931.
Muṇḍ. Up.	(= *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed. R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., London, 1931.
Nicholas of Cusa	(= Nicolaus Cusanus) 1. (*De visione Dei*) *The Vision of God*, ed. E. G. Salter, London, 1928. 2. *De filiatione Dei*, in *Schrif ten des Nikolaus von Cues*, Leipzig, 1936-, Vol. II.
Pañcadaśi	*Pañchadaśi*, *A Poem on Vedanta Philosophy*, ed. & tr. Arthur Venis, in *Pandit*, V—VIII (1883-1886).
Pañcatantra	*The Panchatantra Reconstructed*, ed. Franklin Edgerton, New Haven, 1924. American Oriental Series, III.
Pāṇini	*The Ashtādhyāyi of Pāṇini*, ed. S. C. Vasu, 8 vols., Allahabad, 1891-1898.
Philo	Complete works published in LCL; Vols. I—X, ed. F. H. Colson; *Supplements* I, II, ed. R. Marcus. All works cited by full title with exception of: a) *Aet.* (*On the Eternity of the World*, vol. IX); b) *Congr.* (*On the Preliminary Studies*, vol. IV); c) *Deterius* (*The Worse Attacks the Better*, vol. II); d) *Heres.* (*Who is the Heir*, vol. IV); e) *Immut.* (*On the Unchangeableness of God*, vol. III).
Plato	*The Collected Dialogues of Plato, including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Princeton, 1961 (Bollingen Series LXXI).
Plotinus	*Plotinus*, *The Enneads*, tr. Stephen MacKenna. 3rd ed. rev, by B. S. Page, London, 1962.

Plutarch	1. *Moralia*, tr. Frank Cole Babbitt and others; includes *De genio Socratis* (LCL). 2. *Pericles*, in *Lives*, tr. Bernadotte Perrin (LCL).
PMLA	*Publications of the Modern Language Association.*
Prema Sāgara	*Prema-Sāgara*, ed. and tr. Edward B. Eastwick, Westminster, 1897.
PTS	Pali Text Society Translation Series.
Quintilian	*Institutio Oratoria*, tr. H. E. Butler (LCL).
Ramāyaṇa	*The Rāmāyaṇa*, ed. M. N. Dutt, Calcutta, 1891-1894.
Rūmī, *Dīvān*	*Selected Poems from the Dīvanī Shamsi Tabrīz*, ed. R. A. Nicholson, Cambridge, 1898.
RV	*The Hymns of the Rgveda*, ed. R.T.H. Griffith, 2 vols., 4th ed., Benares, 1963.
S	*The Book of the Kindred Sayings* (*Saṃyutta-Nikāya*), ed. C.A.F. Rhys Davids and F. L. Woodward, 5 vols., London, 1917–1930 (PTS).
ŚA	*Śāṇkhāyana Āraṇyaka*, ed. A. B. Keith, London, 1908.
Sāhitya Darpaṇa	*The Mirror of Composition, A Treatise on Poetical Criticism, being an English Translation of the Sāhitya-Darpana of Viśwanatha Kaviraja*, ed. J. R. Ballantyne and P. D. Mitra, Calcutta, 1875 (reprinted, Benares, 1956).
Śakuntala	*Abhijñāna-Śakuntala* of Kalidāsa, ed. M. B. Emeneau, Berkeley, 1962.
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa	See ŚB.
Sāyaṇa	*Rg Veda Samhitā, with Sayana's Commentary*, ed. S. Pradhan, Calcutta, 1933.

ŚB	*Śatapatha Brāhmana*, ed. J. Eggeling, 5 vols., Oxford, 1882–1900 (SBE XII, XXVI, XLI, XLII, XLIV).
SBB	The Sacred Books of the Buddhists, London.
SBE	The Sacred Books of the East, Oxford.
SBH	The Sacred Books of the Hindus, Allahabad.
Scott	See Hermes.
Sextus Empiricus	*Sextus Empiricus*, tr. R. G. Bury (LCL).
Shams-i-Tabriz	See Rūmī, *Dīvān*.
Siddhāntamuktāvalī	1. *The Vedānta Siddhāntamuktāvalī of Prakāśananda*, tr. Arthur Venis, in *The Pandit*, Benares, 1890. 2. Tr. J. R. Ballantyne, Calcutta, 1851.
Śilparatna	*The Śilparatna* by Śrī Kumāra, ed. Mahāmahopādyāya T. Ganapati Sāstri, Trivandrum, 1922-1929.
Sn	*The Sutta-Nipāta*, ed. V. Fausböll, Oxford, 1881 (SBE X).
St. Augustine	1. *The City of God against the Pagans*, tr. William M. Green (LCL). 2. *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* of *the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, New York, 1886–1890, vols. I–VIII, *Collected Works of St. Augustine* (in English tr.).
St. Bonaventura	1. *The Works of Bonaventure, Cardinal, Seraphic Doctor, and Saint*, tr. José de Vinck, Paterson, N.J., 1966– (in progress); Vol. III, *Opuscula, Second Series*, 1966, includes "On Retracing the Arts to Theology" (*De reductione artium ad theologiam*). 2. *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae S. R. E. Episcopi Cardinalis opera omnia* …, Florence, 1883–1902, 10

	vols.; vols. I–IV, *Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* (abbreviated *I Sent.*, etc.).
St. Clement	See Clement.
Sukhāvatī Vyūha	*Buddhist Texts from Japan*, ed. F. Max Müller and Bunyiu Nanjio, Oxford, 1881 (*Anecdota oxoniensia*, *Aryan Series* I).
Śukranītisāra	*The Sukranīti of Śukrācārya*, ed. B. K. Sarkar, Allahabad, 1914 (SBH XII).
Sum. Theol.	*The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. London, 1913–1942, 22 vols. Also in Parma ed., 1864; see Aquinas.
Suśruta	*The Suśruta-Saṃhita*, tr. Udoy Chand Dutt and Aughorechunder Chattopadhya, 3 fasc., Calcutta, 1883-1891.
Svātma-nirūpana	*Select Works of Sri Sankaracharya*, tr. S. Venkataramanan, Madras, 1911 (includes *Svātma-nirūpa*^{p}*a*).
Śvet. Up.	(= *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*) In *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, ed, R. E. Hume, 2nd ed., London, 1931.
Tao Te Ching	Arthur Waley, *The Way and Its Power*, London, 1934
TB	*The Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa of the Black Yajur Veda, with the Commentary of Sayaṇa Archaryya*, ed. R. Mitra, 3 vols., Calcutta, 1859–1890 (Sanskrit).
Tertullian	*The Writings of Q.S.F. Tertullianus*, tr. S. Thelwall, *et al.*, 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1869–1870.
Theragāthā *Therīgāthā*	1. *Psalms of the Early Buddhists*, I. *Psalms of the Sisters*, II. *Psalms of the Brethren*, tr. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, 4th ed., London, 1964 (PTS). 2. *The Thera- and Therī-gāthā*, ed. H. Oldenburg, London, 1883 (PTS).

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY was born in 1877, the son of Sir Mutu Coomaraswamy, one of the leading men of Sri Lanka, and Lady Elizabeth Clay Beeby, an Englishwoman from an aristocratic Kent family. After graduating from London University with Honors in Geology, he became—at age 25—Director of the Mineralogical Survey in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). His interests were soon, however, to be consumed by the arts and crafts of the region, which he expertly interpreted in the light of their underlying metaphysical principles. In 1917 Dr. Coomaraswamy relocated to the USA where he became Keeper of Indian and Islamic Art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, establishing a large collection of Oriental artifacts and presenting lectures on their symbolic and metaphysical meaning. An encounter with the seminal writings of Traditionalist author René Guénon served to confirm and strengthen his view of the perspective of the perennial philosophy, or "transcendent unity of religions"—the view that all authentic Heaven-sent religions are paths that lead to the same summit. From this period onwards Dr. Coomaraswamy began to compose his mature—and undoubtedly most profound—works, adeptly expounding the perspective of the perennial philosophy by drawing on his unparalleled knowledge of the arts, crafts, mythologies, cultures, folklores, symbolisms, and religions of the Orient and the Occident. In 1947 he had planned to retire from his position as curator at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and return to India, with the intention of completing a new translation of the Upanishads and taking on *sannyasa* (renunciation of the world). These plans, however, were cut short by his sudden and untimely death.

WILLIAM WROTH is senior editor for a new series of republications by World Wisdom of the works of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. Dr. Wroth is a graduate of Yale University and holds the M.A. and Ph. D. from the University of Oregon. He is a specialist in the Hispanic and Native American traditional arts and cultures of the Southwest and Mexico and was Curator of the Taylor Museum of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center from 1976 to 1983. Since that time he has served as guest curator and consultant for exhibitions at the Taylor Museum, Museum of International Folk Art, American Craft Museum, St. Louis Art Museum, and other institutions. He has been visiting professor in the Art and Anthropology Departments at Colorado College (1977-1985, 1991, 1994, 1999, 2002) and was Director of the Southwest Studies Summer Institute at the College in 1991.

He is the author and editor of numerous works on Hispanic and Indian arts, including *Ute Indian Arts and Culture from Prehistory to the New Millennium* (Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center and University of New Mexico Press, 2000); *The Mexican Sarape: A History* (St. Louis Art Museum, 1999); *Images of Penance, Images of Mercy: Southwestern Santos in the Late Nineteenth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); *Christian Images in Hispanic New Mexico* (Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 1982); *The Chapel of Our Lady of Talpa* (Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 1979); and *Hispanic Crafts of the Southwest* (Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 1977).

ROGER LIPSEY earned a Ph.D. in the history of art at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. Lipsey edited a trilogy of titles in the Bollingen Series, Princeton University Press on the works of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: two volumes of selected Coomaraswamy papers on art, symbolism, and metaphysics, followed by a biography. He is the author of numerous titles, including *The Spiritual in Twentieth Century Art* (1989, reprinted 2004) and *Angelic Mistakes: The Art of Thomas Merton* (2006).

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Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) was one of the great art historians of the twentieth century. His books and articles deal primarily with visual art, aesthetics, literature and language, folklore, religion, and metaphysics.

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