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College of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif.

A CORRELATIVE STUDY OF THE ANTI-LITERAL IN MODERN ART, MUSIC, AND LITERATURE

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of English

College of the Pacific

58834

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

Alden H. Hervey Smith

June 1948

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with the understanding as a way to enjoyment of the anti-literal in modern art.[1] The work of art is regarded as the locus of various cultural factors--a live product of the vital energies of its age and itself a source as well as a reflection. The analysis of these cultural factors lays no claim to completeness. It seeks merely to indicate in simple language the layman can understand, conditions, forces, and stimuli in the artist's milieu which are potential motivations of his artistic idiom,[2] and through the examination of those

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[1] The term art is used in its all-inclusive meaning: literature, music, and the pictorial arts--painting and sculpture.

[2] The expression artistic idiom is used here as it is defined by Edward F. Rothschild in his The Meaning of Unintelligibility in Modern Art, pp. 2-3. "A work of art has three essential attributes: expression, involving the point of view of the artist, his attitude toward his theme, toward his public, toward himself, his faith, his feelings, his hopes--in short, a message in which certain more or less general and permanent attitudes and certain immediate feelings and reactions are given immediate or particular embodiment; style, the physical or sensory means, and their results or record in tangible, visual, or audible experience, which the artist employs as the vehicle of his expression or for the sake of their intrinsic integration; and quality, which is the degree of success approaching perfection that any observer may attribute to the result. . . . These three attributes of a work of art are not, in fact, discontinuous and separable, nor are they mutually exclusive, but they do cast some light on the validity of critical procedures. . . . the unity which they constitute is referred to as artistic idiom."

influential factors, to try to discover why the artist chose the anti-literal idiom.

There are two general aspects of contemporary art about which everyone is agreed--its complexity and its revolutionary break with tradition. Nobody would be bold enough to select one particular school and say, "This is the type of modern art; all the rest is in some manner derivative or false." At other times, even down to the end of the last century, there has been a certain unity in the development of art, so that historians have been able to trace from generation to generation a coherent evolution of style. But where, in the immediate ancestry of modern art, shall we find forbears of Picasso, Henry Moore, Stravinsky, Schonberg, Gertrude Stein, and James Joyce--whose work will be included in this survey? There seems to be a definite break in the historical development of the artistic faculty.

It is possible to draw some parallel between this condition of the arts and the general social conditions of our civilization. The complexity of styles in art, the apparent dis-continuity in their development, is no greater than the complexity of what might well be called styles in morals, religion, and social economics. Everywhere there is the same lack of unity, the same absence of authority, the same break with tradition.

There have been, of course, revolutions in the history of art before today, less noticeable, perhaps, in the fields of literature and music, but still there. There is a revolution with every new generation, and periodically, every century or so, we get a wider or a deeper change of sensibility to which we give the name of a period--the Baroque, the Rococo, the Romantic, the Impressionist, the Expressionist, and so on. But we can already discern a difference of kind in the contemporary revolution; it is not so much a revolution, which implies a turning-over, even a turning-back, but rather a break-up, a devolution, some would say a dissolution. Its character is catastrophic.

The machine and its attendant philosophies have affected art in many different ways, the most direct being through spelling the doom of handicrafts the world over. Another has been the fostering of a cult of realism, a type of art which has little to do with man's aspirations or idealizations but which rather emphasizes the pragmatism rampant in the contemporary world. The realists, whether writers, painters, or musicians, did not hesitate to use the ugly for the stuff of their art; they often felt that it suited their purposes better than that which was beautiful. This spirit flourished more strongly in literature

than in the other arts:[3] but its influence was felt in painting and sculpture and, a bit later--around the turn of the century--in music and architecture.

Finally there arose the school of Impressionists. Impressionism is, as has often been said, the last phase of realism,[4] the final fling of the artists who tried to reproduce on their canvases what they felt nature revealed to their eyes. Its exponents called to their help some of the new discoveries which science had made, discoveries

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[3] The list of realist authors is legion. In France, Flaubert (whose Madame Bovary, published in 1857, is looked upon as the first great realistic novel), Daudet, De Maupassant, Zola, Bourget, and, above all the others, Anatole France. In England, George Meredith and Thomas Hardy concerned themselves with the pitiful and realistic struggle of people for existence; Henry James studied the leisured classes of two continents--people on a different, but no less realistic, plane; Bernard Shaw; H. G. Wells; and Samuel Butler's sceptical Way of All Flesh carried the realistic concept to its ultimate conclusion, for no attempt was made to take seriously either life or death. In Norway, Bjornson and Ibsen; in Germany, Sudermann and Hauptmann; in Italy, Pirandello. The works of Russia's realistic writers were especially effective: Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Gorky took delight in showing what a miserably weak cog in the machinery of Russian life the common man was, and portrayed with pessimistic realism the inevitable futility of his existence.

[4] For purposes of simplification, the differentiation between realism and naturalism in the arts is disregarded in this paper. The terms have different connotations in literature and in the plastic arts. In literature, realism attempts to portray all aspects of life; naturalism is restricted to the unpleasant, the sordid, the ugly. In Art, realism refers to the underlying truth; naturalism to the surface aspects.

which showed the phenomenon we know as color resulting from the breaking up of light waves; in order to gain the greatest possible realism in this respect, these impressionists, instead of mixing their colors on a palette, broke them up into tiny smears placed on the canvas in close juxtaposition, leaving the mixing and blending of them to the eye of the beholder. This made the color seem much more alive and gave a fresh, open-air quality to their work which was in pleasing contrast to the older studio technique. Thus the whole problem of painting came to be bound up largely with but the one idea, the realistic rendering of light and color; forms were dissolved into color patches, patterns became unconventional and largely accidental, subject did not matter. The most familiar, commonplace objects became material for pictures--washwomen, bridges, factories, open-air scenes from everyday life, the sea--all painted as visual impressions caught under certain light conditions. One writer has rather wittily described this type of painting as reality dissolved in a luminous fog.[5]

But if impressionism can be accepted for what it is--an exalted poetry of nature expressed through light and color--a new world of beauty is revealed to our eyes. All

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[5] Sheldon Cheney, The Story of Modern Art, p. 474.

the men concerned with this movement possessed definite personalities and produced individual results.[6] Musicians are specially interested in these artists because of their direct affect on the works of Debussy and his followers.

A parallel movement in literature was called Symbolism,[7] which was first established as a theory and illustrated in poetry by Stephane Mallarme. His ideal was the result of the success achieved by the painters: "to name an object is to sacrifice three-quarters of the enjoyment which comes from the pleasure of guessing bit by bit. To suggest, that is our dream."[8] And he and his followers--Verlaine, Rimbaud, Maeterlinck, Swinburne, and Yeats--wrote delicate, tenuous verse that is frankly sensuous in sound and suggestive rather than exact in its meaning. Words were used much as the colors of the impressionists,

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[6] Monet is supreme in his rendering of the play of light and color over nature; Renoir, the greatest of them all, painted joyous, buoyant pictures which made use of impressionistic color in an architectural sense; Seurat, with his technique of Pointillism (Post-Impressionism), used minute, evenly spread dots of color to exalt the episodes of everyday life.

[7] The Impressionist movement in art, which included Gauguin, Cezanne, Matisse, and Van Gogh, was first given the name Symbolism by Paul Serusier, who first formulated its qualities. Symbolism was not an inapt name, and it was only because the contemporary literary movement in France usurped this name that painting since Gauguin has not been so labelled. For the importance of Serusier, see Theories, by Maurice Denis, pp. 147-9, and Les Arts Plastiques, by Jacques Emile Blanche, p. 243.

[8] Camille Mauclair, The French Impressionists, p. xi.

as symbols evocative because of their sound and certain subconscious sensations, rather than as means for conveying ideas: the central thought contained in a passage was of less importance than what one was led to read between the lines. The opus magnum of symbolism was Mallarme's famous L'apres-midi d'un faune. It was this masterpiece of vague liveliness and poetic imagination that inspired Debussy to attempt to transfer to tone the symbolism which he felt the poet had tried to convey through words. His orchestral poems L'apres-midi d'un faune and La mer and his now rarely heard opera Pelleas et Melisande may be said to have been the direct results of impressionism. That these are perhaps the most successful incarnations of the spirit of this whole period is due to the indefinite nature of the art they represent, rather than any difference in the ideals of the artists who created them. In the literal sense, they are the first great modern works in music.

These artists of the Impressionist school, living at the turn of the century, began to question the naturalistic and positivistic world which had seemed so permanent and final to their fathers; indeed, the very scientific researches of this materialistic generation provided one of the strongest causes for its downfall. Around 1910 a demand arose for some sort of attempt at an explanation of

all these scientific phenomena which had accumulated, such as the breaking up of the atom, the evolution of new ideas concerning time and space, the results of research by means of the X-ray and the microscope; something that would fit them together into a comprehensive conception of the world that was not based merely on outward appearances. As a result man began to turn away from nature's external aspects in an attempt to conceive and understand what lay behind them; to him the essence of things became of greater importance than their appearance; creative minds tried to make of art some sort of vision freed from materialistic and physical appearances.

Added to this was a dissatisfaction with the world as they saw it and a realization of the catastrophes inherent in its social impacts, together with a revolt against nineteenth-century falseness of morality and narrowness of opinion.

Cezanne spent almost his whole long career in an attempt to show that nature was not what she seemed when photographed by the camera lens, but was something which, after having been absorbed by the artist's eye, could be projected through his soul. He sought to find the form behind the content, the sphere behind a peach or an apple, the cone behind a pine tree, without, however, denying that peaches or apples or pine trees were valid subjects for art.

He believed also that the values of a landscape or a group of objects could best be represented on canvas through the manipulation of what he called "planes"--an intermingling of close and distant perspectives--and that these could be suggested to the eye by means of color sensations.

Van Gogh, another leader of the time, was able to get beneath the surface appearances and fix in vivid and startling color the wild ecstasies of his soul and the fire of his vision. Never has there been a better example of an artist to whom tradition meant so little. Van Gogh's chief concern was that of spreading his curiously intense personality on canvas. Gauguin left a successful career as a member of civilized society and went to the South Seas in order to try to get a fuller understanding of nature and men in their primitive aspects. And Stravinsky the musician sought, at least in his earlier work, to penetrate the mask of nature and depict man in his pre-civilized and pre-sophisticated estate.

Once these artists decided that they must be concerned with other than natural appearances, they did not hesitate to adopt methods of technique quite at variance with older practices, if in so doing they could secure the results they sought. And all sorts of groups and schools arose, most of them centering in the work of one or two leaders. The two unifying principles of these groups

seemed to be their desire to express what they perceived with their minds rather than what they merely saw with their eyes or heard with their ears, and to abandon such ideas of the past as had come to be banal through their overuse during a period of centuries. These Abstractionists were culture-weary artists, trying to create a new objectivity, light, and form out of the chaos wrought by their abandoning of old ideals, to fashion a pure aesthetic reality that has a consistency entirely divorced from ordinary life. Lewisohn calls it plastic license and likens it to the writings of Gertrude Stein.[9]

In painting, the Cubists tried to carry forward Cezanne's methods of breaking natural forms into planes and building definite designs with them. They attempted to form a new kind of space relationship by creating instead of imitating, and so rejected all the accepted rules of construction, perspective, and the rest, moving around an object they attempted to depict, so as to show several points of vision at the same time. The synthetic results they achieved are familiar enough in the pictures of Picasso, Braque, Marc, and Feininger.

Futurism, an Italian movement launched after the birth of cubism in France, made a novel attempt to

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[9] Howard D. McKinney and W. R. Anderson, Music in History, p. 819.

dramatize simultaneously the diverse movements and aspects of an object. It was in February, 1909, that F. T. Marinetti, an unknown Italian writer, threw the "Initial Manifesto of Futurism" like a bomb into the pages of Figaro in Paris. Futurism embraced other fields besides painting, and there is reason in the contention that Fascism was Futurism translated into practical, political terms.[10]

Dadaism was a humorous and largely futilitarian gesture against the useless sacrifices of the War years; it tried, by assuming a mood of utter nihilism, to upset the whole artistic applecart. All sorts of absurdities were perpetrated, not only in painting but in music and literature as well; thermometers, clockwork, scraps of rubbish, and pieces of newspaper were glued onto abstract paintings. But Dadaism took itself so frivolously that it laughed itself to death, fortunately.

Newplasticism decided that art was a matter of simplified designs of rectangles and horizontal and perpendicular lines; it is one of the forms of pure abstraction, in which the artist makes no attempt to attain natural forms.

Inspired by postwar developments, especially the

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[10] Edward F. Rothschild, The Meaning of Unintelligibility in Modern Art, p. 28.

doctrines of Freud as to our subconscious existence, was Surrealism, which, like so many of these painting movements, has strongly affected the other arts. Painting in bright colors, with careful attention to detail, men like Salvador Dali draw their motives from dream-consciousness and work them out in terms of nightmares.[11]

These are only some of the various attempts made by modern artists to rebuild the scheme of things, so rudely shattered to bits during the last years of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth century. Not all of these artists have been concerned simply with the generalities of abstraction and the attempt to mirror the chaos of the spirit of the times. There have been others who have tried to transform society by directing their shafts against the horrors of machinery and civilization, combining the new technique with vital social criticism. These are the men of

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[11] Miro, another important surrealist, abjures natural forms and seeks to be as largely interested in design as in dreams. Klee, the German exponent of this school, tries to combine in his pictures the ideas of psychoanalysis and those received from our knowledge of primitive man; they can be understood, his apologists insist, only by a consciousness which embraces the successive worlds of the past and the vast heritages of all that has gone before. This is something of an order!

the Neue Sachlichkeit[12] of realism. Painters like Max Beckman, Dix, Grosz, and Georges Rouault have carried on the traditions of the great Daumier and Goya in presenting in their works a terrifying reflection of the desolation and decay of our age, a reflection which is the more effective because it employs modern techniques.

All these aesthetic problems which now seem so confusing would be greatly simplified if it were possible to confine the processes of artistic development in watertight compartments and not have them interflow, as do all other changes in mankind's mental and spiritual make-up. Our perception of even the essential nature (not to speak of the values) of these phases of art is obscured by the fact that at any given time at least three strata of activity are being worked simultaneously: there are the best of the older practitioners, who continue to use their familiar technique, sometimes with fresh intimations of old beauty;

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[12] The phrase Die Neue Sachlichkeit, "The New Objectivity," was coined by Dr. Hartlaub, the Director of the Mannheim Art Gallery, who says, "The expression ought really to apply as a label to that type of modern realism which bears a socialistic flavor. It was related to the general contemporary feeling in Germany of resignation and cynicism after a period of exuberant hopes (which had found an outlet in Expressionism). Cynicism and resignation are the negative side of the Neue Sachlichkeit; the positive side expresses itself in enthusiasm for immediate reality--the result of a desire to take things entirely objectively on a material basis without immediately investing them with ideal implications." (Herbert Read, Art Now, p. 92.

there is a smaller class of art workers who have found, or are in the process of finding, some equation between the old and the new technique, perhaps not much more than an accommodation, or something in the nature of a not very stable compound which is likely to resolve into its disparate constituents; and the class of out-and-out extremists, who, in intention at least, have thrown over all the old methods and ideals.

Whatever the technique or method used by the artist, it is assumed that the general purpose of art is to produce enjoyment of an experience as rich and fecund as possible by means of revelation or demonstration and synthesis. But enjoyment is partially based upon understanding, and that which cannot be understood in any way cannot be enjoyed. In many cases the understanding which precedes enjoyment may be intuitive and not consciously recognized. This is probably, to a large extent, the case with primitive people, children, and those who possess artistic temperament or highly developed intuition. In many cases, also, the satisfaction in understanding may be so great that there is little possibility of the extension of the experience into other realms of enjoyment. This is a sort of mathematical pleasure which is probably common to scientists and logicians or to puzzle-solvers and which, of course, may often be sought by such temperaments as an end

in itself. But it would seem likely that, to the majority, understanding is a normal stage preliminary to enjoyment.

The particular artistic idiom selected by the artist is a result of a number of things: attitudes, traditions, feelings, which he shares with his contemporaries. Or his artistic idiom is the embodiment of his personal reaction to this common culture. It is largely a reflection and index of his time, just as he is largely a creature of his age. That he is able to give substance to what he sees and feels makes him an artist, and, as such, a voice of his era. When he is able to go deeply beneath the surface, he is a great artist, a voice of all ages.

The artist, whether writer, painter, or composer, is immediately faced with the problem of selecting the best idiom for expressing what he sees and feels. The selection of his particular idiom must be intuitive on his part, and intuition is usually respected only when it has proved its case, which, in the matter of pronouncing the greatness of an artist, must await the verdict of time. In the meantime those who are concerned with the enjoyment and understanding of the work of art must be content to trust their intuitions. But it must be remembered that the proper sphere of intuition is beyond understanding, and the critic must be prepared to go as far as he can within the realm of understanding in order that his intuitions and enjoyments

will be projected along a real road between the bogs of the merely capricious and the wilfully arbitrary. If the observer tries to understand the artist, he will not argue over differences of opinion and will respect the inclinations of personality and temperament. It is only when these irrational elements invade the field of understanding that there are conflicts, anti-social behavior, ineffectiveness, hallucinations, disappointments, and insanity. But the converse is equally true. There is a limit to the powers of understanding; and when these powers try to overstep the limit, the result is academicism, fetishism, puritanism, conventionalism, word-worship, and the other ills of normalistic, legalistic, taboo-ridden experience.

Understanding and enjoyment are separate but complimentary. Understanding without enjoyment is sterile and barren; enjoyment without understanding is possible only on the level of pure animalism, and it is totally lacking in any sense of permanence or fecundity. Mr. Herbert Read says, "The prejudice against modern art is, I am convinced, the result of a confined vision or a narrow range of sensibility. People forget that the artist (if he deserves that name) has the acutest sense of us all, and he can only be true to himself and to his function if he expresses that acuteness to the final edge. We are without courage, without freedom, without passion and joy, if we

refuse to follow where he leads."[13]

Twentieth-century modernism has had many different phases; but no matter what its way of expression, subjective or objective, impressionistic or expressionistic, abstract or poetic, it has developed from the same general backgrounds. A brief survey of the economic and philosophical conditions of the century which produced it will show why its appearance was inevitable.

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[13] Herbert Read, op. cit., p. 15.

CHAPTER II

THE ZEITGEIST

The quality of culture, by which is meant its achievements in literature, music, and the plastic arts, obviously depends in some subtle way on the underlying social organization. Present civilization is in a state of crisis. The system of laissez-faire capitalism, which has been the unconscious economic basis of civilization since the end of the Middle Ages, has broken down, and various alternatives seem to present themselves. These take two general forms--either a continuance of capitalism with a planned control of its objectives, or the replacement of capitalist enterprise by some form of communal ownership of the means of production and distribution. It is not necessary, perhaps, to detail all the possibilities, but they are more various than some of our politicians assume, and the cultural patterns which would emerge from such diverse economic structures as, for example, the international cartelization of industry and the autarchic state control of industry would be totally different. If one thinks around present-day problems as widely as possible, factors and symptoms will be noted which complicate these problems and tend to make people more sympathetic toward artists in every sphere of work.

The creative artist is a human being like the rest of us. He cannot solve these problems except as one of us, but through his art he can help us to see and understand them, for artists are the sensitive antennae of society. The work of art is a symbol, a visible symbol of the human spirit in its search for truth, freedom, and perfection.

Contemporary art forms are tied to their culture.[1] Just what is that culture? What are the forces which have influenced the introverts, as Lewis Mumford likes to call the creative artists? One of the most far reaching, in its conflict between the romantic and the utilitarian, was the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century.

I. THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

For Walt Whitman's seventieth birthday (1889), Mark Twain wrote a letter on behalf of a committee of American men of letters, in which he said:

> You have lived just the seventy years which are the greatest in the world's history and richest in benefit and advancement to its peoples. These seventy years have done much more to widen the interval between man and the other animals than was accomplished by any of the five centuries which preceded them. What great births you have witnessed! The steam press, the

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[1] "Culture" and "civilization" are used as synonyms, though in German, for instance, a differentiation is made between the two; "civilization" is the term for technological and "culture" for the humanistic sphere.

> steamship, the steel ship, the railroad, the perfect cotton gin, the telegraph, the phonograph, photogravure, the electrotype, the gaslight, the electric light, the sewing machine, and the amazing, infinitely varied and innumerable products of coal tar, those latest and strangest marvels of a marvelous age. And you have seen even greater births than these for you have seen the application of anesthesia to surgery-practice, whereby the ancient dominion of pain, which began with the first created life, came to an end on this earth forever. . . . Yes, you have indeed seen much--but tarry for a while, for the greatest is yet to come. Wait thirty years, and <u>then</u> look out over the earth! You shall see marvels added to those whose nativity you have witnessed: and conspicuous about them you shall see their formidable Result--man at almost his full stature at last--and still growing, visibly growing while you look. . . . Wait till you see that great figure appear, and catch the far glint of the sun upon his banner; then you may depart satisfied, as knowing you have seen him for whom the earth was made, and that he will proclaim that human wheat is more than human tares, and proceed to organize human values on that basis. (Signed) Mark Twain.[2]

Fifty-nine years have passed. The marvels came--airplanes and self-propelled explosives that assailed helpless cities; flame throwers, poison gasses, and atomic bombs that threatened to exterminate not merely active combatants, but every vestige of organic life in the region subjected to them. Man almost at his full stature at last!

Needless to say, in the admirable list of inventions over which Mark Twain exulted, there was reason to exult--provided reason had governed their exploitation and had made them the servants of man's own higher development.

The industrial revolution opened up a new

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[2] Lewis Mumford, <u>The Condition of Man</u>, pp. 305-306.

dimension--the dimension of a new science and a new technology which could be used for the realization of all-embracing relationships. Contemporary man threw himself into the experience of these new relationships. But saturated with old ideologies, he approached the new dimension with obsolete practices and failed to translate his newly gained experience into emotional language and cultural reality. The result has been and still is misery and conflict, brutality and anguish, unemployment and war.

II. KARL MARX

The man who sought to master this situation, who planned to convert the utilitarian hell into a proletarian heaven, was Karl Marx, a German born of a Jewish family in the Rhineland.

One need hardly list all the contradictions and ambivalences of Marx's attitude toward the world around him, for he organized them into a water-tight system, an argument by critical examination of logical consequences. Marx accepted this process as a complete description and turned it upside down. He claimed that material forms brought into existence appropriate ideas in art, religion, philosophy, morals--these were mere shadows of the "real" world, the world of economic activity, which was governed by the necessity to eat, drink, have shelter and clothes,

and to produce ever-more elaborate means of securing physical livelihood.

His claim that the materialistic development came before the artistic gives away the weakness of the Marxian interpretation, for in actual history the developments of language, art, and politics are as early as the technological developments. In society these aspects of life are organically related, and neither precedes the other.

One might describe the Marxists by paraphrasing what Macaulay said of the Puritans and bear-baiting: that they sought to do away with exploitation not so much because of love of the exploited as out of hatred for the exploiter. Cut loose from the humanizing ideas of the English, the American, and the French revolutions, it was small wonder that Marxism in Germany lent itself so easily to the exploitation of the National Socialists. Even the Jew-baiting of the Nazis was a sinister game that Marx himself actually began. The Russian deification of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin marked the downward passage of socialism into its opposite: authoritarian communism, tempered by conspiracy and stabilized by purges--the negation of the democratic and egalitarian ideal. And again the authoritarian aspect of socialism was a direct bequest of Marx. In his faithful translation of Marxian theory into practice, Nicolai Lenin progressively wiped out the groups and

associations that would have shared and diffused the power of the state. What was not wiped out was incorporated within the state. Espionage, punishment without open trial, secret imprisonment in remote concentration camps or equally secret death, forced labor, the suppression of free speech and rational political alternatives, the creation of an official ruling class almost as remote from the masses as the capitalists and bureaucrats they supplanted, the complete centralization of economic power--all these new attributes of communism helped betray its original aims.

III. CHARLES DARWIN

A third great influence (for good and evil) was the great upsurge of interest in science with the false interpretations placed upon the findings of the scientists by the laymen. Darwin became popularly known as the central exponent of the theory of biological evolution. This theory had been known and developed from the time of the Greeks, but in the Origin of the Species the doctrine of evolution was given by Darwin a peculiar twist. His leading idea, the idea he fancied was original to him, was the notion that the population of all species tends under natural conditions to outstrip the food supply, that this brings about a struggle for existence between the members of the same species, and that as a result, the weaker

members are driven to the wall, while those who survive reproduce their kind and hand on to their descendants precisely those more favorable variations that enabled them to survive. Extermination became the key to development.

In support of this theory Darwin added the Reverend T. S. Malthus's theory of population: the belief that population increases in geometrical ratio; so that poverty, vice, crime, and war are the only alternatives to either abstinence or a voluntary decimation.

This theory of Malthus's performed a special social duty. It explained why the poor must remain poor, and why the upper classes, by getting all they have, are by a supreme law of nature entitled to have all that they can get. By confusing the fact of survival, which rests on many other circumstances besides individual ability and capacity, with the fact of biological development, Darwin confused fitness with betterment, and adaptation with physical prowess. In short, he justified man's contemporary inhumanity to man by pinning the whole process on nature.

Here lay the secret of Darwin's great popular influence. His theory of natural selection sanctified the brutality of industrialism and gave a fresh impulse to the imperialism that succeeded it. He lent to the brutal assertions of class, nation, and race the support of a

holy "scientific" dogma.

Observe the final result. Precisely at the moment when the mechanical means of communication and transport were making the world one, a subversive ideology, on the basis of a partial, falsified view of nature, sanctioned non-cooperation and erected the struggle for existence into a dogma. Men who had guns and who used them ruthlessly--the Americans robbing the Indians, the Belgians in the Congo, the Germans in Southwest Africa, the Boers and British in Transvaal, the united Western powers in Peking--were obviously destined to survive; their brutality placed the seal of virtue on their fitness. To exterminate their rivals was to improve themselves--or so the gunmen thought.

What the militant leaders of this society took from biology were not its truths but its errors. Thus the spreading interest in life-processes fostered barbarism and played into the hands of the unscrupulous. In reacting against the dehumanization of the machine, people identified the natural with the savage, the organic with the primitive, the life-creating with the death-serving.

IV. THE PHILOSOPHERS

Alfred North Whitehead. Whitehead's great and ever-increasing influence flowed through two channels: his

numerous books and articles, and his direct personal associations with colleagues and students in the university environment.

His concepts of space and time exerted a tremendous influence on the creative artists of Europe and America. Opposing the traditional notions of space, time, and matter, he contended that ultimate physical reality is composed of interrelated "events," revealed in sense-awareness. An automobile accident is an event, so also is the Great Pyramid. Space and time are not containers for events; rather, they are relations between events. The traditional doctrine of the distinct independence of each bit of matter should be replaced by an emphasis on the pervasive presence of everything everywhere. This theory is supported by reference to the electromagnetic activity. There seems to be a modification of the electromagnetic field at every point of space at every instant, owing to the past history of each electron.

Whitehead's philosophy involves a dramatic widening of intellectual horizons. He discusses the nature of ultimate reality, religion, human personality, value, social organization, industry, education, art. In the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century, many keen minds were indulging in cynicism and scepticism, or, suffering from loss of nerve,

climbing on some authoritarian band wagon. Whitehead set himself to "frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element in our experience can be interpreted."[3] Thus he undertook the task of formulating a philosophy of life which would do justice to all the facts: aesthetic, moral, and religious, as well as the data of the natural and social sciences. Whitehead claims that an examination of human experience reveals that a person is a unity of experiences of environmental facts. This experience of the external environment is contributory to the being of the person in question. However, the developing person selects material from the available data, using only what he required. This process of autonomous self-development is guided by an apprehension of certain ideal goals. It is Whitehead's contention that all the component entities of the universe have the characteristics found in the "mental" experience of a typical human self. In other words, the universe is composed of a very large number of "persons," each of which is building itself up by reacting to persons in its environment in accordance with ideal goals which it has apprehended. At first glance this theory may seem incredible, but Whitehead offers considerable evidence in its support. For example,

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[3] A. N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 4.

he argues that if you are serious in claiming that human experience is part of nature, then you must admit, as he does, that what you find in human experience must be found in nature. His really fundamental argument, based on specific illustrations, is summarized thus: "The general principles of physics are exactly what we should expect as a specific exemplification of the metaphysics required by the philosophy of organism."[4] Thus, according to Whitehead, reality is composed of a large group of persons who enjoy various degrees of width and depth of experience. Each of these persons emerges as the result of creative interaction with other persons. This process is guided by apprehended ideals. It follows that human beings and so-called inanimate objects are inescapably subject to a process of creative change. Those who shut their eyes to the fact of change have lost their grip on reality.

Henri Louis Bergson. One of the most striking facts about Bergson's works is the extent to which they have appealed not only to the professional philosophers, but also to the ordinary public. For him reality is not to be reached by any elaborate construction of thought--it is given in immediate experience as a flux, a continuous process of becoming, to be grasped by intuition, by

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[4] Ibid., p. 178.

sympathetic insight. Concepts break up the continuous flow of reality into parts external to one another; they further the interests of language and social life and are useful primarily for practical purposes. But they give nothing of the life and movement of reality; rather, by substituting for this an artificial reconstruction, a patchwork of dead fragments, they lead to the difficulties which have always beset the intellectualist philosophy, and which on its premises are insoluble. Instead of attempting a solution in the intellectualist sense, Bergson calls upon his readers to put these broken fragments of reality behind them, to immerse themselves in the living stream of things and to find their difficulties swept away in its resistless flow.

For purposes of this paper, the most pertinent aspects of Bergson's philosophy, as of Whitehead's, deal with time and space, and with the intensity of conscious states. He shows that quantitative differences of conscious states are applicable only to magnitudes, that is, in the last resort, to space, and that intensity in itself is purely qualitative. Passing from the consideration of separate conscious states to their multiplicity, he finds that there are two forms of multiplicity: quantitative or discrete multiplicity involves the intuition of space, but the multiplicity of conscious states is wholly qualitative.

This unfolding multiplicity constitutes duration, which is a succession without distinction, an interpenetration of elements so heterogeneous that former states can never recur.[5] The idea of a homogeneous and measurable time is shown to be an artificial concept, formed by the intrusion of the idea of space into the realm of pure duration. Indeed, the whole of Bergson's philosophy centers around his conception of real concrete duration and the specific feeling of duration which our consciousness has when it does away with convention and habit and gets back to its natural attitude. At the roots of most errors in philosophy he finds a confusion between this concrete duration and the abstract time which mathematics, physics, and even language and common sense substitute for it. Applying these results to the problem of free will, he shows that the difficulties arise from taking up one's stand after the act has been performed, and applying the conceptual method to it.[6] From the point of view of the living, developing self these difficulties are shown to be illusory; and freedom, though not definable in abstract or conceptual terms, is declared to be one of the clearest facts established by observation.

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[5] Henri Bergson, Time and Free Will, p. 85.

[6] Ibid., p. 154.

V. PSYCHOANALYSIS AND THE DILATION OF SEX

The last and one of the most powerful forces to be discussed in this paper is the scientific re-investigation of sex, which began with the discovery of the precise nature of the ovum and the spermatazoon and culminated toward the beginning of the twentieth century in Freud's sexual interpretation of the dream and his enlargement of the role played by sex in the development of both child and adult.

Much of the renewed sexual interest of the nineteenth century sought only verbal channels or legal forms of expression. The defiance of convention went no further than the praise of the prostitute, with Swinburne, or the living together without binding legal ties, as with George Eliot. If the conventional language or sex, particularly in Protestant countries, took long to recover the forthrightness of the seventeenth century, a steady outflow of erotic interest characterized, with increasing intensity, the art of the nineteenth century. It reached its highest point, perhaps, in Rodin, whose supple nudes float, ripple, undulate in the visual blur that intense passion itself produces.

This dilation of sex at length found a philosophic exponent in Havelock Ellis, whose work began in the eighteen-eighties. In a series of monographs on the nature

of sex, in all its aspects, he brought together not merely a vast amount of specialist investigation but a great many private biographies, for lack of which even the medical knowledge of sex had been unduly restricted. Yet Ellis's work, many-sided and all-embracing as it seems, reveals how completely sex had departed from its normal place in consciousness and practice. In all his studies, although he wrote on marriage, he never follows the sexual embrace as far as the child or allies his fresh insights on sex to the nature of the family and the psychological reconditioning of sex that springs out of permanent parental relations. This prophet of sex celebrated the flower and forgot the seed.

Far more original in its insights, and far more profound in its effects, was the work of Dr. Sigmund Freud, who was brought to the study of sex by his work as a psychiatrist on neuroses. Freud not only revealed the primal energy of sex and identified the undifferentiated manifestations of sex in infancy and traced their topographical fixation, their conversion, their reawakening and further maturation at adolescence; he not only established the role of sexual shock, injury, and repression on the development of the whole psychic structure; he further showed the protean disguises of sexuality in the dream and in all those concrete modifications of dream and waking

consciousness and rational intelligence that manifest themselves as art.

The need for a vital revaluation of sex and for a sexual revaluation of life was never greater, perhaps, than at the moment when Freud and his followers appeared. Sex now became an open subject; the very theory of the censor lifted the long-maintained censorship. Not merely did the psychoanalyst liberate the neurotic from his obsessions, his morbid compulsions, his impulses toward self-destruction; he gave to those whose development had been more fortunate a license, as it were, to expand the contracted sphere of their sexuality. If repression were the cause of illness, might not unlimited expression be an adequate preventative? That insight, that tacit permission, coincided with a great period of anxiety, constraint, and emotional depletion, beginning with the First World War. Sexual facility, sexual relaxation, became an imaginary panacea for the ills of life, while all the by-products and sublimations of sex--devotion, loyalty, sympathy, esthetic transfiguration--became subject to a systematic denigration as futile escapes from life. From the romantic over-valuation of the object of love, the new lovers turned to a matter-of-fact over-valuation of the instrument. Jealousy was taboo: who could be jealous of a sexual organ? Only envy was permissible.

The great truths that Freud discovered cannot be reproached with the manner of their exploitation, any more than scientific biology can be reproached with Spengler's perverse interpretation of man as a carnivore. But just as Darwin's misuse of Malthus started a whole train of derivative falsifications, so Freud's essential pessimism, coupled with an active resentment against the historical role of culture, played a part in deflating the modern super-ego and in favoring an insurrection against it.

The most sinister conclusion to be drawn from the teachings of Freud was that the needs of the id were more important than the curbs of the super-ego. If the super-ego. If the super-ego dammed the currents of life, maintaining a perpetual tension within the personality, accompanied by distressing feelings of anxiety and guilt, why should that dam not be removed? Freud did not draw that conclusion, but the generation into whose minds Freud's ideas filtered sought a shortcut to psychoanalysis by a general relaxation of tensions. Why should one not start by rejecting all the ideal claims that culture makes upon the personality? This task was not cinfined to the fascists, who indeed restored an infantile "innocence" in their lying, torturing, and murdering; it had a far wider provenance in the belief that "history is bunk," and that good and bad, true and false, ugly and beautiful, were mere

words that served nothing but the ego's appetites. "Once the needs of the individual are separated from the claims of society, no criterion for their selection and expression remains. Social claims must balance personal needs as duties balance rights; otherwise the self becomes de-socialized, if not actively anti-social. Unlimited self-assertion leads to the destruction of personality."[7]

Once one rejects the creative role of the super-ego, only two other courses are open: the course just described, and the fascist's effort to create a positive super-ego out of the raw elements of the id--blood and carnage and booty and copulation--as ideals.

Is it any wonder that the creative artist of today speaks to us in an idiom our fathers could not understand? Is it not understandable why so many people of this day and age find modern art unintelligible? Each successive age in the progress of man has witnessed an inevitable clash between the "modern" men of that era and the academicians (the men who think that what was good enough for yesterday is good enough for today).

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[7] Lewis Mumford, op. cit., p. 365.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE IN THE MODERN IDIOM

In the realm of literature the "anti-literal" is much more difficult to define than in the field of the plastic or visual arts. People are accustomed to judge automatically the forces that hold together a variety of ideas expressed verbally. Whenever those ideas and the forces holding them together become so amorphous as to render the meaning uncommunicable, the writing is "anti-literal" in the meaning of this paper. Here again a difficulty arises. That which is unintelligible or anti-literal to some may be replete with meaning for others. For purposes of correlating modern art, music, and literature, an arbitrary choice has been made of two twentieth century writers, James Joyce and Gertrude Stein, whose works have been variously called "nonsense," "unintelligible," "incomprehensible," and "anti-literal."[1]

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[1] The following critics have used the above adjectives in reference to Gertrude Stein's and James Joyce's works:

Burton Rascoe, Saturday Review of Literature, 17:11, December 4, 1937.
Harold Strauss, New York Times, April 14, 1935, p. 12.
Edmund Wilson, New Republic, 58:21, February 20, 1929.
Paul Rosenfeld, Saturday Review of Literature, 20:10, May 6, 1939.
Alfred Kazin, Books, May 21, 1939, p. 4.
Louise Bogan, Nation, 148:533, May 6, 1939.

I. GERTRUDE STEIN

After the complexities of James Joyce, the writings of Gertrude Stein seem quite simple and straightforward. An explanation of the artistic idiom used by Miss Stein will clarify that statement. Stein uses words much as Joyce does; they are anti-literal in their order and sequence. But where Joyce invented and coined words, Miss Stein is satisfied with words the reader knows.

The greatest aid one can get toward an understanding of the writings of Gertrude Stein is to be found in her critical writing and her discussion of "presentness." In 1926 Miss Stein delivered before the students of Oxford and Cambridge Universities her first lecture, "Composition as Explanation," in which she said:

> In beginning writing I wrote a book called Three Lives this was written in 1905. I wrote a negro story called Melanctha. In that there was a constant recurring and beginning there was a marked direction in the direction of being in the present although naturally I had been accustomed to past present and future, and why, because the composition forming around me was a prolonged present. A composition of a prolonged present is a natural composition in the world as it has been these thirty years it was more and more a prolonged present. I created then a prolonged present naturally I knew nothing of a continuous present but it came naturally to me to make one, it was simple it was clear to me and nobody knew why it was done like that, I did not know myself although naturally to me it was natural.[2]

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[2] Gertrude Stein, Composition as Explanation, p. 16.

> After that I did a book called The Making of Americans it is a long book about a thousand pages.
>
> Here again it was all so natural to me and more and more complicatedly a continuous present. I almost made a thousand pages of a continuous present. . . .[3]

In the first book there was a groping for a continuous present and for using everything by beginning again and again.

> Then I said to myself this time I will be different and I began. I did not begin again I just began.
>
> In the beginning naturally since I at once went on and on very soon there were pages and pages and pages more and more elaborated creating a more and more continuous present including more and more using of everything and continuing more and more beginning and beginning and beginning.[4]

In the volume Lectures in America (1935), written nearly a decade later, there are also references to the present which imply its particular value. Perhaps the most relevant is that to be found in the lecture "Plays": "The business of art as I tried to explain in Composition as Explanation is to live in the actual present, and to completely express that complete actual present."[5]

These passages contain the most direct references to the present in Gertrude Stein's work. There is, how-

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[3] Ibid., p. 17.

[4] Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[5] Gertrude Stein, Lectures in America, pp. 104-105.

ever, an idea related to this which receives considerable attention from her in the Lectures in America. This is an idea of "knowledge." For example, the opening sentence of the book is: "One cannot come back too often to the question what is knowledge and to the answer knowledge is what one knows."[6]

"What is knowledge," Stein asks again in Plays. "Of course knowledge is what you know and what you know is what you do know."[7] "How do you know anything," she asks in Narration, "Well you know anything as complete knowledge as having it completely in you at the actual moment that you have it."[8]

Again, in speaking of the period of The Making of Americans, she says, "I was faced by the trouble that I had acquired all this knowledge gradually but when I had it I had it completely at one time."[9]

"I wondered is there any way of making what I know come out as I know it, come out not as remembering."[10]

It was the struggle with this problem which caused

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[6] Ibid., p. 11.

[7] Ibid., p. 94.

[8] Gertrude Stein, Narration, p. 20.

[9] Gertrude Stein, Lectures in America, p. 147.

[10] Ibid., p. 156.

her in writing the thousand pages of The Making of Americans to construct

> . . . a whole present of something that it had taken a great deal of time to find out, but it was a whole there then within me and as such it had to be said.[11]

In the lecture "How Writing is Written," which Gertrude Stein delivered in 1935 at the Choate School, subsequently printed in The Oxford Anthology of American Literature, she expresses a parallel idea:

> Each generation has to do with what you would call the daily life: and a writer, painter, or any sort of creative artist, is not at all ahead of his time. He is contemporary. He can't live in the past, because it is gone. He can't live in the future because no one knows what it is. He can live only in the present of his daily life.[12]

She states much the same thing in Narration, couched in another idiom:

> . . . anything contained within itself has no beginning middle or ending, any one can know this thing by knowing anything at any moment of their living, in short by knowing anything. How do you know anything, well you know anything as complete knowledge as having it completely in you at the actual moment that you have it. That is what knowledge is, and essentially therefore knowledge is not succession but an immediate existing.[13]

If the "immediate existing" of knowledge here maintained is the reality which "exists in a present," and if

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[11] Ibid., p. 147.

[12] Gertrude Stein, "How Writing is Written," p. 1446.

[13] Gertrude Stein, Narration, p. 20.

beginning and ending are the "past and future" to which existence has been denied, it is clear that Stein would propose a present as the locus of reality.

Virgil Thomson has said, "Literature is made out of words, which are ethnic values and which everybody in a given ethnic group understands."[14] So it is with Miss Stein's writing. In the following poem every word is one which any English speaking person knows, with the possible exception of the word "exstate," which is used in Preciosilla with the meaning of thoroughly - or completely-state. A coined word, if you wish, since it is not in the dictionary, but one which is understandable. The difficulty here lies in the order in which she uses words and in her non-academic punctuation. The answer is to be found in her striving for expression of the "on-going-present." The reader must erase from his mind the ethnic values of the words and listen to the sound. He will discover he is receiving a definite impression of a pond of varicolored water lilies, sparkling with rain or dew.

Preciosilla

Cousin to Clara Washing.
In the win all the band beagles which have cousin lime sign and arrenge a weeding match to presume a certain point to exstate to exstate a certain pass lint to exstate a lean sap prime lo and shut shut is life.
Bait, bait tore, tore her clothes, toward it,

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[14] Virgil Thomson, The State of Music, p. 3.

toward a bit, to ward a sit, sit down in, in vacant surely lots, a single mingle, bait and wet, wet a single establishment that has a lily lily grow. Come to the pen come in the stem, come in the grass grown water.

Lily wet lily wet while. This is so pink so pink in stammer, a long bean which shows bows is collected by a single curly shady, shady get, get set wet bet.

It is a snuff a snuff to be told and have can witer, can is it and sleep sleeps knot, it is a lily scarf pink and blue yellow, not blue not odour sun, nobles are bleeding bleeding two seats two seats on end. Why is grief. Grief is strange black. Sugar is melting. We will not swim.

Preciosilla

Please be please be get, pleast get wet, wet naturally, naturally in weather. Could it be fire more firier. Could it be so in at struck. Could it be gold up, gold up stringing, in it while while which is hanging, hanging in dingling in pinning, not so. No so dots large dressed dots, big sizes, less laced, less laced diamonds, diamonds white, diamonds bright, diamonds in the in the light, diamonds bright, diamonds in the in the light, diamonds light diamonds door diamonds hanging to be four, two four, all before, this bean, lessly, all most, a best, willow, vest, a green guest, guest, go go go go go go go, Go go. Not guessed. Go go.

Toasted Susie is my ice-cream.[15]

II. JAMES JOYCE

James Joyce's Ulysses is an excellent example of the new literary construction analogous to the cubist collage[16] where different elements, fragments of reality, are fused into a unity of new meanings. Joyce showed that the

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[15] Gertrude Stein, What Are Masterpieces, pp. 39-40.

[16] The collage is described on page 115.

seemingly inconsistent, illogical elements of the subconscious can give a perfect account of man, the unknown, who is always the same whether the Ulysses of antiquity or today's Leopold Bloom.

Ulysses has been considered for many years an incomprehensible, even nonsensical book. But viewing the book in the light of the later Finnegans Wake, it appears as a straight continuation of the nineteenth century psychological novel. It has a clearly circumscribed content--the story of a day, June 16th, 1904. It has its characters, its direct and symbolic meanings, its place and setting.[17] The book has its own technique of rendering--at some places the technique of the stream of consciousness--of rendering a constant penetration of the subconscious forces along with those of the conscious thoughts drawn from the scientific discourses of Freud and the therapeutic application of psychoanalysis. In spite of its confusing richness, Ulysses leads the reader to a vivid, naturalistic description of the life of an anachronistic city, of the place, events and persons involved, though astonishing elements of the subconscious sometimes enter the field. The inundation of the characters with rude and

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[17] His characters, though living in Dublin, are basically the same as the Homeric figures. This conception can be seen as either debunking the hero or elevating the common man. See the chart on page 44.

Framework of "Ulysses" by James Joyce

Leslie L. Lewis - Joyce Lectures
Institute of Design

	Pages	Title	Time	Place	Principal Characters	Odyssean Counterpart	Hebraic Parallel	Art	Color	Physiological Symbol	External Symbol	Technique
1	5-24	Telemachus	8 am	Martello Tower	Stephen Dedalus Buck Mulligan	Telemachus Mercury		Theology	White Gold	-	Heir	Narrative (Young)
2	25-37	Nestor	10 am	Deasy School	Stephen Mr. Deasy	- Nestor		History	Brown	-	Horse	Catechism (Personal)
3	38-51	Proteus	11 am	Beach	Stephen	-		Philology	Green	-	Tide	Monolog (Male)
4	55-69	Calypso	8 am	Bloom House	Leopold Bloom Molly Bloom	Ulysses Penelope	Burnt Offering Holy of Holies	Economics	Orange	Kidney	Nymph	Narrative (Mature)
5	70-85	Lotus-eaters	10 am	P.O.-Church Chem.-Bath	Bloom Communicants Martha Clifford	- Lotus Eaters Calypso	Rite of John	Botany, Chemistry	Yellow	Genitals	Eucharist	Narcissism
6	68-114	Hades	11 am	Cemetery	Bloom Paddy Dignam	- Elpenor	Rite of Samuel	Religion	Black	Heart	Sexton	Incubism
7	115-148	Aeolus	12 n	Newspaper Office	Stephen Bloom Dan Dawson	- - Aeolus	Urim and Thummin	Rhetoric	Red	Lungs	Editor	Enthymemic
8	149-181	Lestrygonians	1 pm	Davy Byrne's	Bloom Blazes Boylan	- Antinous	Rite of Melchizodek	Architecture	Blue-Green	Esophagus	Constable	Poristaltic
9	182-215	Scylla & Charybdis	2 pm	Library	Stephen Aristotle Plato	- Scylla Charybdis	Holy Place	Literature	Silver	Brain	Shake-speare	Dialectic
10	216-251	Wandering Rocks	3 pm	Dublin Streets	Whole Cast	-	Simchath Torah	Mechanics		Blood	Citizen	Labyrinthine
11	252-286	Sirens	4 pm	Ormond Bar	Bloom Barmaids	- Sirens	Shira Shirim	Music	Bronze, Gold	Ear	Barmaid	Fuga per Canonem
12	287-339	Cyclops	5 pm	Barney Kiernan's	Bloom The Citizen	- Polyphemus	Holocaust	Politics	Green	Muscle	Nationalist	Gigantism
13	340-376	Nausicaa	8 pm	Beach	Bloom Gerty MacDonald	- Nausicaa	Rite of Onan	Painting	Blue	Eye	Virgin	Tumescence, Detumescence
14	377-421	Oxen of the Sun	10 pm	Maternity Hospital	Bloom Stephen Medical Students	- - Companions	Heave Offering	Medicine	White	Womb	Maternity	Embryology
15	422-593	Circe	Mid-night	Brothel	Bloom Stephen Bella Cohen	- - Circe	Armageddon	Magic	Brown, Yellow	Legs	Harlot	Hallucination
16	597-649	Eumaeus	1 am	Lunchroom	Bloom Stephen Skin-the-goat	- - Eumaeus	Atonement	Navigation	Grey	Nerves	Sailor	Narrative (Old)
17	650-722	Ithaca	2 am	Bloom House	Bloom Stephen	- -		Science	Brown	Skeleton	Star	Catechism (Impersonal)
18	723-768	Penelope	3 am	Bloom's Bed	Molly Bloom	-		Amativeness	Red	Flesh	Earth	Monolog (Female)

College of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif.

exalted attributes at first frightens the inexperienced reader. He may be temporarily misled because of the frightfulness of the subconscious landscape which had not yet been exploited in pre-Joycean literature. However, Joyce handles the subscious man--a new ecce homo--with lucid explicitness.

In some respects, the Homeric parallel is a useful contrivance for the reader. By giving him something to take for granted and showing him something to look for, by helping him to control an overwhelming flux of impressions, it justifies its existence. In other respects, it seems more important to Joyce than it could possibly be to any reader. The myth may well have served as a scaffolding while Joyce constructed his work. Before the book was printed, he tacitly removed the Homeric chapter headings that appear in the manuscript.[18]

Since they resolve the book into such a transparent outline, in Joyce's own terms, it is convenient to reprint them here. They reveal, more graphically than further discussion or second-hand summary, how the myth of the Odyssey is superimposed upon the map of Dublin, how the retelling of an old fable is absorbed into the cross-section of a contemporary city. Joyce has rearranged the twenty-four

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[18] Harry Levin, James Joyce, A Critical Introduction, p. 76.

books of Homer in three parts, subdivided into eighteen episodes of increasing length and elaboration. The first three constitute a prologue, more or less equivalent to the first four books of the Odyssey, the so-called Telemachia:

I. 1. Telemachus. 8 a.m. Breakfast at the Martello tower.

2. Nestor. 10 a.m. A history lesson at Mr. Deasy's school.

3. Proteus. 11 a.m. A walk along the beach at Sandymount.

The body of the book consists of the twelve subsequent episodes, always expanding and often reversing the eight books into which Homer has concentrated the wanderings of Odysseus. The first public engagement, the funeral procession to Glasnevin Cemetery, reproduces the trip to Hades, which was one of the last incidents on the voyage of the wily Greek. Mr. Bloom's erratic route, from breakfast until midnight, manages to find some local landmark for every one of his predecessor's stopping places in the cradle of civilization.

II. 1. Calypso. 8 a.m. Breakfast at 7 Eccles Street.
Kidney of Bloom, pray for us.

2. Lotus Eaters. 10 a.m. The public baths (and a phallic symbol).
Flower of the Bath, pray for us.

3. Hades. 11 a.m. At the funeral (with an eminent solicitor).
Mentor of Menton, pray for us.

4. Aeolus. Noon. At the office of his newspaper.
Canvasser for the Freemen, pray for us.

5. Lestrygonians. 1 p.m. Lunch at Davy Byrne's pub.
Charitable Mason, pray for us.

6. Scylla and Charybdis. 2 p.m. Bloom in library. (Soap in pocket).

7. Wandering Rocks. 3 p.m. The streets and the bookstall.
Sweets of Sin, pray for us.

8. Sirens. 4 p.m. Barmaids at the Ormond Hotel.
Music without Words, pray for us.

9. Cyclops. 5 p.m. Humiliation at Barney Kiernan's.
Reprover of the Citizen, pray for us.

10. Nausicaa. 8 p.m. Flirtation with Gerty MacDowell.
Friends of all Frillies, pray for us.

11. Oxen of the Sun. 10 p.m. The maternity hospital.
Midwife Most Merciful, pray for us.

12. Circe. Midnight. Bella Cohen's brothel. (Bloom's amulet).
Potato Preservative against Plague and Pestilence, pray for us.

Insofar as the story is Bloom's, this time-table is reliable. A notable exception is the library scene, where he cuts a dim and transient figure while Stephen Dedalus (Telemachus) holds the floor. Stephen, for the most part, is conspicuous by this absence until the evening episodes. The third section serves as an epilogue, corresponding to the Nostos, or homecoming, in the last twelve books of the Odyssey. Though it includes the long-waited dialogue

between Bloom and Stephen, the predominating figure is finally Molly Bloom. This is her part of the book, as the first is Stephen's, and the second Bloom's.

III. 1. Eumaeus. 1 a.m. The cabman's shelter.

2. Ithaca. 2 a.m. 7 Eccles Street: the kitchen.

3. Penelope. 2:45 a.m. 7 Eccles Street: the bedroom.

The architectural framework, which Joyce reconstructed from Homer, is most impressive when the reader contemplates the work as a whole and tries to visualize the relation of its parts.

The imitation of life through the medium of language has never been undertaken more literally. Ulysses ignores the customary formalities of narration and invites the reader to share a flux of undifferentiated experience. You are not told how the characters behave; you are confronted with the stimuli that affect their behavior, and expected to respond sympathetically. Joyce's efforts to achieve immediacy lead him to equate form and content, to ignore the distinction between the things he is describing and the words he is using to describe them. In this equation, time is of the essence. Events are reported when and as they occur; the tense is a continuous pre-

sent.[19] For example, Joyce did not begin his Portrait of the Artist as other autobiographers would, by summoning up a retrospective account of his earliest remembrances. Instead, the opening pages of the book are presented as a verbal equivalent of the opening impressions of his life.

> Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo. . . .
>
> His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.
>
> He was baby tuckoo. The moocow came down the road where Betty Byrne lived: she sold lemon platt.

The story of Ulysses takes no longer to happen than to read; acting time, as it were, is simultaneous with reading time. Joyce's technique shows the confluence of many modern developments in the arts and sciences. The impressionistic painters, by defining their object through the eyes of the beholder, gave Joyce an example which his physical handicap (for years he was practically blind) may have encouraged him to follow. The Wagnerian school, with its thematic blend of music and ideas, had its obvious lesson for a novelist who had wanted to be a lyric poet or

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[19] The time element in Joyce is treated in great detail in Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress, (Shakespeare and Company, 12 rue de L'Odeon, Paris, 1929). This is a collection of papers from transition, the Paris magazine in which Finnegans Wake first appeared. The writers have taken their cues from Joyce himself, and he seems to have chosen this way of providing the public with a key.

a professional singer.

The international psychoanalytic movement, under the direction of Jung, had its headquarters in Zurich during the war years while Joyce was writing Ulysses, and he could scarcely have resisted its influence. And, although philosophy could not have offered him much in the way of immediate data, it is suggestive to note that Bergson, Whitehead, and others--by reducing things-in-themselves to a series of organic relations--were thinking in the same direction. Thus the very form of Joyce's book is an elusive and eclectic summation of its age: the montage of the cinema, impressionism in painting, leit-motif in music, the free association of psychoanalysis, and vitalism in philosophy. Take of these elements all that is fusible, and perhaps more, and you have the style of Ulysses.

Ulysses stood for seventeen years as the last work in both symbolism and naturalism. It was attacked and defended, imitated and diluted, pirated and bowdlerized, taken for granted and reacted from, but never eclipsed in the richness of its technique or the reality of its material. A generation of critics lived in its shadows, terrified at the prospect of a sequel, and secretly convinced that anything short of the millennium would be an anticlimax.

Then in 1939 Finnegans Wake was given to the world.

During the seventeen years that followed the publication of Ulysses, Joyce performed literary experiments that had appeared as Work in Progress. Different witnesses have deposed contradictory testimony. Attempts to criticize Finnegans Wake in the nine years since its appearance have been about as accurate and as adequate as the efforts of Aesop's blind men to describe an elephant. Lacking the full perspective that Joyce alone had eyes to see, we have been left with one of the white elephants of literature.

The texture of Finnegans Wake is so close that it cannot yet be considered readable in the sense of an ordinary novel. Indeed, it begins with the latter part of a sentence, the beginnings of which are found on the last page. This circular construction, which carries out Vico's philosophy of history,[20] invites us to plunge in almost anywhere.

Joyce created his own time scheme, as he created his own vocabulary and characters. We may thus account for the fact that eighteen hours of Bloom's life should give birth to Ulysses, and it is easy to imagine that Ulysses might have been ten times as long, a hundred times as long,

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[20] Vico, Italian philosopher of the late seventeenth century, proved to his own satisfaction the existence of a higher power from the evidence in history that each new civilization in turn finds in the ruins of its predecessor the elements for its growth. Vico likens civilization to the Phoenix. Joyce stages his cosmos in Phoenix Park.

extended to infinity, that one of Bloom's minutes might have filled a library. This is the mystery of the relativity of time. But still more than to Ulysses these remarks apply to Finnegans Wake. From a bird's eye view, time appears to be its principal subject, not only by its concrete expressions but likewise by its abstract essence.

The chronology of the story matters little to the author. By his caprice, which in reality obeys a carefully studied and realized constructive will, characters most widely separated in time find themselves unexpectedly cast side by side. Locales are telescoped in like manner. When we are made to pass, without any transition other than an extremely subtle association of ideas, from Original Sin to the Wellington Monument and when we are transported from the Garden of Eden to the Waterloo battlefield, we have the impression of crossing a quantity of intermediary planes at full speed. Sometimes it even seems that the planes exist simultaneously in the same place and are multipled like so many "over-impressions." These planes, which are separated, become remote, and then are suddenly reunited where they are fitted exactly, one into another, like the parts of a telescope.

This gift of omnipresence permits Joyce to unite persons and moments which appear to be the most widely separated. It gives a strange transparence to his scenes,

since their principal elements are perceived across four or five various evocations, all corresponding to the same idea but presenting varied faces in different lightings and movements.

It has been often said that a man going away from the earth at the speed of light would by this act relive in an extraordinarily short time all the events in the world's history. Supposing this speed were still greater and near to infinity, all these events would flash out simultaneously. This is what happens sometimes in Joyce. Without apparent transition, the Fall of the Angels is transparently drawn over the Battle of Waterloo. This appears as contrary neither to the laws of logic nor to those of nature, for these "bridges" are joined with a marvelous sense of the association of ideas. New associations, created by him with amazing refinement, cooperate in creating this universe, the Joycean world, which obeys its own laws and appears to be liberated from the customary physical restraints.

The reader has the impression of a very individual world, very different from our own, a world of reflections that are sometimes deformed, as in concave or convex mirrors, and imprinted with a reality true and whole in itself. This does not refer only to the vocabulary which Joyce employs and which he transforms for his usage--which

he creates--but especially to his manners of treating time and space. It is for this reason, much more than because of the work's linguistic difficulties, that the reader often loses his footing. This is related to the prodigious quantity of intentions and suggestions which the author accumulates in each sentence. The sentence takes on its genuine sense only at the moment that one has discovered its explanatory rapprochements or has situated it in time.

Joyce does not believe in transitions. When one unit of his work has come to its natural termination, he drops it and turns to the next. He does not announce that six months have now passed in the life of Stephen or that the following pages will reproduce the drowsy flow of Mrs. Bloom's consciousness as she lies in bed. Such a procedure would be alien to his mind and would seriously damage the organic quality of his writing.

This closeness of composition is intimately related to another phase of Joyce's writing, a phase that has impressed and discouraged more readers than his time and space concepts--his preoccupation with words, a preoccupation which, apparent in the verbal precision of his early writing, became so highly developed that it has blinded most of his readers to the rich internal art of his latest work.

On the first page of the first story in Dubliners

is found the following significant passage:

> Every night as I gazed up at the window I said softly to myself the word paralysis. It had always sounded strangely to my ears, like the word gnomon in the Euclid and the word simony in the Catechism. But now it sounded to me like the name of some maleficent and sinful being. It filled me with fear, and yet I longed to be near to it and to look upon its deadly work.[21]

Joyce's sensitivity to words is expressed as Stephen reflects after discussing the word funnel with the dean of his school, an English convert to Catholicism:

> The Language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.[22]

Again, the youthful Stephen communes with himself as he stands on the North Bull bridge:

> He drew forth a phrase from his treasure and spoke it softly to himself:
>
> A day of dappled seaborne clouds.
>
> The phrase and the day and the scene harmonized in a chord. Words. Was it their colours? He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of apple orchards, azure of waves, the greyfringed fleece of clouds. No, it was not their colours: it was the poise and balance of the period itself. Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their association of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of

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[21] Harry Levin, The Portable James Joyce, p. 19.

[22] Ibid., p. 452.

> mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world, through the prism of a language many coloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose?[23]

Here is Stephen-Joyce reacting to the occult power of words as another might react to caresses or blows. His "soul frets" in their presence; they "fill him with fear"; certain of them he "cannot speak or write without unrest of spirit;" they evoke in him more intense emotions than the phenomena of the outer world. This is not an affectation. It is as vital a part of Joyce as his Irish birth or his Catholic training. Possibly, as he has suggested, the weakness of his eyesight has sensitized his appreciation of the images that may be built from words; but, whatever the cause, this almost abnormal need for the nourishment of verbal associations has made it possible for him to write such sentences as "And low stole o'er the stillness the heartbeats of sleep," in which he voices an emotion tuned to the pulse of the ages and familiar to all humankind.

Many critics have pointed out the very perceptible progression from Dubliners (written when Joyce was in his early twenties) to Finnegans Wake. It is little wonder that Joyce reached out farther and farther in his

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[23] Ibid., p. 426.

explorations of the world's languages and cut ever more deeply into the roots of the language formed by the successive generations of his ancestors. Nor is it any wonder that the wealth and range of his vocabulary grew with each chapter and that his interests in his later years became concentrated on the magnificent universe that might be brought into being by language.

Onomatopoeia is used freely. Not only in the accepted usage of the figure of speech does Joyce use sound; much of his writing is not about something--it is that something itself. When the sense is sleep, the words go to sleep.

> Can't hear with the waters of. The chittering waters of. Flittering bats, fieldmice bawk talk. Ho! Are you not gone ahome? What Thom Malone? Can't hear with bawk of bats, all thim liffeying waters of. Ho, talk save us! My foos won't moos. I feel as old as yonder elm. A tale told of Shaun or Shem? All Livia's dauthersons. Dark hawks hear us. Night! Night! My ho head halls. I feel as heavy as yonder stone. Tell me of John or Shaun? Who were Shem and Shaun the living sons or daughters of? Night now! Tell me, tell me, tell me, elm! Night night! Telmetale of stem or stone. Beside the rivering waters of, hitherandthithering waters of. Night![24]

The manner in which Joyce tightly packs an overabundance into a few words may well be illustrated by the following lines from Finnegans Wake, which are analyzed by Stuart Gilbert in Our Exagimination.

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[24] Ibid., p. 744.

> Not all the green gold that the Indus contains would ever hinduce (o.p.) to steeplechange back to their ancient flash and crash habits of old Pales time ere beam slewed cable or Derzherr, live wire, fired Benjermine Funkling outa th'Empyre, sin right hand son. . .

The last words of this passage are built on an old musichall refrain, popular in those good old days when the Empire of Leicester Square was the happy-hunting-ground of the pretty ladies of London town: "There's hair, like wire, coming out of the Empire." An electrical undercurrent traverses the whole of this passage, which alludes to the dawn of pre-history (Pales, the oldest of woodland gods; "Palestine" is also implied) when Vico's thunderclap came to rescue man from his wild estate; the "flash and crash days." "Beam slered cable" hints at the legend of Cain and Abel, which is frequently referred to in Work in Progress (Finnegans Wake). "There's hair" has crystallized into "Derzherr"--Der Erzherr (arch-lord)--with a side thrust at the hairy God of illustrated Bibles. He is a "live-wire"--a bustling director. "Benjamin" means literally "son-of-the-right-hand"; here the allusion is to Lucifer (the favorite archangel till his rebellion) as well as to Benjamin Franklin, inventor of the lightning-conductor. The end of his name is written "-jermine," in tune with the German word Erzherr, which precedes, and "Funkling" (a diminutive of the German Funke--a spark), which follows. Also we can see in this word a clear, if

colloquial, allusion to the angel's panic flight before the fires of God. In the background of the passage a reference to the doom of Prometheus, the fire-bringer, is certainly latent. "Outa," the Americanism, recalls "live wire," as well as such associations as "outer darkness," Lucifer's place of exile in the void. "Empyre" suggests Empyrean, highest heaven, the sphere of fire (from pyr, the Latinized form of the Greek root pur--fire). Finally, "sin" implies at once the German possessive sein (his), and the archangel's fall from grace.

> This passage illustrates the manner in which a motif foliates outwards through the surrounding text, beginning from a single word--here the "flash" in "flash and crash" has "electrified" the words which follow, and a German formation has similarly ramified into the context. All through Work in Progress similar foliations may be traced, outspreading, overlapping, enmeshed together; at last deciduous, as new and stronger motifs thrust upwards into the light.[25]

Joyce's death two years after the appearance of Finnegans Wake deprived his readers of an authorized commentary similar to Stuart Gilbert's on Ulysses. Finnegans Wake has been studied and analyzed ever since its first appearance. Prior to its publication, Joyce spent seventeen years embroidering it, condensing, telescoping, laying one meaning over another. In some cases, this overlaying of meanings has had the result of rendering quite

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[25] Stuart Gilbert, "Prolegomena to Work in Progress," Our Exagmination, pp. 59-60.

opaque passages which at an earlier stage--as can be seen by comparing the finished text with some of the sections as they first appeared--were no less convincingly dreamlike for being more easily comprehensible. Three versions of a passage in Anna Livia Plurabelle are found on page 164 of the Exagmination; and on page 213 of Finnegans Wake Joyce has worked up still a fourth, though in the fourth version only one word has been changed: "I hurd them sigh" of version three is changed to "I hurd thum sigh."

> . . . Look, look, the dusk is growing. What time is it? It must be late. It's ages now since I or anyone last saw Waterhouse's clock. They took it assunder, I heard them say. When will they reassemble it?[26]

> . . . Look, look, the dusk is growing. Fieluhr? Filou! What age is it. It saon is late. 'Tis endless now since I or anyone last saw Waterhouse's clock. They took it asunder, I heard them say. When will they reassemble it?[27]

> . . . Look, look, the dusk is growing. My branches lofty are taking root. And my cold cher's gone ashley. Fieluhr? Filou! What age is at? It saon is late. 'tis endless now since eye or erewone last saw Waterhouse's clogh. They took it asunder, I hurd them sigh. When will they reassemble it?[28]

There is a gain in poetry, certainly; but in the meantime the question and the answer have almost disappeared.

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[26] Appeared in this form in Le Navire d'Argent, September, 1925, p. 72.

[27] Transition, No. 8, p. 33.

[28] Anna Livia Plurabelle, p. 62.

Has it really made Anna Livia any more like to introduce the names of two rivers? (Saon is the Saone river doing duty as soon, and cher is the Cher river doing duty for chair). In the chapter Anna Livia Plurabelle he uses several hundred rivers on earth and eight in hell and heaven to indicate that Anna Livia is a river. Unless the satisfaction he himself gets matters enough so that it transmits a satisfaction to the reader, it does not appear significant that he sought for the word peace in twenty-nine languages so that he might call a composite female character peace in twenty-nine ways; and similarly with twilight that after much research he finds that in the Burmese there is only the word Nyi-ako-mah-thi-ta-thi, which translates literally into "the time when younger brother meets elder brother, does not recognize him but yet recognizes him."[29]

He has disregarded the limited time and intelligence of common men. He has drawn from an erudition that can be communicated in its entirety to only a few scholars, especially as his interests are so diversified. In addition to this, he has sealed up many parts of the work to even the erudite reader through the unamplified allusion to subjects familiar only to himself or to a limited number of people.

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[29] Robert McAlmon, "Mr. Joyce Directs an Irish Ballet," Our Exagmination, p. 107.

CHAPTER IV

TWENTIETH CENTURY MUSIC

Among the great techniques, music is, all by itself, an auditory thing, the only purely auditory thing there is. It is comprehensible only to persons who can remember sounds. Trained or untrained in the practise of the art, these persons are correctly called "musical." No other field of human activity is quite so hermetic, so isolated. Literature is made out of words, which have symbolic meaning for everyone in that particular language group. Painting and sculpture deal with recognizable images that all who have eyes can see. Music even in its most accepted form is abstract, so that any attempt to comprehend modern music is more difficult than a like attempt in the fields of writing or the plastic arts.

Two aspects of modern music will be expounded in this paper: consonance and dissonance, and atonality and polytonality. The first pair, consonance and dissonance, are defined and illustrated at some length on the following pages, but perhaps a brief explanation of the terms atonality and polytonality would not be out of place here. A literal definition of atonality would be "an absence of the relationship of all the tones and chords to a central

keynote."[1] Thus it is the opposite of tonality, which is the principle of key in music, or, to quote Webster: "the character which a composition has by virtue of the relationship of all its tones and chords to the keynote of the whole." In tonal music, a passage in C major revolves about the tone of C, and the ear finds rest and satisfaction when the tone of C, and the chord which has it for its root, are sounded at the close. Instead of having for its basis the major or minor scale of any key, atonal music is based on a twelve-tone scale (every chromatic tone within the compass of an octave), or, in other words, the tones represented by all the black and white keys on the piano keyboard. Polytonality is the opposite of atonality. While the atonalists forego entirely the use of any definite key, the polytonalists write their music in two or more keys at the same time. Most of them, however, content themselves with two at a time.

It may help towards an understanding of modern music to compare the human conception of musical consonance and dissonance with a few acoustical principles. The art of music has developed according to what has pleased human ears; it has been evolved by musicians, not

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[1] Marion Bauer, "Atonality" (Oscar Thompson, editor), The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians, p. 79.

by scientists. Nevertheless, as one compares the growth of the art of music, and the extension of its basic principles, with the laws of acoustics, he finds an interesting parallel between the two. Men have found most pleasing to their ears the conbinations of those tones which bear certain physical relationships to each other (consonances), even though they may not have been aware that those relationships existed.

All sound is caused by vibration. What is called noise is produced by irregular vibrations; a musical tone by a regular vibration which may be counted and timed. The rate of vibration determines the pitch; the faster the vibration, the higher the tone.

At standard pitch, the tone of the A above Middle C is produced by a vibration at the rate of 440 impulses a second. The A an octave below vibrates at the rate of 220 a second, or half as fast; while the A an octave above has 880 vibrations a second, or twice as many.

A musical tone reaches the ear through the vibrations of the atmosphere, which is set in motion by the vibrations of a string or other solid body, or by a vibrating column of air (in the case of wind instruments). Neither the strings nor the columns of air, however, vibrate as a whole throughout the entire duration of the vibration; they break into vibrating segments which produce

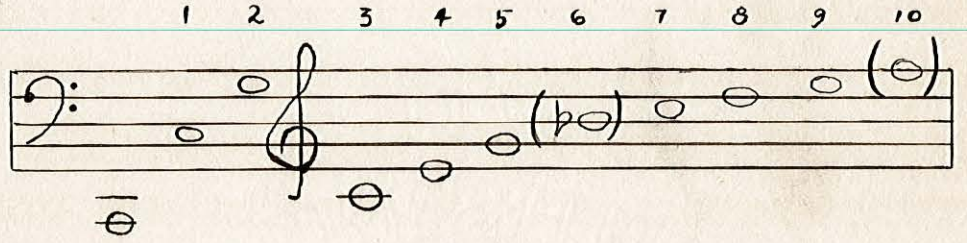
what are known as "overtones," or subsidiary tones of higher pitch. Sometimes these are called "harmonics" or "upper partials." The ear hears these overtones even though it does not distinguish them and recognizes only the pitch of the principal tone. Overtones lend an instrument or voice its distinctive tone-quality. The flute produces the fewest overtones of any instrument; therefore it has the purest tone, but one that is not particularly colorful.

A simple experiment with a piano will demonstrate clearly the natural overtones. Press down the key of C an octave below middle C, without sounding the tone. Hold it down while you strike sharply the C two octaves below middle C. Be sure not to press the damper pedal. For an instant you will hear the tone you have actually struck, but as quickly as it dies away, you will hear the tone from the key you didn't strike, but for which you are raising the damper and allowing the string to vibrate. The sound you hear is caused by the upper C vibrating in so-called sympathetic vibration with the note you struck. The higher C is the first overtone of the lower C. When you struck the lower C, its overtone caused the air to vibrate at a certain rate, and started the string tuned to that pitch vibrating on its own account.

Now hold down, without sounding the tone, the G

below middle C. Strike the low C in the same manner, and you'll hear the tone of G, not as clearly as you heard the upper C, but clearly enough to distinguish it. Then repeat the experiment with the E above middle C, and you'll have the same result, still fainter, but audible. If you have a grand piano, you can also get an extremely faint tone from B flat.

What you actually have been doing in these experiments is to follow the series of natural overtones, sometimes known as the Harmonic Series. This is represented in musical notation by the following table:



Overtones 6 and 10, enclosed in parentheses, are not perfectly represented by the notes on the staff. Overtone 6 is somewhat lower, or flatter, than B flat, and 10 is about half-way between F and F sharp.[2]

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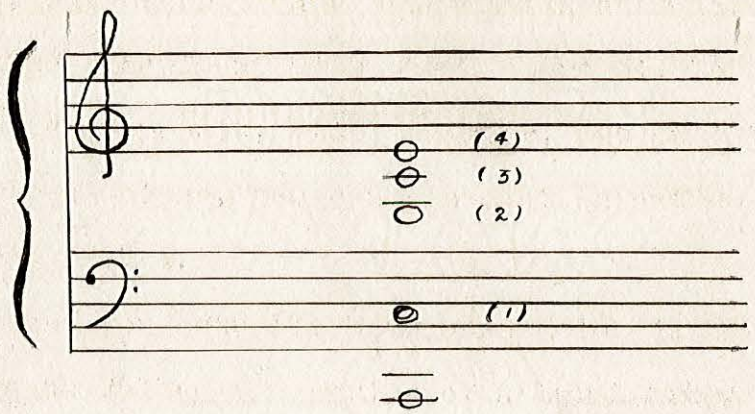
[2] John Tasker Howard, This Modern Music, pp. 54-57.

The first four overtones, placed in the position of a chord, produce the common chord of C:



Musicians were not aware of acoustic principles when they first started to sing and play in parts; music as an art was developed according to the dictates of taste rather than according to scientific ratios and laws. Authorities differ as to the actual connection between the so-called harmonic series of overtones and the development of tonal combinations in music. It is impossible, however, to ignore the parallel between the two, one an art and the other a science, and to fail to observe that the tones which have been accepted by Western ears as producing agreeable, or consonant, sounds in combination with other given tones, have corresponded roughly with the natural overtones of those given tones. Moreover, the order in which these tones have come into the musical vocabulary forms an almost identical pattern with the harmonic series.

Thus, the first interval[3] to be accepted as consonant was the octave, and when the Greeks sang in parts they merely sang an octave above or below the melody.

The history of music records attempts at harmony from as early as the ninth century. Harmony, of course, is the simultaneous sounding of two or more tones, producing what we know as a chord. In written or printed music, a chord, or harmonic combination, is shown in a vertical arrangement of notes.

In the earliest attempts at harmony, the only intervals which were considered consonant were the octave, the fourth and the fifth.[4] Consulting the overtone series (page 65), you will note that just as the octave is the first natural overtone, the fifth is number two. In the tempered scale, the fourth is the same as the fifth, by inversion. In other words, while the interval from C to G is a fifth, if we put the G below the C, instead of above it, we have a fourth, computing downward from G to C. This elementary harmony of the ninth century was known as

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[3] An "interval" is the distance between two tones, measured by the ratio between the vibrating rate of the two tones; or, in musical notation, by the number of steps on the staff line.

[4] For convenience, the piano keyboard may be used for computing intervals. Count both the lower and upper tones of the interval, as well as those between. Thus the interval from C to E is a third (C, D, E).

"organum."

With Sumer is icumen in (the oldest known canon or round, believed to date from 1240) a form of harmony known as Fauxbourdon" originated in England, which admitted the interval combinations of the third and sixth.

Fauxbourdon, then, accepted overtone 4 as a consonant interval. It had required over thirteen hundred years, almost a millenium and a half, for the human ear to become accustomed to the combination of three tones which make the simplest chord in the music of the Western World! After the acceptance of the third and sixth as consonant intervals, the principle of building chords in thirds came into practise. The common chord, or triad, consists of three tones of which the upper two are arranged as a series of thirds above the fundamental tone.

Throughout the entire history of music, the extension of the harmonic vocabulary has consisted largely of adding another third to previously existing chords. In modern music composers make free use of chords of the ninth, and the eleventh, and the thirteenth.

Again comparison with the table of overtones on page 65 shows an interesting parallel. In the foregoing example, the ninth and the eleventh intervals of the chords (D and F) are next in the series of overtones from the seventh (B flat), omitting overtones 7 and 9 (C and E),

which are repetitions, in higher octaves, of lower overtones. Thus the acceptance of intervals which had formerly been considered dissonant has continued to have its approximate counterpart in the series of natural harmonics, from early times to the present.

And so we come to our own time, when our music is showing such startling changes, such radical departures from older music, that it seems to the traditionalist to be nothing but inexcusable noise. But once again we have merely to consider the events of our own time to find the reason. Even before the first World War, life had become more complex than it had ever been before. The changes that have occurred so rapidly and so suddenly would have required centuries in the Middle Ages. Science and invention have made such rapid strides in the last quarter century that civilization will require several generations to catch up with them and to learn how to use their products intelligently.

Modern music tells of the feverish pace at which modern man is living. When he dances, he does not have the patience for the slow steps of the minuet, or the smooth, gliding motions of the waltz; he spends his energies on the rhumba and the conga; or else he jitterbugs. It is commonly said that life is so much more complex that the young people of today are as sophisticated as their grandfathers,

and as wise, if not wiser, in the affairs of the world. So new music is complex and sophisticated, and much of it appeals chiefly to the younger generation.

Carl Engel wrote some understanding words on this subject:

> What we need most of all is an explanation for the probable connection between the latest changes in music and the increase in noise. The progress of music is based on and conditioned by the necessity of constantly overcoming fatigue. And the fatigue of the ear has been hastened or aggravated by the alarming increase in noise to which modern life is subjecting us. Probably our whole nervous system is affected by it, and not to its profit. Where two hundred years ago melodious street-calls announced the approach of itinerant vendors and the song of an ungreased axle-tree merely emphasized the ordinary stillness, we have now the involved and strident counterpoint of traffic over an ostinato of policemen's whistles and automobile horns. The timid tinkle of the spinet has been replaced by the aggressive tones of the 'loud speaker." Loudness and coarseness go hand in hand. Pandemonium in the street, and the home a jazz dive or a roaring Chautauqua--truly the art of music is hard put to devise new stimuli wherewith to counteract the growing aural disturbance. The wonderful and consoling fact is that Music, apparently, is equal to any occasion.[5]

> . . . each new tonal device was an innovation in its day, designed to communicate to the ear a fresh equivalent of the stimulus necessary to relieve satiety by way of variety. . . . The proportion of discords needed to tauten our nerves depends upon the individual and the generation. . . . In contemporary music we have learned to demand discord not merely for the sake of contrast, but for itself, as an indispensable stimulus.[6]

If it were not for dissonance, music would be an

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[5] Carl Engel, "Harking Back and Looking Forward," Musical Quarterly, 14:2, January, 1928.

[6] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

altogether insipid affair. Listening to it would prove monotonous and cloying, just like reading a novel in which all the characters are annoyingly good, and everything connected with the plot is Utopian. The pleasant things of life are pleasant in contrast to the unpleasant, and it's because bad things exist that we enjoy the good ones.

Debussy's most revolutionary break with tradition lay in his treatment of the individual chord as an independent unit. He looked upon a chord as a color medium which could be entirely independent of anything that came before it or followed it. Thus dissonance became an end in itself, and not merely a temporary disturbance of the ear which must be set at rest by a consonance.

As John Tasker Howard so aptly puts it:

> Dissonance is like seasoning in foods. The amount found agreeable varies greatly among people. Even the taste for such ordinary household ingredients as salt and pepper varies so much among members of the same family that every dining table offers salt and pepper shakers so that each person may season his food according to his liking.[7]

It is the same with the discords heard in modern music. Some people like them used sparingly, while others, particularly the young people, want them piping hot. The more dissonances people hear, however, the more accustomed they become to them. Consequently, the development and evolution of music through the centuries has been marked

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[7] John Tasker Howard, op. cit., p. 40.

by an increasing use of dissonant combinations. No sharp line can be drawn between consonances and dissonances aesthetically, because the boundary that separates them changes in the course of evolution. In other words, the dissonances of yesterday become the consonances of today.

Thus, the use of the term dissonance is elastic. Its most commonly accepted meaning is that of a harsh-sounding combination of sounds, but of course the degree of harshness will vary according to the experience and taste of the listener.

In a series of lectures given at Harvard University, Igor Stravinsky has something to say on this subject:

> Consonance, says the dictionary, is the combination of several tones into an harmonic unit. Dissonance results from the deranging of this harmony by the addition of tones foreign to it. One must admit that all this is not clear. Ever since it appeared in our vocabulary, the word dissonance has carried with it a certain odor of sinfulness.
>
> Let us light our lantern: in textbook language, dissonance is an element of transition, a complex of interval of tones which is not complete in itself and which must be resolved to the ear's satisfaction into a perfect consonance.
>
> But just as the eye completes the lines of a drawing which the painter has knowingly left incomplete, just so the ear may be called upon to complete a chord and cooperate in its resolution, which has not actually been realized in the work. Dissonance, in this instance, plays the part of an allusion.[8]

While musically, or aesthetically, a dissonance is

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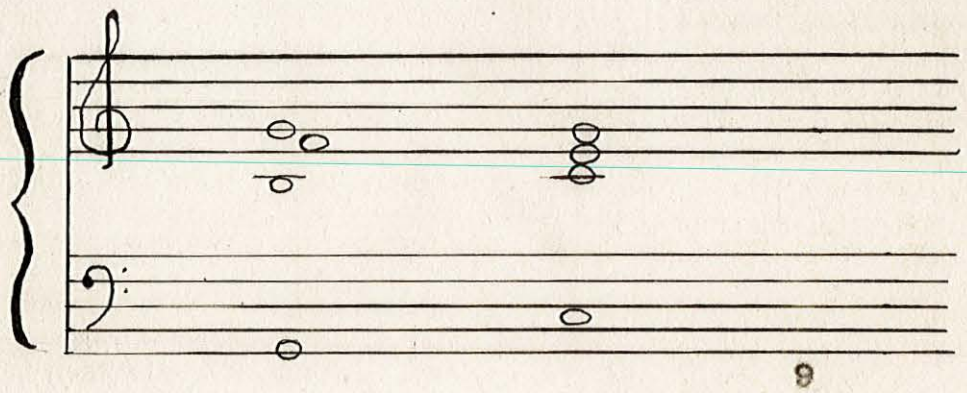
[8] Igor Stravinsky, Poetics of Music, p. 34.

a harsh combination of sounds, in effect it is a chordal combination which so disturbs the ear that it requires satisfaction and appeasement in the chords that follow. The most elementary example of this principle is found in the so-called dominant seventh chord. If this chord is heard by itself, the musical ear demands something to follow it, something which will answer, or resolve, the unfinished feeling aroused by its dissonance. The second chord is known as the "resolution" of the first, because it resolves the disturbance the dissonance has caused.



This elementary principle becomes much more complex in modern music as can be seen in the following example of a chord based on the same root relationship with its resolution.

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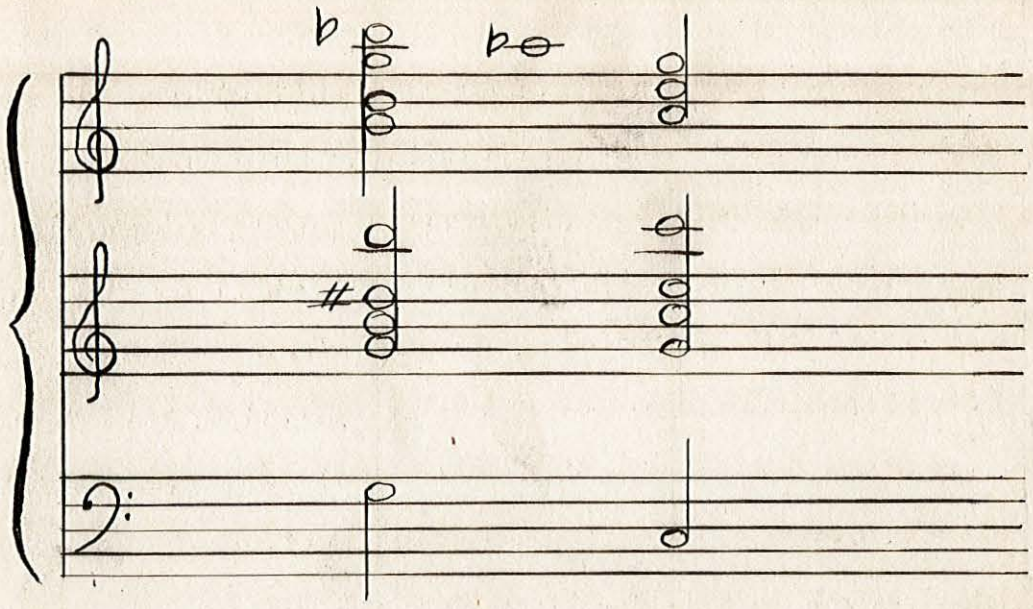
[9] Howard, op. cit., pp. 41-42.



I. IGOR STRAVINSKY

Although Igor Stravinsky was not a child prodigy, he was reared in a musical atmosphere (his father was a bass singer at the Russian Imperial Opera), and as a youth tried his hand at composing. When he was nineteen, he met Rimsky-Korsakoff, who suggested that he study with one of his own pupils. Later he studied with the master himself.

It was not until the ballet The Fire Bird, commissioned by Diaghileff and written in 1910, that Stravinsky's own individuality began to crystallize. Certain characteristics of the idiom that have come to be known as Stravinsky's are apparent here, especially the arrangement of rhythms into ingenious patterns and the use of constantly clashing chord members and chord combinations. The Fire Bird was an acknowledged masterpiece.

Diaghileff showed his pleasure by commissioning

another ballet the following year. This was Petrouchka, which was first produced in Paris in June, 1911. As the score developed, the piano and the orchestra were given dialogue, each answering and imitating the other, which brought to the composer's imagination the vision of a mischievous, aggravating puppet, the counterpart of Petrouchka, who was the hero of an ancient Russian marionette show. The puppet Petrouchka looks at life with the detached observation of the cynic and shows the comic existence which man leads in a largely disinterested world.

As a ballet, Petrouchka was immediately successful, but its musical significance was far greater than people realized at first. The music marked a transition in Stravinsky's style, from the fantasy of The Fire Bird to realism. The Fire Bird had a generous share of sustained, flowing melody, even though it was far more advanced harmonically than the works of Stravinsky's teacher, Rimsky-Korsakoff. Petrouchka is episodic, loosely constructed, and highly dissonant. If The Fire Bird represents the bridge between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, Petrouchka is pure twentieth; at least, early twentieth century.[10]

Most important of all, however, was the introduction of polytonality, for by his use of the Petrouchka chord,

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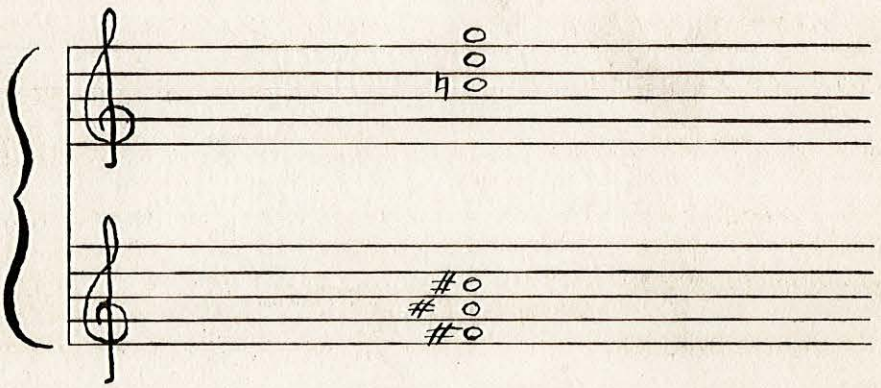
[10] Ibid., pp. 140-141.

Stravinsky became a pioneer in using two keys at the same time. The vogue of polytonality dates from the appearance of the Petrouchka chord, used throughout the composition, representing two different keys, F sharp major and C major, sounded simultaneously:



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Stravinsky is at his best in this period starting with Petrouchka; it is in this period that his true charm is condensed. Petrouchka fell like a meteor upon the comfortable Strauss-dominated musical world of the pre-war twentieth century. The triumphant crystal-clear technique he displays in this ballet is like a flash of light in a murky wilderness. The harmonies and rhythms of the dance-music create a dramatic atmosphere which ferments, which quivers with suppressed energy--the scenes of the fair, the carnival, the quack, the dolls--all the crowd that makes up

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11 Ibid., p. 125.

the living world, all the dolls become tragic actors. Above it Stravinsky looms, enormous, the mechanic who pulls the wires and makes the puppets laugh and dance and die.

Guido Pannain in Modern Composers says:

> Take the introductory adagietto of the second tableau, before the entry of the dance. The music, strongly rhythmic in character, absorbs into self the mere external realities of gesture and scenery, and becomes plastic and comprehensive; and this is the secret of how Petrouchka (in contrast to Les Noces, where the stage action is an indispensable part of the artistic whole) stands by itself as a purely musical composition. In the generously drawn tone-pictures of the Carnival and of the Russian dance, the popular melodies become an integral part of the lyrical texture, so new, so flexible, and so clear. Stravinsky uses these tunes as if they were indeed children of his own begetting; he only turns them to his own ends because he himself is an expression of the national self of which they also are a part. In Petrouchka Stravinsky has at length discovered himself. The form he has chosen comes from the intuitive recesses of his mind; and once he recognizes it he follows it until it leads him into artistic paradox, to the chaos latent in his naive and anarchic exuberance of spirit.[12]

In Petrouchka there are also clever manipulations (after Debussy's habit) of the running of constituent chord members in parallel lines, an elaboration of the practise of the ancient organum.

The realism of Petrouchka led to the primitivism of the next ballet Stravinsky composed for Diaghileff, Le Sacre du Printemps, The Rite of Spring. When this work was produced in Paris on May 29th, 1913, it aroused such fury that the audience rioted. The music was so dissonant, so

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[12] Guido Pannain, Modern Composers, pp. 41-42.

bewildering, that the world was faced ". . . with the alternative either to reject this music as a freakish exhibition of an unbalanced young man, or accept it as a revolutionary innovation."[13]

It is important to consider Le Sacre du Printemps carefully, for it represents the peak in Stravinsky's career which is soon to be followed by a turn in the opposite direction, from the height of complexity, of barbarism to the utmost simplicity of neo-classicism. The Rite of Spring is scored for an orchestra of tremendous size, and it employs crashing chords which were almost unbelievable to the ears of the pre-war concert-goers. Anyone who knew Stravinsky's background, however, and was familiar with The Fire Bird and Petrouchka, was aware that the new ballet could not be a haphazard product, but that its composer was fully conscious of what he was doing, and was accomplishing his purpose with a masterful though grim and almost diabolical grasp of his medium and his materials.

Le Sacre du Printemps deals with the sacrificial customs of primitive peoples, barbaric, brutal pagan rites, and it is not to be expected that a composer like Stravinsky would have depicted primitive man with the cloying sweetness of conventional harmonies..

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[13] Nicolas Slonimsky, "Igor Stravinsky," The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians, p. 1817.

> He suggests the primitive worship of our ancient ancestors and attempts to project the mind of the twentieth-century man back into the dark, unexplored realms of prehistory. It raises to a higher power than any other music ever written that nervous excitement and emotional tension through rhythm which so many followers of Stravinsky have tried in vain to imitate. Its dependence on rhythmic pattern complexity suggests the feats of savages in remembering elaborate drum patterns and using them for the communication of excitement. This remarkable tour de force, and veristic triumph has become an accepted classic.[14]

Stravinsky claims that he would have written this sort of music even if he had not been writing it for the ballet. He says that he conceived it first as absolute music, entirely apart from the plot, and that its rough, uncouth themes themselves suggested to his mind the earth-worship of primitive man. Thus, the idea for the ballet came from the music; not the music from the plot of the ballet.

> Stravinsky is a barbarian who has been trained in the school of pure form in art. Le Sacre du Printemps is the hymn of his innate barbarism. His musical sense, like that of all primitives, is founded on movement, which is to say, rhythm. Melody, in so far as he brings himself to indulge in it, is always translated throughout his work into a witty and spirited system of punctuation. Study the opening of Le Sacre, gentle and spring-like in its freshness, until the sudden change comes to a bitter mood expressed by stiff angular phrases. Stravinsky's pathos comes from an aggressive melodic idiom, which reaches its acme of development in this primitive and orgiastic work, a savage song of the earth's cruelty and mercy. But it holds pages of magnificent poetry, such as the "Rondo of Spring" and the electrifying "Earth Dance."

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[14] Howard D. McKinney and W. R. Anderson, Music in History, pp. 834-5.

> The pace of the work, shaken by the dizzy series of emotional transitions, finally imposes its own limits on the composer's imagination. He is drunk with his own creative enthusiasm. In the fascination of building one movement out of the materials of a former one Stravinsky loses all control over the timbre of his work, and the details of the work are assembled out of all proportion to each other; he builds up, destroys, alters, and rebuilds, continually seeking a true balance. Stravinsky handles the tone-values throughout their range with such skill that he finally attains the virtuosity of a ring-master in a circus. He is a tight-rope walker, who runs along the sharp edge of dissonance without ever cutting himself. He builds up his tonal material in symphonies of movement. And this movement is so lively and ardent that it grips every other element in the work, and twists them about itself. For Stravinsky cannot treat the problem of tone-value from a static point of view; he cannot isolate sounds by themselves, as the traditional harmonic theory dictates, but can only consider them in motion, only capture them as they pass.[15]

These two works, Petrouchka and Le Sacre du Printemps, are the first unified works of art to be evolved from the experiments in the new style. In fact, they remain strangely isolated and lonely masterpieces. Both of them deal, in a characteristic Russian manner, with fantastic subjects beyond ordinary experience. Nor have other composers been able to enter into the land discovered by this musical Moses; they have copied his rhythms but missed his music; imitated his dissonances, and provided thereby not stimulation but merely distraction, displeasure, or utter boredom.

After composing Le Sacre du Printemps, Stravinsky

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[15] Pannain, op. cit., p. 42.

turned his back on primitivism and turned toward neo-classicism. Several intermediary ventures were a preliminary to the actual turning point, which came when he composed his Pulcinella ballet, produced in Paris on May 15th, 1920. This work was based entirely on the music of the early 18th century composer, Pergolesi, and although Stravinsky was by no means a mere arranger in adapting this music, he retained the exact spirit of Pergolesi's style, and kept his own score chastely simple.

By adhering to the classicism of Pergolesi's eighteenth-century style, Stravinsky had so imbued himself with its spirit that he was ready to adapt it to original compositions of his own invention. Thus he has completed in his own creative career a cycle which passed from late romanticism, through realism and primitivism, to a pure objectivism which is marked by a detached viewpoint and a formalism that reverts to Bach and Handel.

As is to be expected, critical opinion of Stravinsky varies greatly. The conservative or reactionary attitude is represented here by McKinney and Anderson:

> But this variability of style is in many writers--Stravinsky, for example--only a confession of weakness, of having so exhausted their material that they must run out, seeking new.[16]

Never has there been so great a disappointment in

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[16] McKinney and Anderson, op. cit., p. 681.

> music. The fires that flared up with such fierce promise when fed with the broken fagots of the older style have, in The Wedding, The Tale of the Soldier, Oedipus Rex, Symphonies of Wind Instruments (in which the composer strives to dispense with emotional impressions altogether), and in most of his other post-Rite works, died down to a feeble glow; and in his latest ballet, The Card Table, we find merely the cold ashes of technique. It would seem that once Stravinsky had emancipated himself from the past, he had no further interest in life; it may be, as some critics insist, that the advance in technical progress made through his modernistic experiments has been worth the effort. But his early admirers would readily trade all these neoclassic miscegenations for one stunning work of the calibre of Petrouchka or The Rite.[17]

In the opposite camp is Adolfo Salazar, the distinguished Spanish musicologist and composer, who says, "I believe that, in the work of some present day composers--of whom the most significant, in my opinion, is Igor Stravinsky--there is to be found that crystallization of artistic purpose for which we seek."[18]

II. ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

The great influence in modern music is Arnold Schoenberg, who, more than any other single composer, even Stravinsky, has succeeded in evolving a set of theories to explain the intellectual elements which have crept into the new neoclassic style.

Schoenberg did not decide to be a professional

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[17] Ibid., p. 835-6.

[18] Adolfo Salazar, Music in Our Time, p. 278.

musician until he was sixteen years of age. He had been a devoted amateur, and had enjoyed playing in chamber music ensembles, sometimes composing violin duets, etc., for the groups he played with. He showed some of his compositions to a Vienna musician named Alexander von Zemlinsky, a friend of Brahms. Zemlinsky was interested enough to give Schoenberg some instruction, the only instructions he ever had, for he is mostly self-taught.

The first work of any major importance was Verklaerte Nacht, Transfigured Night, which showed him to be a mixture of post-romanticist and impressionist. For a time Schoenberg gave full expression to emotionalism, and the tonal beauty of his Transfigured Night bathes it in a loveliness that is shimmering and starry. The second important work, his Gurrelieder, shows some of those signs of megalomania that have weakened so many of the later German romantic compositions. It demands five solo singers, three four-part male choruses, one eight-part mixed chorus, a narrator, and an orchestra of tremendous resources (including some heavy iron chains). No wonder it is seldom performed. With verses by the Danish poet Jacobsen, this ballad cycle is much more than a Wagnerian debauch; it shows the best of its composer's individuality and what he might have accomplished had he gone on in the same way. It should have been acknowledged as much a landmark in its own way as was Stravinsky's Le Sacre du

Printemps, a few years later.[19]

In both of these works, Verklaerte Nacht and Gurrelieder, he pushed chromatism to extremes but did not, as later, throw the old tonal systems completely overboard, for throw them overboard he did. Schoenberg felt enslaved and shackled by his Wagnerian inheritance, and he determined to be a free man artistically, no matter what it cost him. He decided that the only way he could be free was to break entirely with tradition, to evolve something that would be altogether new, a musical speech that would have in it nothing of the past. In 1911 he wrote a new treatise on harmony in which his extremist, cerebral style first took full shape.[20]

This new harmony which Schoenberg evolved was the so-called atonal music. The exponents of atonality resent the term. They claim that their music is not lacking in tonality; far from it. It has twelve tonal centers instead of only one. It should, they say, be called "twelve-toned," rather than "atonal" music. Some of them call it

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[19] Ibid., p. 696.

[20] Howard, op. cit., p. 100.

"pantonal," or "dodecaphony."[21]

Stravinsky is among those who protest the use of the term, and expresses himself in his Poetics of Music:

> The expression is fashionable. But that doesn't mean that it is very clear. And I should like to know just what those persons who use the term mean by it. The negating prefix a indicates a state of indifference in regard to the term, negating without entirely renouncing it. Understood in this way, the word atonality hardly corresponds to what those who use it have in mind. If it were said that my music is atonal, that would be tantamount to saying that I had become deaf to tonality. Now it well may be that I remain for a considerable time within the bounds of the strict order of tonality, even though I might quite consciously break up this order for the purpose of establishing a new one. In that case I am not atonal, but antitonal. I am not trying to argue pointlessly over words; it is essential to know what we deny and what we affirm.[22]

Nevertheless, the terms "atonality" and "atonal music" have been so firmly fixed in the vocabulary of music that they are used in spite of the merits of the case.

Construction of atonal music follows well-defined patterns. The rules of the system are as strict and rigid as any of those which limit the student of conventional harmony and counterpoint. If anything, the atonal rules

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[21] See Salazar, op. cit., p. 217, Howard, op. cit., p. 102, David Joseph Bach, "A Note on Arnold Schoenberg," The Musical Quarterly, 22:13, January, 1936, Howard S. Hill, "Schoenberg's Tone-Rows and the Tonal System of the Future," The Musical Quarterly, 22:16, 18, 21, 36, January, 1936.

[22] Stravinsky, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

are stricter. The fundamental basis of an atonal piece is known as the "row" or "tonreihe," or the succession of tones on which the composition is built. In this device the composer's mechanistic, intellectualized, non-Romantic style is carried to its ultimate conclusion; the compositions written in this latest period, their closely woven, contrapuntal parts based on these rows, are, even more than their forebears, "paper" music, their intricacies and dissonances being established intellectually and incapable of being appreciated by the normal ear. It is not accurate to speak of this row as a melody or theme, for its succession of tones is subjected to such drastic alterations that it soon becomes unrecognizable to the average listener. The avowed purpose of the row is to establish and reveal the relations between the several tones used. Variations of the series are then employed to increase the number and variety of these relationships.

The first rule in developing the row is that all the tones of the twelve-toned scale must be sounded before any of them is heard for the second time. This eliminates the possibility of any one becoming more important than the others. If C should be sounded twice, the listener might get the idea that the piece is written in the key of C. Once the complete row is announced, the piece continues in a manner similar to the variation form, and the row is

subjected to a variety of manipulations and alterations. The intervals between tones may be made narrower or wider (shorter or longer skips and jumps); the intervals may remain the same, but the rhythm changed, elongated or contracted; some tones may be omitted and others added.

Two of the patterns for altering the twelve-tone row have descriptive names: the "mirror" and the "crab." The mirror and the crab were old patterns borrowed from fifteenth century polyphonists. Bach himself used them in his Musical Offering, written to Frederick the Great. The mirror is what the name implies, an inversion, or turning of the row upside down. When the skip from tone to tone represents an upward interval, the mirrored inversion presents the same interval in the opposite direction, or downwards the same number of scale degrees. In the "crab" pattern the row is sung or played as a crab travels, backwards. It starts with the last tone of the row, and then offers the whole series in reverse. The two patterns, the mirror and the crab, may also be combined, and the row played backwards and upside down, simultaneously. Atonal music might thus be described as music in which the "tonal-row" may be played forwards, backwards, rightside up, or upside down.[23]

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[23] Howard, op. cit., pp. 106-7.

One of the basic principles of atonal music is condensation of material. In striving to free himself from Wagnerian heroics, Schoenberg felt that there must be no high-flown, long-extended passages in his music. Nor must there be the flowing development sections which composers like Beethoven made an indispensable part of their symphonies. Hence Schoenberg was laconic, almost monosyllabic in his new music, and he wrote piano pieces a single page in length, some of them containing as few as nine measures each.

He explained this need for brevity in a lecture he delivered in Paris in 1911.

> Relinquishment of tonality implies a corresponding relinquishment of the structural process founded upon the very principle of tonality; and therefore early examples of works written by means of twelve notes between which no other relationship exists than their relation to one another were necessarily very brief.[24]

Another fundamental principle is the avoidance of consonant combinations, and a rigid insistence on dissonant chords, unrelieved by anything in the way of a simple three-toned triad in thirds, or even a seventh or ninth chord. Thus, atonal music must be written with extreme care to avoid any combinations which would be pleasing to the ear of the man who likes his music sweet. It cannot be composed haphazardly, but requires mathematical and

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[24] Ibid., p. 103.

studied exactness to produce an uninterrupted succession of harsh sounds.

In his 1911 lecture Schoenberg discussed this necessity for dissonance:

> It is likely that, for a time at least, consonant chords will have to disappear from music if the tonal principle is eliminated--not for a physical reason, but for reasons of economy. . . . A tonal consonance asserts its claims on everything that follows it, and regressively on all that came before. Hence, consonant chords tend to occupy an excessive amount of room, and might disturb the balance proper to the new scheme--unless some way is found either of satisfying or of suppressing the requirements of such chords.[25]

In other words, for Schoenberg's purposes, pleasant sounds are objectionable because they cannot stand alone as well as dissonances can, so if atonal composers are going to write short pieces, they must avoid consonances.

It is possible to grasp some idea of the underlying principles of atonal music from verbal description, but the reader who wants to consider them visually and aurally will be interested in excerpts from one of Schoenberg's pieces. The following measures are taken from the fifth and last number of Opus 23, and they show some of the variations to which the twelve-tone row is subjected. The piece is entitled Walzer, an almost ironic title, if you try to waltz to the music.

There is, of course, no key signature, and the

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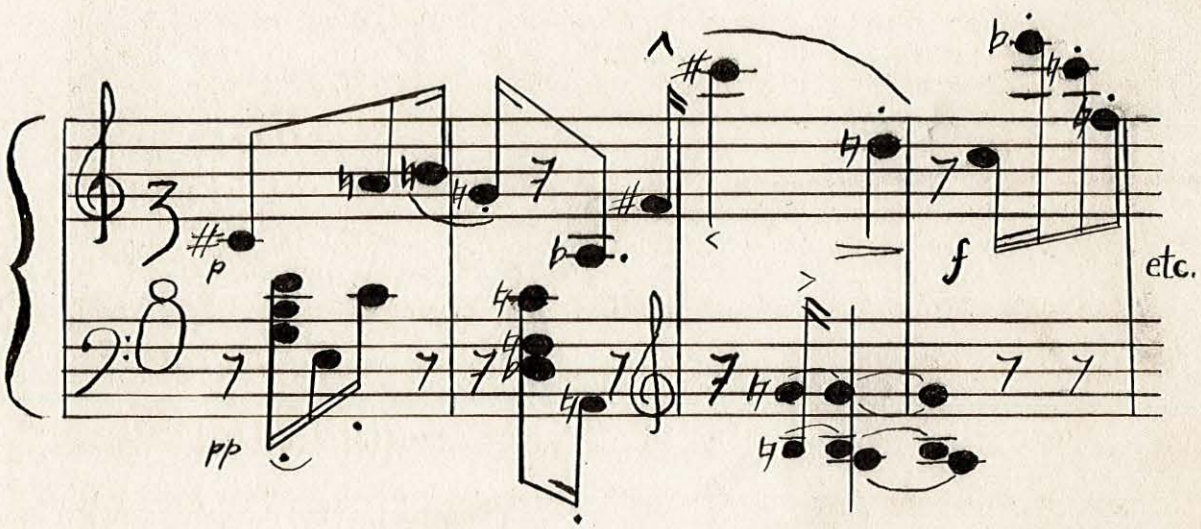
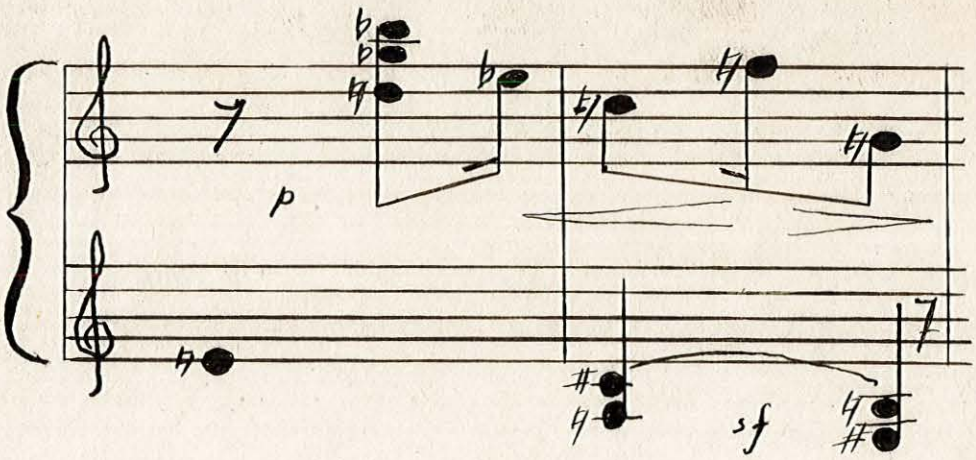
[25] Ibid., p. 104.

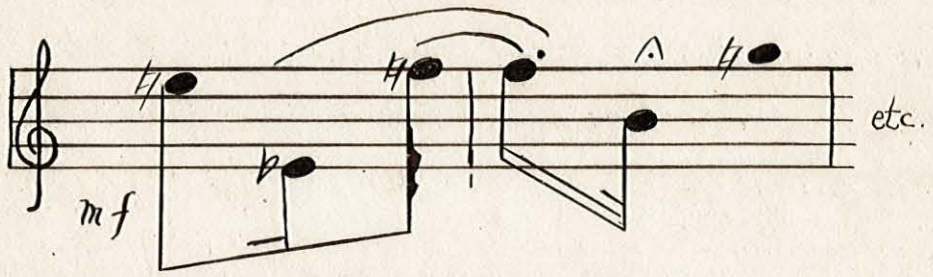
twelve-tone row is set forth in the opening measure. If you examine it carefully, you will find that no tone in the upper part is repeated. Then look at the lower part, and you will find that it too, has twelve tones, each of them different from the others:



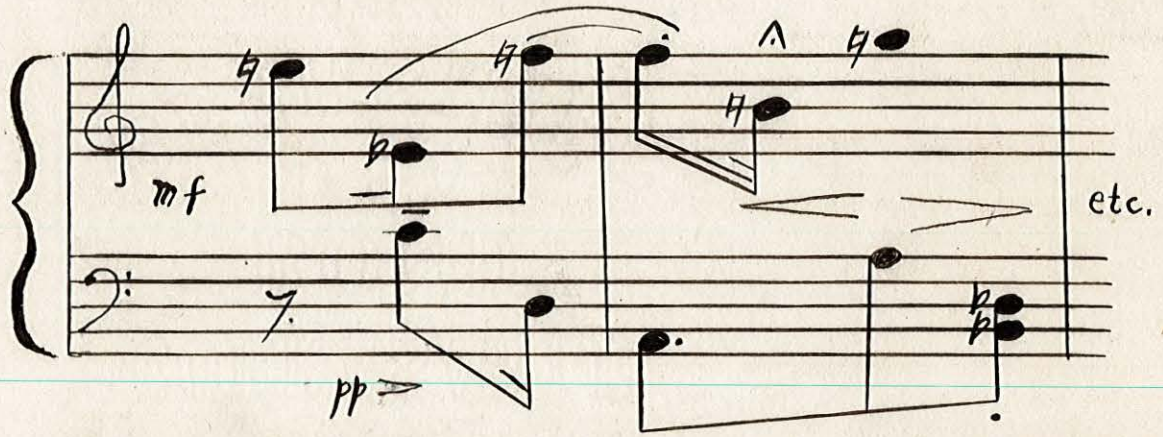
In the following measures, the opening motive (the first five tones of the upper part) is changed by having its rhythm re-arranged. You will notice, also, that once more all twelve tones are sounded, and none repeated:



In a few measures the five-tone motive takes this form:



and is woven, horizontally, to the same motive arranged upside down and backwards:



(Schoenberg's Walzer, Op. 23, No. 5: Copyright, 1923, by Wilhelm Hansen.)[26]

The work which marks the end of Schoenberg's experimental middle period is Pierrot Lunaire, a set of 21 songs, each of them differently orchestrated and possessing a different structural form. Critics seem to agree that Pierrot Lunaire is his most significant work, but they disagree violently in all other respects.

McKinney and Anderson say the following:

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[26] Ibid., pp. 107-9.

> In this he created a work which, in form, content, and style, exceeded anything he had done up to that time. For the first time this experimental music seems to come to life and not be merely the embodiment of the composer's theories. And in it we have a hint, in the incessant repetition of certain main themes, of the means he finally adopted in trying to solve the problem of giving some sort of unity and coherence to a type of writing broken loose from its former moorings.[27]

Guido Pannain writes as follows:

> Here is a polyphony which is counterpoint in convulsions: . . . a restless vocal music, that stands halfway between intoning and recitative, giving the impression of unreal, fantastic pride in empty ingenuity and ingenious pedantry, of provoking paradoxes, the fanciful imaginings of a lunatic; the drunken gestures of a learned professor! It is a perfect Cockaigne of contortions, of sneers, sobs, laughter, of tears cynically swallowed, of a mixture of melodies and rhythm which end in the same mocking grimace. What a paradox of virtuosity! Today Pierrot Lunaire seems a ghost from another world. If our senses had not been blunted by the hard realities of the war we might still feel the fascination of lyrical sentiment melted away by the heat of rhetoric, and of all the vagaries of a prolific but treacherous and unhealthy musical instinct. But now it seems merely the cry of a sorrowful soul rushing towards the precipice of a dark future.[28]

But is it strange that such violent new music as that written by Schoenberg should provoke such bifurcated opinion? Modern devices in music have generally been a development and extension of something that has existed before. Debussy's ninth and eleventh chords were the simpler chords of earlier composers to which further tones

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[27] McKinney and Anderson, op. cit., p. 842.

[28] Pannain, op. cit., pp. 117-8.

were added at regular intervals. Moreover, this evolutionary process has in general followed scientific acoustic principles, even though the innovations were developed by trial and error rather than by laboratory methods.

This explains why atonality is the most difficult of all modern systems for the layman to understand and accept, for it represents a sharp break with what has gone before and what has developed by slow process. It discards all previous rules and conventions, and starting with twelve tones of the scale, sets up an entirely new system.

It is not fair to assume that atonal composers have written the way they do carelessly, or that they compose differently merely because they have not had the patience to master the technique of their craft. To the novice it seems that the same effect could be gained by taking a brush filled with ink and spattering it on a fresh page of music paper. Perhaps the result would be no more difficult to perform or listen to, but the works of the leading atonalists are produced with as much thought and labor as went into the works of the older masters. Whatever drawbacks atonal music may possess generally result from an over-scientific approach, rather than from any lack of workmanship.

It is doubtful that any system which limits itself

so strictly and so arbitrarily to prescribed patterns can achieve unlimited expressive powers. Schoenberg himself has come to realize this, for he has publicly stated that when his system has become fully developed and the music-lover's ear has become accustomed to the new tonal relationships, consonances may be re-introduced with safety.

They will have to be included if atonal music is to have the flexibility and variety essential to any true work of art. Expressiveness depends so much on contrast that if the means of gaining contrast are denied the artist, he cannot hope to convey his message.

Aaron Copland has ventured a shrewd opinion on the future of atonal music:

> Actually it is rather difficult to foresee what the future has in store for most music written in the atonal idiom. Already it begins to sound surprisingly dated, hopelessly bound to the period of the twenties when it was first played extensively. No doubt we are badly placed to judge it at present. But admitting our lack of sufficient perspective for judging it fairly, one can even now see certain inherent weaknesses; for whatever reasons, atonal music resembles itself too much. It creates a certain monotony of effect that severely limits its variety of expression. It has been said that the atonal system cannot produce folk songs or lullabies. But more serious is the fact that, being the expression of a highly refined and subtle musical culture, it has very little for a naive but expanding musical culture such as is characteristic today of the United States (or the Soviet Union). This is not to deny its historical significance or its importance as an advanced outpost in the technological field of musical experiment.

But for a long time to come it is likely to be of interest principally to specialists and connoisseurs rather than to the generality of music lovers.[29]

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[29] Howard, op. cit., pp. 112-3.

CHAPTER V

THE PLASTIC ARTS OF TODAY

People--not artists or those particularly interested in art, just people--stand in front of a picture or a piece of sculpture and ask, "What's it supposed to be?" It is as if they had lost their ability to enter into and understand any new thing. This is unfortunate; more than that--catastrophic.

Understanding new things, or a deepening of understanding of old things, is important, for we never can completely understand anything. In a time so chaotic, so aimless as our own, any small addition to understanding is precious. Now one of the greatest possibilities of art is to increase understanding of things hither-to partially known or entirely unknown. Science is not much help; it plays odd tricks on us; just as we begin to think it is our friend, it pulls something like the atomic bomb from under its hat and what we mistook for a friendly face turns into a skull. Religion has lost its hold on many. Art could be the friendly hand in the dark. But is it?

This question, "What's it supposed to be?" is raised not only by the works of Henry Moore and Pablo Picasso, but also by those of a great many other present-day sculptors, painters, writers, and musicians. Critics may call these

works powerful or pregnant or whatever. Ordinary citizens, more used to applying such adjectives to their cars or their wives, do not concur.

It may be permissible to hazard a guess as to why so many recent works of art seem so impenetrable. Performers in the arts tend to acquire such a large assortment of specialized rules for speaking their minds that these amount to a sort of secret language which defeats its own purpose. Once having learned the language, its proud possessors show it off for the approval of the few other people who understand it, thus forfeiting the attention of the many to whom it is gibberish. This leads to a sort of war between the artist and the public.

Humiliated first by its own inability to understand and further by the artist's apparent unconcern about them, the public becomes excessively irritated. This irritation is expressed in sneers and jeers. The public comes to think of the artist as a kind of fifth column, whose main purpose is to tease, embarrass, and bore the rest of the population.

The artists and their entourage of sophisticated spokesmen retaliate in kind. Feeling snubbed by the public, which they might want to please, they take the snappish view that people who cannot understand their special idiom are ignorant Philistines, totally bereft of

aesthetic responses, whose loutish enthusiasms are therefore not worth bothering with.

The war between the artists and the public seems, like most wars, to be based on misunderstanding. The facts are that aesthetic responses are by no means the private monopoly of a few specialists; if they were, art as a whole would not be worth bothering about. On the contrary, everyone has such responses, and in America they are especially lively.

Of course to day that the United States has lively aesthetic responses is not to say that these responses are always what they should be. But it does suggest that the public would greatly enjoy the fruits of knowledge and that the artists would enjoy wide appreciation if the iron curtain between them could be raised.

How this can be done is hard to say--save that, while it is part of an artist's job to make himself understood, it is also part of his audience's job to try to understand him.

As in the preceding chapters of this paper dealing with literature and music, the plastic arts--through the arbitrary selection of the works of Henry Moore, the English sculptor, and Pablo Picasso, the Spanish painter--will be discussed in language the uninitiated layman can understand.

I. HENRY MOORE

For the past few years Henry Moore has been regarded as Britain's best sculptor. The seventh child of a Yorkshire coal miner, he was invalided after World War I, then taught physical education. After winning the Royal College of Art traveling scholarship, Moore went abroad for six months. Italy has not always had a good effect on English artists, but Henry Moore went there clear in his mind that he was not going to be captured by the Renaissance. He was after the simple, monumental forms of life. He found them, above all, in the remaining chapel of Santa Maria del Carmine at Florence, in the solemn, solid figures grouped on the walls by Masaccio. Geoffrey Grigson has said, ". . . He has seen many other things, such as the paleolithic cave paintings in Spain, but he has most of all been moved by those Masaccio paintings (which he still keeps in his mind."[1] That Moore continues to keep Masaccio in his mind is borne out by his not infrequent reference to the early fifteenth century Italian artist in his all too few essays on art.

> A carving might be several times over life size and yet be petty and small in feeling--and a small carving only a few inches in height can give a feeling of huge size and monumental grandeur, because the vision

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[1] Geoffrey Grigson, Henry Moore, p. 2.

behind it is big. Example, Michelangelo's drawings or a Masaccio madonna.[2]

All art has its roots in the "primitive," or else it becomes decadent, which explains why the "great" periods, Pericles' Greece and the Renaissance for example, flower and follow quickly on primitive periods, and then slowly fade out. The fundamental sculptural principles of the Archaic Greeks were near enough to Phidias' day to carry through into his carvings a true quality, although his conscious aim was so naturalistic; and the tradition of early Italian art was sufficiently in the blood of Masaccio for him to strive for realism and yet retain a primitive grandeur and simplicity. The steadily growing appreciation of primitive art among artists and the public today is therefore a very hopeful and important sign.[3]

Henry Moore has been intensely interested in primitive art, which forms the second great influence on his own artistic idiom. Extracts from his essay "Primitive Art" first published in The Listener in 1941 clearly show his concern with these elemental forms of art.

. . . primitive art makes a straightforward statement, its primary concern is with the elemental, and its simplicity comes from direct and strong feeling, which is a very different thing from that fashionable simplicity-for-its-own-sake which is emptiness.

The most striking quality common to all primitive art is its intense vitality. It is something made by people with a direct and immediate response to life. . . . It is art before it got smothered in trimmings and surface decorations, before inspiration had flagged into technical tricks and intellectual conceits.[4]

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[2] Henry Moore, Sculpture and Drawing, p. xii.

[3] Ibid., p. xliii.

[4] Ibid., p. xliii.

> One of the first principles of art so clearly seen in primitive work is truth to material; the artist shows an instinctive understanding of his material, its right use and possibilities. Wood has a stringy fibrous consistency and can be carved into thin forms without breaking and the Negro sculptor was able to free arms from the body, and to have a space between the legs. This completer realization of the component parts of the figure gives to Negro carving a more three-dimensional quality than many primitive periods where stone is the main material used. . . .
>
> Of works from the Americas, Mexican art was exceptionally well represented in the Museum. Mexican sculpture, as soon as I found it, seemed to me true and right, perhaps because I at once hit on similarities in it with some eleventh-century carvings I had seen as a boy in Yorkshire churches. Its "stoniness," by which I mean its truth to material, its tremendous power without loss of sensitiveness, its astonishing variety and fertility of form-invention and its approach to a full three-dimensional conception of form, make it unsurpassed in my opinion by any other period of stone sculpture.[5]

Masaccio's figures and the Mexican carvings are in many ways not unlike. In both, detail gives way to monumentality and strength. In both, features are made simple subordinate. Both are grand without dictatorial swagger. Both combine deliberation with a held-in immensity of life. That life, that held-in, immense life, is Moore's interest. He is interested in the rounded, solid shape into which life builds itself.

> I am very much aware that associational, psychological factors play a large part in sculpture. The meaning and significance of form itself probably depends on the countless associations of man's history. For example, rounded forms convey an idea of fruitfulness, maturity, probably because the earth, women's breasts,

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[5] Ibid., p. xliv.

> and most fruits are rounded, and these shapes are important because they have this background in our habits of perception.[6]

The human figure interested Moore most deeply, but he found principles of form and rhythm from the study of natural objects such as pebbles, rocks, bones, trees, and shells.

> Pebbles and rocks show nature's way of working stone. Smooth, sea-worn pebbles show the wearing away, rubbed treatment of stone and principles of asymmetry.
>
> . . . Some of the pebbles I pick up have holes right through them. . .
>
> A piece of stone can have a hole through it and not be weakened--if the hole is of a studied size, shape and direction. On the principle of the arch, it can remain just as strong.
>
> The first hole made through a piece of stone is a revelation.
>
> The hole connects one side to the other, making it immediately more three-dimensional.
>
> A hole can itself have as much shape-meaning as a solid mass.[7]

To illustrate what Henry Moore means by saying that "a hole can itself have as much shape-meaning as a solid mass," look at the figure below. At first the observer will think of the dark mass as the figure. But as he gazes more and more at the whole design, the white space

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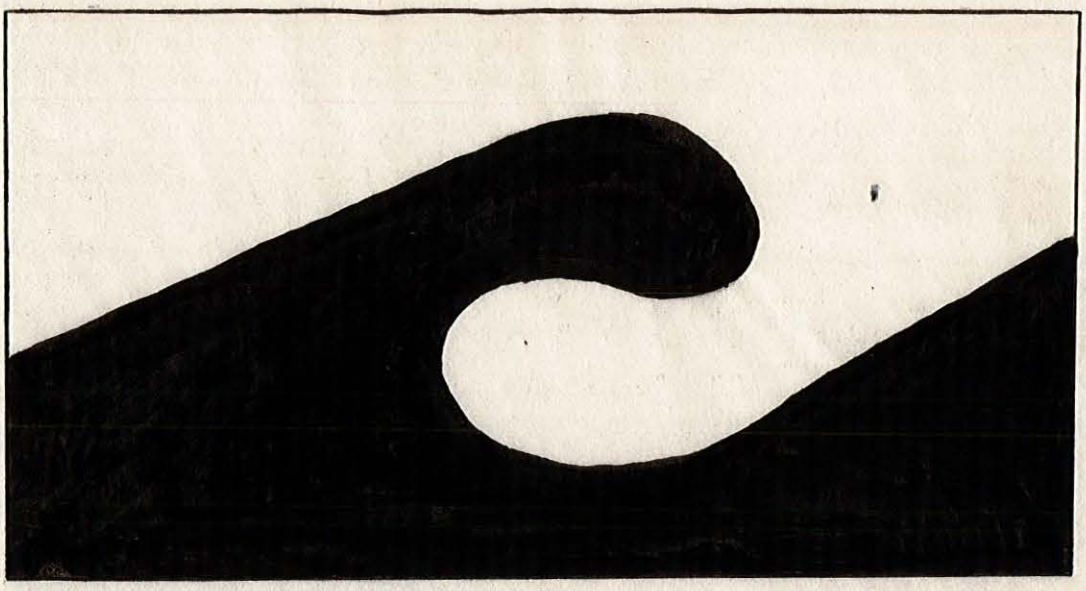
[6] Ibid., p. xxxviii.

[7] Ibid., p. xxxix.



FLUCTUATION OF THE FIGURE AND BACKGROUND

begins to take on meaning. Actually the uncolored portion of the above design has as much meaning as the colored portion. The white space is the "hole." Sculpture is the creation of three-dimensional forms which give aesthetic pleasure, and if the sculptor's interest is the three-dimensional form of the "hole," then he is carving in air. In every clear concept of the nature of vision and in every healthy approach to the spatial world, this dynamic unity of figure and background has been clearly understood.

Sculpture in air is possible, where the stone contains only the hole, which is the intended and considered form.

The mystery of the hole--the mysterious fascination of caves in hillsides and cliffs.

Rocks show the hacked, hewn treatment of stone, and have a jagged nervous block rhythm.

> Bones have marvelous structural strength and hard tenseness of form, subtle transition of one shape into the next and great variety in section.
>
> Trees (tree trunks) show principles of growth and strength of joints, with easy passing of one section into the next. They give the ideal for wood sculpture, upward twisting movement.
>
> Shells show nature's hard but hollow form (metal sculpture) and have a wonderful completeness of single shape.[8]

Herbert Read has something very pertinent to say about nature in art in his lectures given at Yale University on "Social Aspects of Art in an Industrial Age," published in 1947 as The Grass Roots of Art:

> And we must understand by nature not any vague pantheistic spirit, but the measurements and physical behavior of matter in any process of growth or transformation. The seed that becomes a flowering plant, the metal that crystallizes as it cools and contracts, all such processes exhibit laws, which are modes of material behavior. There is not growth which is not accompanied by its characteristic form, and I think we are so constituted--are so much in sympathy with natural processes--that we always find such forms beautiful. The artist in particular, I would say, is a man who is gifted with the most direct perception of natural form. It is not necessarily a conscious perception; he may unconsciously reveal his perceptions in his works of art. Artists are to a considerable degree automats--that is to say, they unwittingly transmit in their works a sense of scale, proportion, symmetry, balance and other abstract qualities which they have acquired through their purely visual and therefore physical response to their natural environment.[9]

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[8] Ibid., p. xli.

[9] Herbert Read, The Grass Roots of Art, p. 11.

But since man today lives in a much more complicated age than did the fifteenth-century Italians or the Mayans, it is to be expected that a modern sculptor's reactions will be more complicated than those found in Masaccio's paintings or the carvings of the so-called primitives. Modern man cannot avoid certain humanitarian preoccupations. The modern sculptor, therefore, more naturally seeks to interpret the human form; at least, this has been the tendency of sculptors for many centuries, and in this respect Henry Moore follows their precept. In his case the tendency has been modified by a desire to relate the human form to certain universal forms which may be found in nature.

But there is just this difficulty; most of the forms of natural growth are evolved in organic materials--flesh and blood, tender wood and sap--and these cannot be translated directly into hard and brittle materials like stone and metal. Henry Moore has therefore sought among the forms of nature for harder and slower types of growth, realizing that in these he would find the forms <u>natural</u> to his carving materials. He has gone beneath the flesh to the hard structure of bone; he has studied pebbles and rock formations.

Having made these studies of natural form, Moore must then apply them in the interpretations of his mental

conceptions. He wishes to express in stone his emotional apprehension of the human figure. To reproduce such a figure directly in stone seems to him a monstrous perversion of stone, and in any case a misrepresentation of the qualities of flesh and blood. Representational figure sculpture can never be anything but a travesty of one material in another--and actually, in most periods, sculptors have tried to disguise the stony nature of their representations by painting or otherwise coloring their statues. It is only in decadent periods that the aim has persisted of trying to represent flesh in naked stone. The aim of a sculptor like Henry Moore is to represent his conceptions in the forms natural to the material he is working in. His whole art consists in effecting a credible compromise between these forms and the concepts of his imagination. A confusion arises when attempts are made to identify this aim with an historical ideal of beauty.

> Beauty, in the later Greek or Renaissance sense, is not the aim in my sculpture.
>
> Between beauty of expression and power of expression there is a difference of function. The first aims at pleasing the senses, the second has a spiritual vitality which for me is more moving and goes deeper than the senses.[10]

The distinction is so important for an understanding of his work, and, indeed, for an understanding of many

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[10] Henry Moore, Sculpture and Drawing, op. cit., p. xl.

phases of modern art, that his words should be carefully pondered:

> For me a work must first have a vitality of its own. I do not mean a reflection of the vitality of life, or movement, physical action, frisking, dancing figures and so on, but that work can have in it a pent-up energy, an intense life of its own, independent of the object it may represent. When work has this powerful vitality we do not connect the word beauty with it.[11]

These are the words of an artist, an artist who has had no truck with metaphysics or aesthetics, an artist who speaks directly out of experience. Obviously the whole scope of art is altered if you make it, instead of the more or less sensuous symbolization of intellectual ideals, the direct expression of an organic vitalism. To be interested in life, as Moore is, rather below the conscious level, is not to be sub-human. The rounded forms used by Moore may be related to a breast, or a pear, or a hill, or a stone. But they might also relate to the curves of a human embryo, or an ovary, a sac, or to a single-celled primitive organism. The rounded limbs of a human foetus, a fertilized egg, or even the pneumococcus that chokes and ruins lungs with pneumonia, would not, when realized with the bigness of life, be less worthy than a lounge suit in white marble or an Alsatian dog a million times smoothly reproduced in colored china.[12]

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[11] Ibid., p. xl.

[12] Geoffrey Grigson, op. cit., p. 9.

What is to be explained is why the artist who frankly resorts to vital or organic forms, does not literally reproduce them, but recombines them or distorts them in an apparently wilful manner.

The answer involves a certain philosophy of life. Modern civilized man regards that faculty which attributes spiritual or vital qualities to inanimate objects as the mark of a primitive stage in human development; and it would be a mistake to identify modern art with any such "animism." But modern scientists have restored a degree of animation to matter, which a short time ago was regarded as merely inert. The microscope, the telescope, and the X-ray have enlarged man's horizons. As man's universe increases, so must his language, whether that language be ethnic word symbols, melody, or spatial shapes on canvas or carved three-dimensionally in wood or stone.

> If the abstractions, the words, the phrases, the sentences, the visual cliches, the interpretive stereotypes, that we have inherited from our cultural environment are adequate to their task, no problem is presented. But like other instruments, languages select, and in selecting what they select, they leave out what they do not select. The thermometer, which speaks one kind of limited language, knows nothing of weight. If only temperature matters and weight does not, what the thermometer "says" is adequate. But if weight, color, or odor, or factors other than temperature matter, then those factors that the thermometer cannot speak about are the teeth of the trap. Every language, like the language of the thermometer, leaves work undone for other languages to do. . . .
>
> Every day we are, all of us, as persons, as groups, as societies, caught in the teeth of what the older

> languages leave completely out of account. We talk of a new, shrunken, interdependent world in the primitive smoke-signals of "nationality," "race," and "sovereignty." We talk of problems of an age of international cartels and patent monopolies in the economic baby-talk of Poor Richards Almanack. We attempt to visualize the eventfulness of a universe that is an electro-dynamic plenum in the representational cliches evolved at a time when statically-conceived, isolable "objects" were regarded as occupying positions in an empty and absolute "space." Visually, the majority of us are still "object-minded" and not "relation-minded." We are the prisoners of ancient orientations imbedded in the language we have inherited.[13]

Henry Moore has never been attracted by the fag-end of the old ideal values of Renaissance Europe. In art, these values have decayed into a set form. What sculpture needed was to be thought out again, or re-explored by feeling. So Moore went back to seeing life, or the simple, rounded forms of life, back to seeing everything.

His tendency is to humanize rock or wood or bone or geological shape or biological specimen. That compromise produces some of the most monumental, but also at the same time some of the least moving of Moore's work. His stony reclining landscape women need to be nearer women, very often, or else further from them; more natural or else more abstract. But his love of the cave and hollow and deep carving gives him room for all kinds of subtlety. His objects of life may be still--a kidney cannot throw a discobolus or hold tables of law--his objects may sprawl, but

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[13] S. I. Hayakawa, The Language of Vision by Gyorgy Kepes, pp. 8-9.

his scale is always big, and he arranges with moving intricacy mass against hollow, hollow against line, and height and breadth. That, after all, is one element by which painting and sculpture have satisfied and delighted human beings all through history and all through changes of style and subject.

II. PABLO PICASSO

Pablo Picasso is perhaps the outstanding painter of our time. More completely than any other artist, he represents both our achievements and our disfigurements. His entire work is a series of shocks; and with each shock part of the structure of our civilization symbolically is revealed--and collapses.

To his detractors, who are legion and vociferous, Picasso is a scintillating virtuoso whose art adds up to a spiritual emptiness. He has been the subject of bitterest denunciation.

Leo Stein, late brother of Gertrude Stein and an early patron of Picasso, has given his verdict: "He would have been a truly great artist if he had been more genuine; as it is, he's an extraordinary phenomenon."[14]

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[14] Charles G. Wertenbaker, "Picasso," Life, XXIII:92, October 13, 1947.

Thomas Craven says:

> Whenever Picasso tackles a real problem in art, his failure is monumental. Years ago, when he was on the climb, he attempted a portrait of Gertrude Stein. That uncouth spinster was collecting geniuses and he was willing to be collected. She professed to admire his pictures, and was patronizing him for all there was in it. He had never drawn from life and was ignorant of the structure of the head; but he pegged away at the job for nearly a year and finally called it finished. And there it is, a lifeless old squaw: the celebrated carcass of Stein! Since that fiasco, he has let nature alone, except for an occasional school-piece for the American juries.[15]

Picasso also has been the subject of extreme adulation. To his admirers, who include an impressive roster of critics and art experts, he is a modern master of art, a genius.

> To pin the history of one's own times, like a butterfly to a setting board, takes genius, and that is what Picasso has done; to influence the visual approach of half the world requires supernormal power, and this Picasso has.[16]

> In every phase, Picasso's paintings have given a truer image of the world we live in than the so-called documentary realists, who show only what the most superficial eye sees.[17]

His maturity begins with haunting pictures of poverty and misery, the deep humanity of his blue period. The paintings of this period, which began in 1901, plainly

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[15] Thomas Craven, Modern Art, p. 179.

[16] Michael Ayrton, in "Picasso" by Charles C. Wertenbaker, Life, XXIII:92, October 13, 1947.

[17] Lewis Mumford, op. cit., p. 375.

show the artist's indebtedness to Degas's graceful ballet dancers, to Puvis de Chavanne's sad blue pictures, and to El Greco's elongated figures.

Picasso carried all these art ingredients into his next period when, around 1905, he changed his color scheme from dominant blue to dominant rose. Here haggard columbines and famished harlequins connect him with the surviving playworld of baroque society. The most ambitious of the rose period pictures is The Family of Saltimbanques, a group of solemn circus characters. To the blue influences have been added the romantic feeling of Watteau's harlequins and the gentle, classic lines of Greek decorations. His paintings of this period have a stiff, fragile air.

Then comes the primitivism of Negroid idols and masques; an effort to reassert our waning vitality by a return to primitive, vital sources, almost synchronous with the rise of jazz. The huge Demoiselles d'Avignon, eight feet high, is the most important painting of this so-called primitive or Negroid period, and the first cubist painting. At this time, 1906, the most advanced younger painters were excited by Gauguin's ideas of expression through color and form and even more by Cezanne's paintings, in which construction by lines and planes was so important. Look at certain of Cezanne's paintings (especially Pines and Rocks) upside down, so that

you can see the design more clearly; then look again at the Picasso and you will see that Picasso has exaggerated Cezanne's underlying pattern of angular shapes until the whole picture--figures and background--becomes a great dynamic design of zigzag lines and sharp-edged planes. The figures at the left, which were painted first, resemble certain prehistoric Spanish sculpture; the two faces at the right, which seem out of keeping with the rest, are like West African Negro masks, which interested Picasso as he was nearing the completion of this experimental picture.

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., in What is Modern Painting? has this to say of this painting:

> The Demoiselles is not only the first important cubist painting, it is also the first picture in which Picasso's formidable and defiant genius reveals itself. For Picasso, though he has painted many charmingly pretty pictures, is not usually concerned with "beauty" so much as with power and intensity. His art carries a high voltage.[18]

With picasso's cubist compositions begins a definite tendency to formulate a new and completely abstract art depending chiefly upon arrangement of forms, lines, and colors for the achievement of aesthetic effects lacking associational and useful values. The element of free and joyful play, which determined the fortuitous structure of the cubist compositions, was echoed in the critical

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[18] Alfred H. Barr, Jr., What is Modern Painting?, p. 26.

formula that a picture should make a pleasant appearance even when hung on its side or upside down. Abstract art recalls two passages from Plato, one suggesting that "the most beautiful shapes were those which had no sensuous associations,"[19] that is, purely mathematical shapes, the other that "all art should approach the conditions of music,"[20] in which harmony and rhythmic repetition or melody would be the dominant sensations experienced.

Around Picasso swarmed cultists who made him the high priest of modern art. Not only did they experiment with cubism in pigment, but they evolved complicated compositions, the collage, in which they used bits of wallpaper, tobacco wrappers, newspaper clippings, wire mesh, glass, metal, wood, etc. These strange bits of material were so placed that they piled up on each other, disappeared only to reappear, forming patterns of texture. When one does not worry about what each element means in its naturalistic connotation, then one can enjoy the pictorial and graphic wealth of these interpenetrating planes, shadings, and textures. The observer can enjoy the juxtaposed elements, the correspondence of lines and surfaces, the continuation of planes, passing far back under other

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19 Plato, "Symposium" in Landmarks for Beginners in Philosophy, Irwin Edman and Herbert W. Schneider, p. 99.

20 Plato, The Republic, p. 85.

planes and coming out from the back to the front to disappear again; the observer can enjoy the subtle modulations which are brought to a crescendo by the space-building power of lines crossing, curving around and running diagonally. All that is a celebration for the eye, a rhythmical and emotional exultation. To be sure, classical paintings offered such rhythms for the eyes too. The correspondence of planes, shapes, lines, points, were always the organizing element of visual expression. But cubism brought to all this a purity, arriving at a new visual microcosmos of rudimentary emotional values.

In the years following Picasso's pioneer work, cubism passed through many phases and spread throughout the world. One of these phases was the pluralistic image. Here different faces attempt to express the psychological mobility of a person; sometimes the female component of the male, sometimes the dark counterpart of the light half--a multitude of various psychological characteristics.

Picasso often likes to observe his objects at a very close range. Both the breaking up and the dislocation of planes are the most obvious expressions of this inclination.

> What he is striving for is the simultaneity of several points of view. These points of view (or better still "fields of view") may result from a movement of the object, or of the spectator, or merely of his eyes, or from any combination of these factors. This kinesthetic experience of the close

> view is the basic principle of all these possibilities. Any close view needs a complementary movement of the eyes in order to reveal the whole surface of an object. Moreover, it effects a disparity of the pictures impressed on the two eyes of the observer; i.e., even if the eyes are not moved, each eye assumes a different point of view and hence receives a different picture image.
>
> However, Picasso has often combined this very close observation with a more distant one which allows the object to be seen at a glance. This approach makes for the simultaneous appearance of profile and frontal or semi-frontal views, if either the sitter or the artist moved during the process of perception. The close view, on the other hand, brings about striking changes of "perspective" within the object so that, for instance, one can look into the mouth from above while the nose is seen from below, and so forth.
>
> It is this combination of the very close with the less close perceptions, and their incorporation into a two-dimensional representation, which makes possible the new unity of the object which Picasso has achieved in his later work. As long as he kept to a comparatively consistent distance from the object, movement broke the perceptions into a sequence of disconnected fragments. He could only either superimpose these fragments upon each other or else add them to one another; the integration of disconnected perceptions into one objective unit comes through the mediation of the close view.[21]

The medium of the painter remains, of course, limited to a two-dimensional plane. The absorption of time, at least, into his concept of environment must take an entirely new turn. In Picasso's Girl With a Cock of 1938, the jerky movements of the cock's head found their expression in the two beaks and in the two eyes combined with the profile of the comb. Viewed as a "static projection"

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[21] Paul M. Laporte, "The Space-Time Concept in the Work of Picasso," Magazine of Art, XLI:1, January 1948, p. 27.

this head does not make sense. But if the observer gives himself to the suggested movement in space, he will soon feel that the static form he sees loses its significance, and he will realize that a form in movement cannot be identical with a form at rest. Each form in Picasso establishes a field of energy around itself; this field of energy has become so much a part of the represented object that the object is no longer identified with its outlines. Picasso's objects take up, as the case may be, a larger or smaller amount of space than is suggested by their contours. This might better be explained by saying that the observer sees the object from several sides simultaneously, and these multiple views varying in distance from the object--some close, some distant.

With this concept of space and time in mind, Laporte analyzes in detail the Girl With a Cock:

> The ground on which the Girl With a Cock is placed is viewed from above, and so are her legs, her mouth and her left hand. Her right foot, nose and forehead are seen from below. The cock, the girl's right hand, her left eye, and a portion of her face are seen from the side. While the upper part of her body and her right eye are viewed from the front. As can be seen from this analysis, there is a rhythmic recurrence of aspects spread over the picture space. Only in certain places has the observer moved so close to the object that an actual twist of space occurred, namely in the right leg, in the head of the cock and in the head of the girl. It is as if the observer had entered at these places the "gravitational field" of the object, and his vision was thus of necessity deviated from its previous direction. These are the same places where the strongest "distortion" and "dislocation" of forms occurs while the spaces between and

> around them are, as it were, "neutral." The places where the observer is drawn into a field of energy are not chosen arbitrarily, but they themselves contribute to the rhythm of the whole work.[22]

After cubism came neoclassicism and paintings of sheer technical virtuosity. Finally a real emotion overpowers Picasso; the actual horror of the fascist uprising in Spain grips him and tortures him; hence the powerful symbolization of woman's utmost misery in his Guernica mural. On April 28, 1937, the ancient and hallowed Spanish town of Guernica was destroyed by German planes flying for General Franco. The Luftwaffe was said to have been very pleased with the night's work; about a thousand people --one out of eight--were killed. It was the first "total" air raid. Two days later Picasso took an artist's revenge; he began work on his Guernica, a huge mural canvas nearly twenty-six feet long, commissioned by the Republican Government for the Spanish building at the Paris World's Fair.

This picture translates the anger and desperation about the Nazi bombing of Guernica into a plastic demonstration. Besides the symbolic significance of the painting (the bull stands for fascism, and the horse turning around in pain for the loyalists), it is the motion of the figures which conveys the real meaning. At the right a

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[22] Ibid., p. 32.

woman, her clothes on fire, falls shrieking from a burning house, while another rushes toward the center of the picture, her arms flung wide in despair. At the left is a mother with a dead child in her arms, and on the ground are the fragments of a sculptured warrior, one hand clutching a broken sword. In the center a dying horse (the loyalists) sinks to his knees, his screaming head flung back, his back pierced by a spear dropped from above like a bomb. To his left a bull (the fascists) stands triumphantly surveying the scene. Over all shines a radiant eye with an electric bulb for a pupil, symbolizing night. Beneath it to the right a figure leaning from a window bears witness to the carnage, the lamp of truth in her hand.

In painting Guernica Picasso used only black, white, and grey, the grim colors of mourning. But otherwise he has made full use of the special weapons of modern art which during the previous thirty years he himself had helped to sharpen: the free distortion of expressionist drawing, the angular design and overlapping transparent planes of cubism, surrealist freedom in the use of shocking or astonishing subject matter.

Moholy-Nagy visited Picasso in 1937 before the painting was placed in the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair. At that time "he said that he had attempted to render 'the inside and outside of a room simultane-

ously.'"[23]

Among the Guernica studies which Picasso made there are a number of drawings which record not only the space-time visualization of the successive changes of physical motion, but also the psychological space-time, the emotional metamorphosis caused by horror in the doomed creatures.

In the old arts, horror was usually rendered through the distortion of the facial muscles, distortion of the open mouth, by enlarged and protruding eyeballs. Picasso intensified this approach by moving and distorting the usually immovable and indistortable elements of the body such as the eyes, ears, and nose. In Guernica he shifted the eyes away from their normal position; he turned the ears upside down. Disintegration can go no further this side of sanity. In the studies for the mural he transformed the eye into a cup and the lower eyelid into a saucer from which tears poured. He exposed the tongue of a screaming, horror-stricken victim as a flame, at other times as a dagger to signify despair. In one of these studies he showed a dozen variations of a face, changing the profile of a young mother under the impact of unspeakable suffering--into the distorted, crumbled features of an old woman. This was done through inter-

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[23] L. Moholy-Nagy, Vision in Motion, p. 249.

weaving the features of a panicky, quickly aging, hideous creature, each expression growing out of the other without breaking the oneness. The same etching, if looked at upside down, solved the enigma by displaying the deteriorated, piggish visage of Hitler, the cause of the bestial destruction. The Guernica is a dramatic statement about one of the world's most urgent problems: war and its effect on humanity. It is not a superficial propaganda picture, not a poster to catch the passing eye. It is the work of a man profoundly moved by a great and terrible event and eager to tell the truth about it with all the resources of modern painting.

CHAPTER VI

ARGUMENT

The most obvious correlation in the anti-literal fields discussed in this paper, and one which has been mentioned over and over again, is the complexity to be found in the realms of literature, music, and the plastic arts. And there is a very close parallel between the complexity in the arts and the cultural patterns which these artists interpret.

James Joyce is so complex that his last work, Finnegans Wake, is completely unintelligible to the mass, slightly comprehensible to a few, and completely understood by none. Even the most erudite reader cannot untangle all the many ramifications of the allusions to subjects familiar only to Joyce himself. The complexities of Miss Gertrude Stein are reduced by comparison with those of James Joyce, Miss Stein's writings have perplexed intelligent readers to the point where they have accused her of "writing with tongue in cheek."

The anti-literal in music, as represented here by Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg, presents a complexity of another sort, but no less real. In attempting to discover a music wholly free from extra-musical appeal, they experimented with dissonance, atonality, and polytonality,

carrying these technical devices to their logical conclusions--to the utter confusion of most people.

The complexity of Henry Moore lies in his tendency to humanize rock, wood, bone, or geological specimen. His monumental pieces are simple in line, but the intricacy and subtlety with which he arranges his planes and the liberties he takes with the human form puzzle the observer. Pablo Picasso's complexity in his later works lies chiefly in his efforts to demonstrate the simultaneity of several points of view. Though he is the best known of living painters, the layman thinks of him largely as a man who paints women with two faces and sometimes isn't sure what part of a woman's anatomy belongs where.

The second broad correlation between the anti-literal idioms of modern art is to be found in the artists' rejection of the generally accepted ideals of beauty as their goals. They have been called culture-weary artists striving to get away from the romanticism and the stereotyped art of the nineteenth century. It is interesting to note that with the exception of Henry Moore, each of the artists considered in this paper began their creative careers in the conventional styles of their respective arts. But the restrictions of the academy chafed them. They were disgusted with the effete products of the rules, so in place of "beauty" they strove for "vitality" and meaning. And it

is this sincere effort to revitalize their art that brings the third correlation to mind.

These artists are all subjective in their treatment of art. They feel that the public is too apathetic to aesthetic responses, with the result that they tend to disregard the reactions of the man on the street. This attitude creates a vicious circle. The public resents being excluded from the secret language spoken by the artists, and this resentment is expressed by open scoffing or utter disregard. There is another phase of the public's antagonism toward the artist which will be considered as a separate correlation.

Consciously or unconsciously the artist in the anti-literal field shocks the audience, and the audience, for the most part, does not like to be so treated. This mental insulin injection is used for various reasons: Joyce attempted to show the complete man, and in order to do that he felt compelled to show man in his most base aspects as well as his highest; Gertrude Stein uses "shock" for a different reason. Referring to the last line of Preciosilla, "Toasted susie is my ice cream" comes as a distinct shock. It was done deliberately. She has composed a poem using words in their anti-literal sense, and to have ended the composition with "Not guessed. Go go." would have left it up in the air. The punch in the solarplexis at the end certainly brings the poem to a

definite conclusion; Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg use shock to telling effect in their music, deliberately and with malice aforethought, to make the definite and decisive break with romanticism; Henry Moore and Pablo Picasso use the same device unintentionally, though their detractors would deny this. Their distortion of the human anatomy shocks the public. Picasso's Guernica is an exception; here the artist used every device at his command to startle man and make him feel the horror of what had been done.

Another very interesting correlation between the arts is found in the artists' return to primitivism. In its widest sense the term Primitive Art is used to cover most of those cultures which are outside European and the great Oriental civilizations. To quote Henry Moore, "The most striking quality common to all primitive art is its intense vitality."[1] And since these artists were seeking vitality to counteract the effete nineteenth century art, it is natural to find them making use of this source of elemental and direct feeling.

In contrast to the preceding correlations, which have been "characteristics" of the three fields of art, is a "tool" used by the modern creative artist: new concepts of time and space.

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[1] Henry Moore, Soulpture and Drawing, op. cit., p. xliii.

Joyce has used an entirely new concept of time in Finnegans Wake. Many indications aside from the fact that the book begins in the middle of a sentence point out that its design is circular, without beginning, middle, and ending prescribed for chronological narratives. The idea of past, present, and future must be laid aside, if one is to grasp the composition. This is possible, given the slightest familiarity with modern developments in physics or mathematics or even a moderate appreciation of recent tendencies in painting. If one can consider all events as having a standing regardless of date, that the happenings of all the years are taken from their place on the shelf and arranged, not in numerical order, but according to a design dictated by the mind of Joyce, then the text is not nearly so puzzling. For example, if Noah, Premier Gladstone and "Papa" Browning are telescoped into one, because of common characteristics, no violence is done to logic. The treatment of space is equally elastic. Phoenix Park, Dublin, becomes interchangeable at one time with the Garden of Eden, again with the Biblical universe. Mr. Joyce takes a point of view which commands all the seas and continents and the clouds enveloping the earth. The characters are composed of hundreds of legendary and historical figures, as the incidents are derived from countless events. The "hero" or principal male character is primarily Adam, and

includes Abraham, Isaac, Noah, Napoleon, the Archangel Michael, Saint Patrick, Jesse James, any one at all who may be considered "the big man" in any given situation. He is called each of the separate names by which he has been known, or more frequently H. C. E. (Here Comes Everybody, H. C. Earwicker). His symbol in nature is the mountain.

His female counterpart, the river, is Eve, Josephine, Isolde, Sarah, Aimee MacPherson, whoever you like occupying the role of leading lady at any time or place. She is called most often Anna Livia.

Gertrude Stein's obsession with the "presentness" and "on-going-present" has been treated at some length. There is a further correlation to be seen between Finnegans Wake and Miss Stein's poetry. The reader can start anywhere in Preciosilla and work around to the starting point, and the result will be the same. Both used the circular construction.

Schoenberg attempted to dissociate the conventional concept of time from his music by making each note independent, that is, with no dependence on anything that had preceded or was to come. His atonal "row" can be played backward or forward, upside down or rightside up, and you can start anywhere you please and work back to your starting point.

There is a very nice comparison possible between Preciosilla and Schoenberg's atonal music. In order to

dissociate words from their ethnic symbolism, Miss Stein purposely places them together in an anti-literal way. Reading the poem, or preferably hearing it read, one receives an impression of an on-going-present, no past, no future. Each word is used independently; the relationships of the words to each other are the important things. Now look at atonality. No consonances are allowed because every consonance has a dependence on what has preceded (the past) and on what is to follow (the future). Every tone, a distinct dissonance, is used independently.

Picasso is developing a very dynamic space-time concept, comparable to that used by the other artists discussed. He is chiefly concerned with the representation of movement in a two-dimensional medium. He further complicates the problem by having the object move, the artist move, and the spectator move simultaneously. Picasso has been accused of being nothing but a technician, with no feeling whatever in his art. His Guernica disproves this. He very definitely can be emotional when he wants to be. To generalize, the artist of the twentieth century has had a phobia against any display of feeling. In the fear of being sentimental he has sacrificed sentiment.

The so-called anti-literal artist of the twentieth century has made one very definite decision--literature must not be used merely to tell a story, a picture must not be used merely to tell a story, a picture must not tell

a story, nor must music.

The English music critic Edwin Evans made a statement in 1930 regarding music which is equally applicable to the other arts under discussion:

> The first thirty years of the twentieth century was an age of experiment that set in because it was needed and the time was ripe for it. It has come to an end because it has performed its function of providing a sufficiency of new expressive resources. It has yielded a profusion of new material none of which has been fully exploited, and much of which has scarcely been developed. . . . A time of experiment is not likely to be fertile in masterpieces, but those years created the material in which the artist of the next phase is to work.[2]

And what is the artist of today doing? Are the experimental techniques of these avant garde artists discussed in this paper being used, are these techniques the "material in which the artist of the next phase is to work?"

Phyllis Bentley, in her book Some Observations on the Art of Narrative, quotes Virginia Woolf:

> Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions. . . . from all sides they comes, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms. . . . Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern. . . which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.

Then Miss Bentley goes on to say:

> Life is not lived in a summary, but in a continual flow of changing single perceptions; therefore the summary is not only "ugly" and "clumsy" but "incongruous,"

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[2] Twentieth Century Music, op. cit., pp. 397-398.

> that is, out of keeping with the reality of life. The scene, the presentation of the specific moment, is the only truthful mode of presenting life.[3]

The writer of today makes extensive use of the "stream-of-consciousness," quite frequently uses the "presentation of the specific moment," or Gertrude Stein's "presentness," and also employs symbolism daringly. But any writer with one eye on the book market, as most writers seem to have, will avoid the erudite complexities of Joyce.

In the field of music it is quite a different story.

> The technics of today have grown out of the experiments of yesterday, only the experiments have come to be accepted as a matter of course and exist as part of the unconscious memory of the present generation of composers. Atonality, polytonality, modal harmony, dissonant counterpoint, all are used in greater or lesser degree, just as the nineteenth century composers enlarged on the harmonic material of the eighteenth century. The difference lies in the fact that the present generation has simplified much that it helped itself to. . . . Also, there is a definite swing away from dissonance used in exaggeration as it was by many in the previous generation. The pendulum leads back to diatonicism and neo-romanticism; back to homely sentiment; but it eschews the sentimentality that seemed to have weakened the post-romantic movement; both the public and the young composers have in many ways become reactionary. . . . But the writing on the wall points to a new romanticism, a renaissance of beauty and simplicity--but a romanticism composed of the new materials. The spirit of beauty must be born again. It must be released from the fetters that have held it earthbound.[4]

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[3] Phyllis Bentley, Some Observations on the Art of Narrative, p. 42.

[4] Twentieth Century Music, op. cit., p. 414.

Walter Abell, Professor of Art at Michigan State College, makes the following prognosis in the field of art:

> Abstract design, it would appear, is now the chief medium of expression for American artists under thirty and will therefore presumably constitute the major trend of the immediate future in American Art. Surrealism, though less wide-spread, has sufficient followers to give it a definite place among the current aspects of American production. Exponents of both movements are scattered throughout the country, in isolated farms and desert villages as well as in metropolitan art centers; they include not only professional artists but many other devoted workers, who, while earning their living as doctors, teachers, business men or housewives, are pouring the essence of their creative spirits into some form of art. In short, abstraction and surrealism are flourishing and widely disseminated phases of contemporary American culture.
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> These conclusions emerge from a survey made by the Art Institute of Chicago in preparation for its Fifty-Eighth Annual Exhibition of American Art. Departing from the tradition of mixed exhibitions, the Institute plans to devote each of its American annuals for the next several years to an intensive display of one or two related artistic trends. Traditionalism, Realism, Romanticism and other idioms will have their years. This year it is Abstraction and Surrealism. The Institute's associate curators, Frederick A. Sweet and Katherine Kuh, travelled 24,000 miles to select abstract and surrealist work from every section of the United States.[5]

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[5] Walter Abell, "The Law, the Maze and the Monster," Magazine of Art, 41:6, January, 1948.

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