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## A B S T R A C T

Sociologists have tended (a), to assume art as a 'given', and, (b), to attempt to relate art to 'society', thus conceptually separating the two.

I argue that art is a social phenomenon, and that, historically, until the Renaissance, painting and sculpting were no more nor less 'art' than house-building or saddle-making. The sociologist should, therefore, examine the conditions under which painting and sculpting came to be constructed as art, and the social relations through which art is reproduced and maintained as an ideology and practice.

Taking William Morris's analysis of art and the division of labour under capitalism as a starting point, I examine and develop his analysis in four areas.

First, I examine the development of state intervention in the arts in Britain in the period 1830--1975. Second, I examine the ideological pre-conditions for, and assumptions implicit in, the present day art market. Third, I examine the impact of the ideology of art on the working classes. Fourth, I examine the present position and experiences of the producers of art, craft and design.

Through examining these four areas, I attempt to show not only the usefulness of Morris's analysis, but also the way in which the ideology of art is bound up with the class divisions and work relations of 19th and 20th century British society. Furthermore, I show that the producer of art, while being in control of the production of his work, is not generally in control of how it is defined, presented, bought, sold and valued.

contd...

The chapters concerning art and the state, art and the working classes, and the position of the producer of art, can be seen as contributions to the debate on state policy in the arts. However, while I analyse state policy and its effects, I do not go on to discuss at any length alternative forms of state policy, or alternatives to state policy. The analysis presented, however, is arguably a foundation for discussions of present-day British state policy in the arts, as well as of alternative state policies, and alternatives to state intervention.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ART

Volume One

by

Nicholas Martin Pearson

submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

September 1976

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## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I wish to thank for their encouragement in the research here presented all those who have contributed their time and energies in reading and commenting on the various drafts of the thesis. In Particular I owe a debt to my colleagues in the Departments of Sociology at Durham and Leicester Universities. Also I wish to thank the various artists, craftsmen, and designers who agreed to be interviewed for this study, and who commented on and reacted to what I was doing. Throughout the writing a 'test' of my argument has been the extent to which it made sense to those actually involved in producing art.

I would like to give special acknowledgements to Philip Corrigan for his detailed reading of and comments on successive drafts, and to Jane Pearson for both commenting on the material and correcting the proofs.

As a post-graduate student at Durham University the work was facilitated by the generous allocation of rooms to post-graduate students within the department of sociology.

Finally I wish to express my gratitude to the Social Science Research Council who made the work possible by the provision of a post-graduate award between 1972 and 1975.

Nicholas M Pearson  
Leicester University,  
September 1976

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION



## Chapter One

### The Sociology of Art

#### The Sociologist and Art

Sociologists directing their attention to art have tended to concentrate their work on the senses in which the contents of art can be seen as determined by, or reflective of, the social. Whether this form of analysis has rested on a scrutiny of class structure<sup>1</sup> or on a classification of types of social system,<sup>2</sup> it can<sup>3</sup> and has tended towards the assuming of too many givens - among these 'givens' being the very existence of 'art' as an unproblematic set of objects or events available for study.

It is the contention put forward in this thesis that a pre-condition for any attempted examination of the content of the material objects of art as a social phenomenon is an analysis of the social relations within which art is produced, through which it is defined, and as part of which it is viewed, bought, discussed, and made available to differing groups of people. It will be argued that that which, in its material form, is defined as art, is so defined as a consequence of definitions embodied in the practices and ideologies comprising the social relations of art, and in the wider social relations of capitalist society of which these are a part. It will be emphasised that the meaning of 'nature' of art is not to be found through an empirical examination of

a set of objects already defined as art: rather the sociologist, in order to contribute towards the understanding of art, must examine the social conditions which make art possible, in turn viewing the existence of art as itself problematic.

### History and the Sociology of Art

Given, as we shall assume for the time being, and shall substantiate later, that 'art' exists socially as a definition - a label the application of which depends upon the social relations and context - the task is to elucidate the general practices and social relations through which and as part of which the definition is applied. Such a study could not be carried out solely through an examination of the present day art-world, for that would leave the investigator in the situation (so far as what comprises art is concerned), of merely presenting a list of various objects that are so designated. So far as how the label is applied is concerned, he would merely describe the various institutions involved - art schools, the art market, universities, art critics, and artists themselves: a fragmented and seemingly incoherent account would result. Only a historical analysis will make clear the inter-relations between the organisations, persons, and objects, and the meaning and significance of art as it now exists within the broader context of late 20th century Britain. An historical analysis is perhaps especially important in dealing with a phenomenon so laden with history as is art.

in its present social form.<sup>3</sup>

It cannot be hoped, in a study of this length, to present a detailed historical account of the social construction of art from the pre-Renaissance period (when no concept or practice equivalent to the modern 'art' existed) to the present day. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to present an analysis that makes clear the skeletal structure of the social relations involved in art, and to explain why, of a given set of possible ways of developing, particular forms of definition, ideology and practice have arisen.

The sociologist has to differentiate between what a particular person means in saying a particular thing, and what it means to say that particular thing in various social contexts; that is, he has to examine the conditions of possibility of a particular form of saying, and how the social relations that form of saying is part of, define the social meaning of what is being said. Thus in this study the bulk of evidence cited is in the form of statements on art by both contemporary and historical figures; the intention is not merely to see what was meant by a particular statement, but to examine, rather, what it means or meant, in a specific socio-historical situation, to say that thing. That is, this investigation seeks to establish under what conditions it is and was possible to talk in various ways of and about 'art', and, therefore, what is and was implied by such talk about art - and 'talk', of course, is not a mere play of words,

but is part of definite social practices and relations, and is part of the actions and practices of people doing, 'being', constructing, and being done to.

#### Outline of Thesis

A thesis entitled 'The Social Construction of Art' is in danger of being seen as a potted account of the sociology of post-Renaissance western society as exemplified in the social relations of art. I must, therefore, make clear the focus of this study, and the specific purposes behind the inclusion of the various pieces of historical investigation.

The purpose of the thesis is to present a way of understanding and analysing the social existence of 'art' in late 20th century Britain. Historical material is presented, therefore, in order to explain the development and social relations of various aspects of art as it now exists. Thus, while the period from the Renaissance to the late eighteenth century is only dealt with in a cursory fashion, much space is devoted to an examination of various developments in the 19th century, since these developments, it is argued, are crucial to an understanding of the contemporary situation.

In outline form, therefore, the thesis is organised as follows.

Part One (chpts. 1 & 2) is introductory, chapter one being a general introduction and survey of the field, and chapter two being a more detailed presentation of the analysis of art and society formulated by William Morris. Morris's analysis is taken as a starting point and basis

for the arguments presented in this thesis, and his ideas are therefore given detailed consideration not only because of their general importance, but in order to emphasise the coherence and analytical sharpness of his account against presentations of his thought which tend to blunt his intellectual importance either by romanticising him, or by simply ignoring much of his post 1877 work.

In part two of this thesis (chpts. 3 & 4) I shall examine what I have termed the 'pre-conditions' for the social relations of art in the 19th and 20th centuries. 'Pre-conditions' in the sense that the construction of the artist (as part of a developing division of labour) from the Renaissance to the end of the eighteenth century involved the construction of ideas on art and the artist, and the value, meaning, importance and significance of art, that were to form the basis for the 19th and 20th century developments, but which were in themselves confined to a narrow social group.

It was in the 19th century (examined in part three, chapter 5), that these definitions and ideas on art were taken and propagated socially outwards and downwards. Thus in examining the 19th century developments I concentrate on the intervention of the state in art - an intervention which is crucial to art becoming a 'public' concern. Thus in chapter five attention is focussed on museums, art galleries, art and design education, the Royal Academy, and various exhibitions of applied art, all of which were important factors in the way in which the social relations of the art of the 18th century became expanded and developed as part of relations involving

more extensive and varying social groups and classes in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The chapter dealing with 19th century developments is the longest and most involved in this study. In it many of the basic arguments are developed and talked through. The second chapter in part three (chapter 6) follows on from chapter five by continuing the discussion of art and the state, considering this time, however, the post second-world-war state in Britain, and its effect in defining, limiting and propagandising art through the Arts Council of Great Britain, the Crafts Advisory Committee, the Design Council, the Regional Arts Associations, and so forth. In part three as a whole I therefore emphasise the continuity of development between and throughout the 1830--1870 and 1939--75 periods, and, more importantly, the essential similarity and coherence of state intervention in the two periods.

In part four (chapter 7) the present day art market is examined. While this is often seen as being, somehow, peripheral to what art is, or, simply, a means whereby art objects are exchanged, it will be argued that not only is the art market central to an understanding of the contemporary social relations of art, but that the ideological preconditions for the art market play a central role in supporting and maintaining existing definitions of what is and is not to be art; who art is for; and what sorts of hierarchies of values and judgements are to exist within art.

In part five ('Definitional Conflicts') various ways, in which what is and is not to be art are struggled over, are examined. I illustrate not only the extent to which successive attempts by artists, craftsmen and designers to alter or redefine art have been negated and incorporated into the ruling or dominant social definitions of art, but also the extent to which the range of objects defined as art has altered over time, and what consequences the defining of a phenomenon previously not defined as art, as art, has for the social use of and attitudes to that phenomenon.

The final chapters of the thesis, (chapters 9 & 10), deal with material from a series of interviews with practising artists, craftsmen and designers. These are presented to illustrate how the practitioner - the producer - has to cope with, and work through, social relations and definitions of art that are only partly of his own making, and which are a consequence of the forms of historical development examined within the rest of the thesis. The full text of the interviews is presented in an appendix.

In part six ('Conclusion') I summarise the arguments and draw out the implications of what has been said.

#### The Development of the Word

A brief consideration of the changes in the usage of the word 'art' will indicate something of the social transformation to be examined in this study, and make clearer what it is that is going to be discussed as 'the social construction of art.'

In the middle ages a distinction was drawn between the 'liberal' and 'mechanical' arts, and it has been pointed out that

Poetry and the theory (but not the practice) of music were ranked among the 'Liberal Arts', pursuits proper for an educated man and a gentleman; sculpture and painting belonged to the 'sordid arts' and their practitioners were classed among the manual workers or artisans and were often members of the craftsmen's guilds. . . . As a very broad generalisation the 'practical arts' were considered to be those which involved a manual skill and the 'theoretical arts' those which were thought of as belonging to the mind, as depending on the exercise of reason or the acquisition of scholarship. (4)

While, therefore, a distinction was drawn in the middle ages between the mental and the manual, the term art was applied to both, and the usage bears little relation to modern notions of the fine arts. It is worth bearing in mind the extensive meanings still current in the English language associated with the roots of the term 'art'; for example<sup>5</sup>

artefact a product of human art and workmanship; a product of prehistoric art as distinct from a similar object naturally produced.

artful cunning, crafty, deceitful.

artifice device, contrivance; skill.

artificial made by art; not natural.

artisan mechanic, handicraftsman.

And even the word Art itself is defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary as

skill, esp. human skill as opposed to nature; skilful execution as an object in itself; skill applied to imitation & design, as in painting etc; .....

while Artless is defined as

unskilled, uncultured; clumsy; natural; guileless, ingenuous...

Within these definitions one notices firstly a general distinction between nature and 'un-natural' in the sense of 'of-mankind'. As part of this there is a general



sense of art as 'skill', whether this be skill in the form of 'cunning'/'deceitful' or as 'competence' and 'precision'. The general sense of the medieval usage also survives as in the term 'artisan' (which in the nineteenth century was in common usage meaning skilled workman). 'Artist', in the sense of a man or woman who paints, sculpts, or engages in a related activity, is a comparatively recent usage.

It is at the social developments involved in the emergence of the specialist meaning of 'artist' that we are to look in this study. Thus, in linguistic terms, we are to examine what it is that lies behind the narrowing of the popular meaning of the term art from its general sense of 'skill' or 'man-made' (un-natural) to its present most common usage in relation to a range of activities including painting, sculpture, and to a lesser extent other activities including weaving, pottery and film.

The concept of a 'work' of art, and of the 'fine' arts, coincided in its emergence with the decline in power of the medieval guild system, and the rise of Academies in 16th century Italy. Thus the distinction between 'fine' and 'applied' arts, as employed in 19th century England, is of Renaissance origin. Using the term 'art' as a synonym for 'fine arts' came commonly into English usage in the 19th century. The phrase 'the polite arts' had been employed in the 18th century, but, by 1849 Henry Cole<sup>6</sup> was able to use the term 'art manufactures' to mean 'fine art' applied to mechanical production - thus indicating the extent to which 'art' as a term had become compressed in

meaning from its broad medieval usage.

In looking thus briefly at the history of the usage of the word art something of the social transformation involved can be seen. Today the term art is used in both an evaluative and a denotative sense. Thus painting and sculpture are generally called 'art' in a denotative sense, but, at the same time, it is possible to say of a particular painting, 'That is not really art', using the term there in an evaluative sense. Film-making or photography are in more ambiguous positions: with these it is not general to describe the activities or products as 'art' in a denotative sense; rather in 1975 the appellation 'art' or 'artist' in these fields indicates a person or work of particular distinction.<sup>7</sup>

Completely outside the usage of 'art' as a term of cultural evaluation, the word is used as in, for example, 'the art of football' or 'the art of thatching', where it is employed to indicate that particular skill is involved. To describe photography as 'art' implies that photographs should be regarded as aesthetic objects in a particular way; to describe football as art does not necessarily imply this, but, more generally, would imply that the game simply involved skill and finesse.

#### The Material Limitations of this Study

From the point of view of the producer of art I am concerned in this study to limit the treatment to visual artists - painters, sculptors, weavers, potters, film-makers, and so forth. Limiting the field in this manner is no easy matter, for it is apparent even in this brief list of producers that I have included people who might be designated 'craftsmen' or 'designers'. They all produce 'visual' things, however, and the

relationship of 'craft' and 'design' to the concept of 'art' shall be examined in the course of the thesis. I am excluding in my evidence and treatment music, literature, ballet - in general the performing and verbal 'arts'. This exclusion is partly arbitrary, partly founded on likenesses of activities, and partly necessitated by the scope of the thesis.

The term art, however, as part of the dominant culture in the Renaissance and post-Renaissance period, embraces all the activities mentioned, and more. Much that is said, therefore, about the social existence of the idea and practice of art, as a phenomenon of developing capitalist society, has implications for all the arts. A tighter separation of different arts, or a more specific limitation of the implications of what is being said in this study, is impossible because one of the phenomena being investigated is the very fluidity and generality of art as a definition which implies more than that an artist does a particular thing.<sup>8</sup>

Were I to limit this study to, for instance, the painter as artist, or, even more specifically, the painter in nineteenth century Britain, I would become trapped within the forms of discourse and practice that constitute the social relations of art. In order to understand the social existence of art, and the social relations through which it is meaningful, I must enter more broadly into the ambiguities and varieties of the practices and phenomena that are part of the social relations of art. Thus, in as far as it is partially possible to limit an enquiry such as this to the visual arts this is done, but, in as far as much talk about art is general talk, the study will go beyond this limitation. The result is a compromise between

the necessary limitation of the scope and empirical subject matter of the research, and the dictates imposed by the subject of study.

The Artist, Craftsman and Designer as Material Producers

An important reason for limiting this study to 'art' as applied to the visual artists, is that painters, sculptors, weavers, potters, industrial designers, jewellers, etc., are all producers of material objects. That is, they are all involved in producing 'things' in the same way that the maker of motor cars or tables or clothes or houses is also a producer of material objects. In the middle ages all these forms of work (both the painting/sculpting and the motor-car manufacturing/house-building) would have been different forms of manual work (the sordid arts). In investigating the visual artist and arts, therefore, we are looking at the separation of certain activities from other activities; we are looking at the division of the medieval crafts into two groupings - one becoming manual work and the other becoming 'art'. The development of art can therefore in this case be clearly seen as part of the developing division of labour - a division both between different activities, and between the mental and the manual in general.<sup>9</sup> Focussing on the visual arts, therefore, enables us to see more clearly the development of 'art' as part of the more general development of capitalist society, including the development of hierarchies of expertise, knowledge, ability, and education. In other words, the ideological character of 'art' as a way of thinking and defining aspects of the world becomes visible.

In the visual arts, furthermore, the tension, or contradiction, between 'art' and not-art becomes in the nineteenth century increasingly visible, and therefore, by focussing on the contradiction we are able to specify the social relations of art within developing capitalist society in Britain more readily than might be possible with theatre or poetry. For, in the nineteenth century, the separation of 'art' and 'manufacture' - of the creator and the mechanical maker - became increasingly problematic. And therefore the 'designer' became constructed as, in a sense, an intermediary - an applier of art. That is, 'art' (in the sense of intellectuality and creativity), having been separated from general industrial production, and the 'worker' having been made merely a 'doer' and not a 'thinker', it became necessary to attempt to overcome the contradiction thus created between the intellectual-artist as creator and the manual non-creative 'doer' as 'workman'. The attempts to overcome the contradiction, however, were formulated within the terms of the specialised division of labour which embodied that contradiction or separation. The designer, therefore, became in himself simply a further specialisation - a specialisation both within industrial production and within artistic production. He symbolises, in a sense, the separation of art/creativity from production/work, rather than overcomes that separation.

#### A Relational Approach

The approach being adopted towards art in this study is a relational approach. That is, it is being argued that art exists (as a practice, a definition, an ideology, a way of segmenting and understanding the world) only through and as

part of definite and historically defined social relations. This thesis is, therefore, implicitly a criticism of any historical or cross-cultural study of art which assumes the existence of art, as art, in another period or culture simply because material objects bearing some resemblance to objects defined as art in the modern West are seen to exist.

This is more than an academic point. For it is the apparent truth of the statement, 'All Cultures and Civilisations known to man have produced Art' that lends credence to the assumption that art is treatable in an a-historical sense - a form of production characteristic of all mankind that only varies in its content.

It is being argued here that not only must the material objects defined in modern Western cultures be understood in a relational sense, but that non-western productions which appear similar to that which modern western societies define as art must be understood within the terms of that society. To not so treat the 'artistic' productions of other cultures or other historical periods is to lend implicit support to a non-sociological anti-relational view which renders a clear analysis of the situation of art in Britain today highly problematic.

An example may make the point clearer. In a recent Unesco publication on 'Cultural Policy in Great Britain'<sup>10</sup> the failure of the working classes to participate in arts centres is discussed, and, similarly, in the Government White Paper 'A Policy for the Arts'<sup>11</sup> access to and democratisation of the arts was proposed. In neither publication was the nature of art itself seen as problematic - nor was any hist-

orical view apparent. Art is seen as 'Culture' and 'Value' and as 'our heritage' and 'our history', and, therefore, the specific ways in which the artist and art has historically developed as part of a complex division of labour within a specific form of society is ignored. As a consequence, therefore, of this implicit essentialist position, the general observed lack of working class 'participation' cannot be explained: rather it must be explained away. 'Explaining away' necessitates invoking concepts such as 'apathy', 'lack of understanding', and 'lack of proper education'.

#### The Social Construction of Art

The above remarks may become clearer if we considered further what 'art' is as a concept. It is, for instance, not the same sort of word as 'train'. Trains in every society remain trains; they may be put to different uses, carry different sorts of people, and stop at different sorts of places, but they remain trains and, as such, are definable in specific ways. Art is not such a concept. A painting, like a train, is always a thing painted. It is not always art. The National Gallery is a repository of art, while poster hoardings are not (in conventional usage) exhibitions of art. A poster, however, displayed within the confines of an-art gallery, may become 'art'.

In the 1920's Marcel Duchamp sent a urinal to a Paris exhibition as his exhibit. After initial resistance his exhibit was accepted. The urinal is, in any context, a urinal; within the exhibition, however, it could also be art. In being art, it is looked at and treated in a different manner.

This story is significant in relation to the assumptions implicit in the Unesco and government documents referred to above, for, while the story may appear exceptional, it points to the fact that we do all have access to urinals, just as most of us have access to reproductions of paintings or can paint our own paintings, or can create our own environments within our own homes. 'Art' is something again - something extra. Marcel Duchamp in sending the urinal to the exhibition was attempting to make a comment on what art was - to make explicit some of the issues being discussed here. The attempt, however, backfired on him, for, as he wrote looking back on the incident in 1962

I threw the bottle-rack and the urinal into their faces as a challenge and now they admire them for their aesthetic beauty. (12)

#### The Universality of an Aesthetic Sense

That art is a universal category and form of production common to all mankind is an assumption more often implicit than explicit. A related but more sophisticated position is that claiming that there is a universal aesthetic sense. Thus Desmond Morris in 'The Biology of Art'<sup>13</sup> studied the picture making behaviour of the great apes, comparing this with human activity, and he argues that, from his earliest stages, man has been activated by an aesthetic impulse (alongside magico-religious and utilitarian purposes.) Professor Paul Wingert similarly has argued that, in the development of utilitarian crafts (textiles, ceramics, metallurgy, carving, etc.,) an aesthetic impulse has always led to the work being given embellishment or



craftsmanship redundant to and beyond pure practical requirements.<sup>14</sup>

An aesthetic impulse or response may or may not be universal - the answer is beyond the scope of this thesis. One can note, however, that the definitions of utilitarian and non-utilitarian (hence, also, of aesthetic in the sense employed by Morris and Wingert above) are the definitions of recent Western culture. For, wherever there is a choice involved in the design or form in a humanly produced artefact, there must of necessity be an aesthetic sense or impulse, if we follow the sorts of definition indicated by Wingert. The argument is self-fulfilling.

More fundamentally it should be noted that the very distinction between an object and its ornament (its decoration, colour, form, etc.,) is a distinction developed during and through the industrial revolution. The distinction between function and form, and between art and utility are products of industrial capitalism, and it is questionable as to to what extent it is useful to enquire about the universality of an impulse or response or sense, when the very identification of that sense depends on an intellectual abstraction founded in a specific set of social conditions.

The meaning and purpose of aesthetics as a term and as a mode of philosophical enquiry has undergone many changes. For Kant aesthetics was the 'science that treats of sensuous perceptions'. By the 1760's the term was being used by the German philosopher Baumgarten to refer to 'criticism of taste'.<sup>15</sup> This usage became current, and, though there was resistance to its adoption in England, the Penny Encyclopedia could define it as follows in 1832

Aesthetics is the designation given by German writers to a branch of philosophical enquiry, the object of which is a theory of the beautiful. (16)

While continuing to be concerned with the nature of beauty, aesthetics is now also very much centered on the question, 'What is Art?'. Faced with the impossibility of deducing from the range of objects designated 'art', many aestheticians are now faced with the choice of either adopting a prescriptive or relativist position.<sup>17</sup>

The Kantian definition of the science of aesthetics as treating of the 'conditions of sensuous perceptions' leaves it open for the examination of the social forces and conditions which lead to the growth of art as a field in itself, and for an examination of the social conditions under which some activities/objects become art, and others do not. Within the Kantian definition it remains possible to examine the manner in which choices are made in the creation of and response to our whole sensuous environment. But a science of aesthetics in Baumgarten's sense goes beyond this. Assuming the beautiful a-priori, the socially given beautiful and artistic is taken as the subject of study, this leading inevitably to the frustration of aesthetics as a discipline that is neither wide enough to produce philosophical conclusions in the Kantian sense, nor historical enough to produce historical or sociological conclusions of any significance.

It is against this background that many aestheticians have followed the road of sociological relativism, seeking to examine the social conditions of art and the beautiful, rather than the abstract and absolute. This does not rule out a science of the visual, or a science of perception, but that

is, simply, another question, from that of the understanding of the social construction of art.

A worthwhile sociology of art cannot exist until the sociologist has fully grasped what it means to say

The Middle Ages had no more idea of the concept we express by the word 'Art' than had the Greeks or Egyptians, who had no word to express it. (Andre Malraux).(18)

or, as it is put in a standard modern work on aesthetics

through the greater part of human history the so-called 'fine arts' were regarded as handicrafts among others, not distinguished as a class, and . . . art objects like products of human industry were designed to serve a purpose recognised and approved by the society in which they arose. . . . The purposes of the arts have been extraordinarily various. (H.Osborne) (19)

#### The Sociologies of Art

Thus far I have made little reference to published sociological work on art. I stress here 'published', since a growing minority of sociologists are becoming involved or interested in the field, while only a few published works exist, and my references to published work will on the whole be adverse.

Given that there is in fact little published work in the field, I shall attempt to make the following comments more than merely a list of complaints, through using the discussion that follows as a vehicle for further illustration of the social relations of art in general: the discussion will be more an examination of an ideology than a sociology.

Many of the problems that recur in the study of art derive from the sense in which as 'high' culture art is surrounded by and exists through a powerful mystique. This involves art being seen as something 'special - as part of the make-up of an educated man: it is seen as being created by inspired men - exceptional men - men who lead or led lives of

struggle and hardship, sacrificing all to their art: it is seen as beyond or above politics and the petty struggles of any particular time and place, for art is seen to contain some wider vision.

At this point I can only assert this position: during the course of this thesis these ideas will be argued more fully.

Sociological accounts of art have been bedevilled by such ideas, but not only in the sense that concepts of traditional 'high culture' have intruded into or usurped the place of analysis, but also in that radical alternatives to traditional high culture have often been adopted instead - meaning therefore that the sociologist, far from engaging in analysis, has simply become entrapped within a debate.<sup>20</sup> The sociologist has thus become prescriptive and precluded analysis.

A value-free sociologist is an ideological fiction: an objective sociology may also be such. But a scientific sociology is possible, and the 'science' must precede and be separate from the presentation. Sociology is a social fact: it is of the social world, and the conclusions of the sociologist and the subject he chooses to study being of the social world are also thus part of the social world. The presentation or publication of sociological work is the entering into debate and controversy. Bias and 'position' exist and must exist and follow from the choice of presentation, and the place and time of presentation. Sociology as 'science' however, implies that the analysis and the presentation of material be rigorous. Rather than starting from within a

debate, the sociologist as scientist must start by examining the conditions of possibility of a debate: he re-enters the debate only after being 'scientist'. Unfortunately published work on the sociology of art seems rarely to have left the particularity of current debates.

The mystification of art by sociologists, as by historians, results in part from treating 'art' as if it is really embodied only in that limited number of productions and producers who have been incorporated into the ranks of the great masters and the great tradition within art history, and who are currently elevated to the status of 'stars' within the contemporary art scene. In other words, the sociologist never departs from the level of phenomenal forms, to examine the conditions which make such appearances possible.

At the very least the sociologist should go beyond the accepted hierarchies of the art historian and contemporary art critic to examine the conditions under which the majority of artists work - that is he should at least grasp 'art' in its 'average' sense.<sup>21</sup>

This concentration on the exceptional, or on those works or persons pre-defined as special, links to a confusion within sociology between the socially significant and the sociologically significant. H.A. Bloch has pointed out this confusion, arguing that

those who desire to comprehend the 'social significance' of any art-form, therefore, are wholly concerned with these two problems; (1) does it faithfully reproduce the problem as it exists in society? and (2) what is the significance of the problem to the social group itself? (22)

Bloch argues that in, for instance, the field of drama, plays having a 'social' significance are often purely 'reflective'; that is, they define and discuss a social problem

(e.g. race, sex, trade unionism) but frequently do little more than express the problem in dramatic form. Such plays are educative and propagandist - as with, for example, 'Cathy Come Home'. By contrast, Bloch continues,

The sociological interpretation and analysis is primarily engaged with such questions as (1) why the work came to be written or created at all, (2) what relationships it has to other works of art in the same field and to works in other fields of artistic expression, (3) why it has come to be accepted at a given period of historical development, (4) what basic values in the culture it expresses other than the problem aspect, and (5), which is very important, why it has come to be cast in the particular form used by the creative artist. (23)

While I do not agree fully with Bloch's specification of sociological significance, and would suggest that he is still focussing too much on the object to the neglect of the social relations through which it exists and is defined, he is right to seek to distinguish the socially significant and the sociologically significant. For this distinction is close to one in the field of visual art between the few exceptional artists (so defined) and the mass of producers. The distinction is furthermore similar to that I have just been drawing between the sociologist of art who starts from and remains within a debate (taking the high-culture stance or a radical alternative) and the sociologist who commences by seeking to understand the conditions of possibility of the debate and the phenomenal forms.

While this thesis is concerned with the social construction of art, relating art in its visual and material senses, the work of Swingewood and Lawrenson on the sociology of literature<sup>24</sup> is illustrative of the confusion of social and sociological significance present in many discussions of art. The writers they select for detailed discussion -

Orwell, Camus, Sartre, Fielding, D.H.Lawrence, - are all in some way political in intention, or are exhibiting for display 'problem' or 'non-public' areas in social life; the sociologist is thus in danger here of saying no more than that writers writing about social problems manifest a connection between literature about social problems and social problems, and that political writers are political writers because they write in a political sense.

There is nothing in itself wrong in selecting these writers for study, but, from the point of view of sociological study, it can lead to an over-easy correlation between artist and class, and to simplistic generalisations about the radical nature of art. But, beyond this, by concentrating on such writers who are in some way in opposition to establishment politics, values and practices, the sociologist's attention is diverted from the mass of writing which is non-political, which does not deal with social problems, and where other perhaps more revealing sociological discoveries may be made.

Jean Duvignaud, in his 'The Sociology of Art', opens his work by making several of the points I have been making here.<sup>25</sup> He argues that the task of a sociology of art is to find, without being "dogmatic or pedantic, the extent to which the imaginary is rooted in collective life.", and, he attacks mystical and sacred views of art on the grounds that the sociologist, faced with something unusual, or that he finds hard to understand, has too often used ideas of mysticism, or the 'essence of art', to explain away in terms of a non-explanation (posed as an explanation) that which he could not in fact understand. However, despite these opening remarks, Duvignaud goes on to make exactly these sorts

of mistakes, and to present a book which, however fine as the personal statement of an academic who is not a maker of art on what it means to him, has little to do with social analysis. For instance, he argues that

In turn, when the artist creates his work, he seems to incorporate into it an invisible community, the spirit of a society in which the social substance, the 'mana' which holds the secret of our future existence is crystalised. Perhaps he can do this because he will never know absolute joy. (26)

This is an incredible statement given his opening remarks on what he should be doing. Incredible, however, not simply because it bears so little relation to what art is or has been, or to what artists are, and not simply because it comes from a man who is supposed to be in some way exploring the social conditions of art; but rather because it is essentially so trite and meaningless.

Duvignaud is illustrative of another contemporary fallacy in dealing with art; namely, that which suggests that art is only art and is nothing else. This is a view summarised in the slogan, 'Art for Art's Sake' - a legitimate ideology for the practitioner of art to work within, but hardly a useful basis from which to analyse the actual social conditions of art. Thus, Duvignaud, in discussing what an 'authentic' work of art is, suggests that

It depends on two factors: the force of conviction in a work (bearing in mind its explicit aims) and its detachment from financial, ideological and political concerns - in other words the authentic work of art cannot serve as a justification for any other activity except itself. (27)

In making the above statement Duvignaud may be trying to combat the confusion mentioned earlier - that which fails to distinguish social and sociological significance; he is also



attempting to combat interpretations of art in transcendental, religious, or other terms. But, to abstract 'art' from the rest of social life and the activities of men, and say that art can only exist authentically when only as itself, is equally false. Some both highly successful and unsuccessful art has been involved in propaganda, nationalism, revolutionary and reactionary politics, and, of course, in religion. The notion that art is only true or authentic art when done for its own sake is simply yet another ideology connected with the social relations through which art has been or is produced.

It may be that I am over-critical of Duvignaud. It is possible to agree with him when he says that

Since the work of art exists in relation to the outlook of a certain period, group or individual, and is found in types of society having different experiences of human relationships and emotions, it is necessary, in order to measure the depth to which imagined creation is rooted in society, to define these factors both in relation to artistic attitudes, either known or implied, and in relation to the function exercised by art in a particular type of society. (28)

But, Duvignaud follows this within a few pages by arguing that a work of art always goes ahead of society, and poses an 'as if' possibility. He talks of the search for an absolute where man can communicate without signs. These generalisations about 'as if' possibilities are simply not true for most of what has been produced as art, and the tenor of this discussion is pure mystification of his subject.

Duvignaud has fallen into the same trap as Swingewood and Lawrenson<sup>29</sup> in basing his arguments not only too much on the productions of the 19th and 20th centuries, but in also laying too much stress on the 'exceptional' works of a tradition. It is the practice of the art historians and

literature specialists of our society to base their studies on their particular type of reading of the exceptional works, and to elaborate their concepts of form, style, meaning, tradition, and so forth, from these works. What the sociologist has to offer in explaining both the activity of these 'specialists' and the relations and practices surrounding and comprising art in general is an analysis based on the conditions of production, usage, viewing, etc., of the mass of work produced, used, communicated through, acted upon, and so forth.

Swingewood and Lawrenson, echo Duvignaud closely in their prescriptive remarks on what the true meaning of literature is, and what the sociologist should be doing. Their failing again derives from an over-concentration on the art-object or text. Thus, they say

It could be argued, then, that the 'true' meaning of great literature and the social groups involved in its production lies precisely in the quest and the struggle of both for 'authentic values', the values of a genuine human community in which human needs, aspirations, and desires are mediated through social interaction. If this is so, and it will be defended later in the book, then the task of the sociologist is not simply to discover historical and social reflection (or refraction) in works of literature, but to articulate the nature of the values embedded within particular literary works, what Raymond Williams has called 'the structure of feeling'. (30)

Again, therefore, we see displayed the ideas of 'quest' and 'struggle' - very much characteristics of the romantic view of the artist. And of course, if they choose to define Great Literature as that which manifests 'quest' and struggle then Great Literature shall be that which displays those characteristics.

A more fundamental criticism of the above passage

is of the way in which literature is separated from society: it reflects (or refracts?) but is not seen as part of society. My criticism of the idea of 'reflection' of society in art is part of a basic suspicion of a crude 'base' and superstructure' model of society within which art and ideology are seen as 'superstructural', and, in being 'superstructural' are thus abstracted from the social relations through which, and as part of which, they exist in a social sense. Any analysis based on the a-priori assumption of such a separation of base and superstructure can only be impoverished in its results.<sup>31</sup>

I have made it clear thus far that my basic criticism of the type of work represented by Duvignaud's 'The Sociology of Art', and Swingewood and Lawrenson's 'The Sociology of Literature', is that both works are fundamentally unsociological. Both works are more works by sociologists writing about art or literature, than sociologies of art or literature. Richard Wollheim, an aesthetician, has entered this field and attempted in an article written, so to speak, from the 'outside' to identify the three types of explanation which he sees as possible within sociology as applied to art.<sup>32</sup> His first type is 'causal', in which certain social conditions are seen as in some way causing a particular work of art; the second is 'expressive', in which a work of art is seen as expressive of or reflective of an age; and, lastly, he sees 'anecdotal' as being an explanation within which a particular work of art is seen as being caused by a particular event or group of events, this connection being demonstrated by detailing the chain of events in a common sense and particularistic way. Wollheim argues that the first two types of explanation are

inadequate, and indicates that he sees the third type as being the only workable form of sociological explanation of art.

It must be noted that Wollheim, in discussing sociological explanations, is referring to explanations of particular works of art, and not to explanations of types of art, or sets of attitudes to types of art. The manner in which Wollheim frames his questions as to causality is, therefore, not sociological in the sense normally understood, since sociology does not generally explain individual phenomena, except in so far as they are typical of, or illustrative of, or have characteristics related to, or significantly different from, a more general type, or more general set of relations.

Far from talking, therefore, about 'sociological' explanations, Wollheim is talking in his article of 'social' causation of individual art objects. Furthermore, his invocation of 'common sense' as being part of anecdotal explanation is problematic; for common sense is the stuff of the daily news press and anecdotal 'myth'; the sociologist has to go behind the screen of common sense to the conditions and preconditions for the ideologies and practices involved in art. Common sense is the stuff of assertion, and not analysis, and, always, one must ask, 'Whose common sense?', and, more importantly, 'Upon whose experience is this common sense based?'

#### The Historian as Sociologist

While work by sociologists on art is as yet both limited in quantity and quality, there does exist a

body of work by historians that is sociological. Thus Andrew Martindale's 'The Rise of the Artist in the Middle Ages',<sup>33</sup> and Francis Haskell's 'Patrons and Painters',<sup>34</sup> or Michael Baxandal's 'Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy',<sup>35</sup> are all sound empirical works which provide analyses of the real historical situation of art and artists. Such works should be compulsory reading for any sociologist (or art critic) tempted to make trans-historical generalisations about the nature of art and artistic experience.

It is not intended here, however, to praise historians at the expense of sociologists. For it is the generality of historians dealing with art who are the creators and legitimators of that particular narrow reading of the history of art which focusses on the lives and productions of a few individuals, and which John Berger is so rightly critical of.<sup>36</sup> Given the range and number of historians it is perhaps more than likely that this minority of very good works would be produced. The sociology of art is by contrast comparatively new.

#### The 'Involved Visual Campaigners'

While a limited concern with art is evident among sociologists, and the works cited above by historians do provide a basic empirical context and resource for this thesis, the primary intellectual setting or tradition within which this thesis should be seen, and from which it develops, is that body of work by those we may call 'involved visual campaigners'.

The involved visual campaigners can be grouped

together in the sense that their writing has resulted from their having a particular issue they wish to publicise, alter or dispute. Usually the issue will concern the nature of art, or the importance of a particular group of artists, or the significance of a particular way of practising art. The work is thus often polemical; but, it is this very situation outside mainstream academic art history or criticism that has led some of these writers to look critically at art and to unearth information and present arguments largely ignored within the confines of academic art scholarship.

Herbert Read is a well known example of the campaigner-writer.<sup>37</sup> I would suggest that in his case, however, increasing distance in time from his major output has made it clear that he read his history a little too closely to the purpose of his campaigning. His influence on thinking about art and design was nevertheless immense.

A more recent book of the 'campaigning' variety is 'Fads, Fakes and Fantasies - the crisis in the art schools and the crisis in art' by Sjoerd Hannema.<sup>38</sup> The book is a polemic, and perhaps suffers at times from a superficiality resulting from the quantity of information and range of ideas pulled together in the argument. If there is a superficiality in the work, however, I would suggest that it to some extent inherent in any attempt to situate historically and sociologically the conventional dogma of art, given that the social meaning and existence of art is bound up with so many institutions, interests, histories, cultures, ways of thinking, being educated and being civilised.<sup>39</sup>

Hanema's book was in fact seminal in my work on this thesis, since it was his book (picked up by chance in a 'remainder' bookshop) that first indicated to me how, viewing art both historically and in its contemporary form, one could attempt to stand outside the social relations and ideologies which constitute the contemporary art-world, and analyse it as a specific historically defined social formation. This thesis departs in many ways from Hanema's argument, and is now theoretically rooted within the form of analysis presented by William Morris in the 1880's, but the initial impetus and direction derives from Hanema.

Bruce Allsopp - an architect, writer, painter and university teacher - is another example of a campaigner<sup>ref</sup> in his writings. Like Sjoerd Hannema, he draws on a wealth of material relevant to the sociology of art in his book, 'The Future of the Arts'.<sup>40</sup> Of greater value from him, however, is his 'Style in the Visual Arts'.<sup>41</sup> In this book he demonstrates that the concept of style was only introduced into the visual arts in the late eighteenth century, having been totally absent prior to the Renaissance. This is an important piece of work given the importance of 'style' as an analytic concept and means of categorising work among art historians and critics, and, perhaps even more significantly, the extent to which notions of style are dominant in the ways in which contemporary artists think about and relate to their own work and the work of others.

One of the most powerful works of the 'campaigning' variety is 'The Cult of Art' by Jean Gimpel.<sup>42</sup> Dealing with the development of art as a religion in capitalist society the book is "a historical justification for his . . . loss of faith" in art.<sup>43</sup> The justification is all the more powerful because of Gimpel's former position within the art-world and his consequent knowledge of art, Gimpel being the son of René Gimpel, the art dealer, and the brother of those who run the Gimpel Fils gallery in London, Zurich and New York. Since 1948 he has refused to have a work of art in his house, and the book is both scholarly and incisive in analysing the cult of art.

#### Conclusions

The purposes of this thesis would not be served by further extending this review of the field. Major omissions are apparent, as with, for example, any mention of the work of Raymond Williams.<sup>44</sup> In so far as his work deals primarily with literary culture, however, his work is not of direct relevance to this study; also his output is already being critically re-assessed by other writers.<sup>45</sup>

More obvious is the omission of any comment on Marxist work. A large part of Marxist work on culture is, however, primarily concerned with literary culture<sup>46</sup> - and the extension of generalisations based on the analysis of literature to the field of the visual arts is an activity that has yet to be given a sound scholarly justification.

Where Marxist work is relevant the field is vast and intricate. To present a survey of these writers simply to define my own position in relation to them (often



negatively) would be wasteful of both time and space.

I propose, therefore, to devote the bulk of the next chapter to the work of one Marxist - William Morris - and to cite other Marxist work where relevant and significant throughout the text.

The theorisation of the social relations of art developed by William Morris, and presented in the following chapter, provides both a base from which to develop further arguments, and a framework to return to throughout the succeeding chapters.

## Chapter Two

### William Morris, and the Analysis of the of the Social Relations of Art

#### Marxism and Art

In the last few years there has been something of a boom in publications by Marxists on art (and literature) or about Marx himself and his theories, or alleged theories, relating to art.<sup>1</sup> Frederic Jameson<sup>2</sup> in an introduction to 'Marxist Esthetics' by Henri Arvon<sup>3</sup> has attempted to locate what could be called a re-emergence of Marxist work in these areas within its historical context when he argued that

Such recent scholarship as that of Adolfo Sanchez Vasquez and Stefan Morawski, as well as the older pioneering studies of Marx's own esthetic views by George Lukacs and Mikhail Lifshitz, have begun to make clear the extent to which the development of Marxist theory after the death of Marx was crippled in all domains by the reformist practice of the great labour parties and the influence of non or pre-Marxist schools of thought such as positivism or neo-Kantianism.  
(4)

In broad European terms Jameson may be right: but, within the English context he overlooks the work of William Morris in the 1880's and 1890's. It is true, however, that Morris's period as a Marxist analyst of the social relations of art falls between the death of Marx, and the first successes in Britain of a reformist labour party whose background in Methodism and Fabianism was to prove antagonistic to the development of a strong Marxist critical tradition. Jameson's insight into the stifling effect of the great reformist labour parties on Marxist theory is

worth noting, therefore, for it is in part the success in parliamentary terms of the British Labour Party that may explain the neglect of Morris as a major Marxist theorist. For, while the major 20th century attempts at a Marxist approach to art and literature have been imported into England from the European continent, and from languages into which Morris's work has not been translated, Morris himself has been, until recent years, ignored and forgotten within the British Isles as an important Marxist writer on art.<sup>5</sup>

Marx himself did not develop what can be called a 'Marxist' theorisation of art. In as far as he made any comments on art they are only passing references, or comments arising in situations in which he uses a discussion of art to illustrate a point being made in an argument concerning a different subject. Thus Morris, in developing a Marxist critique of art, was very much having to construct this himself from his own experiences as an artist-craftsman; from his understanding of Marx; and from the intellectual traditions centering around the Gothic revival which he had at one time had great hopes for.

Before considering the analysis presented by Morris, however, it will be useful to examine one of Marx's lengthiest statements on the visual arts, if only so as to be able to lay that ghost to rest.

#### Marx on Art

One of the most thorough accounts of Marx's views on art is contained in a book by Mikhail Lifshitz called 'The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx'.<sup>6</sup> This book,

while entertaining and informative on the level of biography, remains inconclusive as a practical theorisation of the social relations of art. Unlike many writers, however, Lifschitz does bring forward a wealth of material in arguing for his view of what a Marxist philosophy of art would be. Too often the idea of 'Marx on Art' brings to mind only selected passages in 'The German Ideology', or a densely written two pages from the Grundrisse.

It is this latter passage I intend to consider here, not only because it is a lengthy and oft-cited passage, but because the passage encapsulates a series of misunderstandings encountered in both Marxist and general discussion of art.

Lifschitz argues that the passage under discussion shows that

the doctrine of the historically-conditioned contradiction between art and society is as indispensable an element of the Marxist interpretation of the history of art as is the doctrine of their unity. (7)

this statement being, I will argue, a further elaboration of the original misunderstanding.

In the passage Marx first poses a problem:

In the case of the arts, it is well known that certain periods of their flowering are out of all proportion to the general development of society, hence also to the material foundations, the skeletal structure as it were, of its organisation. For example, the Greeks compared to the moderns or also Shakespeare. (8)

Marx resolves this problem to his own satisfaction by pointing to the manner in which different social relations provide the pre-conditions for different sorts of mythologies, imaginations, etc., and hence different social relations define and delimit different possibilities for art.

Rhetorically Marx asks, therefore

Do not the song and the saga and the muse necessarily come to an end with the printer's bar, hence do not the necessary conditions of epic poetry vanish? (9)

His feeling that he has solved the problem of the relation of levels of artistic attainment to the development of society, however, only leads Marx on to a further problem;

the difficulty lies not in understanding that the Greek arts and epic are bound up with certain forms of social development. The difficulty is that they still afford us artistic pleasure and that in a certain respect they count as a norm and as an unattainable model. (10)

Many would accept the validity of this problem as posed; that is, would see it as a problem to be sociologically explained. Few would perhaps follow Marx, however, in the next passage, where he attempts to explain away his problem through the use of a metaphor picturing societal development as being akin to that of a human being from childhood to adulthood; thus

A man cannot become a child again, or he becomes childish. But does he not find joy in the child's naivety, and must he himself not strive to reproduce its truth at a higher stage? Does not the true character of each epoch come alive in the nature of its children? Why should not the historic childhood of humanity, its most beautiful unfolding, as a stage never to return, exercise an eternal charm? . . . . The Greeks were normal children. The charm of their art for us is not in contradiction to the underdeveloped stage of society on which it grew. It is its result, rather, and is inextricably bound up, rather, with the fact that the unripe social conditions under which it arose, and could alone arise, can never return. (11)

The Grundrisse as a whole is a strongly argued draft analysis of capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production: this passage, however, is only an aside, and a Marxian aesthetic does not follow from two pages of writing on a subject not central to Marx's theme. More importantly, lest we continue to take too seriously Marx's posing of the 'problem' of the eternal value of Greek art "as a norm and an unattainable model" these remarks should be situated in

the context of the mid-nineteenth century, when he wrote them. For, while the Renaissance tradition, within which the classical represented an ideal, was still very much alive (and accepted by Marx) it was already being challenged by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Gothic revival in England, and, within both general education and in art education was largely to die out within the next three-quarters of a century. Greek art no longer holds that privileged position within the range of world sculpture, painting and decorative productions that, to a mid-nineteenth century educated Westerner, seemed natural. Equally now thinkers in the west have become aware that Greece is not the "historic childhood of humanity", however great its importance within the intellectual development of Western Europe.

#### The Past as Part of the Present

Leaving Greek art aside, it could be argued that the 'problem' of art remains as posed by Marx; that is, art does appear to break the bounds of time or place, and evoke a response when the social conditions under which it was produced and used have gone. In this sense it could be argued that a distinguishing characteristic of that which is art is its communicative power outside its original social context.

I would suggest, however, that where there is such a response, it is not something peculiar to art. The response, for instance, to a painting on the wall of a Pompeian house is neither more nor less trans-historical than the response to the other material evidence for the existence of Pompeii as a working social system. And, of all the material remains of Pompeii, perhaps the most

response-provoking would be the archaeologist's plaster casts of the spaces left in the compressed Vesuvian debris by human bodies that have since decayed: the cast exhibits in every detail of body, expression and clothing that person at the moment of death. I would suggest that the response to the material remains of a past society is, therefore, often simply at the level of recognition that 'they' were 'like us'; human beings despite their differences. From observing visitors to museums and ancient sites there would seem no grounds for attributing to that which in post Renaissance terms is called art any power of trans-historical and trans-societal communication peculiar to art alone.

The demise of the attitude of veneration towards the Greek ideal, and the demise of the 18th and early 19th century contempt for the pre-Renaissance illustrates the sense in which that which 'communicates' across time does so very much within the terms and definitions set by the modern society, and not within the terms of the past society. And, on the broad level, any visitor to the ruin of an ancient city will find a variety of responses to it among other visitors; these will range from the response to the romantic character of a ruin (very much a late eighteenth and nineteenth century attitude) to the approach of the scholar studying the material products of a particular society (a late eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century attitude) to the attitude of the modern 'day-tripper' out to enjoy himself in a tourist centre that is an old ruined city, as opposed to being a seaside beach or a zoo.

It is, therefore, being argued here that the response to the past (both its art and other productions) must be understood in terms of the social relations and practices of the present. And, within our present society, any privileged position given to art, and, within art, to different styles or types of art, must be accounted for in terms of the social relations of the present and the historical determination and development of those relations.

Marx was right, in the passages cited earlier, to note the sense in which differing technologies and social systems make differing mythologies and imaginations possible or impossible: he was not right, however in assuming art to be a 'given' outside society and time, and his attitude to the qualities and types of art was, I have indicated, that characteristic of many western educated men of his time. Furthermore, the sense in which Marx conceptually separates 'art' from 'society', as in

In the case of the arts, it is well known that certain periods of their flowering are out of all proportion to the general development of society....(8)

is, I will be arguing, highly problematic, for it presupposes that art as a phenomenon has certain definite and general characteristics absent in other forms of production. It is this sort of assumption in particular that William Morris was to challenge from a Marxist standpoint.

#### Our reasons for having discussed Marx

We have perhaps given an over-extensive treatment to a passage by Marx which he wrote only as an aside, and not even for publication. It is sometimes necessary,



however, to deal at length with such a passage, not only because through commentary upon it other points can be made relevant to our central arguments, but because such passages are frequently used as sources of legitimation for their ideas by other writers; thus even a non-Marxist will invoke such a passage to give weight to his own ideas, and, because it is in this case Marx that is being cited, to give also a touch of radicalism to the argument.

William Morris, by contrast, is not a thinker whose work is generally cited in social-scientific discussions of art or ideology, and, despite the quantity of material by and about Morris, the coherence of his analysis of art and work as a Marxist analyst is not widely realised. The remainder of this chapter will therefore be devoted to an examination of Morris's views.

#### Reasons for citing Morris in this thesis

William Morris lived from 1834 till 1896. He did not become involved in political work till the late 1870's; he became a Marxist-socialist in the 1880's. As an artist-craftsman he had experienced the problems and contradictions of being workman, designer and artist, and he was very aware of how industrial capitalism not only devastated the environment, but, more importantly, dehumanised people.

Morris's Marxist analysis of art is, therefore,

- (a) the product of his own complex life-experience:
- (b) was made possible by a particular juncture of historical events. We could, therefore, go on to give an elaborate answer to the question, 'Why did Morris produce the sort

of analysis he did when he did?'

I cannot emphasise too strongly, therefore, that this is in no sense what I am doing. Despite the fact that Morris's lectures and socialism are in part a reaction to the events I describe in chapter Five, my inclusion of a consideration of Morris in this thesis is not on account of his significance in the nineteenth century as a designer, a craftsman, or an active political figure.

I am treating Morris, rather, as a social theorist. I am seeking to give a concise exposition of his theories: an exposition which I shall then examine for (a) the coherence of his theory; (b) the explanatory value of his theory.

A theory stands or falls according to its success as a theory; not according to who produced it or why. Thus, while I shall include some minimal biographical details on Morris, and shall consider why and how his work has been mis-represented, I am including an account of his analysis (a) because I consider it the most radical and incisive theorisation of art and society yet produced; (b) because I believe that Morris's analysis of art provides the fundamental starting point for any consideration of the social construction of art; (c) because I consider that Morris's analysis of the division of labour as it affects art, design and work, has a fundamental bearing on the present position of the artist, craftsman and designer - and thus on the material I shall examine in the latter sections of Part Five of this thesis.

Current Mis-representations of Morris

That Morris was a 'many-sided' man is both a cliché and the basis for the variety of contradictory assessments of his thought and propaganda. He was a "designer, craftsman, printer, pioneer, socialist, dreamer" and "robust and generous personality" and a man of "extraordinary vitality", "creative concentration" and "courage".<sup>12</sup> Whether all of these descriptions are true is not our purpose to discuss here; the point is that the possibility of treating different facets as separate can lead and has led to a misrepresenting of each. This has followed particularly in relation to his views on and practice of art and craft.

Morris's career as a lecturer on art and craft from the late 1870's to his death coincides with the period in his life when he was moving from Liberalism to a full socialist position, and, while his becoming a socialist grew in part from his experience as an artist-craftsman, his views on art and craft, as expressed most coherently in his lectures, and fragmentarily in letters of the same period, are only comprehensible within the context of his wider socialist programme - as he makes abundantly clear. It therefore follows that any assessment of his statements on art and craft, and his programme for the arts and crafts, which leaves aside his analysis of capitalism and socialism is bound not only to miss the point, but to judge his programme as being faulty and inapplicable to the world we live in. Yet again, any assessment of Morris based on

judgements of what he himself produced as a craftsman, and relating this only to his general statements on art, may very justifiably find his approach archaic and impractical - and with the latter judgement Morris himself would probably have agreed.

There is a further ingredient in the mis-representation of Morris's analysis, stemming simply from the institutionalisation of learning within discrete disciplines in schools and universities. Art schools have, until comparatively recently, been housed and run as educational units separate from the rest of higher education. Meanwhile art history has been taught separately from practical art, and only in a minority of British universities. Thirdly, English literature as a discipline became a very powerful and central part of secondary and further education, and was characterised by a concentration on the text, and the history of English literature and movements within that as deducible from the texts and from a limited study of the biographies of the authors, concentrating on them as authors, i.e., as literary men. Thus, in terms of the general presentation of 'culture' in the British educational system Morris has tended to figure, where he was touched on at all, as the writer of fairy tales, romances, and some minor poetry - all with strong medievalist overtones.

This experience of his medievalism exists, therefore, as a strong reinforcer of any judgement of Morris that, through a superficial contact, dismisses him as impractical and archaic.

Shortly we shall be examining Morris's own statements on art, socialism, and the division of labour. Immediately, however, I shall present a few examples of the ways in which Morris has been mis-represented, through authors omitting to place his practice and theory of art and craft in the context of his socialist critique of capitalism.

#### Illustrations of mis-representation

Gillian Naylor, in a book on the Bauhaus,<sup>13</sup> rightly mentions the importance of Morris as a precursor of the Bauhaus experiment; however, Morris is said to have "loathed the values of the steam age" and his condemnation is said to have been "backed by a highly developed social conscience."<sup>14</sup> Thus 'steam age' is substituted for Morris's more general use of the terms 'commercialism' and 'capitalism', and 'social conscience' is substituted for 'socialist critique'. Morris is then paraphrased as saying

Nothing of value could be produced by machinery,  
since mass production brought with it mass degradation.

Such a mis-representation of Morris follows directly from considering his artistic statements outside his socialist analysis. As Morris himself pointed out,

It is not this or that tangible steel and brass machine which we want to get rid of, but the great intangible machine of commercial tyranny which oppresses the lives of all of us. (15)

It was not, thus, machinery, that Morris opposed (as stated by Naylor), but machinery as employed to exploit further those who operated the machinery = who served rather than controlled.<sup>16</sup>

Geoffrey Warren, in a book on Art Nouveau<sup>17</sup>

treats Morris in a similar vein, but, in his case the evidence that he has not read Morris is rather more striking. Morris is said by Warren not to have realised that

hand-made products would be far too expensive for the masses, who, under increasing industrialisation were becoming even poorer. He did not appreciate that Victorian society was in no way comparable to the Medieval one. Sincere as he was, his vision was doomed to failure. (17)

It is perhaps not that commonly appreciated that Morris was only too well aware of the price of his goods, but, no excuse can be offered for suggesting that he was confused as to which era in history he lived in. While Warren's statement on Morris (above) is in many ways so inaccurate and banal that it deserves no serious treatment. at all, it is worth noting the way in which in the last sentence quoted Morris is summed up as 'sincere', possessing 'vision', and being a doomed 'failure'. Many writers more sophisticated than Warren manage to avoid confronting Morris's intellectual strength and incisiveness through a similar use of patronising phrases - stressing how nice he was, and regretting that such a visionary should be also, alas, such a fool in practical matters.

Both Warren and Naylor are writing about movements following on directly from Morris's lifetime, and in many ways influenced by the Art and Crafts Movement. There is thus little excuse for misunderstandings. As a general historian of art Ernst Gombrich<sup>18</sup> reinforces the impractical and hopelessly romantic impression given of Morris when he mentions (in passing) that

Ruskin and Morris had still hoped that the regeneration of art could be brought about by a return to medieval conditions (18)

And Gombrich adds that "many artists saw that this was an impossibility". One might add that, as it happens, Morris was certainly one of these.

A perhaps more devastating and closely argued critique of Morris was presented by Herbert Read in 'Art and Industry' (1934), - a critique which, however, rests on the same separation of Morris's socialism and analysis of capitalism from his analysis of art, craft and design. For Read Morris's approach was "external, dilettente", and it is significant, so Read suggests, that Morris was born of wealthy parents and went to Marlborough and Oxford, "remote from scenes of industry such as those in which Wedgwood had his upbringing."<sup>19</sup>

Morris's parental background and education have of course no bearing on the viability or otherwise of his theorisation of art and society. A person's biography may explain why a person came to think in a particular way: it has no bearing whatsoever on the effectiveness or otherwise of his thoughts. A physicist would certainly be suprised were he told that a major drawback in Einstein's work was his parental background and education: in the field of social and aesthetic theory, however, such tactics of dismissal are sometimes employed.

Read goes on to point out that Ruskin's 'Stones of Venice' was published during Morris's first year at Oxford.

Read suggests in connection with this that

When we have traced the workings of Ruskin's doctrines in the robust mind and frame of Morris, we have explained the general course of his life; any differences are temperamental, not intellectual. (20)

This amalgamation of Ruskin and Morris, if practised in the reading of their two histories, would at the least make the actions and thoughts of the two men wildly confusing.

Unlike many other writers, Read is aware that it is the treating of Morris as 'poet', 'craftsman' and 'socialist', in three separate categories, that breaks down the "fundamental unity of the man" and therefore leads to misrepresentations. Swinging off at a tangent, however, Read then follows this by suggesting that perhaps Morris was

too normal in his psychology to possess the particular concentration of faculties and sensibilities that make a great artist. (21)

In this statement Read has invoked, in order to condemn Morris, so to speak, from behind, the very ideology of the artist as a special and abnormal kind of 'man apart' which Morris criticised, and which Morris, through his analysis of art within capitalism, was attempting to expose as resulting from the social organisation of capitalism - not from the nature of art. One might have hoped that Read would have done Morris the courtesy of confronting his arguments directly.

As is customary, Read credits Morris with a general opposition to the development of machinery, "and the ugliness and degradation which he /Morris/ associated with that development." Read concludes that



Such unreality as we now connect with the name and the works of Morris is due to the false objective he thus set up.

Having thus effectively condemned Morris for a position which in later life he did not hold, Read mentions several pages later that Morris did, in fact, as a socialist, reconcile himself to machinery. While Read, probably rightly, emphasises that this was an uneasy and not too stable reconciliation, he goes on to argue that, if only Morris had known of, or applied, Read's own distinction between "humanistic and abstract art", then Morris's own programme would have been "the outline of a possible ideal."<sup>22</sup> Read then outlines his own case, and presumes at the end that

Morris would now accept such a distinction and would in these days be reconciled to the inevitability of machinery.

Part of Read's programme is that

necessary adjustments can be made in the monetary system so that the capacity to consume bears a relation of approximate equality to the power of production. (23)

With such technocratic phrasing we can leave Read. "Adjustment . . . in the monetary system", "capacity to consume" and "equality to the power of production" are not the language of Morris's socialism, nor is Morris's medievalism anything but the foundation for a critique of the present and a suggestion for the future. And, while Morris did entertain a suspicion of machinery as such, his basic objection was to the uses to which machinery was put; for him machinery also provided the pre-conditions for the building of a creative socialism - not a mere adjustment in the monetary system.

### The Emphasis to be given in the Account of Morris's Theories

Despite recent biographies of Morris,<sup>24</sup> the general work of the William Morris Society, and the publication of work not included in the 26 volume collected works of William Morris, the sorts of mis-representation of Morris that I have illustrated is still deeply rooted. It will therefore be necessary not simply to present an outline of his views on art, but to deal a little more fully with his view of the Gothic, of the possibility of his own work, and of his views on socialism. This we shall do in the following pages, and subsequently at intervals throughout the study. Establishing what he actually said is not only a useful exercise, but one salient to the state of present day art and society: his themes are thus central to the arguments as presented in this study.

### Morris as Socialist and Artist-Craftsman

Part of the potential for the presentation of contradictory versions of Morris's thought and action results from his having developed and altered his views throughout his life. And, as with recent debates over 'young', 'middle' and 'old' Marx, it is possible for any interpreter to select that aspect with which he is most in sympathy. We do not intend here to enter into discussions of Morris's intellectual development, however, but only to treat his statements and arguments as presented between 1877 and his death in 1896. It is during this period that he most coherently formulated the experiences of his life's work, and it was during this period that he personally

dealt with and overcame the contradictions inherent in his position as an employer, and as a producer of high class expensive goods. It also happens that it was from 1878 on that he engaged in extensive lecturing on art and socialism, thus presenting the most coherent account of his own views and work.

Born in 1834, it was not till "the crisis of the Eastern Question and the agitation which ended in the overthrow of the Disraeli government"<sup>25</sup> that Morris began to take a public part in politics. Taking part in the agitation on the Liberal side, it is significant that, in 1877, while nominally a liberal, he issued a manifesto, 'Unjust War', addressed to the "Working men of England". While he was not at this point a declared socialist, the tone of the address can be judged from the following;<sup>26</sup>

Working-men of England, one word of warning yet: I doubt if you know the bitterness of hatred against freedom and progress that lies at the heart of a certain part of the richer classes in this country: their newspapers veil it in a kind of decent language; but do but hear them talking among themselves as I have often, and I know not whether scorn or anger would prevail in you at their folly and insolence:---these men cannot speak of your order, of its aims, of its leaders without a sneer or an insult: these men, if they had the power (may England perish rather) would thwart your just aspirations, would silence you, would deliver you bound hand and foot for ever to irresponsible capital. (26)

Writing of this period of agitation on the liberal side in 1883, Morris said that he could not see in England at the time any party more advanced than the Radicals.<sup>27</sup> He was under no illusion as to the outcome of the Liberals gaining power, except that this "would stem the torrent of Chauvenism, and check the feeling of national hatred and prejudice."<sup>28</sup>

During this period Morris "made the acquaintance of some of the Trade Union leaders at the time; but found that they were quite under the influence of the capitalist politicians, and that, the General Election once gained, they would take no forward step whatever."<sup>29</sup> The subsequent career of the new Liberal government destroyed any hope Morris might have had of "any good being done by alliance with the Radical party"<sup>30</sup>. During the early days of the Liberal parliament he joined a committee which tried to stir up some opposition to the course the government was taking, but this committee did not last long.

In Morris's own words,

It must be understood that I always intended to join any body who distinctly called themselves socialists, so when last year I was invited to join the Democratic Federation by Mr Hyndman, I accepted the invitation hoping that it would declare for Socialism, in spite of certain drawbacks that I expected to find in it; concerning which I find on the whole that there are fewer drawbacks than I expected. (31)

He joined the Democratic Federation in 1882, but had already been developing his critique of art from 1878 on. It is, therefore, from 1878 on, during his emergence as a socialist campaigner, and during his period as a lecturer, that we shall examine his views on art and society.<sup>32</sup>

#### Morris and the Definition of Art

Broadly speaking, Morris treated art as being the human pleasure in life as expressed in and made manifest in the things made by man. Thus, in his lecture, 'Art and Labour' (1884) he defines art as follows;<sup>33</sup>

By art I do not mean only pictures and sculptures, nor only these and architecture, that is, beautiful building properly ornamented; these are only a portion of art,

which comprises, as I understand the word, a great deal more; beauty produced by the labour of man both mental and bodily, the expression of the interest man takes in the life of man upon the earth with all its surroundings, in other words the human pleasure of life is what I mean by art.

In 'The Worker's Share of Art', an article in *Commonweal* (April 1885) Morris offers a further definition;<sup>34</sup>

Art is man's embodied expression of interest in the life of man; it springs from man's pleasure in his life; pleasure we must call it, taking all human life together, however much it may be broken by the grief and trouble of individuals; and as it is the expression of pleasure in life generally, in the memory of the deeds of the past, and the hope of those of the future, so it is especially the expression of man's pleasure in the deeds of the present: in his work.

Thus, as a first step, he has defined art in terms which relate to the doing and practice of everything, and only marginally to the High Art or fine art of his own day: "art: . . . is . . . the expression of man's pleasure . . . in his work."

#### Art and the Division of Labour

Central to his definition of art, and to his critique of the activities going under the name of art, was a critique of the division of labour under capitalism. Thus in his lecture 'The Gothic Revival, II', he discusses what he saw as the existing poor standard of contemporary ornament;

It is because there is such a division of labour in our occupations nowadays that there is a trenchant line of demarcation between artists and workmen, even when the latter are engaged on what are considered in some sense works of art. (35)

The divisions of labour are not simply those between rich and poor, owners and workers, but the divisions within

the work situation, between different aspects of work on the same product, and between the mental and physical aspects of the making of a product;<sup>36</sup> thus he talks of the possibility of the worker creating beauty as follows;

if there is to be any pretence of beauty in the work which is to pass through his hands it will have been arranged for him by some one else's mind, and all his mind will have to do with the execution of it will be to keep before him the fact that he has got to carry out his pattern neatly perhaps, but speedily certainly under the penalty of his livelihood being injured. (37)

And, on the more general level, he argued in a letter to the Manchester Examiner that the absence of popular art from his time

betokens that fatal division of men into the cultivated and the degraded classes which competitive commerce has bred and fosters; popular art has no chance of healthy life, or, indeed, of a life at all till we are on the way to fill up this terrible gulf between riches and poverty. (38)

### Art and the Gothic

Morris participated in the Gothic revival, admired medieval building and work, and frequently lectured upon it. He perceived in the medieval products a greater simplicity and beauty than in most that he saw around him, but, for the purposes of our exposition, what is important is why Morris could use the medieval as an example for the future, or as a test case against the present, and in what sense he used his analysis of the relations of production of medieval society as an empirical example to set against the present.<sup>39</sup>

In what we could describe as the classic archetypical medieval situation the workman, as master, owned his tools, produced goods for use, and negotiated directly with the purchaser. As an apprentice you learned under the supervision

of the master, to become yourself a master and controller of your own work. Even under the later less democratic phase of the guild system, Morris argued, you may, as a worker, have had less privileges, but you nevertheless were still master of your own work.<sup>40</sup> Thus Morris argues,

Now if you have followed me you will take note that these are the conditions under which artists work; and in fact the craftsmen of the middle ages were all artists. (41)

Thus he emphasises again that art for him is the product of a way of working in a situation of workers control over the production. Gothic art, he argued,

was the work of free craftsmen working for no master or profit-grinder, and capable of expressing their own thoughts by means of their work, which was no mere burden to them but was blended with pleasure; (42)

Under these conditions of production, when there were not special men called artists, and there was not a division of labour between mental and manual, or between different aspects of each, it was possible for art to be popular art, to be part of everyday life and things, and to be part of the expression of pleasure in life - involvement in life.

Popular art

is the art of the people; the art produced by the daily labour of all kinds of men for the daily use of all kinds of men: (43)

It is this that Morris felt the division of labour under capitalism, and production geared to the creation of surplus value, rather than goods designed for use, had destroyed.

While Morris himself admired medieval art, and distinctly felt that poverty under the medieval system was preferable to poverty in a late Victorian city (which for him meant also degradation and dehumanisation) medievalism

for Morris was not a possible political or social future. His socialist writings are sharp and practical, and, while growing out of his historical analysis of the medieval, are not an advocacy of a revamped medievalism;

We know that a condition of poverty has not always meant over-work and anxiety, but under modern civilisation it does, and with modern civilisation we have to deal; we cannot turn our people back into Catholic English peasants and Guild craftsmen, or into heathen Norse bonders,

for

commerce has bred the Proletariat and uses it quite blindly, and is still blind to the next move in the game, which will be that the Proletariat will say: we will be used no longer, you have organised us for our own use. (44)

### 19th Century Gothic

The inseparability of Morris' socialist analysis of society from his analysis of the production of art is clearly demonstrated in considering his comments on the 19th century Gothic revival, and his own work as an artist-craftsman.

As has been mentioned, Ruskin's 'Stones of Venice' came out during Morris's first year at Oxford, and Morris became involved in the Gothic revival later. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood further advanced the medieval idea in the fine arts, while Morris himself, in his workshop, further tried to revive something of the medieval handicrafts as he saw them. But, for Morris, architecture was the most important form of actual 'Gothic' revival, for it was buildings that comprised the environment in which people lived. Of his own efforts he commented that;



I may also be allowed to mention that some time in this act some of us thought that the revival might be extended to the necessary arts, and made I assure you desparate efforts to revive them in which process we have at least amused and instructed ourselves a good deal, and even done what is called 'lived on' our efforts; in other words have extracted a good deal of money out of the public by them: allow me to excuse ourselves for that brigandage by saying that the public will have these accessory arts, or some pretence of them, and that if I am not quite blinded by vanity ours are at any rate prettier [than] those which went before them. (45)

He emphasises thus, as he does elsewhere, that his efforts within art itself are, by themselves, merely a personal matter.

What was hopeful for him in the Gothic revival in architecture was as much the increasing historical knowledge of the basis of the original style, as the style itself. That is, he was concerned with an understanding of the relations of production and organisation of work in the medieval period.

The Gothic revival as merely a stylistic innovation among a limited number of people meant little, for

In spite of all the talk among Artistic people the real style of the day, Victorian Architecture, is in full swing; or in other words miserable squalor and purse-proud, rampant vulgarity divide our architecture between them. (46)

And, criticising cheap ornament, he went on to advocate a line very close to that taken by the Bauhaus stylistically;

at present I say build big and solid and with an eye to strict utility: you will find that will be expressive work enough, and will by no means be utilitarian. (47)

The sense in which it was the relations of production that mattered most to Morris - the worker's relationship to his work and his product, and not any stylistic overlay - is illustrated in an important passage where he comments

upon a church built in the pure Gothic style by an architect friend of his;

as I looked at it I began to get tired of it although I could find no fault with its design at all; and why was that? Well there were dozens of figures in the niches, which indeed filled their places: but when you looked at them you knew very well what they were; they were carving not sculpture. That is we have today to use two words which mean the same thing to indicate two different things: so I say they were carving, that they were done by men who really had nothing to do with the design of them who cut them unfeelingly and mechanically without troubling their heads as to whom they represented, with no trace in them of my friend the architect's enthusiasm for the Middle Ages, by men who would just as soon have cut 18th century grave stone cherubs, or apses and amorette in a new club house; in short they were just mechanical dolls, nothing more. (48)

This illustrates very sharply the sense in which Morris was not a protagonist in a battle for changes in style, but rather was an advocate of changes in work relations as a pre-condition for a different sort of art - a different sort of production.

The bar to a real Gothic revival in the 19th century was that

so far from beauty being a necessary ingredient to all handiwork, it is always absent from it unless it is bargained for as a special separate article having its own market value. (49)

This is central to his analysis, for, while art or ornament is not a necessary part of a commodity, and is but an addition to the commodity, art will be nothing but a frill for which the rich pay extra. While art is a luxury and an extra, and has nothing to do with the basic utility and making of an object, and the way the object is made, there could for Morris be no real art.

Morris points out<sup>50</sup> that the Gothic revival of his time was largely one of cultivated men seeking art

through art, instead of art through the life of the people. There was, in his view, no hope for the revival unless art could be found through the people. But, he argued, the division into rich and poor, and cultivated and uncultivated, is "necessary for the existence of the present commercial capitalist system." And thus, while that lasts, he concludes, there is no hope for a Gothic revival anyway.

the progress, nay the very existence of art depends on the supplanting of the present capitalist system by something better, depends on changing the basis of society. (51)

### Artist's Art

Elsewhere Morris discusses "Artist's art" among certain of those working at the time, and comments that

I can't help thinking that it does produce something worthier than was turned out in the 18th century; but I know that if it does it is because of the revolutionary spirit working in the brains of men who at least will not accept conventional lies in anything with which they are busied: and whatever it is I fear it produces little effect on the mass of the people who at present, since popular art lies crushed under money bags, have no share in the pleasure of life either in their work or their play. (52)

And, writing to Andreas Scheu<sup>53</sup> he points out that

in spite of all the success I have had, I have not failed to be conscious that the art I have been helping to produce would fail with the death of a few of us who really care about it, that a reform in art which is founded on individualism must perish with the individuals who have set it going. . . . art cannot have a real life and growth under the present system of commercialism and profit-mongering.

So we see that in these passages he stresses collective work, control by workers over their work, art being 'popular', and art being an integral part of the production of things rather than an added commodity - an ornamental frill: all these are characteristics of a

real and healthy art. It could further be added that his stress on collectivism, as opposed to individualism, in connection with his general attack on the division of labour, points the way to something more than simply a return to a medieval craft condition.

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Machinery:- Capitalist Machinery and Socialist Machinery

The place of design in industrial production, and the relation between art and manufacture, was a central concern of many eminent Victorians. Morris's own later position on machinery is very clear, and is consistent with his broad analysis of the social relations of art, and the nature of capitalist society. Basically he treats machinery as being part of a social system. Under capitalism the machine was a means of creating greater profit, and the effect of the machine was to displace the worker through eroding further the worker's control over his work: the worker became a slave to the machine, as part of being a slave to the system. Thus he says in 'Art and Socialism':

And all that mastery over the powers of nature which the last hundred years or less has given us: what has it done for us under this system? In the opinion of John Stuart Mill, it was doubtful if all the mechanical inventions of modern times have done anything to lighten the toil of labour: be sure there is no doubt, that they were not made for that end, but to 'make a profit' . . . Those machines of which the civilised world is so proud, has it any right to be proud of the use they have been put to by Commercial war and waste? (54)

And again, emphasising that it is the machine as part of specific social relations that he objects to:

It is not this or that tangible steel and brass machine which we want to get rid of, but the great intangible machine of commercial tyranny which oppresses the lives of all of us. (55)

In 'Useful Work versus Useless Toil' he emphasises again that however great the increase in machinery, the effect under capitalism is to further degrade the worker - reduce his skill in work, and hence his power over his product;

The multiplication of labour has become a necessity for us, and so long as that goes on no ingenuity in the invention of machines will be of any real use to us. Each new machine will cause a certain amount of misery among the workers whose special industry it may disturb; so many of them will be reduced from skilled to unskilled workmen, and then gradually matters will slip into their due-grooves, and all will work apparently smoothly again; and if it were not that all this is preparing revolution, things would be, for the greater part of men, just as they were before the new powerful inventions. (56)

And again he emphasises that machinery under capitalism is used to create a reserve labour force, thus increasing the precariousness of the life of the worker;

They are called 'labour-saving' machines - a commonly used phrase which implies what we expect of them; but we do not get what we expect. What they really do is to reduce the skilled labourer to the ranks of the unskilled, to increase the number of the 'reserve army of labour' - to intensify the labour of those who serve the machines. (57)

However, it is true that

Our epoch has invented machines which would have appeared wild dreams to the men of past ages,

And, under a different social system

these miracles of ingenuity would be for the first time used for minimising the amount of time spent in unattractive labour, which by their means might be so reduced as to be but a very light burden on each individual. All the more as these machines would be very much improved when it was no longer a question as to whether their improvement would 'pay' the individual, but rather whether it would benefit the community. (58)

Morris thus stresses that not only does the machine mean and do a different job under different social relations, but that the different priorities and requirements lead to the creation of different sorts of machinery.

Now it cannot be doubted, despite these sharply analytical quotations, that elsewhere Morris does express more forthrightly a view of the machine as a necessary and useful thing whose operations ought to be minimised as much as possible, even under a different sort of social system.<sup>59</sup> That is, he tended to suggest that under socialism the new-directed machine would mine coal, dig trenches, and so forth, and would assist wherever useful in every other sort of work, but that, essentially, man would take back direct contact with his product wherever possible. This was, after all, a precondition for the production of art as Morris defined it. And, while Herbert Read may see this as archaic romanticism,<sup>60</sup> given Morris's awareness of the political nature of factory production, assembly line work-pressure, and the division of labour, his 'dream' seems not unreasonable.

Thus in 'How we live, and how we might live' he deals specifically with 'artistic' abhorrence of machinery, dissociating himself from such a simplistic perspective;

I know that to some cultivated people, people of the artistic turn of mind, machinery is particularly distasteful, and they will be apt to say you will never get your surroundings pleasant so long as you are surrounded by machinery. I don't quite admit that; it is the allowing machines to be our masters and not our servants that so injures the beauty of life nowadays. (61)

He goes on to suggest that under the early stages of socialist construction machinery might further be multiplied. But, multiplied only to the point where objectives could be reconsidered due to the increase in time and possibilities;

I have a kind of hope that the very elaboration of machinery in a society whose purpose is not the multiplication of labour, as it now is, but the carrying on of a pleasant life, as it would be under social order - that the elaboration of machinery, I say, will lead to the simplification of life, and so once more to the limitation of machinery. (62)

However, under the existing system of capitalism, the machine was essentially part of the conditions which were leading or had led to the decline of art. For, in as far as the machine was part of a set of relations that reduced the producer's control over his product, that machine was also, within those specific relations, contributing to the death of art as a normal and necessary ingredient in the making of things. The machine, however, also provided the pre-conditions for an alternative to the capitalist system.

### The Death of Art

As has been said, for Morris

the chief source of art is man's pleasure in his daily necessary work, which expresses itself and is embodied in that work itself; nothing else can make the common surroundings of life beautiful, and whenever they are beautiful it is a sign that men's work has pleasure in it, however they may suffer otherwise. (63)

It was this art as a basic part of work and life that had been strangled under capitalist production. Thus, whatever else may be going on in art as practised by specialists (men and women under the division of labour called artists) the basis for popular art was, for Morris, lacking already;

the workers, by means of whose hands the mass of art must be made, are forced by the commercial system to live, even at the best, in places so squalid and hideous that no one could live in them and keep his sanity without losing all sense of beauty and enjoyment of life . . . . men living amidst such ugliness cannot conceive of beauty, and therefore cannot express it. (64)

In addition, however, Morris felt that the relations of production under capitalism prevented even those who were artists from producing work of real worth; rather the artist was forced back into reviving past styles, or into sentimentalising.

The artists, the aim of whose lives is to produce beauty and interest, are deprived of the materials for the works in real life, since all around them is ugly and vulgar. They are driven into seeking their materials in the imagination of past ages, or into giving the lie to their own sense of beauty and knowledge of it by sentimentalising and falsifying the life which goes on around them; (65)

Further, the artist, who we will remember Morris defined earlier as being in a position of control over his own work and products in a manner equivalent to the medieval workman, has nevertheless to be in a state of constant struggle in order to produce something worthwhile. This struggle, which, in the rhetoric of the myth of the artist is now seen as being the fight to express true and deep feelings,<sup>66</sup> Morris saw as being a necessary waste of time and energy under the commercial system - energies which could better have gone into the work:

whatever is produced that is worth anything is the work of men who are in rebellion against the corrupt society of today - rebellion sometimes open, sometimes veiled under cynicism, but by which in any case lives are wasted in a struggle, too often vain, against their fellow-men, which ought to be used for the exercise of special gifts for the benefit of the world. (67)



Thus Morris saw the state of art in the 1880's as being one in which there was little popular art, little art expressed as a constituent part of daily production, and, that which remained as 'high' or 'intellectual' art suffering from the degradation of surroundings, from its own social exclusiveness, from having to use past ages as inspiration, or else to sentimentalise the present. And, above all, the only possibility of art under capitalism was an individualist art, and

a reform in art which is founded on individualism must perish with the individuals who have set it going. . . . art cannot have a real life and growth under the present system of commercialism and profit-mongering. (68)

Thus far, however, we have talked of Morris's view of the state of art under late nineteenth century capitalism, and the likely continuing effect of capitalism on art. What art would be under socialism was something he refused to specify: what he would and did specify were the pre-conditions for a vigorous art. But at various times he commented that, perhaps, for a new birth of art to take place, there would first have to be a total death of it: this for two reasons; firstly to unlearn the habits of the past, and, secondly, in order that a new society could be built. That is, a period of strict utilitarianism may be necessary as a foundation for the new society.

The experiment of a civilised community living wholly without art or literature has not yet been tried. The past degradation and corruption of civilisation may force this denial of pleasure upon the society which will arise from its ashes. If that must be, we will accept the passing phase of utilitarianism as a foundation for the art which is to be. If the cripple and the starvelling disappear from our streets, if the earth nourish us all alike, if the sun shine for all of us alike, if to one and all of us the

glorious drama of the earth - day and night, summer and winter - can be presented as a thing to understand and love, we can afford to wait awhile till we are purified from the shame of the past corruption, and till art arises again among people freed from the terror of the slave and the shame of the robber. (69)

Meanwhile, under the present system,

the arts have got to die, what is left of them, before they can be born again. You know my views on the matter; I apply them to myself as well as to others. This would not, I admit, prevent my writing poetry any more than it prevents my doing my pattern work, because the mere personal pleasure of it urges one to the work; but it prevents my looking at it as a sacred duty, and the grief aforesaid is too strong and disquieting to be overcome by a mere inclination to do what I know is unimportant work. (70)

Seeing the birth of a new society Morris is prepared to accept as a consequence

the seeming disappearance of what art is now left us; because I am sure that that will be but a temporary loss, to be followed by a genuine new birth of art, which will be the spontaneous expression of the pleasure of life innate in the whole people. (71)

For art cannot be kept vigorously alive

by the action . . . of a few groups of specially gifted men and their small circle of admirers amidst a general public incapable of understanding and enjoying their work. . . . all worthy schools of art must be in the future, as they have been in the past, the outcome of the aspirations of the people towards the beauty and true pleasure of life. (72)

Morris felt that the feeling of artists of his own time for art was genuine, but they had to work in the midst of

the ignorance of those whose whole life ought to be spent in the production of works of art (the makers of wares to wit), and of the fatuous pretence of those who, making no utilities, are driven to 'make believe'. (73)

A new art would only emerge when the workers had taken over control of the means of production. In 1893 he saw some hope of this beginning in a small way;

'By us and not for us', must be their motto. That they are finding this out for themselves and acting on it makes this year a memorable one indeed, small as is the actual gain which they are claiming. . . . I not only 'admit' but joyfully insist on the fact: 'that the miners are laying the foundation of something better.' The struggle against the terrible power of the profit-grinder is now practically proclaimed by them a matter of principle. (74)

In this letter to the Daily Chronicle Morris links the miners' struggle directly with the potential for a new art, thus bringing out very clearly the extent to which his socialist analysis and his views on art are inseparable.

Morris ends the letter (just quoted from) with a refusal to specify what the art of the future under socialism could be: but note in particular his comment on the quality of the art of past ages, in spite of and not because of the system under which people lived. The medieval system may have given greater worker-control, but it was by no means an ideal:

No one can tell now what form that art will take; but as it is certain that it will not depend on the whim of a few persons, but on the will of all, so it may be hoped that it will at last not lag behind that of past ages, but will outgo the art of the past in the degree that life will be more pleasurable from the absence of bygone violence and tyranny, in spite and not because of which our forefathers produced the wonders of popular art, some few of which time has left us. (75)

### Morris as a Socialist<sup>76</sup> - - -

We have indicated already something of Morris's socialism, and it is not our intention here to specify any biographical detail concerning his socialist career, most of which has been covered elsewhere.<sup>77</sup> Given the interlocking nature of his analysis of art and of capitalism/socialism, it would be worthwhile touching on a few points relating to

his type of socialism, firstly to make clear what he was not (e.g. Fabian, as with Bernard Shaw, or purely economic and reformist, as he perceived some socialist groups to be, more yet impractical, as he saw Ruskin to be).

Writing to Andreas Scheu<sup>78</sup> in September 1883 Morris described the content of his lectures as "Socialism seen through the eyes of an artist" which is a point always to be kept in mind. This because, as we have seen in his writings, he defined art as pleasure in life, and saw it as a necessary ingredient of good work, and art and pleasure in creative production were for him inseparable.

Thus for Morris socialism in essence was to do with workers' control over the means of production, and that control had to be not simply a matter of nominal political decision making, but direct control over the work situation collectively and individually; this necessitated also a fundamental attack on the division of labour, which he saw as an instrument of the negation of workers control under capitalism.

It is his priority of reinstating pleasure in life and work, that is, direct producers' control over production, that made Morris highly suspicious of reformism. He not only suspected reformism as having little to do with his fundamental aims, but he was also suspicious of reformists, in that they were individuals, and were often of the middle classes, and he perceived the fundamental action of change to be class antagonism; thus

the basis of all change must be, as it has always been, the antagonism of classes: I mean that though here and there a few men of the upper and middle classes,

moved by their conscience and insight may and doubtless will throw in their lot with the working classes, the upper and middle classes as a body will by the very nature of their existence, and like a plant grows, resist the abolition of classes: neither do I think that any amelioration of the condition of the poor on the only lines which the rich can go upon will advance us on the road; save that it will put more power into the hands of the lower class and so strengthen both their discontent and their means of showing it: for I do not believe that starvellings can bring about a revolution. (79)

Writing to C.E. Maurice<sup>80</sup> he expressed similar sentiments;

such a system can only be destroyed, it seems to me, by the united discontent of numbers; isolated acts of a few persons of the middle and upper classes seeming to me (as I have said before) quite powerless against it; in other words the antagonism of classes, which the system has bred, is the natural and necessary instrument of its destruction. My aim therefore being to spread discontent among all classes, I feel myself bound to join any organisation whose object seemed to me really to further this aim.

Thus, while Morris welcomed an amelioration of the condition of the working classes, this did not for him constitute a fundamental change.

Even in 1893, when to some extent he modified his 'purism' and agreed to the possibility of using parliament as a means for gaining power, he remained highly sceptical about parliamentary reform unless that reform was simply an extension of general agitation and change outside parliament.

Illustrative of his attitude to reformism and improved conditions is a discussion of

public acquirement of parks and other open spaces, planting of trees, establishment of free libraries and the like. (81)

Morris admits these, and other improvements in hours of work and general education, to be a "great gain".

Nevertheless, he argued, these gains were merely the "machinery" of socialism; most important was:

how such reforms were done; in what spirit; or rather what else was being done, while these were going on, which would make people long for equality of condition; which would give them faith in the possibility and workableness of socialism. (82)

Morris was, however, worried, for he considered that:

the Society of Inequality might . . . accept the quasi-Socialist machinery above mentioned, and work it for the purpose of upholding that society in a somewhat shorn condition, maybe, but a safe one. (83)

This suspicion towards that which the reformers hailed as gains for the working classes extended to other areas; the capitalist system Morris saw as being able to absorb and transform any achievement into something suitable to its own ends;

Just as the capitalists would at once capture education in craftsmanship, seek out what little advantage there is in it, and then throw it away, so they do with all other education. A superstition still remains from the times when 'education' was a rarity that it is a means for earning a superior livelihood; but as soon as it has ceased to be a rarity, competition takes care that education shall not raise wages; that general education shall be worth nothing, and that special education shall be worth just no more than a tolerable return on the money and time spent in acquiring it. (84)

While education was for Morris important, it was education in discontent, in socialism, and in the economics, organisation and administration of a strong socialist party that mattered.<sup>85</sup>

The passages quoted above are sufficient to give an insight into his socialist position. The passages indicate not only that he was not reformist, but reveal (within the context of what has been said so far about Morris) why he was not reformist. His position results not from a difference in ideas on tactics as to how socialism is to be attained but rather from his views on what socialism is. In essence socialism was, for Morris, the control by the people of their lives directly both in work and leisure (the

division, moreover, between work and leisure being one of the divisions that should be overcome under socialist society). The conditions for a true development of socialism, and the conditions for the development of a new art, are one and the same.

By contrast, an increase in the wages of workers under capitalism would not affect the basic relations of capital and labour, any more than would the provision of public education, parks, libraries, museums, or whatever. All these things, which Morris calls "quasi-socialist machinery" are compatible, in his eyes, with a continuation of capitalism. The priority for Morris was thus popular control, rather than better living conditions. The latter followed from the former, and, if under capitalism living standards rose these might also, in the context of a fluctuating market, breed greater discontent, and thus provide the basis for a revolution.

Morris praised the miners in 1893 and applauded their motto, 'By us and not for us', for it was his own theorisation of his experience as an artist-craftsman, his grasp of Marx, and socialism, and his understanding of the nature of work, that led him to see art and socialism as being built on such a foundation, and not on the basis of a redistribution of wealth within the existing structure. That would not break down the contradiction between work and leisure, between life and art, and between class and class: it was not the foundation for a new art.

I stress these points here not in order to say that Morris was right and Hyndmann, or any other socialist

worker pursuing a reformist or parliamentary path. in the late 'eighties and 'nineties was wrong, but simply in order to indicate the unity and coherence of the analysis of art and capitalism, and the inseparability of what Morris said about art and what he said about socialism. Given his definition of art, the preconditions for the one were the preconditions for the other.

From the late 'eighties onwards, when there was strong pressure within the Socialist League towards parliamentary participation, Morris began to feel himself too much of a purist in his attitude, and began to suspect that his own position involved too much a 'conscience-salving', rather than realism.<sup>86</sup>

Morris had always considered that establishing socialism would involve a period of transition. The point at issue was how to lead to this period of construction and transition, and what form that transition would take. As we saw earlier, this transition could involve the absence of art; even were a system of state socialism to be set up that negated popular control over government and production, this would be better, he felt, than the existing capitalist system, for, as he wrote in 1888;

Even the crudest form of State Socialism (which I do not agree to) would have this advantage over the individual ownership of the means of production, that whereas the state might abuse its ownership, the individual owners must do so. (87)

The issue of what form the transition would take, was, however, one of the future; one can note in his various statements on this, however, the shift between a grudging acceptance of the parliamentary road, and, on the other hand, a pure socialist road.



In Commonweal of 7th June 1890 Morris wrote;

The true weapon of the workers as against parliament is not the ballot-box but the Boycott. Ignore Parliament; let it alone, and strengthen your own organisation to deal directly with your masters.

This statement is consistent with his general position as we have outlined it so far. However, in August 1892 he wrote in a lecture on Communism:

I cannot fail to see that it is necessary somehow to get hold of the machine which has at its back the executive power of the country, however that may be done, and that the organisation and labour which will be necessary to effect that by means of the ballot-box will, to say the least of it, be little indeed compared with what would be necessary to effect it by open revolt. (88)

This is a sharp reversal of his position; all the more so for a man whose socialism grew from his own understanding of control over work, rather than from a wish simply to ameliorate the standard of living of the working class. As early as 1888, with the pressures in the Socialist League towards parliamentary participation, Morris had written to Mrs Burne Jones<sup>89</sup> concerning his own reaction to the move:

in all the wearisome shilly-shally of parliamentary politics I should be absolutely useless: and the immediate end to be gained, the pushing things just a trifle nearer to State Socialism, which when realised seems to me but a dull goal---all this quite sickens me.

It is, perhaps, ironic that Bernard Shaw, a great Fabian, who, when a young man, knew Morris, should write in 1931 concerning adherence to constitutional means that

it is not so certain today as it seemed in the 'eighties that Morris was not right. (90)

### Summary Assessment and Interpretation.

A brief discussion of the ambiguities and shifts in Morris's position, under the impact of parliamentary groups in and outside the Socialist League, and under the impact of the preliminary successes of the first labour M.P.s (success in being elected) has been included because these involve a fundamental departure from a position that is, in most ways, coherent.

The importance of Morris for this account of the social construction of art is the sense in which he focusses on the relations of production, the division of labour, and, within that, art being created as a commodity with a value additional to and not part of other commodities. The artist is part of the division of labour, and the art he produces is either an adornment paid extra for, or a luxury article to be treated of as a thing in itself.

The importance of Morris's analysis will be evident not only when we consider (in chapter five) the development of state intervention in and definition of art, but when in the later parts of the thesis we consider the reactions of practising artists, craftsmen and designers to their social situation. For, in the 19th century, the development of state intervention in art can be seen as in part an attempt to come to grips with the very problem of the absence of art in the general population and the absence of 'art' in manufacture - problems which Morris indicates. are rooted in the social structure of 19th century British capitalism. In considering the reactions of artists, craftsmen and designers to their situation it will be noted

furthermore how sharply aware some of them are of the issues of control or lack of control over work. In, for instance, interviewing artists about their experience of being commissioned to do a particular work I found an acute awareness of the tension between being 'artist', (and in total control of production) and being workman, or technician, (and being merely the executor of a design).

Morris did not consider art in its ideological form, as a means of legitimating the status quo and incorporating people into the status quo: such issues will be extensively developed in this thesis in later chapters. Morris was sensitive, however, to the ways in which parks, museums, and education, could be as public services compatible with and reinforcing of the very capitalist system which he saw as denying real control to the general population, and hence denying art. Such an understanding of the state is central to this thesis, and will be developed in chapter five and six.

In analysing art, therefore, Morris directed our attention not to the varying contents of the works of those defined as great masters; rather he directed our attention to how it is that art, as creative control, became a form of production and work relevant only to a limited group of men and women; how it is that the mass of producers came to lose creative control over production; what the implications of these changes were and are; and how the existence of art and not-art is bound up with the wider development of capitalism and the capitalist state.

It is for these reasons that the analysis to be

presented in the following chapters is largely in sympathy with the analysis and work presented by Morris. I shall go further in some areas, and differ in many others, but the essential understanding of art as part of a complex division of labour implying also the existence of not art remains. And the essential focus on power, and power within the relations of production remains.

Morris's analysis of art, of art and work, and of art and the division of labour under capitalism, is the outline of what a Marxist analysis of art could be. It is Marxist not in the sense that it is a re-statement of what Marx himself said, but rather because it employs the method Marx developed in other fields. Morris examines the conditions of possibility of 19th century art, and of art under capitalism and within the division of labour. He examines the emergence of art within the division of labour, and the conditions of production of medieval art. He approaches art, so to speak, from the outside and from the inside at the same moment; from the outside in as far as he views the development of art in terms of the development of the whole social system - as part of the contradiction between work and leisure, between capital and labour, and between control and non-control over production; and, from the inside in as far as Morris theorises the social relations of art through his own experience as an artist-craftsman - as a direct producer in charge of all aspects of the making of products.

It is the combination of a theorisation of the possibilities of art based on his own experience, with an historical understanding of the development of capitalism,

and the alternative social possibilities that industrial capitalism provided, that makes Morris's Marxist analysis of the arts such an incisive one.

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1. See for instance the work of Lucien Goldmann, e.g., The Hidden God. trans. Thody.P. Routledge and Kegan Paul. (1964). The Human Sciences and Philosophy. trans. White.H. and Anchor.R. Cape. London. (1969)
2. See L'Orange.H.P. Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire. (1965)  
This book is not strictly speaking by a sociologist, but it is certainly one of the most rewarding attempts to relate art and social structure through categorising the style and content of the art in the same sort of terms as the type and structure of the social system.
3. The reader may sense here some clumsiness of language, as in "art in its present social form" or the frequently used phrase, "the social relations of art". Such clumsiness is inevitable at this point - the usage will become clearer as the text advances. For, while 'art' is usually taken as a word denoting an object - a definite thing - I am here attempting to express in words the existence of that object within and through definite social relations. Thus, in "art in its present social form" (as just used in the text) I am not referring to the content of visual art, but to that and the definitions, usages, practices, criticisms, displays, styles, ideologies, values, assumptions, etc., etc., that surround and act upon and in relation to the object.
4. Osborne.H. Aesthetics and Art Theory; an Historical Introduction. Longmans, Green and Co. London. (1968) p.21.
5. These definitions are derived from the Concise Oxford Dictionary Oxford University Press, (1964)  
See also, however, the valuable new publication by Raymond Williams, Keywords - a Vocabulary of Culture and Society Fontana, (1976)
6. For a fuller discussion of Henry Cole see chapter five of this thesis. Also his autobiography, Fifty Years of Public Work George Bell and Sons, London. (1884).
7. For a further discussion of the term 'art' in film and photography see Interview Fifteen, Appendix. The interview is with a film maker who works largely in the documentary field.
8. Artist being thus in this sense a very different sort of word from 'Doctor,' 'Postman', or even 'Painter'.
9. In the Middle Ages the separation or division between the 'sordid' and 'liberal' arts does of course embody a mental/manual separation: the significance of the

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- post-Renaissance developments is not merely that these become more complex and marked, but that the 'craft' work of the Middle Ages, which had involved creation, designing and making, etc., becomes divided in the sense that the creativity and the designing is abstracted from the 'craft' of the 'making': 'making' becomes manual 'work', and designing/creating becomes 'mental' and more prestigious. The mental/manual division becomes therefore more absolute.
10. Green.M. and Wilding.M. (in consultation with Hoggart.R.) Cultural Policy in Great Britain UNESCO. (1970). in the UNESCO series, 'Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies.'
  11. A Policy for the Arts - the First Steps February 1965. HMSO. London. Cmd. 2601
  12. Marcel Duchamp. Letter to Hans Richter. 10th Nov. 1962. quoted in Richter.H. Dada Thames and Hudson.
  13. Morris.D. The Biology of Art. (1962)
  14. Wingert.P. Primitive Art. (1962)
  15. see Steegman.J. Victorian Taste Thomas Nelson and Sons, London. (1970) p.18. see also; Osborne.H. Aesthetics and Art Theory Longmans, Green and Co. London. (1968). pp. 100, 116, 113--130, 152--153, 195, etc. see also the entry under 'Aesthetic' in Williams.R. Keywords Fontana, (1976).
  16. quoted in Steegman.J. Victorian Taste. op.cit.p.18.
  17. see Wollheim.R. Art and its Objects Penguin Books. (1970). see also Taylor.R. 'A Marxist Concept of Art'. in Radical Philosophy No.5. see also Williams.R. Keywords op.cit.
  18. André Malraux. quoted by Osborne.H. in Aesthetics and Art Theory op.cit. p.85.
  19. quoted by Osborne.H. Aesthetics and Art Theory op.cit. p.6.
  20. A trap which Jean Duvignaud, in his The Sociology of Art Paladin, London. (1972) seems to fall into.
  21. The importance of John Berger's work, as in his Ways of Seeing, BBC & Penguin Books, (1972) is that he attempts to do this. He distinguishes the tradition as it is said to exist, from the generality of work as it was made, and looks at the relationship between the constructed tradition, the generality of actual work, and the exceptional work that breaks out of the constructed tradition, only to be hailed as an example of the greatness of the tradition.



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22. Bloch.H.A. 'Towards the Development of a Sociology of Literary and Art Forms.' American Sociological Review Vol.8. (1943)
23. *ibid.*
24. Laurenson.D. and Swingewood.A. The Sociology of Literature. Paladin. London. (1972)
25. Duvignaud.J. The Sociology of Art. Paladin. London. (1972)
26. *ibid.*
27. *ibid.* See, however for an empirical point against Duvignaud's statement the life of Courbet, and Courbet's statement on art and 'art for art's sake' on page 17 of Courbet by Alessandra Pinto. Thames and Hudson.London. (1971)
28. Duvignaud.J. The Sociology of Art. *op.cit.*
29. Laurenson.D. and Swingewood.A. The Sociology of Literature *op.cit.*
30. *ibid.*
31. There is not space at this point to amplify this comment, but the argument will be returned to. It is fundamental to the approach of the thesis as a whole that a simplistic 'base/superstructure' model be rejected. For a well argued Marxist refutation of the base/superstructure model see, Sayer.D. 'Method and Dogma in Historical Materialism' in The Sociological Review Vol.23.No.4.New Series. November 1975. University of Keele.
32. Wollheim.R. 'Sociological Explanations of Art: Some Distinctions.' in Albrecht. (ed). Sociology of Art and Literature. Duckworth. (1970)
33. Martindale.A. The Rise of the Artist in the Middle Ages. Thames and Hudson, London. (1972)
34. Haskell.F. Patrons and Painters: a Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Baroque. Chatto and Windus. (1963)
35. Baxandal. Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy Oxford University Press. (1972)
36. Berger.J. Ways of Seeing BBC and Penguin Books. (1972)

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37. By Herbert Read see, for example; Art and Industry: the Principles of Industrial Design. Faber and Faber. 2nd edition. (1944 )  
The Meaning of Art Faber and Faber. 2nd edition reprint (1936)  
Art Now: an Introduction to the Theory of Modern Painting and Sculpture. Faber and Faber. revised edition. (1936)  
To Hell with Culture, and Other Essays on Art and Society Routledge and Kegan Paul. (1963)  
Education Through Art Faber and Faber. (1943)
38. Hannema.S. Fads, Fakes and Fantasies: The Crisis in the Art Schools and the Crisis in Art Macdonald. London. (1970)
39. Dada and Surrealism demonstrate clearly how even the most frontal confrontation with the accepted definitions of art, culture and thought can be embraced as but another variant of the given and established culture. Hence also the problem with written work of a historico-sociological nature on art: so many relationships must be excavated and demonstrated. In this thesis, for instance, I include a chapter on the art market; a chapter which, through being only one chapter, is insufficient; but, to have omitted it would have been to ignore one of the most central elements in the existence of Western art as a spiritual and cultural value today.
40. Allsopp.B. The Future of the Arts. Pitman, London. (1959)
41. Allsopp.B. Style in the Visual Arts. Pitman.London. (1956)
42. Gimpel.J. The Cult of Art Weidenfeld and Nicholson, (1969)
43. ibid. quotation from dustjacket.
44. His most recent publication, Keywords Fontana, (1976) deserved a better critical reaction than it got. The sense in which he, in Keywords is excavating a series of relations and concepts without telling a story perhaps explains some puzzled reactions.
45. see Cultural Studies 6, Cultural Studies and Theory article by Green.M. 'Raymond Williams and Cultural Studies'.
46. for example, the work of Lukacs, Brecht and Goldman.

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1. see for example: Arvon.H. Marxist Esthetics trans. from French by Lane.H. Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, (1973). First published in French (1973). also the republication of Lifshitz.M. The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx trans. from Russian by Winn.R.B. Pluto Press, London. (1973)  
see also bibliographic note 1 on page v88 of Marxist Esthetics by Arvon.H. op.cit. Also Baxandall.L. Marxism and Aesthetics: An Annotated Bibliography New York. (1968).  
see also: Jameson.F. Marxism and Form Princetown. (1972)
2. Jameson.F., author of books on Marxism and art (see note 1 above ).
3. Arvon.H. Marxist Esthetics. Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London. (1973)
4. ibid. Introduction by Frederic Jameson. p.viii.
5. While Morris's work has been extensively considered and discussed this has often been outside the Marxist framework within which his themes were developed. Within Marxism and within the social sciences his work has been little considered (with the exception of Politics, where his autobiography has been extensively investigated; see, for instance, Thompson.P. The Work of William Morris. Heinemann, (1967)).  
E.P.Thompson, in his biography of Morris, William Morris, Romantic to Revolutionary Lawrence and Wishart, (1955), gives extensive space to Morris's theorisation of art, but appears (a), to separate the theorisation of art from Morris's total Marxist perspective, and (b), to suggest that Morris, in talking about art, is in fact talking about ornament, and not fine art. In this Thompson would appear to be missing the central thrust of Morris's critique.
6. Lifshitz.M. The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx First published in Russian, (1933). Published in English as translated by Winn.R.B. by the Critics Group, New York, (1938). Republished by Pluto Press, London, (1973).
7. ibid. p.86.
8. Marx.K. Grundrisse: Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft). trans. Nicolaus.M. Penguin Books (in association with New Left Review). (1973)
9. ibid. p.111.
10. ibid.
11. ibid.

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12. William Morris Society. From a statement of the aims of the Society: single sheet.
13. Naylor.G. The Bauhaus Studio Vista, London (1968)
14. *ibid.* p.12.
15. Morris.W. 'Art and its Producers' (1888): in Collected Works of William Morris edited May Morris. twentyfour vols published 1910--15. two supplementary volumes published (1936). 'Art and its Producers' Vol.XXII.p.352.
16. Note that while in her book on the Bauhaus, Naylor (*op.cit*) displays that classic mis-reading of Morris that transforms an active socialist campaigner into a well meaning Victorian liberal appalled at industrialisation and seeking an archaic way out, by the time Naylor came to write The Arts and Crafts Movement (Studio Vista, London (1971).), she seems to have become betteracquainted with Morris's work and ideas.
17. Warren.G. Art Nouveau
18. Gombrich.E.H. The Story of Art Phaidon Press,London. First Published 1950. Twelfth Edition (1972) p.126.
19. Read.H. Art and Industry Faber and Faber, London. (1934). p.39.
20. *ibid.*
21. *ibid.*
22. *ibid.*p. 43.
23. *ibid.*
24. For Biographical information on Morris see William Morris, 1834 - 1896: An Introductory Guide to Biographical and Other Studies, Collections of Material, Etc. Available from the William Morris Society. Kelmscott House, Hammersmith.
25. Letter to A.Scheu. 5th Sept. 1883. in Henderson P. (ed) The Letters of William Morris. London, (1950) p.187.
26. in Henderson.P. (ed) The Letters of William Morris. London. (1950) Appendix II. P. 388.
27. see letter to A.Scheu. note 25 above.
28. *ibid.*p.188.
29. *ibid.*
30. *ibid.*

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31. *ibid.* p.189.
32. For biographical information on Morris see introduction to The Unpublished Lectures of William Morris by Prof. E.D. LeMire. Wayne State University Press. (1969) Also the work by Thompson. E.P. and by Thompson. P. as cited in note 5 above. Also for general works see note 24 above.
33. in LeMire. E.D. (ed) The Unpublished Lectures of William Morris Wayne State University Press, Detroit. (1969) p.94.
34. *ibid.*
35. *ibid.* p.86.
36. See the account given by interviewee five (appendix to this thesis) of work as a designer: a graphic illustration of the effects of and experience of the division of labour.
37. as note 35, above.
38. in Henderson. P. (ed). The Letters of William Morris. London. (1950) p.165. Letter dated 14th March 1883.
39. see Christopher Hill's discussion of the use of the past as a way of considering a possible future in Saville. J. (ed). Democracy and the Labour Movement Lawrence and Wishart, (1954). Hill's piece titled, 'The Norman Yoke'. See also Hill. C. Puritanism and Revolution, Panter. Chapter Three.
40. On Medieval Art and Craft see, for example: The Rise of the Artist in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance by Martindale. A. Thames and Hudson, London. (1972). Also Bibliographical notes on pp. 130--135 of same. See also Wymer. N. English Town Craft London (1949). Also Osborne. H. Aesthetics and Art Theory Longmans, London. (1968) chapter one. p.13. ff.
41. from 'The Gothic Revival II' in LeMire (ed) *op.cit.* p.88. N.B. in manuscript 'workmen' is substituted for 'craftsmen'.
42. *ibid.*
43. from 'Of the Origins of Ornamental Art'. LeMire (ed) *op.cit.* p.137.
44. in Henderson. P. (ed) *op.cit.* p.208. Letter to Robert Thompson, 24th July 1884. (underlined in thesis where italicised in Henderson).

45. from 'The Gothic Revival II'. in LeMire.E.D. (ed) The Unpublished Lectures of William Morris Wayne State University Press, Detroit. p.79.
46. *ibid.*p.81.
47. *ibid.* p.83.
48. *ibid.*p.83.
49. *ibid.*p.88/9
50. *ibid.*pp.89--93.
51. *ibid.*p.93.
52. from 'Art and Labour' (1884) in LeMire(ed) *op.cit.*p.111.
53. in Henderson.P. (ed) The Letters of William Morris London. (1950) p.187. Letter dated 5 Sept. 1883.
54. W.Morris. 'Art and Socialism' delivered 1884. quoted in P.Faulkner. William Morris and Eric Gill William Morris Society, Hammersmith. (1975)
55. W.Morris. 'Art and its Producers' 1888. in Collected Works, edited May Morris. (1910--1915) Vol.XXII.p.352.
56. 'Useful Work Versus Useless Toil'. delivered early 84, published 1885. in Briggs.A.(ed) William Morris: Selected Writings and Designs Penguin Books (1972). p.125.
57. *ibid.*p.133.
58. *ibid.*
59. see H.Read. Art and Industry Faber and Faber, London, (1934) p.43.
60. *ibid.*
61. 'How We Live and How We Might Live', 1888. in Briggs.A. (ed) *op.cit.* p.177.
62. *ibid.*
63. 'The Worker's Share of Art' in Briggs.A.(ed).*op.cit.* p.140.
64. *ibid.*p.141.
65. *ibid.*

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66. For example, not in H.Read Art and Industry Faber and Faber, London (1934) , the use of the word 'normal' in opposition to the supposed necessities for being a 'great artist': p.39.
67. 'The Worker's Share of Art' in Briggs.A.(ed) William Morris: Selected Writings and Designs Penguin Books. (1972). p.141/2. Note also John Berger's discussion of the exceptional artist in his Ways of Seeing, Penguin Books & BBC, (1972). Berger argues that the exceptional artist has to struggle against the tradition, but, mediocrity, Berger argues, is not, as is often assumed, a necessary or normal state in art.
68. Letter to A.Scheu. 5th Sept. 1883. in Henderson.P. (ed). The Letters of William Morris, London (1950) p.187.
69. 'Useful Work Versus Useless Toil' in Briggs.A.(ed) op.cit. p.133.
70. Letter to Mrs Burne Jones, 21st August 1883. in Henderson (ed) op.cit. p.180.
71. Letter to Editor of Daily Chronicle. 10th November 1893. in Henderson.P.(ed) op.cit. pp.355-357.
72. ibid.
73. ibid.
74. ibid.
75. ibid.
76. see the latter part of Paul Thompson's biography of William Morris, The Work of William Morris Heinemann, (1967) , for good account of his socialist career. see also Henderson.P.(ed) The Letters of William Morris London, (1950). Letters relevant between 1877 and 1893.
77. see note 76.
78. in Henderson.P.(ed).op.cit. letter of 5 september 1883. on page 187.
79. Letter to T. Horsfall. 25 October 1883. in Henderson.P. (ed).op.cit. p.190.
80. Letter of 1 July 1883. in Henderson.P.(ed).op.cit. p.175.
81. 'Communism', 1893. in Briggs.A.(ed).op.cit. p.154/5.

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82. *ibid.*
83. *ibid.*
84. From an article in Commonweal June 1888. in Briggs. A.(ed). William Morris: Selected Writings and Designs. Penguin (1962). p.146--148.
85. see extract from Morris's article in Commonweal of March 1886, reproduced in Briggs.A.(ed).*op.cit.* p.148.
86. see Letter to Mrs Burne Jones, of 29 July 1888, in Henderson.P.(ed) The Letters of William Morris London. (1950). p.292.
87. Henderson.P.(ed) *op.cit.* Letter of 4th April 1888.
88. quoted by Thompson.P. in The Work of William Morris Heinemann. (1967), chapter Eleven.
89. See Henderson.P.(ed) *op.cit.* pp.292/3
90. from Preface to 1931 edition of Fabian Essays. Quoted in Faulkner.P. William Morris and Eric Gill. William Morris Society, Hammersmith. (1975) p.29. On William Morris and G.B.Shaw see also; Shaw.B. Morris as I Knew Him William Morris Society, London. (1966)



PART TWO

THE PRE-CONDITIONS FOR THE 19TH  
& 20TH CENTURY SOCIAL RELATIONS  
OF ART

## Chapter Three

### The Medieval and the Renaissance

#### Introduction

If Morris was correct in arguing that the Medieval craftsman related to his work in a manner similar to that of the 19th century artist - i.e., he had a direct relation to his product involving control over his work in matters of creating, making, designing, etc., - it would follow that in the Middle Ages we would expect the concept of art, as now understood, to be absent. For, if all manufacture is art, then no manufacture is 'not-art': that is, there is no special class of work to be specially considered and evaluated as something apart from other types of work.

In this chapter I propose to examine (a) the evidence for the absence of a concept of art in the Middle Ages; (b) the evidence for the construction of concepts of art and the artist as special categories of work and persons in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance.

The examination here presented shall be cursory. This is firstly because my intention is simply to refer the reader to work already done, and secondly, to draw out the implications of this work for an understanding of the social construction of art in the 19th and 20th centuries. I shall return at various points in this chapter to the analysis of art presented by William Morris so as to make more precise our understanding of his use of the Medieval as an empirical case to set against the present, and so as to explore further his attitude to the Renaissance tradition.

The Middle Ages, and the Absence of Art

Various writers have commented on the absence of a concept resembling the modern notion of art in the Middle Ages. André Malraux states that

The Middle Ages had no more idea of the concept we express by the word 'art' than had the Greeks or Egyptians, who had no word to express it. (1)

And Harold Osborne has argued that

through the greater part of human history the so-called 'fine arts' were regarded as handicrafts among others, not distinguished as a class, and . . . art objects like products of human industry were designed to serve a purpose recognised and approved by the society in which they arose... (2)

More specifically Kristeller has pointed out that

the term artista coined in the Middle Ages indicated either the craftsman or the student of the liberal arts. Neither for Dante nor for Aquinas has the term art the meaning we associate with it, and it has been emphasised or admitted that for Aquinas shoemaking and cooking, juggling, grammar and arithmetic, are no less and in no other sense artes than painting and sculpture, poetry and music, which latter are never grouped together, not even as imitative arts. (3)

Given the absence of our modern concepts of art or the artist, it is hardly suprising that Martindale is able to point out that

Before the fifteenth century there is no evidence for any of the mystique which has since grown up around the Great Artist. (4)

The lack of any conceptual separation of art from other work is illustrated in a chapter 'Concerning the Manual Artificers' in a treatise by Jean de Jandun written in 1325 in praise of Paris.<sup>5</sup> Note that in the following extract image makers, constructors of instruments of war, makers of clothes and ornament, makers of bread and metal vessals, scribes, illuminators and bookbinders, are all

run together as part of the same general grouping:

We have also thought to add something concerning those craftsmen working with their hands, if it will not displease the reader to consider them. Here indeed you will find the most ingenious makers of all sorts of image, whether contrived in sculpture or in painting or in relief. Here too you will see the most cunning constructions of instruments of war . . . Again you will discover men preparing most diligently clothing and ornaments.

We are not ashamed to mention here the makers of bread . . . nor yet the fashioners of metal vessels . . . The more intently the parchment-makers, scribes, illuminators and bookbinders devote themselves in the service of wisdom to the decoration of their works, the more copiously do the delightful fountains of knowledge flow forth from that most profound source of all good things. (6)

There is in the above, therefore, a complete inter-mixing of activities that we should now distinguish as arts, crafts, and other forms of trade/work.

The position of the medieval 'master mason' is indicative of the different sort of work relations discussed by Morris. The master mason is the nearest equivalent to the modern architect, but, as Bruce Allsopp makes clear, his function was fundamentally different from that understood today:

the clerk of works was superior to the master mason in the organisation of the job. He /clerk of works/ was not a designer or constructor but an administrator who had a clear conception of the scope of his responsibility which was to see that the work was financed and well built without interfering with the design of it. The result was that the architect (the master mason) was not in a position of such authority that he could impose the dead hand of the drawing office on the whole of the work, nor was he weighed down with duties for which he had no aptitude. He had to look to his equals in status for the essential decoration of his structure and a way of working, a team spirit, was developed which made possible a kind of design which could never have been achieved if the architect had been in a position to dictate and design everything himself. (7)

The social transformation through which the master mason became architect involved not only an increasing control over the building, but, much more fundamentally, a change from being senior general planner and doer, to being designer/engineer/mental-worker. It was in the thirteenth century that architects for the first time began to assert their intellectual and scientific skill over manual workers by a separation of office and work: the non-manual-worker architect began to supervise masons that he simply directed. Brunelleschi, in the fifteenth century, illustrates the culmination of this development when he comes to design total buildings as one-man-designed-units down to the last detail: the workers then become simply the executors of a plan.<sup>8</sup>

It is evident from the material I have quoted thus far that there were distinctions between different types of work in the Middle Ages. Moreover, there was a distinction between those who work with their hands, and those who do not. The opening sentence in the extract from Jean de Jandun's treatise was

We have also thought to add something concerning those craftsmen working with their hands, if it will not displease the reader to consider them. (9)

Not only, however, are the general divisions less marked, but, despite the obvious condescension towards "those craftsmen working with their hands", there is no separation within these crafts between the designing/creating aspect of making, and the physical 'putting-together' of making. Thus, while there was a division between the intellectual/social/political elites, and those who used their hands, there was not a

between those who worked with their hands, and those who 'thought up', designed or invented that which those who worked with their hands were to make: rather the designer and the maker were one and the same. Image-makers, book-binders, bread-makers, makers of instruments of war, etc., were all craftsmen - were all involved in thinking about how to make, and actually making. As Marx puts it:

The limited commerce and the lack of good communications between individual towns, the lack of population, and limited needs did not permit a higher division of labour. Every man who set out to become a master craftsman had to be proficient in the whole of his craft. (10)

And, using the word 'artistic' in its modern sense, Marx makes exactly the same point as Morris concerning the implications of such a social system for the nature of work and what was possible within the work-situation;

The medieval craftsmen still exhibited an interest in their special work, and their skill in it which could develop to a certain limited artistic talent. (11)

That is, not being part of a complex division of labour, the worker in many fields had to have a skill and a control over his work which necessitated that his relation to his work involved that degree of freedom, control and creativity that we now call artistic.<sup>12</sup>

When William Morris talked about there being, in the Middle Ages, a situation in which 'art' was an integral part of production, and not an addition, a frill, or a thing applied afterwards, he was in fact talking about a situation in which there was no perceived separation of style/design from function or purpose or content. Lacking

notions of 'style'<sup>13</sup> there was the possibility of freedom within a defined tradition. Allsopp has pointed this out in saying that

There was, of course, no conflict of styles or aesthetic theories to bedevil relationships between the various trades on the job. (14)

For, he argues, the medieval artists

thought of themselves as tradesmen not as demi-gods, and it was perhaps advantageous that no matter how successful a man might become as glazier, sculptor or architect his status remained a relatively humble one. (15)

Further;

For such men as practised the arts in the Middle Ages the presumption implied by a bold rejection of tradition was unthinkable . . . . Such fame as they could hope for had to come through work recognised as well done. Thus there was an incentive to improve techniques and most of the advances in medieval design must have seemed to be technical improvements. (16).

### The Renaissance

It was during the Renaissance that the artist developed as a producer of a specialist product with a new kind of status. The emergence of the artist, and the emergence of 'art' as a special sort of work and a special sort of product is associated with a complex of other economic, political and social changes: what concerns us here, however, is not an analysis of these changes, but a brief detailing of the way they relate to the artist, (to the painter and sculptor) and to his art.<sup>17</sup>

Having established in outline the nature of the social changes as they affect painting/sculpture and the producers of such work, we shall have established;

- (a) ideal types of the medieval craft/work relations, and of the Renaissance artist;
- (b) that the development of the artist (and of art as a social concept) is associated with
  - (i) changes in the class structure in Italy, and later in the rest of Europe<sup>17</sup>;
  - (ii) the development of mercantile capitalism;<sup>18</sup>
- (c) that the development of art and the artist is part of the development of a more marked division of labour and a more marked separation of the manual from the mental in work.<sup>19</sup>

Having indicated something of these changes we shall be in a position further to consider Morris's analysis of his own period.

More fundamentally, however, the implications of work already done will have been drawn together. Primarily this work demonstrates clearly that, as I suggested in chapter one, art and the artist is a social construct. That is, not only is the artist (as something more than 'a man who paints') a social construct (a social role in a particular type of society), but, more importantly, the attitude to painting as a particular sort of image making<sup>20</sup> is a social construct: the attitude to 'art' as heritage, as embodied genius, etcetera, is a social construct. Equally, of course, the possibility of genius being expressed through and recognised in painting (as art) and not in other types of work is a social construct.

To elaborate further would be to pre-empt discussions later in the thesis. Suffice it here to say that the



importance of indicating that art is a social construct is not simply so that we may understand what sort of a construct it is, or what it was that, in the 19th and 20th centuries became a 'public' concern: rather it is important in order that, in later chapters, it shall be understood clearly that, in discussing the social implications and meanings of state promotion of art, and the art market in relation to art and the producers position in relation to his/her art, we are not simply discussing different ways of understanding or promoting or dealing with a given phenomenon; rather we are seeking to analyse the very existence of art as a phenomenon - how that existence is bound up with a particular form of class society; how disputes over the nature of the phenomenon are not simply disputes, over, for example, whether art should be 'public' or private; rather they are over what art is and how it should exist.

#### The Construction of the Artist

It is at the time of Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael that the Medieval conception of the painter as craftsman began to be seriously challenged.<sup>20</sup> Leonardo in his book, 'Paragone' put forward an elaborate comparison between painters and poets, attempting to demonstrate that painting and sculpture were 'theoretical' arts - thus challenging both the position of the painter, and the social meaning and value of that which the painter produced.

Part of the attempted (and successful) elevation of painting to a theoretical art came from the emphasis on perspective, the theory and practice of proportion,

drawing from masters, from reliefs, and from nature - in general an emphasis on a scientific approach: i.e. a mental and intellectual, rather than 'craft' approach. Pevsner indicates the extent of the change in the position of the painter when he says that

In consequence of Leonardo's teachings . . . the connoisseur was asked to follow the intuition of the artist and to acquire the discrimination indispensable for appreciating the aesthetic value of the new style. (21)

Jean de Jandun, therefore, had mentioned "image makers" with the apology, "if it will not displease the reader to consider them.": those following Leonardo were demanding not merely consideration, but that they be followed as experts who lead. The very idea of being a 'connoisseur - one who knows, and one who the artist shall lead and who shall understand the artist - was an innovation, for, as Martindale points out; in the Middle Ages

There is in fact little evidence for an informed interest in the arts by non-artists at all. Nothing is, indeed, more striking than the apparent apathy towards art. (22)

One might add, here, of course, that Martindale's "apathy" is hardly surprising given that the phenomenon to be apathetic towards had no social existence.

The creation of the phenomenon of art was in part the creation of a new status for the creator of art - the artist. Thus Michelangelo did not wish for plebeian apprentices, and his famous statement;

I have never been a painter or sculptor such as those who make their business of it. (23)

indicates the extent of the perception of the artist as a gentleman - he would do the work well, but would not sell on the open market as an ordinary tradesman.

The change in status for the painter and his product were, of course, connected with general changes in the intellectual culture of the ruling classes in Italy. Villani's inclusion of Giotto and other artists and sculptors<sup>24</sup> in his accounts of famous men is indicative of the change: the change itself is connected with the revival of interest in classical culture.

It is worth emphasising, however, that far from the new position of the painter and sculpture as artist being a simple and obvious part of a 're-birth' (Renaissance) of culture (the Classics and the Classical) the process was highly selective. For there are in fact few grounds in classical literature on which to construct the sorts of ideology of art and the artist that were to follow from the Renaissance developments. This must be emphasised so as to make clear that what happened in the Renaissance in Italy, and later in other parts of Europe, is seen as part of the developments of that time, in relation to that socio/economic order, rather than as simply the re-establishing of links with a classical civilisation broken by the dark ages.<sup>25</sup>

The artist in Ancient Rome, for instance, was not a respected figure in the sense that some Renaissance figures became respected. Neither, for that matter, was he a particularly dis-respected figure<sup>26</sup>: rather he was, as in later centuries, a craftsman among other craftsmen.

Pliny and Vitruvius, writing about painting, both display a marked dislike for the painting and sculpture of their own times: in fact much of the literary evidence surviving from ancient Rome suggests this veneration for a past (a Greek ideal) and a contrasting disregard for their own painting and sculpture.<sup>27</sup> Plutarch, writing in 'Pericles',<sup>28</sup> illustrates a not uncommon ancient attitude towards the painter or sculptor when he says;

No youth of proper character, from seeing the Zeus at Olympia or the Hera at Argos, longs to be Phidias or Polyclites . . . For it does not of necessity follow that, if the work delights you with its grace, the one who has wrought it is worthy of your esteem.

This attitude is of course an upper class attitude - the attitude of the educated wealthy man of the imperial Roman Empire. But Plutarch is here talking about two of the most renowned Greeks in their fields - very much in the same sense as an eighteenth century writer could have looked back to Michelangelo, Raphael or Leonardo: the eighteenth century writer would, however, have shown a respect for the creator that Plutarch flatly rejects.

It was not, therefore, the attitude of Plutarch, Pliny or Vitruvius to the art of their time, or the artists of their own time that intellectuals of the Renaissance in Italy cited as justification of their attitude to art and the artist: rather they concentrated on the Imperial Roman general attitude of respect for the Greek past, and on Cicero's use of discussions of art as an analogy when discussing something else.

In the ancient Greek and (especially) Roman period there is evidence for a cult of the ornate, the beautiful,

the expensive, the antique, and the Greek past, there is no evidence for the artist as a man of rank or importance as artist. That development was peculiar to the Renaissance, and was part of the reinterpretation of the classical artist in the Renaissance. Leonardo's emphasis on the artist as gentleman was something new, when he could say;

the painter sits at his ease in front of his work, dressed as he pleases, and moves his light brush with the beautiful colours . . . often accompanied by musicians or readers of various beautiful works. (29)

Leonardo makes painting sound almost casual. Dürer, visiting Venice, indicates the reality of Leonardo's claims for the painter when he wrote;

here I am a gentleman, at home a sponger. (30)

The other side of being a gentleman is indicated when Alberti could recommend to architects that they should only work for persons of quality, because;

your work loses its dignity by being done for mean persons. (31)

There are two further aspects of the construction of the artist that ought here to be mentioned: first, the idea that art could be valued in terms other than monetary - that is in terms other than those based on labour-time and material costs: second, the idea of the artist as eccentric. Both these ideas are related to the general development of the concepts of art and artist; eccentricity, because this was a practice not allowable in a craftsman - a tradesman; 'value', in terms other than money, because this again relates to being not ordinary - not a mere paid worker. Vasari<sup>32</sup> depicts Leonardo justifying long pauses in his

work to the Duke of Milan by saying

Men of genius sometimes accomplish most when they work the least; for they are thinking out inventions.  
(33)

In a craftsman this would be an extraordinary (and unacceptable) attempt to justify laziness; to modern ears, and in relation to the artist, it sounds almost plausible. Men who "accomplish most when they work the least;" are obvious precursors of the 19th century Bohemian.

The point about art being valued in terms other than normal price/time/materials senses is illustrated by another story from Vasari. Donatello is said to have been making a bust for a merchant. The merchant claimed he was overcharged for the work, which had only taken a month. Donatello is said to have responded by telling the merchant that

he [the merchant] was the kind of man who could ruin the fruits of a year's toil in the hundredth part of an hour;

and with that Donatello

threw the bust down into the street where it shattered into pieces, and added that the merchant had shown he was more used to bargaining for beans than for bronzes. (34)

The point about this story is not whether it is, or is not, true; rather it is significant in that there was a possibility that it was true; it is a story that could be told of a well-known artist. It illustrates therefore a new attitude to that which we now call art: art was no ordinary commodity.

It is to be noted, however, that alongside this emergence of a way of valuing art beyond time and materials,

there was also growing up in fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy the beginnings of an art market. As we know today, the idea that art has a value that is in some way not measurable in ordinary terms, and the existence of an art market, far from being contradictory, are closely related.<sup>35</sup>

#### Renaissance Art as an Upper-Class Phenomenon

The terms which I have been employing thus far, like Medieval, and Renaissance, are inexact, and through specifying 'periods' tend to freeze not only the continuity and change, but also the class relations within these changes.

The sense in which, however, the change from the ideal-typical Medieval 'not-art' situation to the Renaissance situation is also a change involving the construction of art as an upper class phenomenon (and not simply changes of name, function and ideas about art) comes out clearly in the new language of taste or aesthetics.<sup>36</sup>

In the Renaissance discussions of art came to take place within the context of a general formula - beauty = nature = reason = antiquity. Disagreements took place within this framework, and could, for instance, centre on the different ways of citing antiquity. Such a discourse of art became, therefore, a discourse of the educated - those who knew about antiquity, and read Latin. In this sense art was becoming by definition socially exclusive.

It is to be noted, furthermore, that the language of appreciation, using such terms as decorum, grace, and 'manners' was derived from the language applied to the social

behaviour of gentlemen. Moreover, such terms of appreciation were applied in a general sense - not a technical sense: the technical language of the maker of things was taboo, for a technical language implied manual work: it implied doing things, and knowing how to do them. The general language that evolved, therefore, was the language of the non-manual-worker-connoisseur in connection with the references and symbolism of an intellectual elite educated in the literature of ancient Rome and Greece.<sup>37</sup>

In connection with the upper-class nature of the new art it should be noted finally that the new styles were general. That is, styles were no longer confined within the pattern of pre-Renaissance regional differences; rather they were part of the general pattern of the Italian Renaissance educated upper class.<sup>38</sup>

#### The Academy and the Decline of the Region or Locality <sup>39</sup>

The Medieval painter or sculptor was a member of a guild: as such he served a long apprenticeship, and, as a guild member, his work was protected and controlled. The rules of the painter's guild at Genoa, for instance, included the stipulation that nobody was allowed to paint at Genoa without having gone through seven years of local apprenticeship: moreover, nobody was to employ more than one apprentice, so that, when there was a surplus of work, work would be passed to less busy guild members. In addition the rules forbade the import of pictures, and the immigration into Genoa of non Genoan painters was forbidden.

The new Renaissance artist, if successful, was an individual, a specialist, and a man who might move in



high social circles. The Renaissance artist is therefore the antithesis of the Medieval guild craftsman. He is in competition with his fellow artists, and as such is not confined by rules restricting import of pictures into different towns, or restricting the possibility of an artist working in a town of his choosing.<sup>40</sup>

The construction of the artist and of 'art' is therefore related to the decline of the Guilds. During the Renaissance in Italy in fact we first see the development of 'academies' of art, providing a forum for painters and artists, enabling them also to act against remaining guild restrictions.<sup>41</sup> The Early Italian academies of art are not typical of the sort that were to develop later in the rest of Europe: they are significant, however, to our discussion here in that they were frequently 'protected' by leading aristocrats; membership was open to people outside the particular locality, and renowned artists from other areas were encouraged to join academies protected by leading aristocrats. Thus, as an academy member, the artist would become a member of a group patronised by the upper class, and not rooted in terms of personnel in any specific geographical region. The new academies therefore symbolise the changed position of the painter - the transformation of the painter into the artist.<sup>42</sup>

#### William Morris: The Renaissance and the Death of Art

In conventional art history the Renaissance is the start of something new: Morris by contrast saw Renaissance art as the end of an era: the Renaissance art was founded on the Middle Ages, and, being an individualist

achievement, it finished with the death of the individuals involved.

The absence of art (pleasure of life) in general work in the 19th century, and the problems of the art produced by those called 'artists' in the 19th century, Morris traced back to the Renaissance.

when it comes to explaining why the labour on which depends the well-being of the arts or in other words the pleasure of life is in its present condition of slavishness I must tell you that since the 15th century a great change has taken place in the social condition of the people at large, which some people ignore, and which more still are contented with as a positive gain...(43)

The Renaissance was a period of great activity, and great talent, but it was founded on what had gone before. It was also the period in which work became degraded in general, and art became "a caput mortuum of academical pedantry", an elite activity which "despised all genuine and sincere attempts at the expression of the thought of man by means of art". Thus, to take the quotation in full;

the slavery which the days of the Renaissance brought on all labour was at first but little felt in the arts; but as time went on, the medieval tradition of work died out, and very speedily too, and the genius of the individual artists was buried in their graves, or flickered feebly in certain narrow circles, and all that was left us of that wonderful and much behymned new birth was a caput mortuum of academical pedantry, which, looking down on the world from the serene heights of cultivated stupidity despised all genuine and sincere attempts at the expression of the thought of man by means of art, and above all despised the people, the true source of all art, as of all wealth, as base mechanical drudges, and brute beasts just good enough to wait upon their fellows for the hire of dogs' wages. (44)

Essentially here Morris is summarising an individualist art which is denied to the mass of the population.<sup>45</sup>

Morris in no sense denies the achievement of the great individuals of the Renaissance; in fact he calls them

some of the most gifted men the world has ever seen, the blossom of all those centuries of free art which had gone before them. (46)

It was, in fact, the very greatness of the individual Renaissance artists that prevented people at the time seeing what was happening, and which, Morris argues, has prevented many since from understanding the real social changes involved. For, the very brilliance of some Renaissance artists

has quite hid from many of us even at the present day the sickness of all that side of art which depended not on individual genius but on collective genius or tradition; all that great mass of art in short which we now justly call popular, or the art of the people; (47)

With the death of the great Renaissance artists, Morris argued, there was left in the field of the "individualist arts" only

a so-called art which prided itself on being exclusive, narrow, and uninteresting; (48)

As to art in general, "the arts of the people";

they had become in countries where art had flourished most, as in Italy, a kind of necessarily tolerated appendage to intellectual art. (49)

Now Morris has, in these few quotations, touched on several points of importance. Firstly, and crucially, he has identified a relation between the rise of the great individual artist, and the degradation of work in general.<sup>50</sup> Secondly he has identified the development of a hierarchy of activities, within which the individualist arts as they developed in the Renaissance are seen as the great achievements, and "the arts of the people" become "a kind of necessarily tolerated appendage". These two

points are of course closely related. The rise of the artist as visual/intellectual specialist and creator is part of the development of a more complex division of labour, and the hierarchy of values within which art is the highest value is the ideology related to that division of labour.

The picture, therefore, that Morris is creating of the Renaissance is of the elevation of painting and sculpture to intellectual art, and the consequent relative downgrading of other work and popular art: further, the construction of a particular ideology of exclusiveness of art is involved (the artist as a gentleman is part of this, as we saw earlier) and following from this is the fact that art was becoming something only available for a particular social class. As the beginnings of a developing division of labour involved the beginnings of the break-down of the limited artistic possibilities of the Middle Ages, so those who were not to produce art (as Morris defined it) were also not to use/consume what was left of art (intellectual art), for that was defined by its exclusiveness.

### Conclusions

In this chapter several things have been done. Firstly brief ideal types have been set out of the Medieval workman/craftsman, and the Renaissance artist. Secondly, against this background, I have attempted to indicate some of the things involved in the creation of the painter/sculptor as artist. I have attempted, that is, to indicate the possibility of a high social status for individual artists as artists; the emergence of eccentric life-styles; the development of the idea that art be not measurable in the

same terms as other commodities; the destruction of guilds and creation of academies; the development of a hierarchy of values, with art at the top; the destruction of regional variation in style and local control over artistic production; the construction of academies and geographical mobility for renowned artists.

I have attempted furthermore to extend the discussion of William Morris's analysis through further examining his remarks on the Medieval work relations, and also noting his comments on the Renaissance.

The main points being made in the chapter - the points that are significant for our understanding of 19th and 20th century developments - can be summarised as follows:

1. The artist and art as social constructs are part of a developing division of labour;
2. Associated with the developing division of labour is a new hierarchy of values involving a more total separation of creativity from general manufacture: the artist becomes the most esteemed creator (a 'pure' creator);
3. The new art is associated with a social exclusiveness; academies are associated with aristocratic patrons; the language and symbolism of art is that derived from classical antiquity - a culture of the ruling classes.

## Chapter Four

### Post Renaissance Developments

#### Introduction

This chapter is to be both a development of the last chapter, and a preface to the main chapters to follow. It is a continuation of the last chapter in as far as I will indicate the significance of some of the ways in which the possibilities thrown up in the Renaissance were taken up: it is a preface to the rest of the thesis, in that I will be introducing some of the background for an understanding of what took place in 19th and 20th century Britain.

In particular I shall concentrate on the development of the academy as an institution, and on the class nature of art as part of an ideology appropriate to sections of the various ruling classes - the ruling classes of the developing nation states involved in mercantile, and later industrial, capitalism.

#### The French academy

The French Academy of art was founded in 1648,<sup>4</sup> despite some guild resistance. Among arguments put forward in favour of its foundation were included the need to separate the noble from the mechanical arts, and the glorification such an academy would give to the monarch. The first of these two arguments is an obvious consolidation of ideas developed in the Italian Renaissance; the second indicates the extent to which art had become a source of prestige -

a development rooted not only in the possibility of high social status for the artist, but in the practice of Italian aristocrats drawing credit to themselves as patrons and protectors of academies of distinguished artists.

The French academy was, in a sense, only a half measure, in that the tuition there was still only part time, the student still having to return to his 'master'. But, all public teaching outside the new academy was forbidden, and only in the academy was a life model allowed. These rulings are indicative of the importance attached to art, and the importance for the state and the monarch of taking the control and the prestige of art unto themselves.

The transformation in what painting was over three centuries is quite remarkable. In 1325, as quoted earlier, Jean de Jandun had, so to speak, apologised for mentioning painting to his readers;<sup>1</sup> by the mid-seventeenth century painting and sculpting, as art, not only lent prestige to the most powerful of European Monarchs, but was so much a part of the state and the monarchy that it could only be studied and taught in its full variety in an institution controlled and set up by the monarch.<sup>2</sup>

In order to understand what it was that painting had become, and what it was, therefore, that lent prestige to the state and the monarch, one must understand something of the relations between painting and the intellectual culture of Renaissance classicism, and of the relations of superiority/inferiority in a social sense implied by being part of or not part of the culture of the ruling classes. Charles Alphonse du Fresnoy (1611--1688) illustrates

something of these relations in the following passage;

The principle and most important part of painting is to find out and thoroughly to understand what Nature has made most beautiful and most proper to this Art: and that a choice of it may be made according to the taste and manner of the ancients; without which all is nothing but a blind and rash barbarity; which rejects what is most beautiful, and seems with audacious Insolence to despise an art, of which it is totally ignorant. . . . Our business is to imitate the beauties of Nature as the Ancients have done before us, and as the Object and Nature of the thing require from us. And for this reason we must be careful in the search of Ancient models, Statues, Gems, Vases, Paintings, and Basso Relievos: And of all other things which discover to us the Thoughts and Inventions of the Graecians; because they furnish us with great Ideas, and make our Productions wholly Beautiful. (3)

In this quotation note first the equation of Nature and the Ancients: nature was in effect to be discovered through the proper study of the ancients. Furthermore, there is a moral purpose, as in the equation of "great ideas" and "beauty" as opposed to "blind and rash barbarity" and "audacious insolence".

A particular sort of education is required to practice and/or understand this art: this education is that of a leisured upper class, and the ideology of art is that of the academy. The negative side of the ideology is the rejection outright of all who are not of that group of people who understand and partake of that form of culture: to reject that culture is "with-audacious Insolence to despise an art" of which one "is totally ignorant".

I mentioned in the last chapter that the new art of the Italian Renaissance over-rode regional differences: as in the above it can be seen how, through the spread of Renaissance culture a general European ruling culture is formed - a culture that in the case of painting involves an intellectual (scientific) study of 'Nature' according



to the rules and discipline derived from the 'Ancients'.

### The Expansion of Academies of Art

The Royal Academy in Britain was set up in December 1768, and opened in 1769. Sited in Pall Mall, it moved in 1811 to Somerset house.

The London Academy was part of a wave of such foundations all over Europe. Thus while in 1720 there were only nineteen in the whole of Europe, of which only three or four can be regarded as academies proper, there were well over a hundred by 1790.<sup>5</sup>

An important impetus behind the founding of many academies of art in the eighteenth century was the effect the academy was thought to have on commerce: that is, the effect of the academy on design - applied art - was thought to be likely to promote the commercial success of the products of a country abroad. An examination of the arguments presented for the founding of an academy is likely to show, therefore, three main elements: one moral, one relating to prestige, and one economic. The moral element concerns the promotion of good taste, understanding, behaviour, and civilisation; the prestige element concerns the respect that would be reflected on the nation, state or monarch through being associated with an academy; the commercial effect would follow from good design being promoted as a 'spin-off' from the promotion of art.

These three arguments are often inter-related, and it is not always easy to disentangle one from another in trying to assess which carried most weight in a particular case.

Pevsner states, however, that he can

prove beyond doubt the paramount importance of economic considerations for the academic movement during the later eighteenth century.

And he adds that the economic motivation was

a natural outcome of the theory of Mercantalism.../by which/ it was the paramount duty of a State to build up a system of flourishing manufactures so as to stimulate the circulation of money, and to strengthen exports of goods and imports of gold. (6)

The Royal Academy in London is an exception to this generalisation - its chief concern being its annual exhibition, despite the existence of the design schools. However, as we shall see in the next chapter of the thesis, state intervention in the arts in Britain can, to a large extent, be considered and understood in terms of the arguments concerning prestige; morality (social control) and commerce.<sup>7</sup> For the time being, however, I propose to examine a little more closely something of what art meant, in the eighteenth century as a social phenomenon. This examination shall serve as an introduction to the more detailed presentation of material in parts three four and five of the thesis.

### The Meaning of Art

Discussing the classical tradition, John Berger has pointed out that

a certain moral value was ascribed to the study of the classics. This was because the classic texts, whatever their intrinsic worth, supplied the higher strata of the ruling class with a system of references for the forms of their own idealised behaviour. As well as poetry, logic and philosophy the classics offered a system of etiquette. They offered examples of how the heightened moments of life - to be found in heroic action, the dignified exercise of power, passion, courageous death, the noble pursuit of pleasure - should be lived, or at least, should be seen to be lived. (8)

Within this tradition in painting it was the 'historical genre' that was seen as the highest form of achievement - and it was this (with its strong moralistic overtones) that the academy nurtured and promoted.

An examination of a few statements by Reynolds will both illustrate and give a more concrete meaning to Berger's statement.

In Discourse VII (1776) Reynolds, President of the Royal Academy of Arts, London, said that;

It is from knowing what are the general feelings and passions of mankind, that we acquire a true idea of what imagination is.....

He therefore who is acquainted with the works which have pleased different ages and different countries, and has formed his opinion on them, has more materials, and more means of knowing what is analagous to the mind of man, than he who is conversant only with the works of his own age or country. What has pleased and continues to please, is likely to please again; hence are derived the rules of art, and on this immovable foundation they must ever stand. (9)

This is an immensely confident statement: "hence are derived the rules of art"; "on this immovable foundation they must ever stand." An examination of the statement, however, reveals several assumptions.

First, art (imagination) is abstracted from its particularity: it is seen as a universal knowledge which can be gained from "the works which have pleased different ages and different countries." The "rules of art", therefore are founded on a knowledge of the art of the past. A second assumption concerns, therefore, not only the way in which the past is knowable, but what exactly the past is.

For Reynolds, in fact, the past means classical antiquity; in no sense could it mean the Middle Ages or the Dark Ages. His assumptions are revealed when

he talks about Greek and Roman Fable and history:

Such are the great events of the Greek and Roman fable and history, which early education and the usual course of reading have made familiar and interesting to all Europe, without being degraded by the vulgarism of ordinary life in any country. (10)

In commenting on the first statement from Reynolds I said that he abstracted art from its particularity: in this second statement it can be seen in exactly what sense he is doing this. For not only is the past, the history with which people are to be familiar, here clearly defined as being classical antiquity, but the references to "early education" and "the usual course of reading" make it clear that "He . . . who is acquainted with the works which have pleased different ages and different countries" is in fact a very special "He". "He" is someone from the classes in society who are brought up on the classics, and who have the time to undertake "the usual course of reading" and the money to gain an "early education."

The "immovable foundation" of "the rules of art" is therefore based in the culture of the European ruling classes since the Italian Renaissance. The classics are not only familiar to "all Europe", but are not degraded by the "vulgarism of ordinary life in any country."

William Morris, as we have noted, saw the basis of art as being popular control over work and life. In such a situation painting (and other fine arts) would flourish as one creative activity among others. Reynolds here is reversing this position, and it is the attitude to the "vulgarism of ordinary life" that Morris was referring to when he discussed the Renaissance academic tradition

in terms of a

caput mortuum of academical pedantry which, looking down on the world from the serene heights of cultivated stupidity despised all genuine and sincere attempts at the expression of the thought of man by means of art, and above all despised the people, the true source of all art, as of all wealth, as base mechanical drudges, and brute beasts just good enough to wait upon their fellows for the hire of dogs' wages. (11)

The extent to which Reynolds's position is the antithesis of Morris's is evident in the following extract;

The Academy, Reynolds said,

has often been recommended upon considerations merely mercantile; but an academy founded upon such principles can never effect even its own narrow purposes. If it has an origin no higher, no taste can ever be formed in manufactures; but if the higher arts of design flourish, these inferior ends will be answered of course. (12)

Reynolds is suggesting, therefore, that for good design to flourish in general manufacture, there must be an independent and flourishing fine art sector. "if the higher arts of design flourish, these inferior ends will be answered". Not only is this position the reverse of Morris's, but the sense in which the fine arts (the superior sector) will influence the "taste" in manufacture is far from clear. Some sort of filtering down process is implied.

The 'problem' of the relationship between art (as creativity and imagination) and manufacture (as making and putting together) is one that we shall find stated again and again in the 19th and 20th century. Usually it is stated in the terms presented by Reynolds, and this is, of course, a logical consequence of the social construction of art (the ideology and the practice) that we have been examining. For, if art is seen as a practice apart from and above the

particular, and if art is seen as the source of discovered truth (taste), and if manufacture (work, formerly craft) is seen as merely 'doing' and not thinking, then the only sense in which creativity can be part of work (manufacture) is if the discoveries of art are in some way applied back to manufacture - but 'applied' from outside.

In Reynolds formulation taste, so to speak, reacts back upon manufacture: the artist creates a general atmosphere of taste, which filters down. The setting up of special schools for training designers in Britain in the 1830's was to be an attempt to formalise this relationship.

The extent, however, to which the construction of art had led to, or was part of, the separation of design and 'aesthetic' activity from manual work and manufacture can be seen in the following statement by Reynolds;

The value and rank of every art is in proportion to the mental labour employed in it, or the mental pleasure produced by it. As this principle is observed or neglected, our profession becomes either a liberal art, or a mechanical trade. (13)

A true High art, therefore, (an art of the highest rank) has as little to do with the manual, and as little to do with design for manufacture and commerce (directly) as possible. It is, to quote Reynolds again, an activity not "degraded by the vulgarism of ordinary life in any country."<sup>14</sup> Rather than be degraded by ordinary life, the student was to

Study . . . the great works of the great masters, for ever. Study as nearly as you can, in the order, in the manner, and on the principles on which they studied. Study nature attentively, but always with those masters in your company; consider them as models which you are to imitate, and at the same time as rivals with whom you are to contend. (15)

Reynolds was president of the Royal Academy, and his Discourses and views<sup>16</sup> were greatly influential; hence their importance in illustrating the assumptions and implications of the practice and ideology of art. There was, of course, dissent, but dissent lacked the power of tradition, of being part of the ruling class culture, and of the support financially of the ruling class.<sup>17</sup> William Blake is an example of a dissenter. Writing in 1808 he summed up Reynolds' Discourses in the following cryptic manner;

After having been a fool, a student is to amass a stock of ideas, &, knowing himself to be a Fool, he is to assume the Right to put other Men's ideas into his Foolery. (18)

Such views, however, were not the dominant ones, and, even in the 19th century when the Royal Academy was to come increasingly under parliamentary scrutiny, and increasingly subject to abuse by artists outside the ranks of the Academicians, the Academy was to grow in strength and influence, attaining its greatest status towards the end of the 19th century.<sup>19</sup>

In the 18th century art, and the culture of the ruling groups, was a relatively 'private' matter, in the sense that it was confined to and practised within the closed circles that held power, or related to the wielders of power. It was in the 19th century that 'taste' and culture and the ideology of art was to become a 'public' concern.<sup>20</sup> In the eighteenth century, however, culture was not 'private' in the sense of it being a matter for individual choices or appetites. Steegman expresses the

point clearly, relating political, financial and cultural power;

As the small upper section of society was rigidly controlling the distribution of wealth and power, in the belief that if they did not there would be no control, so they also controlled as rigidly the rules of Good Taste, believing that if they did not that too would vanish. During the remainder of the eighteenth century, taste underwent many changes, but the control, though at times less rigid than at others, remained always in the same hands; a tradition was formed and handed on, a little altered now and then in its progress; but in the main the dictates of the Augustans were obeyed, and the supremacy of the Ancients and the existence of the Ideal were alike hardly called into question. (21)

We have already noted in Reynolds the certainty with which he could talk of "rules", as also of the importance of the "Ancients". We also noted that, when discussing the relationship between art and manufacture he talked of "taste" - a concept referred to by Steegman in the above quotation.<sup>22</sup>

"Taste" is a concept central to the development of the ideologies embodying and relating to art. We shall come across it frequently in examining 19th century developments, and it is a word that refers to and embodies a whole series of assumptions about moral behaviour, judgement, right thinking, and political attitudes. Understanding the usage of the concept of "taste", moreover, is crucial to an understanding of the existence of art as an ideology of social control in the 19th and 20th centuries: this follows because inculcating taste into the general public implies much more than merely familiarising a population with a pre-defined set of standards relating to art; it was discussed rather (in both the 19th and 20th centuries) as if an appreciation of art implied also a conformity to



certain standards of social, political and moral behaviour.

In the mid-eighteenth century Burke defined Taste as

no more than that faculty or those faculties of the mind which are affected with or which form a judgement of the works of imagination and the elegant arts.(23)

While this definition may appear relatively straightforward.

the following statement from Burke on the causes of a

"wrong Taste" makes clearer exactly what was involved in possessing the necessary faculties;

The cause of a wrong Taste is a defect of judgement. And this may arise from a natural weakness of understanding (in whatever the strength of that faculty may consist) or, which is much more commonly the case, it may arise from a want of proper and well directed exercise, which alone can make it strong and ready. Besides that ignorance, inattention, prejudice, rashness, levity, obstinacy, in short, all those vices which pervert the judgement in other matters, prejudice it no less in this its more refined and elegant province. These causes produce different opinions upon every thing which is an object of the understanding without inducing us to suppose that there are no settled principles of reason . . . men are far better agreed on the excellence of a description in Virgil, than on the truth or falsehood of a theory of Aristotle. (24)

In essence Burke is saying that anybody who has gone through the "proper and well directed exercise" (the right education and training) and disagrees with the accepted and given definitions, is either in some way mentally defective (has "a weakness of understanding") or has not taken his training seriously and attentively (is a man of "inattention, prejudice, rashness, levity, obstinacy," ). Not only, therefore, is there little room for disagreement in matters of taste, but only those who have gone through the right course of training (have had the right education) are in a position to even comment upon taste, let alone exercise it.

### Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter I have discussed mainly the development of the Academy, the academy tradition, and the ideology of art in association with that. I have attempted in the last section to set forth a minimum understanding of the class nature of the ideology of art, and the class relations implied by statements on art.

As has been indicated, the rules of culture, of taste, and of art, were not only rigidly controlled in 18th century Britain, but what dissent there was usually took place within the framework of assumptions about art developed since the Renaissance. The culture and ideology of art of 18th century Britain was, moreover, a matter concerning the relatively small ruling groups and their dependants. Taste, art, and the general ideologies of culture, being educated, and being civilised, were in one sense, badges of self-identification for the elites vis à vis the general population. The rules of taste, of culture, and of art, excluded the lower classes, and the lack of taste and culture of the lower classes formed a mode of self legitimation and justification for the ruling classes.

It was, however, these eighteenth century definitions of art, culture, taste and civilisation that were carried forward into the Industrial Revolution, and that were struggled over by new groups, appropriated by new elites, and investigated and developed by the state.

In the first four chapters of this thesis I have attempted as a whole to present a minimum understanding of the relationship between art, culture, taste, the division of labour, and post-Renaissance social developments. I have also attempted through Morris to present a way of theorising art - a way of understanding not only art as part of a division of labour implying also not-art, but also a way of understanding that talking about art is not necessarily the same thing as talking about painting, sculpture, or any other related activity.

The importance of presenting this minimum understanding of the early social construction of art, and a more elaborate understanding of Morris's theorisation of art and capitalism, is so that we may have a framework within which to deal with the developments of the social relations of art when looking at the role of art in 19th and 20th century industrial capitalist society in Britain.

This framework is necessary because, as I said in my introduction, it is all too easy, when talking about art, to be led into talking from the 'inside' - from within particular aesthetic debates and disputes. Since I am attempting to talk about art, so to speak, from the 'outside' - to locate the ideology within the wider framework of capitalist society in Britain - it has been necessary to step back, to talk around and through the subject, and to present in the first four chapters what has, in fact, been a fairly lengthy introduction to the main body of the thesis.

NOTES TO PART TWO

notes to chapter three

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1. André Malraux; quoted in Osborne.H. Aesthetics and Art Theory, Longmans, Green and Co, London. (1968).p.85. note also the quotation on the same page from Chambers.F.P., The History of Taste (1932), "Conscious aesthetic values would seem to be as wanting in the so-called Dark Ages or Middle Ages of Western Europe as at the height of the Greek era."
  
2. H.Osborne. (as above) p.6. On the same page he continues, "But until the notion of the fine arts as a class of handicrafts whose sole or main purpose was to serve aesthetic contemplation established itself from the eighteenth century onwards, no special group of 'aesthetic' attitudes was consciously called into play in talking and thinking about the fine arts. The pragmatic interest in the arts as handicrafts, products of workshop industry, found its earliest and still interesting theoretical expression in the writings of the Greek philosophers, who discussed the arts within the context of a wider theory of Manufacture, and in the Greek socio-economic theory of the arts."
  
3. Kristeller.P. 'The modern system of the Arts: a study in the History of aesthetics.' Journal of the History of Ideas. vo.s.XII and XIII. Oct.1951 and Jan. 1952. See also the article by Taylor. R. 'The Marxist Theory of Art'. Radical Philosophy Number 5.
  
4. Martindale.A. The Rise of the Artist in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. Thames and Hudson, London. (1972) Martindale continues: "The artist was in the first place a craftsman, working perhaps in some busy cosmopolitan centre where any one craftsman had to live alongside many other people practising different crafts or trades."
  
5. quoted in Martindale.A. op.cit. pp.9-10.
  
6. ibid.
  
7. Allsopp.B. The Future of the Arts, Pitman & Sons. (1959). p.16. see also Martindale.A. op.cit.note.4.
  
8. see Martindale.A. op.cit.note.5.,pp.80--82,inc. The case of the master-mason becoming architect is particularly indicative of the changes taking place, since the construction of a building is an activity involving so many skills and persons. The subordination of the skilled craftsman (including the makers of images in stone, wood and paint) to the position of executors of a plan therefore illustrates well the separation of mental from manual work taking place in association with other social and economic changes involved in the early development of trade and mercantile capitalism in Italy.
  
9. see note 5.

10. Marx.K. 'The German Ideology' in Easton.L.D. and Guddat.K.H. (editors and translators) Writings of the young Marx on Philosophy and Society. Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co. New York. (1967). p.445.

This statement is important, because it indicates the necessity of the direct relationship between the worker and his product that Morris analyses.

11. *ibid.*p.446.

12. It is to be noted, of course, that the Medieval craftsman was working within a tradition in a sense not known today. The lack of a tradition today is connected with the self-consciousness of 'style' and individual creativity in artistic work. (see Allsopp.B. Style in the Visual Arts Pitman & Sons.(1956) ). 'Tradition' is really only meaningful as a way of working by when not 'self-conscious': as a conscious way of working it becomes 'style' - i.e. an extra, an adornment. In the Medieval situation, given the lack of self-conscious aesthetic theory, or design theory, Allsopp rightly points out that: "the presumption implied by a bold rejection of tradition was unthinkable"; (Allsopp.B. Future of the Arts. op. cit.note 7.p.17.) Instead innovation would be conceived as a technical matter - "there was an incentive to improve technique and most of the advances in medieval design must have seemed to be technical improvements." (Allsopp.loc.cit.).

13. On concept of style, and its development as an analytic category for scholastic purposes, and later as an element in the self-consciousness of artists and architects, see Allsopp.B. Style in the Visual Arts op.cit.

14. Allsopp. The Future of the Arts op.cit.note 7.p.17.

15. *ibid.*

16. *ibid.*

17. For a good account of the broad social, economic, political and cultural changes see Burke.P. Culture and Society in Renaissance Italy 1420 - 1540 Batsford,Ltd., London. (1972). This is an excellent book conveying a clear and analytical understanding of the socio-economic changes and the cultural changes. Michael Baxandall's Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy, Oxford University Press, (1972) is a good supplement providing information on the actual working situation of the artist. Martindale's The Rise of the Artist in the Middle Ages, Thames and Hudson, (1972) provides the historical context and background to the developments covered in Burke and Baxandall's works. Martindale suffers, however, from a more confused analysis.

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18. see Gimpel.J. The Cult of Art Weidenfeld and Nicholson, (1969). This is an invaluable book for understanding the relationship between the development of the cult of art and the artist, and the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. As the son of an art dealer, and brother to the two brothers who run the Gimpel Fils gallery in London, Zurich and New York Gimpel's experience is first hand, and his grasp of history is good. For the purposes of understanding the relationship of the development of art and the artist to the development of capitalism, see his chapter, 'Giotto, the first Bourgeois painter' in particular. Gimpel's account should be set against the more limited account given in Martindale's The Rise of the Artist in the Middle Ages. Thames and Hudson, (1972). See also on this general question Burke.P. as referred to in note 17.

19. The process of separating the mental from the manual has taken place at different times in different countries and occupations. Today industrial disputes take place still centring on issues of 'craft consciousness' where status vis à vis less skilled work is concerned. In such disputes, however, it is a matter of status rather than control that is at issue. The idea of 'craft consciousness', however, is indicative of the historical roots of such a situation, and the present day contradictions arising from the nature of the division of labour in large industries. More directly relevant to this discussion is E.P.Thompson's The Making of the English Working Class, Victor Gollancz. (1963), where he discusses the nature of work and the changes in work relations consequent upon the development of industrial capitalism. See especially his chapter eight, 'The Weavers'.

20. On this see Gimpel.R. and Martindale.A. op.cit (note 18).

21. Pevsner.N. Academies of Art, past and present Cambridge University Press, (1940.) p.35.

22. Martindale.A. op.cit.p.98.

23. quoted by Pevsner (op.cit.note 21), p.33.

24. Villani

25. On the nature of ancient art, see ; Pollitt.J.J., The Ancient View of Greek Art Yale University Press, New Haven and London, (1974). also Picard. Roman Painting. ( ). These two are the best works for an examination of the ancient conceptualisation of painting and other crafts. On ancient art in general, see, for instance; Heintze.Helga von. Roman Art Weidenfeld and Nicolson. (1972). Toynbee.M.C. The Art of the Romans Thames and Hudson, London. (1965). Wheeler.M. Roman Art and Architecture, Thames and Hudson, London. (1964). Gassiot-Talabot.G. Roman and Palaeochristian Painting, Heron Books, London. (1968).

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26. He was, of course, despised by those who despised all Manufacture - hand work.
27. Pliny. Natural History. Books 34--36.  
Vitruvius. De Architectura
28. Plutarch. Pericles 2
29. quoted in Burke.P. Culture and Society in Renaissance Italy B.T.Batsford, Ltd., London. (1972) p.64. Cennini makes a similar point; "Know that painting on panel is a gentleman's job, for you can do what you want with velvet on your back." (quoted Burke.P.loc.cit.).
30. *ibid.* p.65.
31. *ibid.* p.63.
32. Vasari.G. (1511--74). His book is Le Vite de' piu eccellenti Architetti, Pittori, et Scultori Italiani, first published 1550, and issued in a second much larger edition in 1568.
33. quoted by Burke.P. *op.cit.* p.72.
34. *ibid.* p.73.
35. see Burke.P. *op.cit.* (note 29) pp.105--109. See also chapter seven of this thesis, on The Art Market.
36. see Burke.P.*op.cit.* (note 29), chapter six, 'Taste'. see also Baxandall's Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy Oxford University Press, (1972). Chapter Three.
37. Burke.P. *op.cit.* (note 29).p.167. "The iconography of secular paintings was probably intelligible to a minority only. Scenes from ancient history and classical mythology would be easy to recognise if one had read one's Livy or one's Ovid; this virtually meant having gone to a grammar school, and only a minority of Renaissance Italians can have done that. This educational fact gives some basis to the favourite Renaissance division of the public into two parts, 'the multitude' and 'those who understand'."
38. One notes the same phenomenon in England: this will be discussed in chapter nine under the heading 'Vernacular Architecture'. Vernacular Architecture is the term applied to that sector of building not normally included within the traditional history of architecture - ordinary buildings built from local materials using accumulated knowledge to solve technical problems in the most efficient way given local resources and skills. Vernacular building therefore tended to vary considerably from region to region. By contrast 'official' or upper class architecture



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 notes to chapter three
 

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is to a greater degree uniform across the country. With the growth of industrial towns all building becomes increasingly uniform across the country within the different categories. Differences remained throughout the nineteenth century between, for instance, the working class brick terraces of Reading, (using different coloured local clays to embellish the houses with patterns) and the stone terraces of West Yorkshire. Such differences, however, have now largely disappeared, leaving only differences in types of housing according to class.

39. The term 'academy' is derived from the park where Plato used to hold his meetings. It was first re-used by Florentine humanists to describe their informal gatherings. The Definitive work on art academies is Pevsner.N. Academies of Art Cambridge University Press. (1940).

40. Here I am describing an ideal type: for qualifications see Baxandall.M. Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy Oxford University Press, (1972), where he gives extensive information on the working relationships and situation of the Renaissance artist.

41. see note 39.

42. see Hannema.S. Fads, Fakes and Fantasies Macdonald, London, (1970), chapter three, 'The Academic Tradition'.

43. William Morris. 'Of the Origins of Ornamental Art'. 1886. in LeMire.E. (ed) The Unpublished Lectures of William Morris. Wayne State University Press, Detroit. (1969)

44. William Morris. 'The Gothic Revival, I.' in LeMire (ed) op.cit.

45. see note 37, and the Renaissance distinction between 'the multitude', and 'those who understand'.

46. William Morris. 'Gothic Revival II'. in LeMire.(ed) op.cit. p.66.

47. ibid.

48. ibid.

49. ibid.

50. as in the quotation at the bottom of page 110.

notes to chapter four

1. See Chapter Three, page 96, of this thesis.
2. on the Academies (including the French) see Pevsner.N. Academies of Art Cambridge University Press. (1940) Also, Hannema.S. Fads Fakes and Fantasies Macdonald, London.(1970), chapter three.
3. Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy (1611--1688). 'De Arte Graphica', eng.trans., John Dryden, 'The Art of Painting'. (1716). quoted in Osborne.H. Aesthetics and Art Theory Longmans, Green and Co. London. (1968)
4. see note 2.
5. Pevsner.N. Academies of Art op.cit.p.140.
6. ibid.p.158.
7. in connection with the commercial motives behind academic foundations note the following two examples. In 1725 it was argued that the Vienna Academy ought to be reorganised,
 

"as a particular recognition of the arts and no less a promotion of commerce."

 And, in a memorandum on the reopening of the Dresden Academy, prepared in 1763, it was argued not only that "Art can be looked at from a commercial point of view", but also that
 

"while it redounds to the honour of a country to produce excellent artists, it is no less useful to raise the demand abroad for one's industrial products."

 Both quotations from Pevsner.N. op.cit.(note 2) pages 152 and 153 respectively.
8. Berger.J. et.al. Ways of Seeing B.B.C., and Penguin Books., (1972) p.101. see also as supplementary to this, Allsopp.B. The Future of the Arts Pitman, London (1959) p. 23 ff.
9. Reynolds.J. Discourse VII. (1776).
10. Reynolds.J. Discourse IV. (1771)
11. see note 44 to chapter three.
12. quoted by Hannema.S. op.cit (note 2).., p.43.
13. Reynolds.J. Discourses. IV. (1771)
14. see note 10.
15. Reynolds.J. Discourses VI
16. As President Reynolds's statements carry a different weight from, say, William Blake's or Hogarth's.

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 notes to chapter four
 

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17. Much dissent from the position of the Academies was rooted itself within the Renaissance tradition. Thus in 18th century France, as elsewhere in Europe, the Academies were challenged because they were not doing what they were intended to do, namely, foster and produce genii on the lines of Michelangelo, Leonardo and Raphael. The concepts of genius and inspiration developed during the Renaissance, and the academies were at times opposed for suppressing genius: - 'genius needs no master', a romantic and individualist reaction, is therefore a further development of the Renaissance tradition, and far from being an assault on the academic tradition, is an assault on academies for failing to produce individual genii.

18. William Blake. 'Annotations to Reynolds' Discourses' c.1808.

19. See Steegman.J. Victorian Taste Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., London.(1970).

Note, moreover, that much criticism of the Royal Academy in 19th century Britain was not for the art it stood for (although there was criticism of this from many quarters), but for its failing to disseminate "taste" and influence manufacture, commerce and morality in an efficient manner. "Taste", in the sense of commercial design, was a concern of the state, and hence state investigations into the Royal Academy - that private body with a public function.

20. "Public" in the sense that an attempt was made to inculcate culture, taste and art into the public; not in the sense that culture became public (general) property.

21. Steegman.J. Rule of Taste. Macmillan. (1936)p.16.

22. see the second quotation on page 121.

23. Burke.E. 'On Taste: a philosophical inquiry into the origins of our ideas on the sublime and the beautiful'. 2nd edition (1759).

24. *ibid.*

## PART THREE

THE EXPANSION OF THE SOCIAL  
RELATIONS OF ART  
( THE STATE AND ART )

## Chapter Five

### The Nineteenth Century: State Intervention and Art as a Public Concern; 1830--1870

#### Introduction

The eighteenth century in England was a period in which political, economic, social and cultural control of the social system was very closely and successfully guarded by the ruling elite: it is not within the scope of this enquiry to suggest why this was possible, or to what extent it was part of a consolidation of power in reaction to the open conflict of the civil wars.

It is sufficient for our purposes that art and culture as they existed and were defined in eighteenth century terms in England existed for the ruling groups, and as part of the being civilised of the ruling groups; art and culture were exclusive of the rest of society, who, by definition, were not civilised, not educated, and not cultured. Thus art and culture existed also as part of the rationale of the ruling groups; for, what Antiquity had been, and what the Renaissance had reconstructed, they also were part of.<sup>1</sup>

It was from this position of strength consolidated that the rigidity of the social, political, economic and cultural rules were loosened during the last three decades of the eighteenth century. This took place as the full force of the industrial revolution was beginning to shake the social structure of Britain - a revolution that was to create undreamt of new sources of wealth, hence of power, (political, economic, social and cultural.)

In the nineteenth century the Royal Academy was to achieve its greatest degree of social prestige and influence, and members of the Academy were to be knighted. But, at the same time, in the context of the industrial revolution, the creation of a new rich and a new poor, and the rapid building and expansion of industrial towns, the status of art and culture were to come much more into question. Conflict about its purpose, its control, and its consumption were to become at times acute. Parliament was, on several occasions to carry out extended investigations into the function of the Royal Academy, and design in England was to become a central concern of the state, with successive attempts to set up a state design-education system, and to persuade or flatter capitalists into both supporting and employing the state produced designer. Benjamin Haydon, among others, was to campaign for state patronage of art - an art that he was to argue should be fitted to public purposes, and that should be appropriate to its location, rather than be a conventional academic art or an art of the dignified portrait. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood were, for a short time, to question the tradition of Renaissance academic art; the Arts and Craft Movement were to question what the term art was to be applied to,<sup>1</sup> and William Morris would attempt to turn the whole concept of art upside down. Mass production of itself was to call into question the very uniqueness of art objects and the exclusive control and possession of such objects by small social groups, while, at the same time, the developments of galleries and museums of art was to reinforce the idea of the unique art-object -

abstracted and venerated in cultural halls.

The variety of phenomena that could be considered is endless, some representing the culmination of the development of art as the badge of privilege for the cultured upper classes, and some direct challenges to the content, or the exclusiveness, or the function and nature, of art. It is a complex pattern; in fact the phenomena we are to examine can be seen as involving the full teasing and testing and stretching out of everything that the social relations of art and culture had become, or had made possible. The strength of the social relations of art in the nineteenth century was to be revealed in the extent to which they were to remain unchanged as relations; able to absorb, transform and negate all challenges to the existence of art within the social relations of developing capitalism.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Permanency of the Social Relations of Art

A question implicit in this thesis is, 'Why have the social relations of art changed so little over the last one and a quarter centuries, despite the onslaughts and challenges of the nineteenth century and since?'.<sup>3</sup>

Taking the same question from a very different angle, we could ask to similar purpose: 'Why is lack of working class participation in art and the national culture still lamented; Why does art remain, in its ideology and attributed values, still a phenomenon of the ruling classes and ruling ideologies within British capitalism?'

On an abstract level this question has, of course, already been answered. For, if the construction of 'art' is also, by implication, the construction of 'not-art',

and if the construction of 'art' is bound up with the development of a specific form of division of labour, and if, as has generally been the case, challenges to art in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been largely at the level of content, and not at the level of the existence of art as part of the division of labour, then it can be seen that alterations can take place at the level of content without the social existence and implications of the existence of 'art' as a special category within the division of labour being affected.<sup>4</sup>

Art does not exist in its content; art is a social definition, a label of value, a call to certain ways of looking and thinking: it is part of an ideology - a set of concepts and ways of thinking about National Heritage, Culture, being Civilised. And, in this sense, art is only one part of a set of ideologies and relations of British capitalist society. The content of art may be transformed (or new contents may be accepted into the definition of what art may be), but, if the new content becomes art, it is first and foremost art, and a new content only secondly. Thus the fact that Marcel Duchamp<sup>5</sup> was able to send a urinal to a Paris exhibition and have it accepted did not change art: that urinal became art however, although no other urinals became art. The Dadaists and Surrealists supposed they could radically alter or transform art by ridicule. They couldn't. And so Duchamp could write in 1962 looking back on the event

I threw the bottle-rack and the urinal into their faces as a challenge and now they worship them for their aesthetic beauty. (6)

The challenge at the level of content failed, because



art exists through its social relations and as an ideology; not through its content. Medieval painting was no more 'art' than Medieval book-binding or cart-construction; Medieval painting, however, became 'art' through the developments of a later generation.

William Morris challenged the social existence of art in a more fundamental way: he challenged it as part of a division of labour, a division of classes, and a division of cultures. He challenged the conceptual segmentation of the environment, and the social implications of this segmentation. The Dada and Surrealist challenge of later years was, by comparison, more on the level of 'Let's pick our noses in public' - a ridicule sometimes trivial, and sometimes serious. That William Morris, the Dada, and the Surrealist movements are all now, in various ways, presentable as heroes of the history of Western art, within the Western tradition (a classless formulation that overrides both class and particularity) reveals something fundamental about the conceptual and social relations of art and culture.<sup>7</sup>

In both the U.S.S.R. and Britain, the maker of a painting, a tapestry, or a statue, is an artist; the maker of a car, or a road, is, by contrast, a manual worker. This thesis is about an ideology and a set of social relations and a way of talking that embodies such distinctions. The examination of aspects of the nineteenth century in this chapter is an examination of how the exclusive and socially confined ideologies and social relations of art of the eighteenth century came to be made:

'public' concerns through the actions of both private individuals and through the intervention of the state in promoting art and its associated practices and ideologies.

### The State

Given that the actions and existence of the British state shall figure extensively in my arguments, some preliminary definitions of what it is that the state is are necessary. My definitions of the state shall, at this point, stand largely as assertions: as such they represent statements derived from an analysis of the actions and existence of the state in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which analysis will be presented in this and the following chapter. The definitions are to be treated, therefore, as statements to be explored and tested as the presentation of material proceeds.<sup>8</sup>

Gramsci defined the state as;

the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules...(9)

And later he added that;

every state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function, are the most important state activities in this sense: but, in reality, a multitude of other so called private initiatives and activities lead to the same end - initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes. (10)

For the purposes of this study the stress in the first of

these quotations on the state managing to "win the active consent of those over whom it rules", and, in the second quotation, functioning to "raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level" is important. Moreover, this aspect of the state as 'seduction' is rightly seen in the above as corresponding to the other aspects of the state as repression (courts, etc.,).

The state must be seen in a relational sense: not as a closed institution, or a machine or collection of roles in the abstract. As part of a set of relations, the state is part of and is bound up with a specific form of society - a 'capitalist' state cannot become a 'socialist' state through a change in the executive.

Seeing the state in a relational sense, Gramsci stresses also the relationship of "private initiatives and activities" to the actions/existence of the state. This point shall be important for our analysis, where "so-called private activities and activities" shall be met in two forms: firstly, 'private' in the sense that a person who has no formal role within the state takes an action or initiative without being requested to take that action or initiative by any formal official of the state; an example could be the foundation of a school or museum: secondly there is a form of 'privateness' that we shall meet frequently in discussions of art, namely an 'ideological privateness'; this is the sort of 'privateness' implied by the 'independence' of the B.B.C., or the Arts Council; both are state organised, and, in various ways, state financed; both are constitutionally independent.

Within the social democratic ideology the state is seen to act as 'society': it can 'do' or 'not do' on behalf of and as 'society' (the public). This is an important feature of the state, and, as, in the latter half of the 20th century, the state becomes increasingly, through taxation, the giver or with-holder of money and resources, the power of the state to decide (in purely financial terms) what is and what is not to count as 'society' or 'public interest' becomes immense. Corrigan has written about the struggles over what is to count as society as follows;

If one investigates the history of class struggle in Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century (when the social democratic ideology of the State acting as society (National Interest) was being materialised), one discovers that class struggle raged over what was to count as 'Society'. By this I do not mean that there were disputes over possession of an unproblematic object, but that the struggle concerned whether some ways of making things and being alive were to be reproduced (to count as 'Society') and thus others would not be reproduced (they, rather would count as 'anti-Society'). In these struggles the bourgeoisie discovered themselves as a class ambiguously related (as they are to this day) to State apparatuses and (importantly) the relations of production indicated by the term Finance-Capital (The Bank of England, the City of London). (11)

The ambiguity of the relations of various groups to the state is important. Keeping this ambiguity in mind we shall be less tempted to see the state as simply a blunderbuss controlled by a particular group, and see it rather as existing within and as part of specific historically defined relations.<sup>12</sup>

The Royal Academy: a 'private', 'public' and 'state' Institution

In the nineteenth century the Royal Academy

was a central forum for the ideological and material production of fine art. The existence of the Academy defined the nature of fine art, and set the conditions for opposition to the established definitions of art. In the previous chapter the ambiguity of the relation between the Royal Academy and the state was mentioned, and this ambiguous relationship is crucial to an understanding of both the distinctiveness of the Royal Academy, and the strength of its ideological position within the social relations of art.

The granting of the Instrument of Foundation by the King<sup>13</sup> was the giving of official recognition and support by the head of state; but, at the same time, this was an action that (in ideological terms) was 'not-state'. This follows from the possibility of the British Monarch acting and existing in several capacities.

In his first capacity the Monarch is head of state through parliament: the King's ministers and their subordinates take actions and make laws validated by the monarch, and this is the sense in which the idea of 'state' as an acting, doing body is frequently understood in nineteenth century references in connection with art and the state.

In his second capacity, the Monarch can, as Monarch, take actions on his own behalf, as in signing the 'Royal' Instrument of Foundation;— this action remains a direct transaction between the Monarch and the organisation, and no rights of legitimate interference are bestowed upon parliament through such a transaction. This relationship is understood, therefore, in nineteenth century references as 'not state', despite the involvement of the nominal

head of state in his capacity as a Royal person.

In his third capacity the Monarch exists as a private person with a considerable private fortune at his disposal. He can bestow funds or premises upon another person or organisation - as with the granting of premises to the Royal Academy, and the initial giving of some financial assistance; this money, and the premises, are not 'public' or the concern of the state. This third form of action by the Monarch differs from the second in that, in the second, he is bestowing a 'royal' title - i.e., he is acting as Monarch. In the second case, however, he is nevertheless acting as a private Monarch. In the first case he is a 'public' Monarch; in the third case he is a private person.

The Royal Academy, as we have noted, related to the King in two of the above ways: it was granted a 'Royal' title (second capacity) and it was given premises and limited finance. Any rich person could have done the second of these (acted in the Monarch's third capacity); the 'richness' of the Monarch (despite this 'richness' being related to the Monarch being Monarch) is therefore only a reinforcement to the first and second forms of existence of the Monarch (first and second 'capacities', above). The ideological strength and importance of the Academy in the nineteenth century relates to, therefore, the possibility of its being 'independent' as an institution, and yet at the same time set up (granted a charter) by the Head of state, as head of state, without reference to the actual machinery of state (parliament, civil service, 'public accountability', etc.).

The importance of the Monarch, therefore, is that he is able to be 'state' and 'not-state' at the same time: hence the Academy could take to itself some of the legitimacy of being state, being official, without therefore being also an instrument of government.<sup>14</sup>

#### A Relational Sociology

Marxism offers a relational view of what we might otherwise term political, social and economic institutions.<sup>15</sup> The importance of this is that it allows us to dissolve and reconstitute some of the complex of relations that constitute a social system, and which would otherwise remain impervious, presenting only the legal and constitutional 'front' made available within the terms of the social presentation and ideology.<sup>16</sup> Not only, however, must we dissolve social distinctions (such as those between different aspects of the King, or between 'art' and 'not-art'), but we must also understand the social and ideological importance of such distinctions.

One could, for instance, designate the British ruling class in the nineteenth century as comprising the government and its administration (of which the Monarch is, in one sense, head), entrepreneur capitalists, a landed aristocracy, and, in part, the established church. But such a grouping would be in many ways too tight and exclusive. It would camouflage the complexity of relations within which, for example, a charity school is both an arm of the ruling class (in as far as it works within certain sets of ideas about education, and is perhaps inspected by and partially supported by the state), and is also

potentially an organisation for educating working class children in opposition to the dominant ideology and control. Thus, to designate the ruling class in institutional terms, as a definable group, is in some ways to abstract the ruling class (and the state) from the set of relations through which and as part of which it exists, and thus also to conceal the contradictions inherent in the relations of which the ruling class is part.

The ruling class is defined in relation to the means of production - production which is material, hence is wealth and power, which is thus political, but which is also, following from this, a relation of production of knowledge - knowledge which is also power.

#### The State in Relation to the Academy and to Taste

The above points must be borne in mind in attempting an understanding of the Royal Academy in the nineteenth century, and why the Academy, as a private corporation of self elected members, could come to be a legitimate concern of parliament on successive occasions.<sup>17</sup>

By the mid-century the Academy had moved from Somerset House (a 'not-state' building in as far as it was granted by the King as a private person) to part of the new National Gallery (a public, i.e., 'state' building), and this occupation of a 'public' building might be supposed to be a legitimate pretext for state enquiry into the functioning of the Academy; but, as a pretext, it was not in itself convincing.<sup>18</sup>

Daniel Maclise, Esq., R.A.,<sup>19</sup> commented in 1863 on the succession of state enquiries into the Academy as



follows:<sup>20</sup>

I often wonder why these inquiries are being constantly made. During the whole of my career there has been a series of inquisitions as to its [The Academy's/ proceedings, which appear rather extraordinary to me, and the same thing happens over and over again. Even the questions which were answered 15 or 20 years ago crop up again. There seems to be a new race of inquirers who make the same suggestions, and ask us the same questions, requiring us to give answers which have been given already. (20)

To a limited extent Maclise was right. There was a new race of enquirers who represented a state the direct machine of which was expanding through the construction of organisations in many fields, including a network of government art/design schools. But the enquirers were no mere meddlers; they were part of a constant search by the state to discover what was going on in the country, and what the people (especially the new and somewhat alarming urban working classes) were doing; how the working classes could be controlled; how industry could be controlled and made more efficient; and, as part of this general enterprise, what was happening and could be done about people's behaviour and thoughts. Not that 'behaviour' and 'thought' control was ever expressed in such words; in the area of art and culture, for instance, the matter came under the heading of 'public taste'.

The nature of 'public taste' was a central concern of the state when investigating matters of art. One of the requirements of the 1863 commission "appointed to enquire into the present position of the Royal Academy in relation to the Fine Arts"<sup>21</sup> was to assess measures required to render the Royal Academy

more useful in promoting Art and in improving and developing public taste;

For 'taste' could elevate a man from his lowly status; in the words of Alexander Beresford Hope, M.P.;<sup>22</sup>

Men who were mere workmen a few years ago are getting more and more artistic with the growth of public taste;

Having already seen the sense in which art, hence being 'artistic' implies a form of 'being civilised' (being as the upper classes) it can be seen in what sense a concern with 'public taste' and the development, control and promotion of that taste, is also a form of ideological control, and a form of incorporation of people into specific forms of behaviour - into a specific form of social system.

Apart from the 'control' element in discussions of taste in the nineteenth century, there is also the assumption (often explicit) that raising taste, and hence raising consumer discrimination, and raising also manufacturing standards, (these three being related) would inevitably place British manufacture in a better competitive position in relation to foreign markets.<sup>23</sup> The perceived connection between raising taste, and success in foreign markets, is an important factor in understanding the involvement of parliament in both the affairs of the (private) Royal Academy of Arts, and in the extensive state (public) art and design school system.

#### The Need for State Control and the Fear of State Control

Daniel Maclise's outright criticism of the 1863 commission of enquiry into the Royal Academy was unusual;<sup>24</sup> most objections were more muted. In the case of Eastlake,<sup>25</sup> the President of the Academy, however, one may suspect

that his acceptance of the right of parliament to enquire was in part a diplomatic acceptance. For, while the commissioners suggested that the basis upon which they had a right of enquiry was in part on account of the Academy occupying a public building (part of the National Gallery) Eastlake constantly affirmed in his witness that this was not the point; the point was, rather, that despite its being a 'private' institution, the position and responsibility of the Academy was 'national', and hence the Academy was open to public scrutiny on that score. We may suspect that Eastlake is, in this argument, attempting to divert attention from an obviously sensitive area (possible parliamentary control of the Academy through allocation of the building); however, the thrust of his position is to emphasise the success of a 'free market'/'private responsibility' situation, and this argument carries a far wider significance than simply the self-interest of the Academy.

The emphasis on 'free market'/'private responsibility' represents a line of argument still current. As we shall see in chapter six, this argument is central to the ideological development of state intervention in the arts in the 1939---1975 period. The argument embodies ideas of freedom and self-help under authoritative advisory guidance.

That the state had a role to play in the field of the arts was an argument put forward by many in the nineteenth century,<sup>26</sup> and the assistance of the state in monetary terms was seen as desirable. The commissioners in

the 1863 enquiry<sup>27</sup> frequently discuss the possibility of grants for artists, and Ruskin,<sup>28</sup> as a witness at the enquiry, argued that a system of subsistence grants for artists would be desirable if only because it would free artists from the dictates of a competitive commercial market situation which he saw as tending to induce bad and ignoble work.<sup>29</sup>

Direct state aid was (and is) more often feared than the open market, however; for, freedom being of the essence of art,<sup>30</sup> and the free-market being, by definition, free, the state was best kept out of direct control of the upper regions of artistic production. Assistance without control was welcome; assistance with control was seen as dangerous.<sup>31</sup>

In the context, however, of industrialisation, mass production, the alarming expansion of towns, and the apparent break-down of a strict aesthetic order in the arts, various people felt that a central control of some sort was necessary. Beresford Hope, M.P., in his evidence to the 1863 enquiry encapsulates succinctly the extent and nature of the control desired:

The art movement having of late years taken various developments requires some central regulating influence. At present there is a strong movement going on which I need not allude to further, the effect of which would be to place that central regulating influence under the direct and unchecked control of the Government, and make it in fact a simple department of the state. I conceive that that consummation would be very dangerous indeed in its influence. While it is well that whatever Government attempts on behalf of art should be more systematically and better regulated than at present, it would be fatal if this were to lead to free opinion and free work being subordinated to bureaucratic authority.

Hope has said, therefore, that "some central regulating influence" is required, but that the "direct and unchecked control of the Government" would be "very dangerous indeed in its influence" and "fatal" because this might lead to "free opinion and free work" being restricted. Hope considered that a solution to the problem (central regulation without state control) could be supplied by a body such as the Royal Academy:

Some body that should be elected by the artists and lovers of art, and which should be independent of the changes of administration and political under-currents, would, I think, be the proper body to supply the central influence. I conceive that the Royal Academy occupies the position which such a body might fill; and that when it was founded 100 years ago, it was intended, according to the ideas of those times, to fill those functions. (32)

The point I wish to stress here is the suspicion of state control in relation to the fine arts, in conjunction with the perception that some form of 'control' is necessary. The Royal Academy represented a form of fine art monopoly through the influence exercised by a meritocracy of artists - merit being defined by the existing group of artists working under the subtle patronage of the crown. This was very much a 'laissez-faire' system of artistic control in a social situation where choices and standards related to a system of aristocratic and bourgeois discourse.

The Royal Academy, however, was small, and its teaching function (by comparison with academies in other countries) was limited. The state, in investigating the Royal Academy, was as much concerned with what it was not doing, as with what it was doing. For, in a world that had rapidly become industrialised, the 'laissez-faire' system of controlling and promoting taste was no longer

sufficient. New classes, new consumers, and new ways of life, made it necessary that taste be more forcefully spread, and the growth of industrial production had brought to the fore the problem of the separation of manual work and creativity - the problem of 'design'.

### The State and Design Education

The Royal Academy represented, throughout the nineteenth century, the highest level of art: it catered as an independent institution for pure fine art, and maintained, through its existence, the ideological and spiritual freedom of art.

The state, faced with the consequences and problems of industrialising capitalism, set up what could be called a 'second level' system of art education, controlled by the state, and aimed at producing both design technicians and a raising of the level of public taste across the country.

Control by the state of the Royal Academy would have been unthinkable (although a little interference and pressure to move in certain directions was acceptable.) Control of a national art/design education system, was, however, a different matter. For the Academy catered for pure art, and for the artistic élite: the national state system was to deal with applied art, and with the taste of the general population. This combination of 'freedom' at the Academy level, and 'control' at the mass level is important: for in its 'freedom' the Academy plays thus an ideological role; it represents unfettered creativity.

The state education system is to represent not, therefore (in ideological terms) 'control', but, rather, the application of the principles freely developed by free men (the pure artists) through a mass education system. The artisan, therefore, is not to be offered art; he is to be offered the techniques developed by artists. And in this way taste (morality, right thinking, and commercially useful techniques) will be propagated.

Prior to and apart from the state system of art/design education the only 'art' available to the working classes was that available through the Mechanics Institutes.<sup>33</sup> These provided information through libraries, lectures, and collections of objects. The first moves towards a state system of art/design education came in 1835 with the setting up of a Select Committee on arts and their connection with manufactures. This was set up on the motion of William Ewart, M.P., for Liverpool,<sup>34</sup>

to enquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the Arts and Principles of Design among the people (especially the manufacturing population) of the country, and also to enquire into the constitution of the Royal Academy and the effects produced by it. (35)

Various persons had been campaigning for some time for a state involvement in design and art education, the arguments being presented on two fronts: the first came from the 'radical' politicians and campaigners for 'useful knowledge'; the second concerned manufacture, and the economic advantages in boosting consumer discrimination and manufacturing standards.

The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce<sup>36</sup> had been involved since its

foundation (1754) in these issues. It had been involved in both fine and industrial arts, although in the latter with only limited success. Thus prize competitions in 1758 for designs for weaving, calico-printing, cabinet making, "or any other Mechanic Trade that requires Taste" had met with poor response. On the other hand there were many entries for drawing prizes, and those who received their first recognition through the Society included Romney, Cosway, Lawrence, Cotman, Eastlake, Landseer and Millais.

Benjamin Robert Haydon, the historical painter, was one of the most powerful individual campaigners for state patronage for art.<sup>37</sup> There was very little art publicly visible in the early nineteenth century, and what there was tended to be official portraiture in civic buildings and naval establishments. Haydon campaigned for civic paintings appropriate to civic buildings, and marine paintings in marine establishments, and so forth. His patron, Sir George Beaumont,<sup>38</sup> gave Haydon access to many prominent men of the day, the argument being taken as far as Melbourne, the Prime Minister.<sup>39</sup>

William Ewart, M.P., was one of Haydon's most consistent supporters. A champion of free libraries, the abolition of capital punishment, the creation of public museums and art galleries, Ewart was of the opinion that the Royal Academy had no interest in carrying further the promotion of the arts of design. Joseph Hume, the<sup>40</sup> economist, was also critical of the Royal Academy on the



grounds that it occupied half the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square for studios and keeper's lodgings. On the same grounds Ewart argued that the Academy collection should be opened free to the 'public', since charges should not be made for entry into a public building.<sup>41</sup>

The Select Committee set up as a consequence of Ewart's motion of 1835 to enquire into the possibility of design schools, recommended that a Normal School of Design should be set up in London; that provincial schools should be assisted by grants; that museums and galleries should be formed; and that sculpture and painting should be used to embellish public buildings. The recommendations on design education were accepted, and their implementation was put into the charge of the Board of Trade, with Poulett Thomson (later Lord Sydenham), M.P. for Manchester, as president.<sup>42</sup> Thomson obtained a grant of one thousand and five hundred pounds for this venture.

#### The Beginnings of the State System

In that a state design/art education system was set up Ewart, Haydon, and other campaigners for the development of 'public' art, would appear to have been, in formal terms, successful. It is in the nature of the social, however, that a 'result', a 'consequence' (an achievement) does not follow from the actions/initiatives of one or two men, but is, rather, the outcome of a multiplicity of persons relating, pioneering, resisting, amending and shaping events. The development of state involvement in art and taste is, therefore, not to be explained simply in terms of the work of men like William Ewart, Benjamin Haydon,

Henry Cole, Prince Albert, etcetera; rather it is to be explained in terms of both why these men promoted state involvement in taste and art, and why and how others came to accept, reject, shape or bring into being institutions and ideologies.

Poulett Thomson, as president of the Board of Trade, set up a Council to administer the new Schools of Design.<sup>43</sup> This Council was to administer total national policy, and to it were recruited manufacturers, amateurs and artists, with Lord Colborne as permanent chairman.<sup>44</sup> The artists who were to serve on the Council were recruited, quite naturally, from the most reputable and respected artistic body of the day - The Royal Academy - precisely the body whose organisation and influence Ewart and Haydon were opposed to. Of the Academicians on the Council, Charles Robert Cockerell<sup>45</sup> was the most energetic, and his speciality was the drawing of reconstructions of Greek buildings and exact representations of the classical orders. He was professor of architecture at the Royal Academy schools, and the designer of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Given the status, hierarchies and value systems of the 1830's, the choice of Royal Academicians to dominate the artistic membership of the Council is to be expected. It is also to be expected, given the membership of the Council, and given that the task was to set up a design school system essentially for mechanics and artisans, that the Council should create a system and syllabus within which 'design' was conceived of as a mechanical application of fine art - an uncreative learning by rote of what (real)

fine artists had discovered, and which would be applied by designers to industrial objects. Haydon's radical advocacy of public fine art had been transformed into a technocratic application of fine art ornamentation in an industrial situation. Fine art was thus reserved to the Royal Academy, in relation to which the courses offered in the design schools would be subsidiary and uncreative.<sup>46</sup>

This division of functions is of a pattern with the division of labour (within production and between mental and manual work) that we have been outlining thus far in this thesis.

The extent to which the new design schools were conceived of as being not places where creative art was to be practised and taught is evident from declarations that potential students had to make. They had to declare that they did not intend to practise as landscape, historical, or portrait painters. In connection with this an early rule of the schools was that figure drawing should not take place within them - figure drawing being central to an artist's training at the time.<sup>47</sup>

These rules and stipulations can be seen as significant in various ways: firstly they represent clearly an effort on the part of the Academicians to keep the design students from being actual 'artists'; rather they were to be practitioners of ornament as taught by artists.<sup>48</sup> Secondly these stipulations can be seen as indicative of what the state, in the 1830's was and was not prepared to do: it would train technicians, but not artists. Thirdly there could be an argument put forward that the removing of

artists and artistic practises ( as then defined) from the courses was an attempt to actually tackle design education as design, rather than as a subsidiary aspect of fine art.<sup>49</sup> However, given that the teaching syllabus involved a concentration on the copying of historical pattern, and a diluted form of Academy teaching, this argument would seem implausible.

### The Failure of the Early Design Schools

It is clear, therefore, that the early design schools, set up in the late 1830's, represent only a specific kind of technocratic training for artisans, design being conceived of as a subsidiary form of high art, and the intention being that a certain element of 'taste' should rub off on the pupils and the 'public'.

Papworth,<sup>50</sup> the first director of the London school, expresses clearly something of the intention behind the early system. He believed that students should neither be shown High art, nor allowed to study the live figure, lest

young men might be tempted to leave the intended object to pursue that which is more accredited and honoured.(51)

This expresses clearly the idea of what the working class are fit for; what the design school was for; and, importantly, the double action embodied in the design schools of the 1830's of both giving and withholding at the same moment.

The first twelve years of the design school system were not auspicious.<sup>52</sup> Industrialists, whom these schools were supposed to serve by producing good designers, were

far from impressed. Some schools, in response to internal and local pressures, tended towards the fine arts, and took on middle-class fee-paying students - usually young women, this not being appropriate for middle-class men.<sup>53</sup> Other schools practised the copying of historical and classical ornament, which proved irrelevant to textile manufacture - one of the largest industries in need of good designers. Thus two paths were being followed: one of fine art in relation to middle-class students and the training of artists, and the other a form of low-grade academic copying derived from the academy system.

The sense in which the industrial-design training was conceived of as the uncreative application of art-principles, rather than the introduction of 'creativity' (creative control) into manufacture is illustrated by a statement by Robert Kerr, a textile manufacturer from Paisley. Giving evidence to the select committee set up in 1849 to investigate the crisis that had by then developed in the design schools, he said that in Paisley the highest branch of teaching was;

what they call the fine arts . . . I do not see at all how it is to benefit us; (54)

He went on to explain that in the Paisley school the principal activities were drawing from statues, heads, and so forth: he could not see how this improved taste, and, designs of men and animals did not sell shawls.

Despite the problems of the schools, however, the investigating committee of 1849 (to which Kerr was a witness)<sup>55</sup> felt able to state that:

The witnesses almost all agree in thinking the maintenance of the schools of design to be an object of national importance, and even those who consider the

schools to be at present in the least satisfactory state, are ready to admit the value of such institutions to the manufactures of the country. (56)

A selective examination of some of the persons and incidents of the pre1850 design schools will perhaps indicate the tensions and struggles that lie behind both the crisis in the schools, and the vague feeling of confidence implied in the perception of the schools as being of "national importance". In examining some of the persons and incidents I shall attempt to show that those who advocated fine art for the working classes, are not the 'radicals' in the story, as is usually implied, or that, by contrast, those who wished to restrict working class education to technical copying are the reactionaries. I shall attempt to indicate, rather, that both sets of attitudes represent different sides of an ideology of art that, within and as part of the social relations of British capitalism at the time, are ideologies and practices involving control, seduction and incorporation of the working classes.<sup>57</sup>

William Dyce<sup>58</sup>

William Dyce became superintendent and professor of the London school in 1838. He had had experience in industrial design in Scotland, and had prepared a report for the government on design education on the continent. His basic problem as superintendent was to raise the number of students in his school, for he was in competition (a) with Mechanics Institutes,<sup>59</sup> and (b) with rival non-state schools offering more fine art oriented courses.

Benjamin Haydon and William Ewart., M.P., were heavily involved in a rival school, 'The Society for

Promoting Practical Design.<sup>60</sup> At this institution lectures were given in anatomy, design, and colour; classes were held for drawing both from the antique, and from the female model. Dyce found the competition from the fine art and life classes so strong, that it was decided that the state schools would have to include drawing for ornament from the human figure, but, this course was kept subsequent to courses in ornamental design, thus attempting to keep such practice secondary.

While Dyce found himself in London in competition with fine art courses in other institutions, and was forced in part to modify his design system to attract students, he also discovered an increasing fine arts tendency in many of the key provincial schools - these schools being subordinate to the London school.

#### Haydon and Jackson

Benjamin Haydon was in part responsible for promoting this fine arts bias, since he had actively continued his campaign for state promotion of the fine arts, in opposition to the system that was emerging.

Haydon's campaigning tours included many of the key industrial towns: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle, Liverpool, Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, Hull, Birmingham, Leicester, Bath and Oxford being among them. Manchester was his first success, where the design school, set up in February 1838, with donations and help from interested pupils, was run by John Zephaniah Bell, a high artist.<sup>61</sup> This school rapidly was moving towards being a fine art

(rather than design) school.

The gist of Haydon's attack on the government design system, and Dyce, as its superintendent, can be seen from the following address:

The Government is determined to prevent you from acquiring knowledge. You might become artists but you will be denied the power to advance yourselves . . . the method employed by Mr Dyce, a flower of the dry hard, Gothic German school is based on the German Gewerbeschule, whereas my proposals are based on the practice of the schools at Lyons - and which do you think is best, German design or French? (62)

Haydon was making a double appeal: on the personal level to those denied fine art and advancement through fine art; and on the economic and cultural level, to a perceived superiority of French design (French design being a product of a fine art oriented system of training).

George Jackson,<sup>63</sup> secretary of the Manchester design school, a manager of a local decorating business, and the man responsible for interesting many local philanthropists in the school, was of similar views to Benjamin Haydon on the relation between design and fine art:

If there was not the distinction between High Art and Ornamental Art we should get a better standard. (64)

Jackson is revealing, however, of the sense in which the assumptions about art, about art for the working class, and about art schools as they related to the working classes, are a rhetoric of the middle class liberals of the time. For art for the working classes meant, in fact, bourgeois<sup>65</sup> art and values. Thus, in a lecture on 'A school of Design for the Useful Arts', delivered in October 1837, Jackson emphasises that an art school would not only bring artistic improvements, but also moral improvements: moral improvement



was a natural consequence of artistic improvement. General education of the working classes would improve their minds, and thus their behaviour. Jackson advocated a permanent exhibition display, but not of the ancients, but:

of the present day; not of the things of luxury alone, but of everyone's necessity . . . . The access to this emporium of useful arts should be free, and its time of access from early morn till late at night; sit utility in spreading knowledge, and its great good in checking vice, would depend on this.(66)

He went on to suggest that:

The great cause of much dissipation and crime is the want of some such emporium as this, in which spare time might be passed in profit and amusement. (67)

The clear implication of this view of knowledge is that the right knowledge will lead to correct (bourgeois)<sup>68</sup> behaviour among the working classes. This illustrates well an aspect of liberal-radicalism of the mid-nineteenth century, which is in effect an attempt to both alleviate the state of the working classes and an attempt to absorb and enclose the challenge of the working classes - the former by making the surroundings nicer, and the latter by and through a form of ideological incorporation. This approach to art and knowledge negates working class culture through an advocacy of 'public' 'national' culture.<sup>69</sup>

Earlier I quoted Corrigan on the nature of struggles over definitions of the state, the 'public' and the nation in the early nineteenth century.<sup>70</sup> The advocacy of fine art for all (bourgeois culture for all) is an aspect of such a struggle. A concept of 'public' that includes the working classes (that defines the working classes) and which incorporates them on a cultural level, is a way

of attempting a negation of class differences, and regional differences; the negation is attempted, however, by those who are part of the controlling and constructing and defining of culture, and who themselves are not of the same 'public' as that which is having experience defined for it or offered to it.

When Jennie Lee was Minister for the Arts in 1965, the White Paper, 'A Policy for the Arts; The First Steps' was operating within the same liberal ideology of bourgeois culture when it was stated that:

More and more people begin to appreciate that the exclusion of so many for so long from the best of our cultural heritage can become as damaging to the privileged minority as to the under-privileged majority. We walk the same streets, breathe the same air, are exposed to the same sights and sounds. (71)

The majority is excluded, so, it is advocated, they be included. However, the inclusion is into a pre-defined "our cultural heritage". Moreover, while some of us may "walk the same streets" and "breathe the same air", it is not true to say that we "are exposed to the same sights and sounds", and one might add that "we" do not live in the same houses, go to the same schools, or have the same jobs and opportunities.<sup>72</sup>

'Cultural incorporation' always manifests this denial of social differences, backgrounds, and relationship to power, decision making and control of the lived in environment.

George Jackson, secretary of the Manchester design school, is not an important figure; he is simply fairly representative of a particular line of thought in his views. Both he and Bell (head of the Manchester school) were opposed to Dyce's methods of running the system,

but Jackson also felt that Bell was taking the Manchester school too far towards a pure fine art system, and so he resigned.

The Manchester school received its first grant in 1842. As with general elementary education the Board of trade reserved the right of inspection in relation to the giving of grants, and also followed the existing practice in elementary education of giving monies where an equivalent could be raised in the locality. Thus the state could exercise considerable control, without 'direct' rule, or the full financial burden of it. This form of indirect control through the giving or with-holding of partial grants is a phenomenon to become increasingly common in state supervision of activities, and this practice is, of course, now the basis of the Arts Council's financial support. Control is the effect of such a system, whatever the stated intention or economic rationale; the control follows from local effort and resources being defined and channelled according to centrally established criteria; local effort becomes pivoted around 'national' (central) assistance.<sup>73</sup>

Dyce, superintendent of the London school, and hence of the national system, and advocate of design schools that excluded fine art, investigated the Manchester school. One 'problem' with the school was that the life model had been found in a state of 'distress': plaster ornament was purchased as a substitute after this scandal. However, despite the regulations for the design schools including the stipulation that:

no person making Art his profession should be eligible for admission as a student,

Dyce was unable at first to do anything about Bell, whom he found objectionable on account of his producing "good draughtsmen in the artistical sense".<sup>74</sup> Dyce found an unusually strong support for Bell locally among Manchester industrialists, who were (a) opposed to pattern designing on account of the students being perfectly competent at that already, and (b) found in the school a source of local prestige. Threats were made that local support would be withdrawn if the school was changed.

Charles Heath Wilson<sup>75</sup>

Bell felt sufficiently thwarted to leave the Manchester school and found his own private academy in London. Dyce, however, also changed jobs, leaving his London post to become inspector of provincial schools - a post which in reality gave him more time for his own work as an artist.

The importance of all these incidents, however, is as illustrations of the contradictions emerging between artists promoting fine art; the state attempting to finance industrial design; radical/liberals campaigning for art/design for commercial and moral reasons; academicians attempting to prevent artistic competition with themselves; and finally artistic design itself being conceived of by men like Dyce as a sub-class of art to be executed by technicians.

Dyce may have conceived of design as an activity which applied technical skills learnt from fine art:  
Charles Heath Wilson, the next head of the London school,

is illustrative of a far more extreme version of this position. For, while Dyce had attempted to run courses oriented towards specific trades, Wilson thought such activities vulgar; rather he would teach a carpentry student to draw from Renaissance figures (these being copied in outline from engraving). Wilson dispatched tracers to Pompeii to make full size full colour copies of Roman wall decoration for use in the schools.

Charles Heath Wilson represents, therefore, in extreme, the subordination of all design/art activity to the tradition of high art and the antique enshrined in the academic tradition. What is particularly significant for our purposes is the way in which, for instance, a carpenter or textile designer is to learn his 'creativity' by practising the techniques of fine art in total isolation from his trade; creativity is fine art, and not textile work or carpentry. The latter are vulgar activities, to which creativity (learnt through art) may be applied. Creativity is thus completely abstracted from manufacture.

An account of Wilson's career in the schools would not be relevant to our purposes here. Suffice it to say that his high-handed treatment of provincial schools and his conflicts with former Dyce adherents led to increasing tension and trouble. The Board of Trade tended to back the authorities against dissenters, but, increasing criticism in the press, and general concern, led to the Board of Trade appointing a Committee of Management over the London School in 1847, thus replacing the old Academy

dominated Council.<sup>76</sup>

Summary of the pre1850 Design-School Experience

The situation vis à vis attitudes to design/art teaching in the late 1840's can be summed up in terms of a dichotomy: on the one side is the Haydon argument that both art and design are of art, and training should therefore be based for both in fine art, leaving the student the option as to how to use his skills; and, on the other side is a more hierarchical argument represented by various academicians, seeing design as a sub-activity of art, it being necessary only to teach students the technique derived from art, but not the practice. This latter position embraces both Dyce, who attempted to relate the teaching of ornament to specific trades, and Charles Heath Wilson, who fought against any vocational training, teaching instead an abstracted Renaissance and classical ornament.

The first of these two options (typified by Haydon) was suitable to both middle class fee-paying female students taking fine art for pleasure, interest or improvement, and to working class (artisan or mechanics) students who were given an opportunity either to become designers or fine artists.

Both the Haydon and Dyce/Wilson positions have one thing in common, however: they are both rooted within and are part of the developments of the division of labour and associated ideologies that we have been examining. That is they are a further development of that separation of creativity and control from general

manufacture/work that we have been examining.

Thus, for Haydon, the same principle regulated the milk jug and the human limb, and excellence in both was negated by any separation of the inferior from the superior: rather both were to be combined as he argued the ancients had done:

if any school of design, though exclusively devoted to manufacture be founded, without provision in its code of instruction for the knowledge of the human figure, the very elements of taste and beauty in manufacture will be omitted in the basis; and it naturally follows that if the elements (known and acknowledged as such) be omitted in its foundations, the superstructure will be imperfectly supported and must fall to the ground. (77)

In effect this approach absorbs all design activity into fine art (into a practice centred on the human figure). The 'designer' becomes the artist, and therefore, as a mental/theoretical worker, is the further separated from the manual/practical of manufacture.

An industrial designer as an applier of the principles of art to manufacture (Dyce's conception) is a half way stage between the maker of a product and the artist/theorist/aesthetician. The designer within such a division of labour is part manual worker and part artist. Within Haydon's conception the designer is completely artist.

Haydon's conception has today been partly realised in the modern tendency for there to be certain named and famous (and thus 'as if' artists) designers. Designers who, through a certain reputation, can guarantee to sell their work, and who are treated more like 'stars' in a similar way to the best known artists.<sup>78</sup>

Haydon's position is in no sense a solution to the problem indicated by Morris, and discussed in chapter two, when Morris stated that:

so far from beauty being a necessary incident to all handiwork, it is always absent from it unless it is bargained for as a special separate article having its own market value. (79)

As a measure to Haydon, Morris indicates the extent to which Haydon's argument is of the ideology of bourgeois art, and the values and practices associated with that.<sup>80</sup>

#### Art as Middle Class Behaviour and Middle Class Morality

The early design schools, set up by the Board of Trade to train artisan-technicians, financed by the central state and local contributions, and oriented towards 'design' rather than 'art' training, were seen in middle class terms as 'charity' institutions.<sup>81</sup> As such they were inappropriate for middle class men. Young middle class women, however, formed an important element in many schools, most especially in those with a greater fine art bias.

Sections of the middle class community would have objected to providing an art education on a charity basis for such students. These young ladies, however, were both able to pay fees and engage in fund raising activities; hence their importance and influence within the schools.

Given that the state contributed funds to the provincial sector in relation to that derived from the locality (on a pound for pound basis), and given that it was difficult to elicit local support if the schools were



seen simply as artisan design schools - i.e., in middle class terms, simply charity schools for the poor, the schools had to develop something of an 'art' element in order to attract local philanthropy, and become an institution available to the daughters of local philanthropists. As an art school, moreover, the school could give a certain prestige to an area (as we saw with Manchester) in a sense that an artisan-design charity school could not.

These local pressures towards fine art are of course separate from and supplementary to any pressure from the artisan students or the teachers within the schools.

The significance of these pressures towards a fine art system as opposed to a design system is, for our purposes, the way in which they are a result of the type of state intervention involved: a type of state intervention that is also now the basis of Arts Council and Crafts Advisory Committee support in provincial areas. For the state, despite the centrally defined rules concerning the expressed function of the schools, and the inspectorate system relating to state grants, was intervening in co-operation with local philanthropic and financial interests. That is, given the 'pound for pound' basis of the grant system, the state was intervening to assist in making possible that which local philanthropic and financial interests were also prepared to support. This is not to say that the state was not also promoting that which was centrally defined as the school's purpose (artisan-training); rather the schools were also becoming fine art institutions available to middle class ladies, and embodying the prestigious and moral associations of fine art.

The design schools of the late 1840s were, therefore, two things: on the one hand they were charity schools to train technicians (artisans) to apply a pre-defined art to manufacture; and, on the other hand, they were fine art schools for the middle classes, providing teaching for young women, and prestige for the locality.<sup>82</sup>

In connection with the conceptualisation of the schools as charity institutions, it is significant that not only were members of the clergy numerous on the governing bodies of many schools, but, some of them also wrote instruction books for use in the schools. Tyrwhitt's 'Handbook of Pictorial Art' was, for instance, frequently awarded as a government drawing prize, and an extract from his book exhibits well the moral good attributed to art;

All success must be won by hard and systematic exertion, which will save him from lower desires . . . Nobody expects that the whole of the working classes will at once take to drawing and entirely renounce strong liquor . . . but many may be secured from temptation to excess . . . Teaching children good drawing is practically teaching them to be good children. (83) (Rev. St John Tyrwhitt.)

Tyrwhitt wrote the above in 1868: even, however, after the prolonged crisis of the state schools in the 1840s the Select Committee set up to enquire into the schools were able to say;

the managers have been right in endeavouring to raise the taste of the great mass of artisans, rather than by special efforts to force on a few eminent designers. (84)

That is, despite the failure of the original intention of the design schools to produce good designers for industry, the committee felt that success enough had been produced at the level of influencing 'taste', for 'taste' meant behaviour, and understanding and correctness (as defined in bourgeois terms).

Taste and art meant curbing working class excesses, and instilling a sense of propriety - as the Reverend Tyrwhitt makes clear.

Of course whether in fact art was having the desired effect on the working classes is another matter. Edmund Potter stated, as a witness to an 1864 parliamentary committee on schools of art that

it is not likely that tired and dirty at six o'clock they working men will walk one or two miles to an art school, before they go home, they will not and do not do it. (85)

The organisers of the state system had obviously forgotten, or not understood, why the 'working classes' were called the working classes: a day's work was enough without bettering oneself in the evening on 'their' terms and to 'their' advantage.<sup>87</sup>

### The State and Fine Art

In the post-1850 period the state art/design schools were to move increasingly towards a fine-art function. The raising of general taste among the general public became the explicit priority, and direct industrial design training became subordinated. I shall be examining the nature and implications of the moves from direct teaching to a general inculcation of taste in the general population shortly; here, however, I wish to make at greater length points concerning the relationship of the state to fine art teaching, and the tendency evident in the 1840s of a fine art emphasis developing in some schools.

For, far from the shift away from the original Board of Trade intentions (instilling art-technique in artisans) being a 'betrayal' of the original objectives, I would argue

that it was at the least, a very strong possibility, given the nature of the state within capitalism in Britain, and the nature of art as constructed as part of the social relations of developing capitalist society.

We have noted already the sense in which the intervention of the state in the affairs of the Royal Academy (high art) was feared and resented. Moreover, the involvement of the state in artisan design training was an action to 'correct' the working classes - to inculcate taste, and to provide trained technicians for industry.

For the state to intervene directly in fine art (bourgeois culture)<sup>88</sup> would be to control, i.e., it would be anti-freedom. The state could intervene against the working-classes, (whether to 'clear' their housing for re-development, or to educate them, or to provide culture for them, is irrelevant here), for the purpose and effect, in bourgeois terms, is to bring them (the working classes) 'up' to a level of bourgeois responsible freedom. In Gramsci's words, as quoted earlier<sup>89</sup>

every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes.

A characteristic of bourgeois freedom (a freedom defined by property) is that the initiative (the enterprise) be free (local). Hence the state, in order not to contravene such limitations, must assist local initiative, rather than command support. 'Assisting' local initiative means contributing resources in relation to local effort, which, of necessity, can only come from local industry, rich philanthropists, and the rates. In the case of the 1840s design system, it came from

industry and philanthropy. Thus the central state, in general, tends to support (within the terms of the criteria of the central state) only that which exists or could exist locally. Inevitably this means that the central state supports a local distribution of wealth, power, and access to ideological production. To impose upon the locality would be to subvert the defined limits of the bourgeois state (defined within the bourgeois definitions of freedom within private property.)

Thus, for the state of the 1840s to assist financially in the production of a design system tending towards fine art, is of a character with the relations of the bourgeois state.

That in practice 'assistance' in relation to local effort in effect means control, is neither here nor there. For the important point is that the state is not seen to control. Thus the present day practice of the local state (rates) financing a large part of education, planning, roads and amenities, is part of the same ideological appearance. The need, for the central state to intervene directly is, in practice, limited, given that in effect the central state is supporting at the local level the local elements of the national ruling classes and interests.

These points are made here in a very abstract sense, and are thus contentious. A generalisation cannot be based on the state in the 1840s and 1850s. These remarks, however, apply equally to the state in the 1960s and 1970s - as I intend to show in later chapters. The point I wish to stress here in relation to the state in the 1840s is that the tendency towards a middle class provision of fine art in its ideological

and material forms was not the result of mere administrative misunderstanding, bureaucratic incompetence, or the characteristics of bureaucratic organisation.

The characteristics of a bureaucracy are never sufficient as a sociological explanation, for a bureaucracy is always the product of a specific historical/social circumstance.

The State Design Schools: 1850--1873: Henry Cole.

Henry Cole<sup>90</sup> directed the state art/design system between 1852 and 1873. It was under his energetic direction that the confusions of the 1837--1849 period were sorted out, and a system established oriented towards the ideological and practical propagation of fine art, but including also technical design teaching conceptualised as a subsidiary activity to fine art.

The period 1837--1849 can be seen as one of experimentation with a new state venture. The proposals and arguments of Benjamin Haydon, or Charles Heath Wilson, in effect went beyond the bounds of the possible in terms of state sponsorship of art at that time, given that the state existed through and was defined by that form of society. The contradictions and struggles became for a time acute, and the design system fell into decline, to be revived only by the impetus derived from the Great Exhibition of '51.

Between 1842 and 1852 twentyone provincial schools of design had been set up: Henry Cole was to preside over the rapid expansion of this system. The Board of Trade, in 1852, authorised the creation of the Department of Practical Art of the Board of Trade. Meanwhile various functions of the Head School in London were moved into separate buildings, and the

Head School itself was renamed the 'Metropolitan School of Ornament for Males'; the female school likewise was renamed, while the provincial schools were renamed Schools of Practical Art.

One of the most significant innovations was the instituting of training classes for art masters at the London Head School, these teachers being trained for the provincial schools, this thus beginning an art teacher training aspect of the system that was to become increasingly dominant.

The 1849 commission of enquiry into the design schools<sup>91</sup> had noted an inadequacy of general elementary education in those attending the provincial schools. In the context of this perceived inadequacy we can see the intention behind Henry Cole's attempts to operate the art schools in two directions; firstly, he attempted to create a central London training school and art museum; secondly he attempted to create schools of elementary art in the provinces. These latter would teach 'parochial' children and send them to the central school as fodder for training as art masters, who, in turn, would return to the provincial elementary schools. The central school was to be the most important art/design centre. As part of these changes Cole removed the original stipulation that students in the schools should specify their career intentions as being vocational - non-artistic in the professional sense. For Cole was moving towards a national art teaching system: the class background, and the orientation towards teaching the working classes technical design was becoming secondary. He was to attempt the inculcation of 'taste' in a more subtle manner.<sup>92</sup>

### Henry Cole's Two-Tier System

The experiments in design education prior to the Great Exhibition had revealed not only conflict as to what such an education could/should be, but it had also revealed a lack of necessary elementary education seen as a basis for design education. Cole transformed this semi-chaos into a coherent national system, by which certain students selected from provincial schools, were trained in London as teachers of art, and then were returned to provincial schools; in addition, Cole had elementary drawing made a part of the national elementary education system. In name this national elementary system was private, or charity, but, in practice, the state grant and inspectorate system rendered considerable control possible.<sup>93</sup> Cole had therefore managed (a) to orientate the national art school system towards general art teaching controlled through the production of teachers centrally: (b) to create a second (lower) tier of basic training in art technique at the elementary level, this second (lower) tier again being staffed by centrally (London) trained teachers.

The system Cole developed was geared towards fine art, rather than design; not fine art in a necessarily creative sense, as we would now understand it, for learning to draw was itself seen as being an artistic activity in the sense that the moral uplift of art came with such an accomplishment.<sup>94</sup>

Cole did maintain and develop design oriented classes at the central school (in London). But, partly for administrative reasons, the central design classes tended to be oriented towards producing copies for use in the provincial schools, rather than the design schools being related to industry. This production



for internal use followed from the department being supposed to be as economically self sufficient as possible.<sup>95</sup>

Under Henry Cole drawing was made central to all courses, but also the emphasis on teaching designing for trades to artisans occurred. After 1864, in fact, 'artisan classes' became referred to as 'night classes for drawing', for the artisan classes were anyway generally filled with lower middle class clerks, builders, engineers, and young architects, who were not working class in the sense intended by 'artisan'.

The cumulative effect of Cole's effort was that any explicit industrial-working-class orientation of the system was phased out. Cole was not attempting to improve artisans; rather he was directing 'public' policy towards all groups from the skilled working class and lower middle class upwards. For, from the beginning, there had been evident a conflict between a state policy directed at the working classes, and a state policy providing for the middle classes. Under Cole the system was consolidated in the latter direction, and much greater emphasis put on education through example (Museums) than through direct pedagogy in relation to the working classes.

The return to education in taste through example, and less through direct instruction, is a restatement of the position expounded by Reynolds in the late 18th century - the only difference being that Reynolds was talking in relation to a single Royal Academy, and a few lesser private institutions, while Cole was providing his example through museums, and an elementary and more specialised education in fine art.

In effect, therefore, fine art is being removed, in an institutional form, from practical involvement with manufact-

ure, and the state apparatus is being realigned towards reproducing and propagating certain conceptions of fine art, and of education through art, and of design as being derived from this in a manner that was available to the lower middle classes via technical and drawing classes, and to the general public (general middle classes) through museums and exhibitions, and, to children in elementary schools (lower class and lower middle class) as an enforced part of the curriculum. In amongst this, the middle class young ladies continued to be offered fine art classes, and paid fees and, through such fees, they bought the freedom to select and choose courses as they wished; this group continued to dominate the schools.

#### The Development and Growth of Museums:

In the early 1830's there were, in Britain, only a few academies of art - private affairs, dominated by the existence of the Royal Academy. There was very little 'public art' - most collections being private, and the commissioning and discourses of art being reserved to aristocratic and middle class circles.<sup>96</sup>

Under the Science and Art Department in the 1850's a 'public' provision of art education and technical art training was being created.<sup>97</sup> As part of this 'public' provision, moreover, the nineteenth century saw a growth of museums - collections of art (and other) objects housed and available to those interested, and provided either by the state or by the philanthropy of the rich.

Here I intend to consider on an abstract level the significance of the development of museums: in later sections

the subject shall be dealt with in a more concrete sense.<sup>98</sup>

A basic feature of a museum or art gallery is that objects used in daily life (whether in a utilitarian sense or as adornment is immaterial), are taken from their location of use and placed in a special place to be looked at. This 'looking' is a particular kind of looking simply by virtue of the objects being in a special place only to be looked at.

The museum or gallery itself imparts a special significance to the objects it houses on account of the cost of the museum gallery; that is, some person or organisation has seen fit to spend considerable sums of money on a museum/gallery, rather than in other ways. The choice thus involved as to how to use resources implies a specialness.

It is one thing for me, as an individual, to have a painting or piece of furniture in my house, and have these admired, perhaps, by guests; it is something very different if I construct myself, or with others, a special building to house several paintings and/or objects, which I then throw open to the 'public' to come and view. The use of the paintings/-objects, and the social significance of the activity of viewing and the building within which this takes place, is something very different from that involved in these paintings/objects being seen and used as part of my own house.

A museum is important in being part of the generation and maintenance of a segmentation of the environment. A currently much over-used term is that of 'art-object' - a phrase perhaps now used because of a sense of embarrassment when talking of 'art' or 'works of art' both because of the vagueness of these terms in a denotative sense, and because of the cultural

implications of the terms as 'pretentious', or pertaining to an expertise that verges on snobbery. Whatever the case may be, the idea of an 'art-object' is one that receives a material validation from museums and galleries.

We have traced from the Renaissance the social construction of art as a form of segmentation of the environment into art and not-art, and as a form of theoretical ideology for the ruling classes. The idea of a museum is a further strengthening and construction of such an ideology/practice, through the museum/gallery being the embodiment of creativity being abstracted from use (even if 'use' was only domestic ornamentation). The museum, furthermore, provides a material validation for the attitude of veneration towards specific products, for the idea of art and culture as things apart and of a value separate from everyday life is embodied in the presentation of culture through museums - a presentation that, through embodying a 'uselessness' in the very material location of the objects (in a museum/gallery where things can only be stared at) implies some other use. That is, some other value other than use, or beyond or above use, is implied by it being worthwhile presenting a range of objects in a situation alien to the normal and everyday use of such objects.

The museum thus validates the idea of art and culture as speciality, and as not related to living but, at the same time, because housed and venerated in special places, being special products of human existence.

This is to state in an abstract form a tendency inherent in the existence of museums within bourgeois culture.

It could be argued, of course, that not all museums conform to such a description: not all museums are of or about art and culture or even history as 'heritage' in the bourgeois sense. Museums of farm implements,<sup>99</sup> for instance, are not discussable in the terms set out above. It can be argued, however, and is being here, that any museum within British bourgeois society is, in being a museum, is to some extent of the type above suggested. A museum of old cars is not in the same way 'art', just as a museum of farm implements and techniques is not art; but both fall within the category of museums, i.e., enclosures of 'heritage' in the form of individuated objects. Historical practice is transformed into objects, and a particular way of staring at history is implied. We are not going to go so far as to argue that it is inherent in the nature of museums that history must, in the nature of museums, be so presented; we merely suggest a tendency - and a tendency where art is concerned that becomes almost an 'iron law'.

#### The Museum and Gallery as Middle-Class Palaces

The nineteenth and twentieth century museum is a product of full industrial capitalism; the eighteenth century private collection was a product of a more rigidly ordered and less industrial society. In the nineteenth century the museum did (among others) two things: it provided in a 'public' (middle class) form the heritage of the aristocracy; and secondly, it provided the 'public' (ideologically speaking 'public' being here 'everyone') access to the 'heritage' of the 'nation'. In the first sense (provision for the middle classes)

the provision of museums can be seen as being related to new power relations within society: that is, an expanded middle class which could not live in aristocratic palaces, could nevertheless have palaces of art collectively, just as they would have education in art through the state, given that the Royal Academy and other private academies were too few and too London based.

In the second sense of making available heritage and culture to all, the museum/gallery is important ideologically. For, it appears to give access to that pre-defined as important (so defined by experts within the culture and education of the bourgeoisie). In fact, of course, the 'public' (everybody) only has access; they have no control. But the ideological function of the museum as 'availability of culture' (democracy of culture) is important within social democracy.<sup>100</sup>

#### Henry Cole and Museums

Since the mid-eighteenth century short-period exhibitions of fine art had been taking place. In France, by contrast, the first Salon des Beaux Arts was opened in 1667. It was the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce<sup>101</sup> (now the 'Royal' Society....), which introduced into this country the idea of exhibitions of contemporary artists, holding the first such exhibition in 1760. This exhibition had contained 130 pictures by 69 painters, including Reynolds, Cosway, Richard Wilson, Morland, Carlini, and Hayman. These exhibitions continued annually until 1764, at which time quarrels among exhibitors led to the formation of two Societies - the Society of Artists of Great Britain, and the Free Society of Artists. The former was a direct and successful predecessor to the Royal Academy.

Such exhibitions as these, however, being short-term, and of living, working, artists, are not of the same nature as museums: rather than being repositories of culture, such exhibitions are promoters of forms of culture. The fact of regular exhibitions is, however, important as a precursor for permanent museums, not only in the field of fine art, but in the general area of decorative and industrial arts.

In the area of decorative and industrial art the role of the Royal Society of Arts was also to be increasingly important both in terms of general promotion, and in terms of a specific involvement in the Great Exhibition of 1851.

It was in May 1852 that Henry Cole set up the Museum of Ornamental Manufactures - the nucleus of what is now the Victoria and Albert Museum. The impetus for this foundation came from the success (and the exhibits) of the Great Exhibition of 1851, and that exhibition in itself must be located within both the growing concern about British design standards vis à vis foreign competition, and the general concern for the level of taste and the activities and values of the working classes.

Industrial art exhibitions (such as the Great Exhibition of '51), warrant discussions separately. Here we shall examine Henry Cole in relation to such exhibitions, so as to place this discussion in the context of Cole's other work in relation to general art education.

Charles Heath Wilson, when principle of the Head School in London, had collected casts and objects for the schools

on a national basis. By the time Cole took charge of the Department, these were scattered around the schools, uncatalogued and often ignored in cellars. Cole, however, wished to set up a more industrially orientated collection of objects as an educational resource not only for the art/design schools, but for the wider population. In these efforts Cole was greatly assisted by Prince Albert, a prominent figure in the art and industry field.

The Treasury (the state) gave five thousand pounds towards the new museum. The type of exhibits for display included textiles, ceramics and metalwork. The Queen (in her capacity as a private Monarch) allowed Cole to search Buckingham Palace, and take Sèvres porcelain worth ten thousand pounds for the collection. She also gave the upper floors of Marlborough House, Pall Mall, (a Royal palace) as a place to house the display - the palace being out of use due to the youth of the royal children.<sup>102</sup>

The involvement of the Queen in this museum is yet again an example of that 'private' Royal patronage/involvement which we have discussed in relation to the Royal Academy. As Monarch the Queen is able to assist with exhibits and premises, for, only as Monarch has she the ability to offer Marlborough House or Buckingham Palace porcelain. Her being Monarch (head of state) is, however, separate in this case from the actions of the state itself. She was not acting as a very rich private individual who also happened to be Monarch, therefore; but she was acting as Monarch in a sense unrelated to parliament, the executive and other aspects of the state.



In the case of the Museum of Ornamental Manufactures the state was also involved in the conventional sense, through the contribution of money (from the Treasury) and through the involvement of Henry Cole as an official of the state. The state in such cases acts to concentrate wealth (wealth obtained through the taxation of producers) in areas defined as being to the public good. The state does not 'provide' the museum, however: it rather acts to help make possible the museum. It acts in concert with private wealth and initiative (much of this in this case coming from the Monarch). In acting thus the state helps to make more possible that which private individuals support - in other words the state acts to enhance and strengthen the private efforts of the ruling groups.

Cole's explicit educative function in the new museum was very obvious. Public lectures were given, and a catalogue drawn up which included details of manufacturing processes. Furthermore, an ante-room was established with examples of 'false principles in decoration'.<sup>103</sup>

These developments are important, for they illustrate the new direction Cole was developing in promoting taste and design. Teaching and instruction in school is a direct method; we could term it the 'hard' method. By contrast public display and exhibition is a method by example - a soft method.

Education through the 'soft' method of example may be supposed to be directed at different social groups. The 'hard' method of instruction in the design schools had been originally directed towards artisans and mechanics - the skilled and semi-skilled working class. The practice of education through example via museums can be seen to be aimed at a wider audience,-

at the 'public' in the sense of the upper working class upwards. It is aimed at those with leisure, those with technical interests, and the manufacturers themselves (the owners of industry). That is, Cole was attempting to transform the ideas of the consumers, the owners of industry, and provide information for technicians.

Henry Cole was not only the Secretary of the Science and Art Department, but also director of the new museum. When this was moved to the new site being developed at South Kensington he instituted the 'loan collection' and the travelling, or circulating, museum. This latter, set up in 1854, involved the construction of special vans, so that packaged exhibitions could be transferred straight to rail waggons. Museum staff travelled with exhibits, unpacking and arranging them. Exhibitions were given at both private and public institutions, provided that the institution could meet the cost. Pictures and other works were shown in churches and mechanics' institutes, local museums, and schools of art. This travelling museum played an important part in promoting the idea of museums around the country, and hence in the setting up of local museums.

At the South Kensington museum itself, photographs and electrotypes of objects in the museum were introduced, and the sales department was set up over the refreshment room. The museum opened in the evenings as well as the day time to cater for working people.

All these developments indicate, therefore, how fully the state was entering into 'exemplary' education, attempting in a full sense to create 'taste': taste both in the narrow sense

of standards of design among consumers and producers, but also in the broader 'moral' sense -- for these two senses were never far apart. It may be remembered in what scathing terms Engels in his 'On the Housing Question'<sup>104</sup> discusses the notion that if the working classes had more sense and understanding, they would be better off: it is in a similar sense that 'taste' is even in its narrowest usage always a moral concept.

Internationally Cole's museum had great effect.

Museums of applied art allied with schools were set up on the continent in various places in the 1860's: notably the Oesterreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie, set up in 1864; a school of applied art being added to this in 1867. Karlsruhe opened its Gewerbehalle in 1865, and Berlin opened a Gewerbe Museum with an art school in 1867. In Köln an Industrie-Museum, and in Munich a Kunstgewerbeschule were opened in 1868, while in 1869 Hamburg opened its famous Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe. Similar developments occurred in Holland, and in the 1870's in France.

Within Britain there was a boom in the opening of local museums in the 1860's, 1870's and 1880's, inspired in part by the impact of the efforts of Cole.<sup>105</sup>

#### Public Services as a Response to the Working Classes

A theme I am pursuing throughout this thesis is the way in which state intervention in culture and art serves to legitimise the ruling classes, and to seduce the general population. Two extracts from a speech delivered by Cole in November 1857 illustrate well his understanding of these processes. In the

first he explicitly relates state provision to radical political movements - a politics he calls 'ultra-liberalism'.

Indeed, it is proved that as a people become intelligent and free, so are they likely to demand Public Education and to be willing to pay for it. Manchester, the scene of the Peterloo riots in 1814, where the democratic feeling has certainly not diminished, although it is perceptibly tempered by increased intelligence, is among the first places in this country to agree to a local rate to support a Free Library, and this willingness to tax themselves for Education is remarkable chiefly on the part of largely populated manufacturing centres, where the politics are what may be termed ultra liberal. Salford, Bolton, Sheffield, Norwich, Kidderminster, Preston, all tax themselves for Free Libraries. (106).

Cole is in the above conceptualising state provisions as a response to a specific sort of pressure - an urban working class politics. Relating 'Peterloo' to the demand for public education is I think, quite remarkable.

The second extract from the speech concerns the evening opening of the Kensington Museum, and indicates (a) the sense in which 'entertainment' or the giving of pleasure are part of the 'soft' approach to providing education and spreading 'taste'; (b) the way in which such provision was seen as an anti-dote to less wholesome activities:

The working man comes to this Museum from his one or two dimly lighted cheerless dwelling-rooms, in his fustian jacket, with his shirt collars a little trimmed up, accompanied by his threes, and fours, and fives of little fustian jackets, a wife, in her best bonnet, and a baby of course under her shawl. The looks of surprise and pleasure of the whole party when they first observe the brilliant lighting inside the Museum show what a new, acceptable, and wholesome excitement this evening entertainment affords to all of them. Perhaps the evening opening of Public Museums may furnish a powerful antidote to the gin palace. (107)

Apart from indicating the sense in which this was education through pleasure and 'entertainment', and as an anti-dote to less wholesome entertainment, this passage is also remarkable

for the patronising and condescending attitude to the working man and his family - his "little fustian jackets", wife and baby. The reference to the "gin palace" also is a standard element in references to the working classes - the vice of drunkenness being almost a symbol for, or euphemism, for the 'problem' (political and social) of the working classes.

The State: From Charity to Public Service

The urban art school in an industrial area was often housed in rented rooms of low quality. It was more usual to find a purpose built school in the rural county town area, i.e., in a non industrial area, where middle class elements regarded the schools as being of fine art, rather than industrial design. Money for the county town school was raised in a variety of ways, including bazars, soirees, exhibitions of staff and student work, and so forth.

In the context of lack of support from industrialists for schools in industrial areas, the Public Libraries acts of 1855 for England and Ireland, and 1867 for Scotland, made possible the appropriation of land by a borough or district board for the erection of buildings

suitable for public libraries, or museums, or both, or for schools for science and art.

Given the lack of movement within these provisions, an act of 1884 further stated that

Buildings may under the said sections be erected for public libraries, public museums, schools for science, art galleries, and schools for art, or for any one or more of those objects. (108)

Such acts brought museums, galleries and art schools within the orbit of local government as possibilities; not as requirements. The state (in the 19th and 20th centuries) can be said to do three main things in relation to local government: firstly it makes some actions of local government (the local state) mandatory; secondly it makes some actions by local government possible; thirdly it makes certain actions by local government impossible. The sense in which the central state makes some actions possible, though not mandatory, we could call 'state laissez-faire'. 109

To some extent it can be said that the state 'makes possible' some things and mandatory other things according to the importance of these things. But there is, I would argue, a further element necessary in understanding why certain activities are generally voluntary. That is, in the case of cultural activities, were these to be made mandatory local-state services, there would be a possibility of these being seen as to do with 'state art' and 'state culture'. In this country state provision would be a possible threat to freedom - to the unfettered individualism of the creative genius. In making something 'possible' rather than mandatory, the central state is appearing to leave the decision to the locality.

The sense in which certain cultural provisions were left as possibilities rather than as obligations at the local level, is interesting in that this allowed for a gradual change during the 19th century, whereby the state changed from being seen as the provider of 'charity' for the working classes, to the provider of 'services' for all - and sometimes for the middle classes in particular.

The function of the state as provider for the middle classes is obvious today in many areas. On the mundane level we may be familiar with the better road surfaces, street lighting and grass verges in the richer sectors of some cities. On a more substantial level, the differential distribution of resources to different sectors of education is related also to the different proportions of working and middle classes in these various sectors. In the field of cultural policy today the heavy subsidies given to Covent Garden, and the creation of a series of monuments to culture on the South Bank of the Thames in London, are all indicative of the role of the state as middle class provider.

It was during the early decades of the nineteenth century that the potential of the state as a provider for the middle classes, rather than as simply a charity for the working classes, came to be discovered. The state as 'nation' could acquire wealth and distribute this to the middle classes via 'public' provision - for example museums, libraries and art schools. Thus the shift within the design school system to an increasingly explicit form of fine art provision can be seen as being part of, or within the terms of, a growing discovery by the middle classes of the potential of the state: through the state the middle classes could have publicly what the aristocracy had privately.

The situation is not, of course, clear-cut: a library or museum is many things at once: it is cultural heritage and bourgeois prestige; it is the enshrinement of the lived past in a frozen present as defined, selected and catalogued according to specific criteria; it is knowledge and utilitarianism;

it is a means whereby the lower classes are impressed and mystified; it is a means whereby an individual may come to understand his/her experiences and reject the mystification; and so on, and so forth. But also as part of all these, a museum, gallery or library, is a shared palace - a resource for the middle class collectively in the place of the much vaster resources enjoyed by the aristocracy privately.

It is in this sense that it is important to see the growth of the state not only as an instrument of central control, seduction provision and repression in relation to the working classes, but also, and importantly, as a phenomenon relating to and part of the rise of an industrial middle class - professional and business.

#### Henry Cole: the Conclusion of his Career

Henry Cole is one of the most interesting of the leading Victorian figures involved in the development of state intervention in art and manufacture. I have therefore been returning to his career at intervals throughout this chapter in order to develop and illustrate points in the argument.<sup>109</sup>

As the real founder of the Victoria and Albert Museum Cole is the originator of an institution that promoted the display of ordinary objects and good design. The Museum itself followed on directly from the Great Exhibition of 1851, with which Cole was involved. These institutions and events are the foundation of the tradition that leads to the glitter of the Ideal Home Exhibition, and the more restrained Design Council exhibitions.

The drive and direction of Cole's activities are



perhaps better understood when it is realised that he was a friend of Thomas Love Peacock, and of John Stuart Mill when the latter was most under the influence of Jeremy Bentham.

The scale of Cole's achievement in the educational field is best suggested in his own words, as given in a lecture delivered to students of Nottingham School of Art three months before his retirement:

Since the year 1852, I have witnessed the conversion of twenty limp Schools of Design into one hundred and twenty flourishing Schools of Art in all parts of the United Kingdom, and other schools like them, in the Colonies and the United States. Five hundred night classes for drawing have been established for artisans. One hundred and eighty thousand boys and girls are now learning elementary drawing. Twelve hundred and fifty Schools and Classes for Science instruction have spontaneously sprung up. The South Kensington Museum has been securely founded as a National Centre for consulting the best works of Science and Art, as a Storehouse for circulating objects of Science and Art throughout the Kingdom. Whilst this Museum itself has been visited by more than twelve millions of visitors, it has circulated objects to one hundred and ninety-five localities holding exhibitions, to which more than four millions of local visitors have contributed about ninety-three thousand pounds. (110)

The achievement is impressive - extending even into the Colonies; note also, however, the reference to 'schools of design' being transformed into 'schools of art'

Cole's major success was as a civil servant - a state official. The basis for his success, however, lies in the way in which it was possible for him to act both as a state official and as a private person in the pursuit of his aims. Thus, while as a state official he worked in various government departments, as a private person he was an active member of the Royal Society of Arts<sup>111</sup> and also an industrial designer (among other things) under the nom de plume of Felix Summerly.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, in the 1849 to 1852 period, Cole was founder and

editor of a magazine - the "Journal of Design".

In discussing the nature of the state in the early part of this chapter I quoted Gramsci as relating "a multitude of other so called private initiatives" to the state, and to the way in which the state maintains the "political and cultural hegemony of the ruling class." I have returned to this theme at several points since; Cole's career, however, is particularly illustrative of the way private and public initiatives can relate.

The 'Journal of Design', for instance, was started during the period when the schools of design were at their lowest point, and Cole himself had little involvement with public art, as sponsored by the state. The Magazine ceased publication when Cole had become involved at Government level with art, and a Department of Practical Art had been founded. The magazine, therefore, was for Cole a forum for private propaganda - a forum through which he could put pressure on government and on manufacturers and public. Cole's first address as editor in the magazine makes very clear his purposes in editing the magazine;

In conclusion, we profess that our aim is to foster ornamental art in all ways, and to do those things for its advance in all its branches which it would be the appropriate business of a Board of Design to do, if such a useful department of Government actually existed. (113)

Explicitly, therefore, he is advocating Government action from a position as a private person. Later we shall be considering the Great Exhibition, and the mixture of 'privateness' and 'publicness' in its organisation. This took place during the 1849---1852 period of the 'Journal of Design', and Cole's

involvement in the Great Exhibition was to lead him to the position where, as a state official, he could re-direct the art schools and found museums. Yet in relation to the Great Exhibition he was working largely as a private person - as a member of the Royal Society of Arts.

His career, therefore is a mixture of working from both within and without the official organisation of the state, and his personal involvement with and friendship with people working both within the state organisation, and within bodies such as the Royal Academy, the Society of Arts, indicates the way in which 'private initiatives and 'state' actions can relate and be embodied in the same individual.

Cole's vision of society is interesting and significant: significant because it indicates one way in which the effect of and intention behind public art and museums was conceptualised. It was in fact a very Durkheimian vision<sup>114</sup> in as far as he saw the possibility of a society with less pauperism, a more responsible capitalist class, and publicly provided alternatives to 'vice' and unwholesome activities. Culture, museums and art were to be a part of this alternative. In the speech at Nottingham School of Art<sup>115</sup> from which I have already quoted, he Cole outlines some of his hopes:

I even believe that the science of political economy will discover the means how to give the agricultural labourer as good a house over his head, as comfortable a bed to lie upon, plenty of as good food to eat, and such proper covering for his body, as a cart-horse worth fifty pounds now gets.

I don't believe such conservative progress is visionary, and with it Schools of Science and Art will multiply. Every centre of 10,000 people will have its Museum, as

England had its Churches far and wide in the 13th century. The churches in the 13th century were the receptacles of all kinds of art work. Every church had its paintings, sculpture, metal decoration, architecture, music, and was in fact a Museum. (116)

The comparison between the 13th century church and the 19th century museum is very revealing.

Cole advocated better housing, public health, and attention to sanitary conditions. Drunkenness, however, was seen by Cole, as by so many others, as being one of the most serious vices to be combatted. He did not go as far as explaining poverty by drink, however, as did some who were more moralistic than practical. Museums and public culture were seen, by Cole, as a way of combatting drunkenness; it could not be legislated away; rather

what I propose . . . . is to go into competition with the Gin Palaces. (117)

Cole was an advocate for

anything that will bring people together and give them innocent amusement, for when a multitude is drawn together, the company exercise a restraining influence, and men are less likely to appear drunk. (118)

Cole was an advocate for Working Men's Clubs "managed by a committee of working men" for in these places, where drink was sold, "the restraining principle that I refer to acts beneficially." He refers also to the importance of "public pleasure grounds". But, close to his heart, and in "competition with the Gin Palaces" was the South Kensington Museum. He explains that

during my connection with it, it has been visited by over thirteen millions of people, but during that time I have only heard of one person having been turned out for drunkenness, though wine, spirits, and beer are sold there. Now, here is the fact that if people are got to visit these places where they get amusement and can do pretty much as they like, there is no drunkenness at all. Every town should have its South Kensington Museum; (119)

Every town, of course, did not get its South Kensington Museum, but many did construct lesser versions. Few were as courageous as Cole, however, in attempting to counteract drunkenness by providing wine, spirits and beer within their museums.

The importance for our analysis of this examination of Cole's work, however, is that it indicates clearly the sense in which state provision could be seen as and intended as an alternative to other activities. In other words, as wages increased, and as leisure increased for certain groups, the state could step in to control and direct leisure towards ends defined as wholesome, by providing activities, resources and places. The state could enter into competition with activities seen as dangerous or unwholesome.

#### John Poynter A.R.A.

John Poynter, A.R.A., as Director of the Art Division of the Department of Science and Art from 1875 on was to further consolidate the tendency for the state art/design school system to become an art school system. Redgrave,<sup>120</sup> Poynter's predecessor under the title of 'Inspector General for Art' had still resisted this tendency, going as far as accusing masters of the schools of art of identifying their interests

less with the sound instruction encouraged by the Department, than with the capricious wishes of the middle class, who at present rather resist such sound instruction. (121)

John Poynter, however, was a High Artist of the Classical tradition, seeking the noble and ideal beauty through the antique and the nude model.

In the 1880's Poynter<sup>122</sup> was the editor of a series of 'Illustrated Text-Books of Art Education'; this was a series of school-student general text books giving basic accounts of various schools of art and architecture. Poynter himself wrote the volume on 'Classic and Italian'; it is, however, at the general preface to the series, as published in that volume<sup>123</sup> that we are going to look in order to to make clear something of the way in which an important and influential figure conceptualised art, and understood its social importance and possibilities.

#### Poynter's Preface

In examining the assumptions implicit in Poynter's preface, and the social relations and conditions that are implied by the discourse and language, our purpose is not simply to discuss the ideas of a single man: rather we are attempting to say something about the social relations of art, and the ideas of a class, as revealed by and embodied in the writings of one man who as an Associate of the Royal Academy, and also Director of the Art Division of the Department of Science and Art.

Central to Poynter's argument is an emphasis on the importance of knowledge about art: only, he argues, on the basis of a sound knowledge of the history of art can a proper taste and discrimination develop. In other words, a sound knowledge will lead to a correct taste. The Preface makes clear whose history it is that is taught, and whom the education is available to.<sup>124</sup>

The opening to the preface is pessimistic; the appropriate classes, he argues, do not have enough knowledge to practise good judgement:

It is no doubt the business of artists to educate the public in matters of art by raising the standard of taste through their own productions, whether these take the form of architecture, sculpture, painting, or the industrial arts. And it is equally without doubt that public opinion reacts, and not always too favourably, upon art, by creating a demand which can but rarely be up to the required level of taste and critical knowledge; and this must be the case so long as that class of the public which possess the means of encouraging art remains for the most part, in a Dogberry-like belief that the appreciation of what is excellent in architecture, painting, or sculpture 'comes by nature'. (125)

Poynter, therefore, is to emphasise the need for knowledge in art to set against errant opinions. This teaching of knowledge is especially necessary in the 1880's, he argues, because:

whereas the patronage of the arts was formerly confined to a small class, in the present day we have entered upon a new and different phase. (126)

In other words the industrial revolution has thrown up a new class of people less drilled in the old traditions of High Art and culture. A wider middle class has been created, and

an interest in art . . . has sprung up . . . which is increasing far beyond the circle of the few highly cultivated persons who at one time constituted the amateur classes.

The danger of the new situation, Poynter suggests, is that the new interest in art among a wider public is no more than a fashion, and a fashion is distinguished by

the opportunity it affords for quackery and advertisement among some so-called 'art' companies and tradesmen (127).

Poynter therefore reacts against consumerism and triviality, arguing instead for an interest in art which has its foundation in "a definite and systematic knowledge of art."

Having thus argued for the importance of a sound knowledge and a correct taste, Poynter points out that, while most "boys" in public schools are not well taught in the knowledge of art, the situation with literature is entirely different.

The literature Poynter has in mind is Greek and Latin literature, and the study of this is the foundation of

a discriminative taste for the higher forms of literature, to the beauties of which his mind may be opened through the study of the best classic models. (128)

He goes on to summarise the sorts of things a boy could end up knowing of classical literature, "to form their taste", and, he adds that, by contrast

it is doubtful whether the large majority of boys would not be puzzled by any allusion to the names of Phidias or Michelangelo. (129)

Thus the basis for the formation of a correct literary taste exists, but the same basis (the same grounding in the Renaissance culture and the antique) is lacking. It is true that

A smattering of drawing . . . has been at most schools within reach of those boys whose natural instinct has led them with more or less insistence in that direction,

and that drawing is becoming "every year more general and is improving in quality;" however,

unless under very able direction, this tends but little towards the cultivation of taste. (130)

We will recognise this argument as being central to the Renaissance and post-Renaissance developments in art as an ideology and practice. Poynter is echoing Joshua Reynolds directly.<sup>131</sup> The importance, however, of Poynter's argument is that he is placing learning and knowledge above practice:

technical knowledge . . . and even great skill and originality as an artist, may exist in an individual in company with the most absolute indifference to any form of art that lies beyond his range of ideas; and there are many cultivated men whose opinion on a work of art is much to be preferred to that of many artists. (132)

Therefore

We must have . . . an acquaintance with the great works of art that are standards of style; such works, that is to say, as have received the sanction of cultivated men of all times. (133)



It is of course true, as Poynter says, that "technical knowledge" and even "great skill and originality as an artist" may exist in company with "indifference to any form of art that lies beyond his range of ideas". But, we may ask: "So What?" My question is not as flippant as it may sound, for it is only the answer to such a question that reveals why it is that the "sanction of cultivated men of all times" is so important.

In invoking the "sanction of cultivated men of all times" (who are not, it is to be noted, the artists, whose vision may be limited to their own practice) Poynter is in fact invoking the judgements and traditions of the Renaissance and post Renaissance ruling classes prior to the industrialisation of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Poynter is, therefore, invoking the culture constructed as part of the class developments prior to the emergence of the nineteenth century middle class, and the urban working class.

Poynter is, moreover, addressing himself to boys going through a public school education; that is, the significant sector of the population in matters of taste, so far as he is concerned, is made up of the more prosperous members of the male upper class. Thus he argues that;

The least that the future possessor of a fine house or a picture gallery can get from such studies will be an insight into his ignorance concerning things which surround him, and meet his eyes at every turn; and if his interest in them carry him but little further than the acquisition of a certain number of names and dates by heart, the mere fact that he has been taught these may be an indication to him of their importance; (134)

It is by now evident from these quotations, however, that, despite the force with which Poynter is putting his arguments, he is, at least in part, on the defensive: that is, he is

fighting for a position that is not fully recognised by all. Were boys to acquire the education he advocates, the effect, he argues, would be of national significance, but the situation he describes is not the one that actually exists:

It seems hardly doubtful then, that it would be well if our future statesmen could have it impressed on them in their youth that some need of this glory which Pericles has received will be their due whenever their encouragement of the fine arts tempts them to go further than the annual votes which they give with a grudging hand to the three museums of London. . . . And it will be well also if our future Mummiuses shall have been taught as schoolboys that works of beauty and skill have a value in themselves independent of their market price. (135)

One can perhaps sense in the above a dislike of the commercial orientation of the politicians and social leaders; men who inhabit prestigious and expensive surroundings, but who do not value their surroundings in the proper manner. Capitalism transforms human relationships and material productions into commodities. Poynter is trying to transform certain specified commodities back into 'culture' - a culture based on the private property of capitalism, but which, in its ideological form, is above class and price. There is often this contradiction inherent in the relations of capitalism, between the tendency for all human productions and relationships to be reduced to commodities with a market price, and the ideologies necessary to preserve a human face within such relations.<sup>136</sup>

The Expert: the Art Historian: the Art Critic.

A central feature of Poynter's argument is the insistence on the necessity for a specific form of knowledge, in order for any valid judgements to be made at all. This is an insistence, given that the knowledge in question is a pre-defined knowledge, on the right of the expert, and only the

expert, to know and to judge.

The art-historian-expert is a product of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; that is, the art historian is a phenomenon which emerged during the period in which an agreed upper class definition of 'taste' was becoming problematic. The 'expert' (commonly acknowledged as such) therefore replaced an upper class social consensus.

The 'expert', whether it be the art expert, or those present-day experts consulted on the television news bulletins on all political and economic questions, are important figures in a class society, for they contain, define, structure and limit knowledge. They define what is to be knowledge, and they define what is to count as 'sensible opinion'. Beneath the expert there is the amateur - lesser men and women within a hierarchical system of knowledge and the knowledgeable as defined by the expert.

The expert is a characteristic of the relations of production (material, social and ideological) of social democratic forms of capitalism. The theoretical possibility of anyone becoming an expert is evidence of the democracy of knowledge and the pursuit of truth; the actual existence of the expert is in practice a denial of that expertise to all who are not also experts. And, finally, the very existence of the expert is a social materialisation of the division of labour and division of knowledge, for, to be an expert is only to know one field, and not to be an expert, is to know no field at all.

Within art the development of the expert has proceeded in a manner very alien to Poynter's intentions. For, in practice,

the art-expert has been divided into two: that is, there has emerged on the one side the art-historian-scholar, whose knowledge is immense, comprising the tiniest details of the biographies of individual pictures. The knowledge is factual and specific. On the other hand there is the art critic.<sup>137</sup>

The art critic is also, by training, an art historian. But the function of the critic today is to assess and judge contemporary productions, while the art historian details the past. The art historian and the critic could not remain one and the same because of the challenge posed by the revolution in the content of art that took place in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of this.

Were the critic and the art historian to have remained one, the judgements and ideology of the historian would have been called into question by the fallibility of his judgements on contemporary work as critic. The critic, therefore, has become a separate expert - an expert through his general knowledge of contemporary phenomena and through the technicality of his language. The critic abandons judgements founded in tradition, in favour of an exclusiveness of dialogue through which he displays an expertise others do not have.

Poynter's argument implies that the critic and the historian should be one; he was, perhaps fighting in the 1880s a rear-guard action, and losing. Styles were already diverging from the classical tradition within which and through which and as part of which the social relations of art had been constructed.

The Commission of Enquiry into the Royal Academy: 1863

Having taken our examination of the state art schools and the associated fine art ideology into the 1880s and the Directorship of the Art Division of the Department of Science and Art of E.J.Poynter, we shall now turn to the 1863 Commission of Enquiry into the Royal Academy "in relation to the Fine Arts". Here we shall examine not so much the Royal Academy itself - obviously the central subject of discussion in the document - but rather those statements relating to art in general, to the state and art, and to the then practice of the state art/design schools in their wider context. Through this examination I shall attempt to establish a clearer picture of the relationship between the Royal Academy and the state, and of the relationship between the Academy and the state art/design system.

The range of witnesses called before the 1863 enquiry make up an impressive list of leading figures in the art world at the time. The report is not only significant, therefore, in being another indication of the intervention of the state in matters of taste and art, but on account of the significance and experience of the witnesses.

A central concern of the Commissioners was the relation of the Royal Academy to the nation as a whole, and the function of the Academy as a propagator of good taste. Thus, pursuing the subject of general education, Sir Charles Lock Eastlake (President of the Academy)<sup>138</sup> was asked whether the Academy

ever considered whether it would be advisable to establish schools in connection with the Academy throughout the country?  
(139)

Eastlake thought this not desirable:

considering the field already occupied by the department of science and art in connection with the establishment at

South Kensington.

And, upon it being suggested that students of "considerable ability" from the provinces might therefore lose out, Eastlake pointed out that not only was there an Academy in Edinburgh, but that students of the Royal Academy were drawn from the whole country. The Academy was a central institution for the best students, and Eastlake was able to say simply, "Yes", to the question:

Do I rightly understand that your theory would be that the Royal Academy school should merely be a school for a superior class of artists who have already passed through preparatory schools? (140)

Eastlake therefore viewed the Academy as being not in competition with the state system, but, rather, superior to that system.

The question of what the fine art that concerned the Academy was, was touched on later in Eastlake's witness, when a discussion developed concerning interior decoration: Eastlake was asked whether he did not think that

in most new private houses you see a better style of decoration introduced than was the case 10 or 15 years ago?

Eastlake agreed with the question, but noted not only that the situation varied over time, but added that

it is a kind of decoration which does not come under the designation of fine art (141)

He thus differentiates fine art from other ornamental/visual work, but, more importantly, separates the concerns of the Academy from those being pursued in the state system, and by the South Kensington Museum.

The witness of Richard Redgrave, R.A., is of particular interest, he being not only a Royal Academician, but also the

"Inspector general of art schools, and referee in art matters generally" in the state system.<sup>142</sup> It was Redgrave, as predecessor to Poynter, who rebuked various masters of the state schools for becoming too involved in fine art and middle class wishes.<sup>143</sup>

At the time of his being a witness to the 1863 Commission Redgrave had been connected with the South Kensington system for fifteen years, also having had experience of teaching in the Royal Academy schools. On being asked to explain the difference between the Royal Academy and the state system he stated that:

The Government schools are from the first more elementary than those of the Royal Academy; they begin from the earliest point, teaching children indeed, in parish schools. They are principally occupied now in training art-teachers; and the teaching has an ornamental direction. I should say that the teaching at South Kensington would principally terminate where the Royal Academy would begin; that is to say, that after having trained the student to a point at which he would be qualified to enter the Royal Academy, from his having acquired a power of drawing, painting, or modelling, the instruction thus given is quite in an ornamental direction, preparing designers for manufactures. (144)

The above is perhaps an over-~~neat~~ distinction, coming from one who was both a Royal Academician and an inspector of the state system. The separation between the design side of the state system, and the fine art practices of the Academy, was, as we have seen, not so readily accepted by those working within the state schools, nor easy to maintain in terms of the definitions of art and design. Not did this distinction between the state and Academy system operate neatly, of course, given the numbers of middle class female students attending the state system.

Redgrave, however, again emphasises the differences between the state system and the Academy, when asked if it would not be a good idea if some of the prizes given by the Royal Academy were not also open to students of the state system:

We do not wish to make artists of our students. We wish them to continue as teachers, or in the practice of ornamental art, and if you opened the higher prizes of the Academy, these higher prizes, which are for works of fine art, would lead our students to become artists. (145)

That the state student should be able to become 'artist' was, of course, what Haydon had campaigned for, and what Ewart, as parliamentary advocate of a state system, had argued for. Notice, however, that in Redgrave's statement the teacher of art and the practising artist are not, in any sense, the same person. And, given that the two roles are seen as separate, it is possible to understand how Redgrave's analysis fits in with Cole's utilitarianism, within which art can be seen as a body of codified knowledge to be taught - and in Redgrave's case taught by one who is not necessarily a practitioner.

The insistence on students not being artists, and the denial that Academy prizes would be a good thing for state students, is hard to explain unless we see Redgrave as either speaking as a spokesman for the state system in a situation where he feels the need to justify state expenditure in practical (utilitarian) terms, or as a Royal Academician not wishing to see a less exclusive system competing with the academy. If the former is the case, it is clear why the increasingly art orientated nature of the state system is not mentioned, and why the important element of fee paying middle class students are left out of his account. Administratively it may have been that the middle class fee-paying students were considered to be only a marginal element in the schools.

However, having denied that the state system is intended to produce artists, Redgrave makes a later rather modest statement which little conceals not only his pride in the South Kensington (state) achievement, but implies that something more like artists



than earlier stated were being produced:

I should say that our system differs from the system of the Royal Academy in one thing, and that is, the continual test examinations. The students are from time to time brought up to examinations, which they cannot shirk, and which we find that they mostly go through satisfactorily. We take our standard so accurately that they all come out with something like the same amount of training. I do not mean to say that we make geniuses, but we give them a thorough knowledge of the reading and writing of art. (146)

The purposes of Redgrave's distinctions between the training of artists, and the teaching of art, is expressed most clearly in a later statement, when, talking of the state system, he declared that:

Our functions are not to create artists, but to educate the whole country as far as we can in art, in order to cultivate public taste and thus improve the national manufactures. (147)

It may at first sight seem strange that he could publicly discuss the education of hundreds of students in art, while at the same time talk of withholding from these students being 'artists'; moreover, while withholding from these students 'being artists' he could nevertheless see this as a way of educating public taste (and thus improving manufacture). Redgrave is in fact distinguishing between knowing about, practising, applying, and teaching art. It can be seen that these sorts of distinctions are, in fact, simply an extension of those divisions within art and between art and not-art that were constructed through and as part of the Renaissance and post-Renaissance periods in Italy and the rest of Europe.

Moreover, it is commonly accepted today that a student may read English literature at university, and qualify as someone who 'knows about', but is not necessarily able to practise literature. In the same sense art had become something in which 'taste' could be divorced from practical understanding,

and teaching could be divorced from the ability to 'do'.<sup>148</sup>

It is significant for our purposes, however, that a formula that linked art, taste, and manufactures, but which excluded the creation of 'artists', was one that could be presented as acceptable in terms of state provision in the 1860's.

Improving taste meant both improving manufactures and improving morals: this was a legitimate concern of the state. For Redgrave the supposed relation between art, taste, and improved manufactures had an economic rationale, for the assisting of the national economy was a concern of the state. Redgrave stresses the moral/behavioural aspect of taste less than, for example, Poynter. Thus, when Redgrave was asked if he did not think that the South Kensington system should not act as a preparatory system for the Academy, he replied emphasising what he saw as the distinctive concern of the state:

I do not know why the Government should pay for the training of artists in any way. Our duties are to train men as art masters, and as designers for manufactures. We especially avoid training artists. We cannot prevent our students going into the Academy, but it is not our business to train them for that purpose. (149)

As we saw earlier, it was non too easy to prevent people gaining an art education through the state system, especially given that certain provincial schools saw themselves as art schools, and given that the system was supported by fee-paying fine art students. Moreover, Henry Cole talks, towards the close of his career, of the system as an 'art' system. Perhaps it was not yet possible to acknowledge publicly in 1863 that the state was in fact involved in an art training system that did train some artists: as I indicated earlier, the middle classes only came over time to begin to use the state,

under the banner of 'national' provision, as a provider of services and facilities for the middle classes.

### The Royal Academy as Social Control

The recurrent concern of political and social leaders with the standard of taste and judgement, and how this was to be regulated or controlled, arose yet again when David Roberts, R.A., was a witness before the 1863 Commissioners.<sup>150</sup> Roberts was asked whether a body embracing the best

sculptors, architects and painters, and also non professional members, might not be of use as a body of referees on questions of public monuments and improvements in the metropolis and elsewhere in the Kingdom. (151)

It is the concept of 'referee' that is here revealing. For urban development, and multiple and competing architectural and aesthetic styles, were part of the full effects of industrial capitalism. Technology gave the ability to build in any fashion; imperial conquest gave a knowledge of a world-wide variety of styles; the rise of the middle classes, moreover, meant a much wider set of individuals creating and disputing the nature or content of taste and culture - this 'wider set of individuals' being untrained in the cultural strictures of the eighteenth century.

Technology itself had made possible a new architecture of engineering in steel and glass, as employed in some railway stations, and, with great effect, in the Great Exhibition of 1851 itself. Moreover, beyond all these phenomena, and outside the orbit of civilised cultural considerations, were the packed back-to-back terraces of the industrial working classes.

It is in this context that a referee was seen as being

Necessary. It was not a 'regulator' or 'controller' that was required, for that would be the anti-thesis of bourgeois democracy, within which it was authoritative advice and arbitration that was offered, or that, at least, was 'offered' to those of sufficient breeding to accept and understand.

David Roberts, as witness to the enquiry, took their Lordships' view, and agreed that a competent body to which all public works and public monuments might be submitted was required. On being further pressed as to whether he did not think that the Royal Academy (reconstituted to include not only the best sculptors, painters, and architects, but also the best non-professional men - i.e. non-artists) might not fulfill the role of referee, he argued that no body could be better than one including the leading men of the Royal Academy. However, he added;

The only difficulty which weights with me is non-professional gentlemen having to sit in judgement upon the works of painters sent in for exhibition. With the exception of that, I am in favour of your suggestion. (152)

The idea of excluding non-artists may seem not unreasonable in terms of present day ideas about professional self-management and the competence of the expert. It must be remembered, however that Roberts is talking of an Academy which, while 'private', is said to have an influence and importance and responsibility which is 'national', and whose function the Commissioners had just suggested should be expanded to include being 'national' referee on public taste.

We are familiar with the idea of the 'professional' in the sense of doctors and lawyers, who operate within an ideology of public duty and service, and who, because of their

'vocation' and expertise, are organised within self-managing professional bodies: this is in fact what was being suggested for the Academy by Roberts. The idea was never put into effect in that form, of course, but the possibility of its being discussed seriously, and that fact that the discussion took the form of reference to professional competence and exclusiveness, indicates something of the position of High Art within a hierarchy of knowledge and professionalism.

The professional may, with every justification, appeal to the evidence of his own expertise as a defence against his being controlled by others that he distrusts: this is a tendency observable in many groups in relation to the existing state and forms of authority. But, the other side of such appeals to professional expertise is 'non-professional non-expertise'; that is, professionalism implies the inability of others to judge and decide upon those issues claimed as the distinctive field of the professional. Thus the social limitation of knowledge is implied.<sup>153</sup>

During the witness of Alexr. J. B. Beresford Hope. B.A., F.S.A., M.P., the theme of a central regulating body, and who should control such a body, was raised yet again. Hope<sup>154</sup> was a politician and author, Tory M.P. for Maidstone between 1841 and 1852, and 1852 and 1859. Between 1865 and 1868 he was M.P. for Stoke, and for Cambridge University from 1868 to 1887. He inherited Lord Beresford's English estates in 1854; he was founder of a missionary college at Canterbury, and "built" All Saints Church, Margaret Street, London. In 1855 he established the Saturday Review with H.D. Cook as editor;

he was President of the Institute of Architects between 1865 and 1867, and was a Trustee of the British Museum and the National Portrait Gallery. His publications included 'Hymns of the Church Literally Translated' (1844), and 'The English Cathedral in the Nineteenth Century', as well as two novels.

These notes form both a background to his witness, and a context within which to locate his statements. Hope is just one of numerous nineteenth century back-bench M.P. s who, through a long parliamentary career, had considerable effect and influence in the construction of the nineteenth century state, through pursuing a variety of concerns consistently over many years, both inside and outside parliament.

Hope was of the opinion that the art movements of recent years did require "some central regulating influence",<sup>155</sup> but he was highly antagonistic to "a strong movement going on" the effect of which

would be to place the central regulating influence under the direct and unchecked control of the Government, and make in fact a simple department of the State. (156)

Hope considered that such a development would be;

very dangerous indeed in its influence. (157)

Continuing, he expressed that combination of mistrust for the state with recognition of its necessity and usefulness, which is a familiar ingredient of nineteenth and twentieth century discussions of the state in relation to art and culture (as also in many other fields). Thus he stated that:

While it is well that whatever Government attempts on behalf of art should be more systematically and better regulated than at present, it would be fatal if this were to lead to free opinion and free work being subordinated to bureaucratic authority.

Hope, therefore, sees the state as a very problematic phenomenon: He makes clear that recurrent fear that the bourgeois state could somehow turn on the bourgeoisie and corrupt bourgeois values and freedoms - a fear of their own frankenstein.<sup>158</sup>

This combination of fear of the state and recognition of its necessity is a reflection of the struggles going on among the upper classes, and between the upper classes and new rising classes. The struggles were (and are) about the nature of the power to be exercised, and the way that that power was to be directed, constructed, and perceived. The struggles among the upper classes can be seen as struggles over how to suppress some alternatives, and promote/provide others, and over how to divert revolutionary potentials into reformist channels. Part of this struggle is a struggle between the options of moral leadership (we might call this a form of ideological domination) and the options of direct state control through state departments, legislation, physical force, and so forth. In the 1960's and 1970's such struggles over the state and state policy can be seen manifested on the gross level in the alternatives of either 'nationalising' the working class (Industrial Relations legislation) and 'nationalising' industry and investment (National Enterprise Board, etc. ), or, the moralising involved in concepts of 'freedom and responsibility', 'national interest' and 'social contract'.

In the field of art and culture in the nineteenth century we have already seen that the Royal Academy was seen as providing a form of 'moral' leadership/control, while the state had intervened directly in the promotion of technical training and taste among the artisan class, and in relation to fine art for the middle and lower middle classes.

Beresford Hope expressed a central tenet of bourgeois democracy when he gave his opinion to the Commission, saying that;

Self-elected corporations keeping the administration in check is of the genius of the English constitution. (159)

Beresford Hope is thus different from William Ewart, M.P., who argued for more direct state intervention. The consequences of both men's arguments, however, would have been similar in relation to the 'public' or the working classes: in both cases ways were being sought to channel, control and guide action through the limitation of certain possibilities, and the opening up of others.

The specific meaning of Beresford Hope's position is made clear when he stated that regulation in art and culture should be carried out by

Some body that should be elected by the artists and lovers of art, and which should be independent of the changes of administration and political under-currents. (160)

Such a body, however, should be able to utilise state power:

there ought to be a department of the State, which should combine the artistic half of the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education, and the artistic half of the Board of Public Works. There should be, in short, a Minister of Arts and Works; (161)

The Minister, however, would not be free to do as he pleased;

when this Department of Arts and Works has been created we shall then want to keep the new minister in check by a central regulating body for the various art movements of the country, which should be independent of the Government of the day. This central body I should look for in the Royal Academy, changed and strengthened.

This is a subtle arrangement, and worth looking at closely, for these statements embody what I am almost tempted to call the 'essence' of bourgeois democracy, especially in relation to culture and the arts. And, lest it be tempting to



dismiss Beresford Hope and his arguments as being merely of the nineteenth century, and peculiar to one back-bench Tory M.P., may I remind the reader that Beresford Hope has given an almost perfect account of the ideology and arrangement through which the 'independent' Arts Council, and the 'government' minister for the arts, operate together in the 1970's.<sup>162</sup>

Beresford Hope is arguing that the arts must be independent. In fact we quoted him as saying earlier that it would be "fatal" if the state were to direct policy. 'Independence', however, means that the most respectable and exclusive body in the field of the arts (The Royal Academy) shall be strengthened and given greater influence. Being 'self-elected' and composed of professional artists and 'experts' the Academy so constituted would have all the appearances of a democratic meritocracy. It would be the Academy as we have described it so far, but with a little more added in terms of its 'national' and 'public' role as a regulator of taste.

And Hope is very keen that there shall be such a 'regulator': there must be order, which, in effect, means there must be order as defined by particular sections of the ruling classes.

A 'laissez-faire'<sup>163</sup> system incorporating the ideological and social power of a respected body (The Academy) is not, however, sufficient. Beresford Hope also wants the legislative and active power of the state, as embodied in a minister, so that, where the 'subtle' control of the strengthened Academy fails, the state may intervene.

We noted earlier that the state cannot be seen simply as a limited set of persons holding official positions within

a 'state' organisation. Beresford Hope's discussion illustrates again what it means to include in discussions of the state bodies that are notionally 'independent' or private. Policy making, public propaganda, and a range of activities are embodied in Hope's conception of an extended Academy: behind this Academy, however, lies the full power of the state. A state which he would presumably hope will need to intervene as little as possible in a direct sense, but which is there as a threat, as a way of channelling resources, and as a way of defining and guarding the boundaries as to what shall and shall not be possible.

In the context of another discussion with the Commissioners Hope is in fact revealing of the ways in which the ruling class and/or the state can effect this opening up of certain possibilities, and limitation of others, so as to control and define specific areas of social life. The discussions I refer to occur when Hope indicated that he resented the accepted hierarchy of the arts, within which painting was considered to be the highest branch. He wished to

allow sculpture and architecture to have a greater amount of representation. (164)

For, as an architect, Hope was sensitive to the variety of industrial crafts which play a part in building and manufacture.

He therefore wanted to

admit various branches of art which are not strictly painting, or sculpture, or architecture, such as enamelling, the ceramic art, metal chasing, wood-carving, and many things of that sort which have excited a great deal of public attention, which have been the speciality of the three great international exhibitions of the last 11 years, and which are every day more and more claiming to be recognised as art and not merely manufactures.

Hope wanted to see these activities brought within the scope of the Royal Academy. Already these activities were within the scope

of the state system; Hope was proposing, therefore, that in addition they be stamped with the seal of approval of the Royal Academy.

The workmen to be brought within the orbit of art were a very specific group;

it is very worthy of notice that a class of subordinate artists is gradually rising from the class of superior workmen. Men who were mere workmen a few years ago are getting more and more artistic with the growth of public taste. (165)

Hope suggested to the enquiry that a third class within the Royal Academy should be created, below the classes of Royal Academicians and Associates. This third class should be the aforementioned workmen. Perhaps, he argued, prizes or certificates or degrees or diplomas should be given to them. He wanted their work to be recognised, and argued, that if such work was recognised, the specified workmen would no longer be satisfied with turning out smooth mediocrity.

Sir E. Head, in a question to Beresford Hope, summed up precisely why Hope considered that this particular class of workmen should be recognised as artists:

If I apprehend your object rightly it is that the Royal Academy should take hold of the element of art which exists in these handicraftsmen, and by taking notice of that, and stamping it with approbation, they should encourage the growth of that element in other handicraftsmen? (166)

This is exactly what Hope meant (as he agreed). Skilled workmen would become third class Academicians - thus above their own class, but below real artists. "Stamping it with approbation", and to "take hold of that element of art", and, by "taking notice . . . they should encourage" - these are the tactics whereby the activity was to be defined and channelled. Through the simple device of diplomas, recognition and prizes, the ruling classes would transform certain forms of manufacture into

a sub-class of art, thus making less possible other developments.

In effect, therefore, Hope is saying that wherever there is evidence of creativity and skill in ordinary work, this work should be abstracted from general work, and called third class art; that in itself is to form a division between the art aspect of such manufactures, and the functional aspect. Art becomes a self-conscious extra - something unusual. Quality and creativity are therefore not to be seen as normal in manufacture.

These ideas of Hope were not put into practise in the nineteenth century in that form. The Royal Academy did not become the umbrella organisation he argued for. Rather it was through the concept of 'designer' that his conception was to take on a social reality. Beresford Hope wanted to call his third class Academicians "working artists"; this is in fact what designers were becoming. A designer was becoming the person who 'artistically conceptualised, while others manufactured: the 'art' was thus separated from the 'making'. But it was the state that was initiating and developing this role of 'sub-artist' and that was to develop the original function of the Royal Society of Arts<sup>167</sup> as a giver of prizes, diplomas and awards to selected classes of skilled workmen.

It was in the 20th century, moreover, that Hope's conception was to be developed through the Design Council, as the third of the three state agencies covering Arts, Design and Crafts, the Design Council fully embracing and promoting the idea of the "working artist" in the role of "designer".

The Commissioners on the 1863 enquiry collected a great deal of evidence from a variety of persons, but the actual

report they submitted is disappointing in being both uncommitted, and mentioning hardly anything of that said, discussed or commented upon by most witnesses. Beresford Hope is therefore a remarkable exception to this when his ideas are specifically discussed, and he is mentioned by name in a laudatory manner. This may indicate the extent to which his thoughts were in tune with those of the Commissioners. The reference to Hope is as follows:

We also recognise great value in the suggestion first made to us in the evidence of Mr A.J. Beresford Hope, that there should be a class of Art-Workmen connected with the Royal Academy. Looking to the intimate connexion between the Fine Arts and those of a more mechanical character, and the great importance of extending the influence of the former over the latter, we think that workmen of great excellence in metal, stone, wood, and other materials might be properly distinguished by some medal or certificate of honour conferred by the Royal Academy, and in certain special cases, become members of the Academy at least as Associates; each of those art-workmen might properly receive a bronze medal, and the appellation of 'Royal Academy Medalist.' (168)

#### Industry and Art: Culture and Industry: Taste and Morality

By examining now, on a more general level, the nature of mid-nineteenth century discussions of industry, culture, art and taste, we shall move towards an examination of the Great Exhibition of 1851, for that exhibition was a crucial moment in consolidating the campaign for bringing together art and industry, and in consolidating that movement which tended towards the creation of designed 'art goods'.

There are many strands and varieties of thought recurring throughout nineteenth century discussions of art, design, culture, and industry: furthermore, attempts to put conceptions into practice are various. Running right through the nineteenth century, for instance, there are forms of 'romantic' reaction against industrialisation. Certain romantic reactions

deplored industrialisation outright, attempting to belittle and condemn it: there is a second form, however, which accepted industrialisation, attempting or wishing to humanise it, or bring it into the service of a wider public. William Morris's thought is an example of one extreme of this variety, his 'romantic' reaction being constructed into what was also a very clear socialist critique of capitalism.

A second broad strand of thought is that relating to those campaigners who wished to advance commercial purposes, particularly in competition with French industry, through the uniting of industry and art.

A third form of thought evident in discussions of art is that within which the spreading of artistic standards, and the elevation of taste, is seen as being also the raising of morals: art would humanise people barbarised by the industrial revolution.

None of these forms of thought/argument existed in isolation: the ideologies were inter-linked, the most obvious linkage being that perceived as existing between the raising of taste and the inculcation of correct morality and the raising of the standards of industrial production (hence greater commercial success). The very personnel who engaged in these debates are not separable out into specific groupings. We have seen, for instance, that William Ewart and Beresford Hope both advocated different policies in the arts vis à vis the state, but that both forms of argument tended towards similar effects and purposes. Even the same person will exhibit different aspects of different arguments depending on the situation and/or the point in his life.

The philistine - the person who considers art a luxury, or an irrelevancy, or a purely personal matter not of 'public' concern - must never be forgotten in these discussions. Such a person does not write in art magazines, make frequent speeches about art, or appear regularly before Royal Commissions or Select Committees enquiring into art. But he is always present, and his presence is particularly important in parliament. State action is not the result of one group taking an initiative; it is rather the result of that initiative as received by, debated by, modified, amended and/or rejected by, a whole series of other groups.

A supreme example of what we have called the 'romantic' form of thought in relation to industrialisation and art is offered by Mathew Arnold. Writing in 1869 he argued that;

If Culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances, - it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr Bright and Mr Frederic Harrison, and many other Liberals, are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilisation is, to a much greater degree than the civilisation of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform because here that mechanical character, which civilisation tends to take everywhere, is in the most imminent degree.(169)

For Mathew Arnold<sup>170</sup> therefore, industrialisation is the crisis that makes more culture necessary. This is a variant of an argument we will be familiar with from more recent times, as in, for instance, the Second World War when the 'Committee for the Encouragement of Music and Art' was set up as a morale booster. Recent statements by Norman St John Stevas, M.P., and Shadow

Minister for the Arts, in which he advocated greater spending on art and culture in the context of economic recession and decline are also of this type.<sup>171</sup> Mathew Arnold, those involved in setting up C.E.M.A., and Norman St John Stevas, are all seeing 'art' as, in some way, an anti-dote to a catastrophe, and something which uplifts and fortifies in times of crisis - whether this crisis be industrialisation, a major war, or an economic recession.

For Mathew Arnold, however, the argument goes much further: he observes first that

Everyone must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end to the greatness of England. (172)

Such an argument, Arnold states, cannot be true, for

Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest and admiration.

And it therefore follows that;

If England were swallowed up by the sea tomorrow, which of the two a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind, - would most, therefore, show the evidence of having possessed greatness - the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal were very little developed. (173)

Mathew Arnold is, of course, quite correct in his implied answer that Elizabethan culture is more valued, in bourgeois terms, than coal, or the thousands who have-died for coal. This is strictly according to a scale of values still operating. Few children leaving school today, for instance, would know more about coal and the struggle for coal, and the central part played by coal in the industrial revolution, than they do about some vague notion of Elizabethan culture through at least the name and reputation of Shakespeare. Within



education the name of Shakespeare towers gigantically over all else as an English achievement, whereas the industrial revolution, what it was and what it achieved, is not only often secondary, but is merely something that 'happened' to happen first in the British Isles.<sup>174</sup>

Mathew Arnold placed art and culture far above industry; a more powerful intellectual campaign in the nineteenth century was that within which a uniting of art and manufacture was sought. A limited number of journals reflected and catered for this line of thought. The most important of these was the 'Art Union', which was first published in 1839, and was dedicated in the 1840's to Prince Albert, the then President of the Commission on Fine Arts.<sup>175</sup> The magazine pursued the union of art and industry, and was the only major publication concerning itself with the two together, rather than with only art, or only industry and industrial design. The title was later changed, however, to the 'Art Journal'. A lesser competitor was the 'Journal of Design and Manufactures', published between 1849 and 1852, this being the magazine edited by Henry Cole.

The 'Art Union', having a sale of 1,000 on its first issue, had reached 7,000 in 1846, and 15,000 in 1847 - a considerable sale for such a magazine.

As a magazine committed to the union of art and industry, it is particularly worth looking at, for it illustrates the terms upon which such a union could be proposed; we shall see that the magazine operated within the ideology and definitions of art, work and manufactures that is being examined in this thesis. For instance, when it was argued in the magazine that;

There is, then, nothing derogatory to the highest Art in lending its aid to decorate objects of utility (176)

The statement can be seen as implying that very division of labour we have been discussing. "Art" shall lend its aid to "decorate": it shall not be 'part of'. The statement is, moreover, highly defensive for a magazine with its objectives: thus "There is, then, nothing derogatory" implies that there might be - it might be thought that some people (Mathew Arnold?) would think that industry can do nothing but harm art.

Further on the sense in which art is external to manufacture is again emphasised;

Let us not be misunderstood; we do not wish artists to become the servants of manufacturers; we do wish them to become their friends and allies; (177)

Not simply "friends and allies", however, but "friends and allies" in effecting the moral purpose of art: for the manufacturer and artist are to be

partners in educating the people; in improving the tastes and consequently, the morals of the community; in developing the intellectual strength and the intellectual resources of the United Empire. (178)

The moral purposes of art, within the terms of the ruling classes, could not be more succinctly put. But note further, that not only is the artist external to production, but he is friend and ally of the industrialist; he and the industrialist together will educate the people. This is a very elevated conception of the artist: - what other figure in industrial production could in such terms be called in to participate as an equal?

The 'Art Union' magazine was not always so distant from the realities of nineteenth century industrial production. It was fully aware, for instance, of what mechanisation had made possible;

a great but silent revolution has been taking place in the production and reproduction of works of art for more than a century. The whole tendency of modern invention is to

facilitate the multiplication of copies, and to perfect accuracy in copying. (179)

Despite the realisation of these possibilities, however, the conception of how the artist relates to manufacture remains totally one-sided;

The artist offers to the Manufacturer the conception which is sure to command the homage of the public; the manufacturer enables the artist to give his conceptions not merely a local habituation in material reality, but an existence which admits of its being known, appreciated, admired and applauded. (180)

Note here that the "conception" is separate from the manufacture; the mental is separated from the manual. Moreover, rather than the "multiplication of copies" altering the social existence of art, the effect is seen as being simply to extend an existing relation. In other words, a necessarily limited number of artists shall merely widen their audiences through utilising the possibilities of mass manufacture. The artist remains a figure who is both rare and apart: he neither enters into nor affects the process of production.

While the Art Union magazine is aware of what mass production makes possible, it is also, however, fully in accord with a way of thinking which has denied the implications of mass production to such an extent that the uniqueness and specialness of the 'original' has become central to the social existence of art. The concept of the original work of art (an original which may be identical to multiple copies) is a notion which has developed only as mass production has destroyed the basis for that uniqueness. That is, as technology has provided new possibilities, the concept and ideology of the unique original has been constructed, preserving the exclusiveness of art. The 'Art Union' magazine, for instance, reassured its 'noble and

wealthy' readers in the following manner;

The multiplication of the copies of a work of Art is an extension of the fame of the artists, from the applause of some score of amateurs to the honest appreciation of some thousands and perhaps millions of his countrymen. While the noble and Wealthy possess the splendid original in marble, alabaster or bronze, the value of that original is not deteriorated to the possessor by the multiplication of statuette copies; while the fame of the artist is infinitely extended, and his share in the education of his countrymen proportionally increased.(181)

The "original" in the above has been transformed from a materially unique 'thing' with a content and/or message, to a commodity which is possessed; as John Berger puts it;

the uniqueness of the original now lies in it being the original of a reproduction. It is no longer what its image shows that strikes one as unique; its first meaning is no longer to be found in what it says, but in what it is. (182)

#### Technology, the Reproduction, and the Original

The point Berger makes in the above quotation is central to any understanding of the social existence of art today. On the intellectual level the point is fairly straightforward and easy to grasp: I doubt if it is as easy to understand on a personal level. For example, while accepting the foundations for and implications of what Berger is saying, would we be entirely happy if, on visiting the National Gallery, we were told that all the works on the walls were in fact reproductions of the normal collection, which was away on loan? With modern technology this could be done: the entire collection of the Tate Gallery could be reproduced, and the originals sold so as to provide the finance for extending and enlarging the gallery. The images on the walls would be identical; the appearance identical. What would have gone?

It would be possible for contemporary artists to issue unlimited editions of prints, or reproductions of paintings, on the same basis as the Long Playing Record. Such work could be priced at a few pounds only, and be both easily available and provide an adequate living for the producer. I suspect, however, that were this to happen, the 'original' would still, before long, turn up at Sotheby's or Christie's, and would sell at fifty pounds, or five hundred pounds, rather than five.<sup>183</sup>

Industrialisation, therefore, has opened up new possibilities: it has altered the possibility of art, and has transformed the social existence of the original. The implications of these changes remain, however, socially unrealised. Something of this is expressed in the name of a shop in the 'Butts Shopping Centre', Reading; the shop sells high quality print reproductions and art-posters, and the name of the shop is, "But is it Art?"

Berger argued above that the meaning of the original now lies not in what it says, but in what it is; he asks further how the unique existence of the original work is evaluated and defined in our culture, and argues that:

It is defined as an object whose value depends upon its rarity. This value is affirmed and gauged by the price it fetches on the market. But because it is nevertheless 'a work of art' - and art is thought to be greater than commerce - its market price is said to be a reflection of its spiritual value. (184)

There is much more to be said on this subject, and I will be examining the art market itself in chapter six. The contradiction between what technology makes possible, and what, in our culture, is said about the original (the 'saying about' being part of the ways of acting, treating, valuing, selling, etcetera), is fundamental to the social existence of art today. It was in the nineteenth century, however, that the implications

of reproduction and the new technology first became visible, and it is in the context of these developments that we must situate the discussions exemplified by the Art Union Magazine, and the debate and energy associated with the Great Exhibition of 1851.

The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations

The Great Exhibition of 1851 was not unique in type, but it was unique in scale. As early as 1761 the Royal Society of Arts (then without the prefix, 'Royal'), had held exhibitions of agricultural and other machinery, with prizes offered for the best work. Since that date the promotion of industrial design, technique and invention had continued to be a major concern of the society. Thus, in the decade prior to the exhibition of 1851, small exhibitions of works of art and mechanical invention had been held, as in 1844 and 1845. These were not of themselves of great importance, except in so far as they were part of the movement towards the Great Exhibition itself. The Prince Consort had been elected President of the Society in 1843, and he was a leading figure in the general campaign for industrial design and art manufactures both within and outside the Society.<sup>186</sup> Under his leadership the Council of the Society of Arts had decided to offer prizes for "useful objects calculated to improve general taste",<sup>187</sup> and a number of such prizes were offered in 1846. The results were, on the whole, disappointing, except for a tea service designed by Henry Cole under his pseudonym of Felix Summerly, and manufactured by Messrs. Minton.<sup>188</sup>

An exhibition held by the Society of Arts in 1847 on its own premises again looked as if it might be unsuccessful.

The exhibition was of "select specimens of British manufactures and Decorative Art"<sup>189</sup> and was saved by the energy of Henry Cole, among others, who

drove about London in four-wheel cabs urging manufacturers and shopkeepers to send sufficient goods to fill the room.  
(190)

At its close the 1847 exhibition had been visited by 20,000 people. A further exhibition in 1848 attracted 75,000, and one held in 1849 was too large for the Society's own premises.<sup>191</sup>

The idea of the Great Exhibition of 1851 is variously attributed to Henry Cole, Mr Scott Russell (both members of the Council of the Society of Arts), and Prince Albert. The idea for that type of exhibition, however, is derived obviously from its precursors in the exhibitions of the Society of Arts, and similar foreign ventures.

In France state supported exhibitions of an industrial type had been held in 1798 (under the government of the Directory), and in 1801, 1802 and 1806, and then regularly from 1819 onwards. In England itself private exhibitions had been held in industrial centres, such as the exhibition of machinery and manufacture at Birmingham in 1849. In Dublin the Dublin Society had set up a triennial exhibition of art, science and manufacture, although this, until 1850, was limited to Irish products.<sup>192</sup>

The Great Exhibition of 1851 was distinctive not only in its size, but in its international character. It can be seen almost as a challenge by British manufacture to the rest of the world. In its scale and international character, moreover, the exhibition served as a monument to industry, and to industrial and art manufacturing techniques.

Finally the exhibition also served as a base for further developments - thus the South Kensington complex would not have been possible without the impetus given by the Great Exhibition, let alone the funds: the Exhibition established publicly the status of industry and industrial art, and the legitimacy of state and private involvement in these matters as important matters. The career of Henry Cole in particular was, as we have noted, considerably advanced by the Exhibition, as was the development of the design and art schools, which Cole was able to take charge of.

Historically, therefore, the Great Exhibition is a crucial moment in the establishment of a position from which the social relations of art were promoted publicly in the sense under discussion in this chapter.

Opposition to the Exhibition was considerable - not only to its conception and scale, but to its siting in Hyde Park. The siting in Hyde Park was not a minor consideration, for the location in Hyde Park represents the campaign for the public promotion of art, industry and public taste being brought to a central public site (i.e., not an industrial city, an out-of-town suburb), Robert Peel, the Prime Minister, agreed with Prince Albert that the Hyde Park site was crucial; the Times Newspaper, however, was one of the leading advocates of a different site. Peel died the morning of the parliamentary debate, and Prince Albert wrote to Baron Stockmar;

The Exhibition is now attacked furiously by the Times, and the House of Commons is going to drive us out of the park . . . if we are driven out of the park the work is done for. (193)



AmI, to the Duchess of Kent he wrote;

the whole public, led on by the Times, has all at once made a set against me and the Exhibition, on the ground of interference with Hyde Park. (194)

### The State and the Great Exhibition

Parliament did approve the site, and the plans for the Exhibition went ahead. The role of the state again merits close attention however.

Parliament set up a Royal Commission of Management, and made available a site: all donations and exhibits were offered virtually on trust, and on the assumption that the enterprise would succeed. This situation was, however, in accordance with the wishes of the organisers - Prince Albert heading a small committee of five, including Henry Cole.

The role of parliament, therefore, is one of 'making possible', by 'allowing' (giving permission for) the exhibition. Parliament 'appears' to have little to do with the exhibition: in fact its role is central in 'allowing' or being able to 'not allow': thus that which was to be publicly possible was ~~controlled~~ (decided upon) by the state.

Credit for the exhibition ever getting off the ground is often given largely to the Prince. This is another example of the ambiguity of the state. For the Exhibition was not 'organised' by the state in a formal sense: rather an 'independent' Royal Commission of Management including Henry Cole (a state official as a private person) and Prince Albert (husband of the Head of State) organises an exhibition which parliament has no involvement with after having initially made it possible.

The Queen herself gave considerable personal backing to the exhibition, visiting it not only thirtyfour times between her official opening of it on the first of May and its closure on the eleventh of November, but, also, eight times during January to May 1851 while the construction work was in progress.

#### The Success of the Great Exhibition

The Exhibition was a success. Over six millions visited it, and revenue from admission fees, sales of catalogues, and the sale of refreshments, came to about half a million pounds, this leaving a clear profit of about £185,000. The United Kingdom exhibition area was about 210,000 superficial feet, foreign countries occupying about the same, and the British Colonies a further 50,000, of which India took three-fifths. France took the largest share of all foreign countries, with the United States coming next.

A four fold classification was employed in the exhibition display itself, these being, in Prince Alberts words;

the four great classes of - 1. Raw materials; 2. Machinery; 3. Manufactures; and 4. Sculpture and the Fine Arts. (195)

In the fine art section oil painting, water colours, fresco, drawing and engraving were excluded. Only sculpture was included from the conventional fine arts. It was explained in the catalogue to the Exhibition that

The Exhibition having relations far more extensive with the industrial occupations and products of mankind than with the Fine Arts, the limits of the present Class have been defined with considerable strictures. (196)

In terms of art, therefore, only that which was connected with mechanical processes, and those mechanical processes as applicable to the arts, were admitted. Thus

Colour-prints and chromo-lithographs were admissable. Paintings as works of art were not, but if they demonstrated an improvement in manufactured colours they were admissable. Mosaics, enamels, ivory-carving, wood-carving, medals were also allowed. So, moreover, was sculpture. Marble statuary came well within the definition of mechanical processes applied to the arts. For many generations past, carving had ceased to be the work of the sculptor and had been carried out by skilled workmen using mechanical appliances. (197)

The aims of the organisers of the Great Exhibition were to stimulate British Industry, and to improve design. The first of these objectives was achieved: the second was less easy to assess. The Prince himself believed a follow-up exhibition was necessary for design and the general promotion of public appreciation of art. This exhibition, titled the 'Art Treasures Exhibition' was held in Manchester in 1857, the siting of this in Manchester indicating the perceived need to take art and taste into the industrial areas.

The success of the Great Exhibition of 1851 can be seen as the result of a combination of entertainment, amusement, and education. This combination of factors was continued when the Crystal Palace (the building specially designed for the Exhibition) was sold to a private company and re-erected at Sydenham as a permanent exhibition and pleasure garden. The combination of pleasure, entertainment and instruction was felt by many to be central to the elevation of 'the masses': this, it was felt, had been the success of the Great Exhibition, and continued to be the success of the re-erected Crystal Palace.

Lady Eastlake,<sup>199</sup> wife of Sir Charles Eastlake, the President of the Royal Academy, wrote of the re-erected Crystal Palace;

It is now a paradise of flowers and works of art. . . . If many make it only an amusement, it will be an innocent one; but, judging from myself, it must be an improvement and raise the whole standard of education. (200)

This is the 'soft' form of education and indoctrination that Henry Cole was to adopt increasingly - education through example, display and entertainment, with only a limited 'back-up' of direct instruction.

#### Henry Mayhew and the Great Exhibition

An illuminating commentary on the Great Exhibition was written by Henry Mayhew, Entitled "1851; or the Adventures of Mr and Mrs Cursty Sandboys and family, who came up to London to 'enjoy themselves', and see the Great Exhibition", the work is in part a satire on the attitude of the authorities to the working classes as attenders at the Exhibition. For our purposes, however, Mayhew's account is useful in illuminating how reforming radicals saw the Exhibition, and the perceived benefits of it for the working classes.

Mayhew discusses the extent to which cheap labour undercuts the higher paid worker, and, as a consequence, tends to drive quality goods off the market, the worker becoming thus forced steadily into the least interesting areas of and forms of mechanical work. In the following extract Mayhew argues that periodic exhibitions, on the lines of the Great Exhibition, will, through raising the demand for quality in work, improve the situation of the worker through his being employed on more 'artistic' activities, and less on unskilled work:

The sole remedy for this state of things /cheap labour leading to cheap goods leading to destruction of skilled labour/ is greater knowledge on the part of the public. Accustom

the people continually to the sight of the best works, and they will no longer submit to have bad workmanship foisted upon them as equal to good.

To those unversed in the 'labour question', this may appear but a small benefit, but to those who know what it is to inculcate a pride of art - to make the labourer find delight in his labour - to change him from a muscular machine into an intellectual artist, it will seem perhaps as great a boon as can be offered to working men. At present, workmen are beginning to feel that skill - the 'art of industrial occupations' - is useless, seeing that want of skill is now beating them out of the market. . . .

The antidote for this special evil is a periodical exhibition of the works of industry and art. Make the public critics of industrial art, and they will be sure to call into existence a new race of industrial artists... (201)

This is a particularly interesting statement both because of the type of social analysis involved, and because of the superficial (but unreal) resemblance to William Morris.

Note first the juxtaposition of 'muscular machine' and 'intellectual artist', illustrating the division of labour that art was part of. Mayhew is operating within the limits imposed by an acceptance of these divisions: Morris operates outside this debate. Secondly, while Mayhew may appear similar to Morris in his concern for the worker and the nature of work, Mayhew is in fact arguing that consumers should have control over production: that is, the 'public', educated through exhibitions of industrial art, shall call into being better work conditions through demanding higher quality goods. Worker's control over production and consumption (Morris) is very different from consumer control (Mayhew). In the late twentieth century we are well aware that machinery can as easily turn out goods manufactured according to existing canons of good design, as according to canons of bad design: the relations of production are not affected. No-one would now seriously argue that the 'Ideal Homes Exhibition' or the 'Which' magazine

have transformed the position of the industrial worker.

Mayhew is a 'radical' in as far as he is proposing the erasure of the division of labour separating the mass of the population (muscles) from the artists (intellects). The very fact, however, that he could attribute such wide-reaching effects to a consumer consciousness of design indicates yet again the extent to which concepts of 'art' had become inter-related with a whole range of other social phenomena (the ideologies and social relations through which production took place).

#### The Public Library, and the Public Museum

Through the Great Exhibition the debate on art and industry, public taste, and state involvement in the arts, was set on a new level. A victory had been won, and the state design schools for the working classes could be transformed into 'public' art schools: museums could be developed as 'public' institutions, and the Department of Science and Art (Henry Cole's dream) was made a reality.

I have referred already to the way in which state involvement in culture developed through the nineteenth century from being an involvement directed at the working classes to a provision for the 'public'. In order to illustrate this development in more detail I intend now to look at the development of public libraries. The history of the early public libraries is not within the scope of this thesis, for libraries take us into the realms of literacy, literary culture, and a whole new field of nineteenth century developments. Furthermore, libraries have been more extensively researched as part of the total social history of the 19th century than have any of the art-design

and cultural phenomena we have been considering.

However, in as far as the founding of, and legislation for, libraries was closely linked with museums and art galleries, it will be worthwhile considering a little of the early history of libraries in as far as this throws light on the sense in which early state policy on museums, galleries and libraries was directed at the working classes.

The first discussions concerning a rate aided library date from 1831.<sup>202</sup> The reference occurs in a letter from Charles Henry Bellenden Ker to Henry Lord Brougham. Ker<sup>203</sup> was an advocate of the popular diffusion of art and literature, and later was to be a member of the council set up to develop the design school system in 1836. Brougham<sup>204</sup> was at the time Lord Chancellor and a champion of mechanics institutes<sup>205</sup> and other forms of popular education. Both were members of the 'Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge', which Brougham had founded in 1826.

In the 1830's there was a variety of new M.P.'s from industrial areas concerned with 'public' provision and education. Benjamin Hawes, M.P. for Lambeth<sup>206</sup> (who was later responsible for having the British Museum opened on holidays) was one. He called for a report on foreign museums and public libraries, this being produced, and circulated in October 1834.<sup>207</sup>

James Silk Buckingham was M.P., for Sheffield for five years. In 1834 he secured the appointment of a Select Committee under his chairmanship to enquire into;

the extent, causes, and consequences of the prevailing vice of intoxication among the labouring classes of the United Kingdom. (208)

Benjamin Hawes was one of the members of this committee.

In its report the committee recommended regulations to control public houses, in conjunction with various forms of public provision of athletic facilities, walks, museums and libraries. The combination of control (public houses) with provision (athletic facilities, museums, etc;) indicates clearly the sense in which the state can channel and define activity through a double-action of making certain things less possible, and other things more possible.

Public houses were viewed by many sections of the ruling classes as breeding grounds for political sedition - a fear often euphemistically cloaked in concepts of drunkenness and vice. The fear of the public house was not necessarily misplaced, however. They were meeting places where both casual and formal meetings took place: later in the century, when a group of working men or women wished to meet for a political or trade union purpose, the pub would be the only place able to provide a meeting place in competition with church halls and public library rooms - the latter two locations being 'controlled' by the church or the municipality.

The public house, moreover, and also parks, libraries, museums and athletic facilities, should be understood as part of the development of the nineteenth century industrial city. The city is characterised by privateness; that is, it is a densely populated and built up area in which almost everything is owned by someone. In the nineteenth century working class terrace areas, where houses are small, the street is the only shared meeting ground. The existence of the public house, therefore,



is of special significance in working class city areas. It is a meeting place - often the only meeting place. It is, therefore, no accident that pressures for state controlled alternatives arise in parallel with the development of the public house. The remarkable thing about the report produced by Buckingham's committee is, in fact, the way in which the alternatives to public houses are grouped together, being seen as a total block of healthy and recreational activities. They recommended;

The establishment by the joint aid of the government and the local authorities, and residents on the spot, of public walks and gardens, or open spaces for athletic and healthy exercise in the open air, in the immediate vicinity of every town, of an extent and character adapted to its population, and of district and parish libraries, museums and reading rooms accessible at the lower rate of charge. (209)

Buckingham attempted to introduce three bills stemming from this report; one to regulate the drink trade; one to set up public walks, gardens and places of recreation in the open air; and one to facilitate the setting up of public libraries, museums, and the diffusion of scientific and literary information. The first bill was refused, but the second two were introduced, and not abandoned till committee stage.

The bill concerning public institutions envisaged halls for social gatherings of the working classes, small rooms for committees and societies, a lecture theatre, a library and reading room, and a museum and picture gallery.

Both Bills were brought forward again in 1836, and, in a combined form in 1837, failing both times. William Ewart had been brought into the campaign in 1835, speaking on behalf of the bill for public institutions.

It was Ewart who, in 1835/6, chaired the Select Committee

on Arts and Manufactures which recommended, among other provisions, the setting up of public museums and galleries of art. In 1839 Ewart was linking together, however, various forms of public provision in a general way much as Buckingham had done;

The public libraries, the public galleries of art and science, and other public institutions for promoting knowledge, should be thrown open for the purpose of inducing men merely by the use of their outward senses to refine their habits and elevate their minds. (210)

This conception was carried forward by Edward Edwards,<sup>211</sup> at the time a junior assistant in the British Museum Library, in an essay on 'The Fine Arts in England',<sup>212</sup> in which he took up points raised in Ewart's Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures.

It was in November 1844 that a meeting in Manchester led to the formulation of more precise proposals. These involved towns being able to support museums from a penny rate. Brotherton,<sup>213</sup> a member of the Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge, passed these proposals on to Ewart, and this led to the Museums act of 1845.

The act enabled councils of boroughs with a population of at least ten thousand to levy a halfpenny rate for the establishing of a public "museum of art and science" and to charge an admission fee of not more than one penny. Ewart presented the measure as part of the move for improved standards in industrial design, and, on that basis, it went through parliament with little difficulty.

Given that Ewart presented the bill within this framework (industrial design) there is little need to explore further why this bill passed relatively easily through parliament. The arguments are ones we are familiar with from the state design

school system itself. However, the setting up of museums is significant, in that this is an instance of 'soft' education (through example and display) rather than the direct method of schooling. Passed in 1845 this measure precedes the redirection of state art and design schools under Henry Cole's management.

Ewart introduced his Public Libraries act in 1850. Certain towns had already interpreted the Museum act of 1845 loosely, and had set up libraries on a limited scale. The new act was designed to make this clearly possible within the terms of the existing halfpenny rate.

The resistance to the Libraries bill was much stiffer than that encountered by the Museums act of 1845.<sup>214</sup> Some resistance was plainly misdirected - as, for example, that which objected to the bill on the grounds that further taxation would be involved. More significant was resistance to the very idea of a 'public' library as a provision for the working classes. The Museums act of 1845 could be seen as relating to industrial design, and therefore was a legitimate concern of the state. The Museums act united industrialists in as far as museums raised design standards; moralists, in as far as museums were an alternative to undesirable behaviour; reformers and educators, in as far as museums were seen as raising the level of education and useful knowledge. Libraries, however, appealed more specifically to those of a like mind to the members of the 'Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge', and, while 'useful knowledge' could be seen as having a long term economic good, knowledge in a printed form could also, it was feared have a subversive or politically undesirable effect.

This is an important point, because, as we have seen, art and industrial art was also seen as a form of knowledge. Visual knowledge and technical-industrial knowledge, however, is not verbal, and in this sense is different. Moreover, visual knowledge was (and is) defined and discussed within the terms of the social relations of art and the division of labour as constructed from the Renaissance through to the present day. That is, art is and was a part of the very division of labour and associated ideological discourses relating to upper class morality, taste, and self definitions. Words, by contrast, are dangerous.

This is a verbal culture: it is words that cut through the meaning of words, and words which are used to define visual experiences and art. An art gallery or museum, moreover, is a static building: the building and the displays within it in part define the meaning of art. By contrast a library contains individualised knowledge. A painting hung on a wall is part of a pre-defined environment: your relation to a book, by contrast, is private.

Generalised resistance to the bill on public libraries is exemplified by Colonel Charles Sibthorp, who, in a statement which is in effect a satirisation of the whole idea of state provision, makes very clear the sense in which the measure in 1850 was seen as one directed at the working classes: i.e., it was not at that time seen as a general provision for all classes.

Sibthorp

supposed they would be thinking of supplying the working classes with quoits, peg-tops, and foot-ball. They should first teach the people to read and write. What would be the use of these libraries to those who could not read or write? He supposed that the Hon. Member and his friends would soon be thinking of introducing the performances of Punch for the amusement of the people. The Bill was

wholly uncalled for. (215)

In general, while Ewart, Brotherton and others placed emphasis on the good that libraries would do for the working classes, opponents of the bill concentrated on the dangers of libraries being centres of agitation and disaffection.<sup>216</sup> When the bill was passed, the debates in town after town followed the same pattern - both supporters and opponents of the bill agreeing, however, that the new provisions were for the working classes, and not the general population.

In as far, however, as the libraries were for the working classes, they were also run by the middle classes. That is, the state, in its local form, was able to define and control what was to be available as 'free'. Not only is this power of defining the available implicit in a state library, however, but such provision is also a negation of any alternative. That is, working mens clubs and reading rooms and societies for reading are made less likely through the provision of alternative state facilities: for, if the state provides a 'free' or cheap service, there will be less support for alternatives which require of necessity considerable contributions from those with little to give.<sup>217</sup>

'Public' facilities are therefore alternatives to people's self-organisation. This is what the elevation of taste, morals and standards of education means, when taste, morals and standards of education are defined by particular sections of the ruling classes.<sup>218</sup>

The early libraries, as with the early design schools, were conceived of as being 'charity' - provisions for the working classes. It is not until the late 1860's and early 1870's that libraries come to be seen as general 'public' or 'town' provisions, rather than 'charity' or 'free' - i.e., for the working classes. This transformation from charity to public perhaps relates to the reform act of 1867 which further expanded the franchise, and the education act of 1870, instituting a 'national' educational system. 'Public' comes to be used as a concept to embrace all classes, and thus be above classes.<sup>219</sup>

Consideration of what has been said in this chapter

The argument of this chapter has been developed through the examination of a range of 'cultural' activities, all of which have involved the transformation of the socially exclusive social relations of art characteristic of the eighteenth century into something that was, in various senses, 'public'.

The contrast between the situation in the late eighteenth century, and the situation in the 1870's is quite remarkable. Not only was there little 'public' art in the late eighteenth century, but there were no public museums or galleries,<sup>220</sup> and there was no state art and design school system. Furthermore, despite the limited activities of the Society of Arts, the Great Exhibition would have been inconceivable. Art and industry was not a topic of general concern in the late eighteenth century, and the question of taste and morals, while important, was not a 'problem' in the sense that, in the nineteenth century, it was. Discussions, arguments and conflicts there were, but the answers were assumed to be known, and dissent was not a

fundamental threat.

In the nineteenth century, by contrast, art and culture became political. Not 'political' in the sense that the ruling classes saw them as political, but in the sense that art and culture were made 'public'; they became part of state and ruling class policy; art and culture became ways of defining, or attempting to define, the life experience of others.

So used are we now to the idea that art is a 'private' affair, to do with personal experience, that the significance of state intervention in design, art, museums, galleries, exhibitions, taste, and moral education, may easily be missed. But it was only during the space of four decades (1830--1870) that 'public' assistance for and provision of art and culture became and was constructed as a normal aspect of 'public' provision. All that has happened since 1870 in the way of state policy towards culture and the arts is nothing but an extension or modification of a pattern established during those four decades.<sup>221</sup>

The difficulty inherent in any attempt to understand the scale and extent of state involvement in art and culture in the 1830 to 1870 period is made all the greater by the way in which the reality of state intervention in these fields has been written out of our history. Green and Wilding, writing in consultation with Richard Hoggart, have stated that:

there was before the Second World War virtually no cultural action initiated by official government policy, with the important exception of the establishment of public libraries and museums by the Museums and Gymnasiums Act, 1891, and the Public Libraries Act, 1892. (sic). (222)

More significantly, perhaps, the Government White Paper, 'A Policy for the Arts -- the first steps', described state involvement in these fields in 1965 as being a 'new' social

service, in the following terms:

All new social services have to fight long and hard before they establish themselves. Only yesterday it was the fight for a free health service. The day before it was the struggle to win education for all. (223)

As we have seen, however, state involvement in culture was, in fact, established before either the national elementary education system following the 1870 act, or the National Health Service following the post war legislation.

Why state involvement in art and culture has been written out of our history is an issue I will return to in the next chapter.<sup>224</sup> The impact, however, of state intervention in art and culture in the nineteenth century is immense, for, not only were the social relations of art thus 'writ large' across the nation - propagated, reinforced and reproduced, - but the very scale of the operation rendered the impact of any counter definition or movement negligible.

But why? Why art and culture? Why museums and picture galleries established with greater confidence than libraries? And are not libraries more useful than picture galleries and museums? And why any of this when education, from the first state grants in 1833 until the 1870 act, was so limited?

It is not sufficient to answer these questions by saying that the Victorians were muddle headed, or that members of the 'Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge' would have put first things first had they not faced a reactionary opposition.

Whatever explanation is offered, part of it must involve an understanding of the ideology and social relations of art as developed from the Renaissance through to the 1820's, and



the sense in which this ideology and the social relations it was part of embodied a 'safe' and strong bourgeois set of values (safer than those values as embodied in and available through literacy), and embodied also images of skill, manual work and mental work, national and international heritage: concepts which in bourgeois terms are elevating and uniting, and which are conducive to the development of 'good taste' and 'morals'.

Furthermore, art is double edged, in that it is in part eminently useful, and in part eminently elevating. That is, it is useful to teach drawing for design, because design can be sold and money be made; at the same time, however, the artisan taught design also touches the fringes of fine art, and learns something of the achievements of the civilisation that his superiors are of. In other words those forms of production which the bourgeoisie have taken to themselves, and which have been exhibited and defined as art and as the greatest achievements of mankind, may indicate to the worker that there is something which he may not obtain, but may at least come to touch, and through which he may become a better and finer man. Art lessens the burden of the worker's squalor, and teaches him the values of the society he is part of; art legitimates and justifies and expresses the cultivation and sophistication of the upper classes who are the finest members of that society.<sup>225</sup>

I am not suggesting in the above that this is what actually happens; merely that this is what is implied as being supposed to happen in the sorts of material we have examined. Art did not transform the working poor into hard working protestant Fransiscan monks: that is not to say, however, that the working classes did not to some extent come to accept the

legitimacy of the ideologies and definitions of work and life implicit in art and the social relations embodying art as constructed as part of the division of labour under capitalism. I shall be returning to a discussion of the relationship between art and the people in the next chapter.

The creation of the industrial proletariat of the 1830's was viewed by the ruling classes with alarm; politically they were feared, and the panic among certain groups over the 1832 reform act indicates how great the fear was.

Developing capitalism created the proletariat, and also the resources for 'doing something about' that proletariat. We can separate out three basic ways in which the bourgeoisie could do something as the bourgeoisie - i.e., within the limitations of the social relations defined by the capitalist mode of production.

Firstly, they could repress and control the proletariat; secondly, they could ameliorate the conditions of the proletariat; thirdly, they could attempt to define and limit the possibilities of action of the proletariat. In taking any of these courses of action the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state is, of course, limited and constrained by its own existence in relation to the working classes: Capital exists in relation to Labour, and vice versa.

Defining and limiting the possibilities of action of the proletariat itself involves two distinct forms of action; the first is to create channels of action and experience for the working classes, as through libraries and elementary and art education and museums; the second is to project or construct certain conceptions of what civilisation and life are about - that is, to create standards, values and goals. This can be

done through the same institutions (libraries, museums, schools) as well as through great events such as the 1851 Exhibition, and other similar displays.

Repression and negation is the other side of provision and amelioration. Repression will be applied to that which is defined in ruling class terms as subversive or dangerous, whether this be a drinking club, a political organisation, or a corresponding society.<sup>226</sup> Repression is direct, through legislation and the courts, the police and the military. Negation of a possible form of action is more subtle, this following from the provision of an available cheap alternative to a form of organisation or institution being developed by the working class. Thus, if the local corporation provides an assembly hall as part of the local library or museum, and if this hall is generally and cheaply available for meetings, it follows that considerable effort will be necessary to raise the finance for an alternative hall to cater for that minority of meetings which the controllers of the library (the local ruling class) object to. 'Amelioration of conditions', as the second type of action the bourgeoisie can take to control the working classes, involves simply the removal of certain forms of working class 'distress', that is, removal of what are now termed 'grievances'; for a 'grievance', if acute enough, may breed political unrest. The provisions of culture do not generally come under the heading of 'amelioration of conditions' except in so far as 'public' facilities (libraries, museums, schools) may be seen as possible alternatives to private squalor.<sup>227</sup>

I am arguing, therefore, that in general terms, culture is part of a defining of perceptions and possibilities; it is the construction of a language and a hierarchy of values, and it is the legitimation of a particular set of social relations. The cultural is related to repression of the political, and the amelioration of living conditions. Essentially, however, the social existence of the ideologies of art and culture in the nineteenth century can be understood in terms of defining life, experience, values and achievements. Was not, for example, the Great Exhibition, as a national event, a powerful argument against socialism?

In differentiating above the different types and forms of state and ruling class action I am attempting to indicate how the state and private individuals became involved in promoting culture, and I am attempting to show how this makes sense in terms of a range of lived social relations which comprised a rapidly developing industrial capitalist system in Britain. The explanation cannot be offered in terms simply of the reforming zeal or good intentions of Ewart, Brougham, Hume, Cole, or any other individual. Rather we must see why particular proposals from these men were seen as legitimate areas for legislation and state involvement. Parliament was composed of more than reformers and radicals, and parliament was paid for through taxes; those who controlled the payment of taxes could control votes, and could exercise other forms of opposition. Thus the state could only intervene successfully where there existed some sort of consensus of legislators, industrialists, civil servants, local gentry, and so forth. Factory acts and inspectors could not operate simply because of a few 'enlightened'

men, and the design school system would have failed completely (as it nearly did) without the powerful support of a whole range of opinions and people, for reasons that varied, but which provided the conditions necessary for the building of such a system.

The design school system, in its development, illustrates well the sense in which such a venture is the product of the actions, initiatives, realisations and hopes of a whole range of persons - each of whom could only exist and work within and as part of the existing social relations. Ewart proposed legislation; Haydon campaigned for the system; but that legislation did not produce the system desired by Ewart and Haydon, for, not only was parliament and the state involved, but a whole range of other persons teaching in, financing, being students in, giving prizes at, and being part of, the developing art and design school system. As for Henry Cole, far from being a civil servant miracle worker, his achievement was based upon and was possible because of the success of the Great Exhibition. Moreover, it was industrialisation itself which had produced and posed the 'design' problem, and thus the very possibility of the design schools, or the Great Exhibition.

Conclusion: The Division of Labour further Constructed

The expansion of the nineteenth century state into the areas of museums, design schools, and the investigation of fine art and taste, resulted in and was part of the further development and consolidation of the division of labour - a division of labour that in this field involved a further differentiation of the mental and the manual, and the creative and the uncreative, at various levels. Thus the setting up of the design school

system was not merely a matter of responding to the perceived strengths and weaknesses of industrial design; it was also the creation of specialists in the production process separate from other aspects of making and producing objects.

A consequence of the development of the division of labour under capitalism was that the worker, over time, lost control over production. Through the division of labour an anarchy of purpose, design, fitness, etc., was produced, and the only testing ground for the appropriateness of the resulting product was the open market. This anarchy in production was the condition for further specialisation - a specialisation of 'design-control'. The state intervention in the design process can, therefore, be seen as an institutionalisation of this further division of labour, involving also an elevation of the specialist designer to 'specialist designer intellectual'; 'intellectual', because 'touched' by fine art.

In this manner, therefore, although design education was produced with the intention of bringing design into the production process, the effect was in fact to take design away from the producer, by making the designer yet a further specialist within the production process.

In general it could be said that the construction of museums, art galleries, exhibitions, and art schools, far from bringing art 'into' life, only served to emphasise the supposed (socially defined) differences between art objects and other objects; between art and life; between being creative and being uncreative.

In creating a class of specialist designers, moreover,

the state was fortifying the idea of design and the designer as an 'extra' - a commodity in itself. As William Morris pointed out, art had become merely something additional to objects, with an extra price value.

'Fine art', as a concept, is the most abstract of a series of concepts embracing, in descending order, art, design, craft, skill, technique, work, toil, and drudgery. The existence of art as a distinct speciality implicitly negates the qualities and activities denoted by the term 'art' in other activities or forms of production. It is for this reason that Mayhew's attempt to verbally reverse the usual uses of 'muscular machine' and 'intellectual artist' was so radical.<sup>228</sup> Mayhew, however, appears to have thought that the opposition of artist and workman was largely a matter of labels, and not fundamental to the social relations of capitalist production, as William Morris was to make clear.

The division of labour in production is a central part of the capitalist mode of production. Through the conceptual and physical segmentation of production life is individualised, and the potential control of the workers over their work is diminished. This 'individualisation' is exemplified in the idea of the artist, the scientist, or the entrepreneur.

Thus, when the nineteenth century state became involved in the propagation of fine art, design, and taste, it was involved in the reproduction and propagation of conceptual and productive divisions and relations fundamental to the capitalist mode of production in its development, and to the class divisions existing as part of that mode of production.

## Chapter Six

### Art and the State; 1939--1975

#### Introduction

In chapter five we examined the development of state intervention in and promotion of art and design in the period 1830 to 1870. In this chapter we are to examine a further expansion of state involvement with art and design in the years 1939 to 1975.

It is not being implied by this selective coverage of time that 'nothing' happened between 1870 and 1939. It is, however, being argued that both the period 1830 to 1870, and 1939 to 1975 witnessed a significant expansion in the type of state involvement, and that an examination of the two periods separately demonstrates a continuity in the ideology and social relations of art from the beginnings of state involvement in the arts to the present day.<sup>1</sup>

I have argued at various points in this thesis that in order to analyse the ideologies and social relations of art it is necessary to break down the separateness of the various institutions dealing with art: that is, one must refuse to treat art and design education, museums, art galleries, industrial art exhibitions, published books, talks and lectures, general education, the Arts Council, Design Council, Crafts Advisory Committee, and so forth, as distinct institutions. Rather these must be examined together and in relation one to another; for, not only are they all part of the promotion of particular conceptions of art, but it is arguable that no individual experiences the separateness that might be implied by a presentation of distinct



biographies of individual institutions.

The approach being adopted here involves both fragmenting distinct institutional biographies, and examining various statements on art, in order to situate and draw out the presuppositions involved, and the social relations such statements and institutions are part of. In this chapter, therefore, I shall be doing three things. Firstly, brief accounts of the history and development of various new forms of state involvement in art will be presented; secondly, I shall attempt to go behind the history and appearance of these institutions as presented by their own spokesmen in order to locate the institutions socially and historically, and examine what is actually being done, as opposed to what it is said is being done; thirdly, I shall examine statements by various leading figures within government and state sponsored institutions in order to demonstrate the presuppositions contained within such statements - i.e. to examine what is implied about the social existence, meaning, value and importance of art.

The first organisation I shall examine is C.E.M.A. - the Council for the Encouragements of Music and the Arts - the war-time precursor of the Arts Council. C.E.M.A. was in many ways exceptional in its policies, ideology and directness, and thus forms an interesting contrast to post second world war policy. Its exceptional character was, of course, made possible by the social political and economic dislocation inherent in a war of that scale - a dislocation which produced policies in many fields out of character with the peace-time state.<sup>2</sup>

C.E.M.A.

Dr. Thomas Jones was the "inspiration and, indeed, the catalyst of the Committee" (C.E.M.A.<sup>3</sup>). Jones had been involved in the thirties in 'Art for the People', devised by W.E. Williams, and carried out by the British Institute of Adult Education. This scheme had followed from the observation that nationally good art galleries were rare, and many pictures were in private hands. These pictures, it was felt, could be loaned for circulating exhibitions in small towns and rural areas. Thus, in 1935 exhibitions were shown at Swindon, Barnsley, and Silver End (an Essex village). The project thrived, and 'Art for the People' was successful.

Thomas Jones saw C.E.M.A. as further opportunity for the development of his project. Meanwhile,

Lord Macmillan saw it primarily as a scheme which would fortify national morale in the grievous trials of war, especially among those communities which, evacuated from the cities, would find themselves without occupation for their enforced leisure. (4)

In the early part of the second world war C.E.M.A. merely gave grants to other bodies. Within a year, however, the Committee was acting directly on its own initiative. Thus 'Music Travellers' were recruited - i.e., professional singers and instrumentalists "who went off on their own, like medieval friars, and gave concerts, assisted by local talent, wherever they could take an audience."<sup>5</sup> A "popular scheme of Factory Concerts, given by one or two players in the lunchtime and midnight breaks"<sup>6</sup> was developed, and the Hallé and Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras were subsidised to visit towns which hitherto had never been able to accommodate top symphony orchestras. This was in fact the first time in their history that these orchestras

had been able to operate on a continuous and full-time basis.

'People's Concerts'<sup>7</sup> were given in areas where workers were engaged on war work - as on Tyneside and in the Midlands. Before C.E.M.A. was a year old four hundred concerts a month were being supplied all over the country.

Similarly in the field of drama C.E.M.A. began to undertake direct sponsorship, having, by 1943, sixteen companies mobile, as well as various ballet and opera groups.

In the field of the visual arts C.E.M.A. expanded Jones's 'Art for the People' scheme. In 1940 over three hundred thousand people visited exhibitions in eighty villages and country towns. Many private owners lent work, and C.E.M.A. itself built up a collection of pictures, buying these at a fixed price of £20.<sup>8</sup>

Further C.E.M.A. activities included involvement in the promotion of post-war plans in architecture, town planning, and industrial design. Thus 'Art for the People' exhibitions on 'Living in Cities', and, 'The Englishman Builds' were put on. Furthermore;

British restaurants, which existed by the hundreds in those lean years were decorated with murals designed by Moore, Duncan Grant, Sutherland, Piper and others and executed by scores of volunteer art students. In British Restaurants, too, as in factory canteens and military camps, art was brought home to new customers by a widespread loan service of paintings and prints. Hundreds of thousands of people saw these things for the first time, in the last localities where such things were ever likely to be seen: even in air raid shelters and on barrage balloon sites. (9)

As with so much connected with art and the state in Britain, the beginnings of C.E.M.A. had been voluntary (private). Thus, despite official (state) backing, the first finance of twentyfive thousand pounds came from the Pilgrim Trust. Four months later the government, through the Board of Education,

matched this with a further twentyfive thousand pounds. By March 1942 the Pilgrim Trust withdrew, and all further finance came directly from the Board of Education. It was also at this time that John Maynard Keynes (later Lord Keynes) became chairman.<sup>10</sup>

#### Assessment of C.E.M.A.

C.E.M.A., embodied a radical departure not only from pre-existing forms of state art organisations, but also from the ideology of 'independence' within which state policy towards the arts had previously been framed. That is, C.E.M.A. pursued policies of direct control and sponsorship. It provided directly travelling musicians, opera, ballet, and orchestras, going not only into the regions, but into the smallest villages. In the visual arts, similarly, it went into rural areas and small towns with the concept of 'Art for the People' embodying highly democratic principles.

In its purchasing policy C.E.M.A. was breaking with pre-existing practices through buying paintings and other work at a flat rate of £20, and thus denying all the usual principles of the art-market with its inflated values and hierarchy of prices. C.E.M.A.'s placing of murals in British restaurants, and other public places, involved, moreover, the direct provision of art in 'everyday' places, this provision being a departure from the practice of confining art to galleries and the houses of the highest bidders.

Thus, by contrast to the practices and ideologies of art we have examined thus far, C.E.M.A. was innovatory in two ways: firstly it sponsored directly; and, secondly, it broke down the centralisation of the arts.

These two statements may appear to be contradictory.

In fact they are not. For it was only direct central sponsorship that made possible decentralisation - that is, that made possible the promotion of art in regions, villages, factories, restaurants, and so forth. I have already suggested that the 'laissez-faire' system of state control (i.e. where the central state (a) makes an activity possible through legislation and rates, and, (b) will give assistance to the locality pound for pound) tends in fact to preserve a form of provision that is (i) geared only towards that which the local power elite (financial, political and cultural) will support; (ii) tending towards prestige large-scale projects in major centres - in particular London. The 'laissez faire' system involves (in reality) central control, but not central provision. By contrast the direct provision, as practised by C.E.M.A. can by-pass the local power élite, and can 'de-centralise' from London through central control and provision.

The 'laissez-faire' system supports the freedoms of those with money, knowledge and position; direct provision and control from the centre makes possible the by-passing of these persons and groups and their freedoms, asserting instead the freedom of the consumer to consume, and the producer to produce; for a centralisation of administration can be compatible with a decentralisation of production.<sup>11</sup>

C.E.M.A. was developed during the emergency of the Second World War. It was that war which made it possible, for it was the emergency of war that meant that parliamentary commissions, enquiries, and the interests of many pressure groups within education and art, could be by-passed.

It was the dislocation of war that made C.E.M.A.'s success possible, and it was the demands of war that led to C.E.M.A. being an organisation that actually went to people, rather than it staying in London and giving the appearance of being for people.

### The Arts Council

In discussing the Arts Council, set up as the peace-time successor to C.E.M.A., it is well to bear in mind our earlier discussion of the ideology of the Royal Academy, and the need for some central regulating influence in matters of taste, as discussed in the last chapter. In particular I remind the reader of the witness of Alexander J. Beresford Hope, M.P. to the 1863 Commission of Enquiry into the Royal Academy.<sup>12</sup>

It is in the light of the sort of attitude towards art, freedom, and the state, expressed by Hope that we must understand the formation of the Arts Council, despite the war time experience of C.E.M.A., and despite a history of art in which the artist has rarely been independent,<sup>13</sup> and despite the consequences of a government agency refusing to do anything directly, being that the agency can only, in the end, become an organisation that (a) supports and reproduces the existing situation, (b) refuses to challenge the interests and involvement of the existing social, political and financial elites in art.

We shall examine the Arts Council through its own words, as it presents itself in the same report as that in which it so enthusiastically commemorated the activities of C.E.M.A.<sup>14</sup> Given the Arts Council's own self image, however, it is important

to bear in mind, in the following, that the Arts Council is, in fact, appointed by government, and is financed by government, and that its continuing success depends on government support.

For the Arts Council frequently stresses its own independence and non-governmental character. Thus

The Arts Council is not a government Department, and bears little resemblance to those Ministries of Fine Arts which exist in many other countries. No Minister directs its policies or decides how and to whom its grants shall be made. (15)

Within the same report (published 1956), however, the Arts Council offers a description of its own organisation which indicates a very different picture:

The Arts Council as constituted by the Royal Charter of 1946 consists of not more than 16 persons, selected by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, after consultation with the Minister of Education and the secretary of State for Scotland, together with separate and autonomous committees for Scotland and Wales. (16)

Furthermore:

A Treasury official sits with the Council, as an assessor; he is there to guide, assist or caution the Council on any matters of public finance. (17)

The grant to the Arts Council was at that time made through an annual block grant given upon an itemised claim - this meaning, for instance, that the annual grant to Covent Garden would not be available for the provinces at the discretion of the Council.

The above quotations make evident the double position of the Arts Council, apparent in much of its literature: it stresses on the one hand independence (not being like foreign government departments of art) and yet, on the other hand, it is evident that it is in fact controlled not only through its appointments, but even down to the allocation of money.

Most of the Arts Council finance, furthermore was (and is) spent on subsidies to 'professional' bodies; that is, the Council felt that its job was to maintain standards which exist in the professional field, and to leave amateur organisations to diffuse art in the non-metropolitan areas.<sup>18</sup> This conception of central professional standards 'diffusing' out and down is precisely the conception we saw offered by the Royal Academy in the mid-nineteenth century. Eastlake, we noted, rejected the idea that the Royal Academy should become directly involved in arts promotion, arguing that by setting an example, the raising of general taste would (somehow) follow. Similarly Joshua Reynolds in the late eighteenth century put forward the same idea.<sup>19</sup>

The Arts Council rapidly ran down the direct sponsoring inherited from C.E.M.A. Directly managed theatres were taken over by 'independent' management, and concert and ballet provision were also curtailed.

Only in the field of the visual arts did the Arts Council continue any services resembling the policies of C.E.M.A., continuing to mount circulating exhibitions to travel the galleries. This policy was maintained, however, on account of there being no non-state body that could take over such a major enterprise. However, the more direct and diffuse activities of C.E.M.A. (murals, exhibitions in small towns and villages, flat rate purchasing policy) were run down.

C.E.M.A. had operated through nine regional offices, as well as offices in Scotland and Wales. These offices had been necessary for an organisation directing and promoting activities throughout the country. In line with its policy,



however, of only promoting professional standards, the Arts Council gradually phased out the regional offices: three were closed in 1952, and by 1955 the remaining five English offices were shut. Three mobile officers (individuals) were substituted, and three more officers were established for the visual arts (one posted permanently to Manchester).

The professional standards that the Arts Council felt itself committed to maintaining and encouraging were, of course, those existing within professional bodies (axiomatic). Professional bodies within Britain are largely to be found in London, and therefore, in practice, the Arts Council of Great Britain tended to become primarily the Arts Council of London.

The Arts Council, in defending this position, attempted to argue that the position was, in some way, normal:

These changes do not represent, as some critics have declared, any doctrine of 'centralisation.' The Arts Council has been governed from the start by its committees in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff. The Regional staff, who worked so devotedly in their posts, were never designers or arbiters of the Arts Council policy, and the closure of the Regional Offices implies no change in the direction of Council policy. (20)

The closure of the regional offices may have involved no change in Arts Council policy; in as far as, however, these regional offices were inherited from C.E.M.A., a considerable change is involved in relation to C.E.M.A. policy.

A few general points can be made about the arguments presented by the Arts Council in the 1956 report - the report in which they discuss the history of C.E.M.A. in relation to their own activities.<sup>21</sup>

First, the Arts Council's account of C.E.M.A. is very glowing and complimentary. By contrast the subsequent section

outlining the development of the Arts Council itself is almost apologetic.

Second, the distinction between amateur and professional is accepted, in the report, without question or discussion, and therefore C.E.M.A.'s sponsorship of the amateur, described in the report, is taken as having arisen only from an emergency (war.). By implication, therefore, C.E.M.A.'s achievement in this field is avoided as a challenge to the Arts Council's practice.

Third, in discussing its withdrawal from the regional offices (inherited from C.E.M.A.,) the Arts Council's report is on the defensive. However, in discussing the withdrawal of direct sponsorship, that is, the reversal of C.E.M.A.'s policy and achievement, the concept of independence of the arts is invoked. Independence, that is, no direct state sponsorship, is seen in the report as being the healthiest situation for the arts, despite the success attributed in the same report to C.E.M.A.'s efforts in direct sponsorship. No attempt is made in the report to suggest why it is possible to see C.E.M.A. as having been successful when the policies it pursued were those that, in 1956, the Arts Council dismisses as being unhealthy and tending to reduce the necessary independence in the arts.

Fourth, the Arts Council report dismisses C.E.M.A.'s success in factory concerts and enterprises in out of the way places by arguing that the audiences were 'captive', and that, moreover, there was nothing else to do in the war. Also, the report argues, C.E.M.A. went to places which sometimes had never seen anything of the sort before, and hence, the report argued, it was a 'curiosity' that people came to see, rather

than the activity or performance for its own sake.

In total these references to C.E.M.A. constitute an attempt to avoid confronting directly the achievement of C.E.M.A. This refusal is very revealing; for, had C.E.M.A. not existed, the Arts Council would have appeared itself to be a massive and daring experiment despite its centralisation of performances and concentration on prestige areas of professional art. It would have been possible to talk of 'greater access' being made available for the arts, and the Council could have bemoaned the lack of a general public response.

Given, however, that the Arts Council was in fact retreating from the more general activities of C.E.M.A., the sense in which the Arts Council was attempting to re-establish ideologically and practically a more exclusive fine art and high art system is revealed. C.E.M.A. was an embarrassment; hence the confusion and condescension apparent in the 1956 report.

The Arts Council's Royal Charter of 1946 itself stipulated that the Arts Council should aim to maintain and improve standards. The Council, therefore, argued that national institutions were its first priority:

Covent Garden, Sadler's Wells and the Old Vic, then, as three national institutions endeavouring to provide exemplary performances in the metropolis are a primary responsibility of the Arts Council. (22)

In order to counter objections that these institutions (i) cost too much, and (ii) were in London, the Arts Council argued that, (a) a nation's metropolis should be the home of its major art, (as with the National Gallery and the British Museum); (b) it is natural and inevitable that Covent Garden, Sadler's Wells and the Old Vic should be in London; (c) the Arts Council did not

set up these institutions, but simply took over the best, which happened to be in London.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, it is argued in the 1956 report that, given limited resources, it was better that the Arts Council should support 'power houses' - i.e. centres of excellence where the arts could be built up and diffused, rather than subsidise empty seats in places showing little interest (i.e. the provinces).

In these forms the arguments presented are weak and incoherent; many élitist assumptions are evident. However, the arguments are actually no more than a restatement of the traditional view of High Art and High Culture; centres of excellence and the diffusion of culture from the centre and so forth are concepts we have seen common throughout the 19th century and before.

It is only the juxtaposition of the Arts Council with C.F.M.A., that makes the condescension and elitism so apparent, and which makes the decisions lying behind particular choices in policy so evident. For the Arts Council, instead of being able to adopt and build a 'laissez-faire' policy as a non-interventionist stance, actually had to dismantle the pre-existing structures; non-intervention became revealed, therefore, as a definite policy with real results.

It is because the reconstruction of the 'laissez-faire' concealed control ideology and practice under the Arts Council required the Arts Council to actually reverse an achievement and disestablish an organisation, that the empirical contrast is both so interesting and so revealing of possible alternatives in state intervention.

I do not wish it to appear that the Arts Council was engaging in no provincial activity; it was. It was the ratio between spending on London professional activities, and spending on other activities that aroused resentment in the early 'fifties, as it still does.

Furthermore, by the 1948 local government act, it had been made possible for local authorities to spend on the arts beyond the provision of galleries - thus to some extent it could be said that the 'regions' were being specially catered for. However, the Arts Council's comment on local government spending on the arts is very revealing of the Council's position and ideology:

Certain local authorities have shown an excess of zeal by providing concerts and plays under their own management, an endeavour which could seem to be---even if not designed as such---a movement towards l'Art Official and, on that ground, as dangerous as similar provision by a central quasi-governmental body such as the Arts Council.

For, above all, it was stressed, the arts must be self-governing:

In this country, at least, it has already been abundantly demonstrated that Government patronage and Local Government patronage can be exercised without any abrogation of the principle of self-government in the arts. (24)

The language in the first of these quotations is remarkably strong, indicating yet again the importance placed on the appearance of independence. The principle underlying the Arts Council view is that expressed so succinctly by Beresford Hope in 1863;

Self-elected corporations keeping the administration in check is of the genius of the English Constitution. (25)

It is in this sense that the Arts Council is stressing a 'laissez-faire' approach, implying the state giving assistance to the existing financial, political and cultural élites, while at the same time maintaining a disguised power -- the power of appointment and the purse string.

Consideration of C.E.M.A. and the Arts Council

The differences between C.E.M.A. and the Arts Council derive not so much from what each does, or did, but rather from what art is seen as being. That is, when the Arts Council talked of the necessity for maintaining high professional standards it was in fact making a statement about what art is: implicit is an idea that without the maintenance of high standards by professionals, art will, somehow, 'go away', or decline and wither. Implicit in the policies of C.E.M.A. is the idea that art is something that can be carried out in a more broadly based and physically diffused sense. It was able to do this on a very low budget. The Arts Council is expensive not because art as such is expensive, but because that particular conception of art supported by the Arts Council is expensive. A primary concern, for instance, of the Arts Council in the 1960's and 1970's is buildings; without buildings of a suitable standard, it is argued, art cannot be performed outside the major metropolitan centres. C.E.M.A. however, found buildings, and performed in places that do not have the cultural or physical splendour and space now required. Behind these differences, therefore, lie two conceptions of art: in one art is a jewel to be finely set; in the other it is something to be practised in all manner of places for its own sake.

Both C.E.M.A. and the Arts Council, however, prompted or promoted conceptions of art that lie on a narrow continuum. Neither challenge the concept and practice of art as such - as did William Morris. Rather C.E.M.A. was a radical

and popular experiment, and the Arts Council a more socially exclusive and élitist reaction.

C.E.M.A., it must be remembered, was set up as a 'morale booster'. That is, it operated and existed within that view of art so clearly expressed in the nineteenth century, which saw art as an alternative to drunkenness, loose behaviour, laziness, and unwanted political activity and divisions. Thus art, as something 'national', could unite the nation; it was above class, and could elevate, unify, and boost morale.

#### The Arts Council Continued

In 1961 the Arts Council returned to the discussion of the dangers of state control.<sup>26</sup> It argued that

It would be wrong on all counts to nationalise theatres and to make the provision of theatres and concert halls a Government responsibility, although there are evidently ways in which the Government could and should stimulate local initiative, e.g. by enabling the Arts Council to contribute on a limited scale to new building projects by, say, equipping a new municipal theatre with a stage lighting system. (27)

And the report commented approvingly that

Local Authorities as a rule are widely refraining from assuming the actual management of orchestras and repertory companies, and are leaving these duties to self-governing boards or trusts of local people on which they seek no more than a token or minority representation. (28)

Fearful as ever of state control, the Arts Council report went on to stress the need for what it termed 'corporate responsibility':

Patronage should disclose, so to speak, a molecular structure of representation; it should be shared by individuals, local and central government, voluntary bodies, industry, and the universities. The makings of such a combination of forces are there, but so far they have rarely come together in a unified effort in any city or region. Examples of corporate responsibility for the arts are rare in this country. (29)

In the above the Arts Council is seeing two things as

being in opposition to one another; on the one hand central or local bureaucratic control, and, on the other hand, 'corporate responsibility' (universities, industry, voluntary bodies, and 'individuals'). The latter, it is implied, embodies freedom; the former non-freedom (l'Art Officielle, as they called it in the 1956 report ).

The presentation of the argument here serves to give the impression that these two forms of control are at two ends of a spectrum embracing all the possibilities. On the one hand we are offered the state (by definition, it is implied, a 'dangerous' thing), and, on the other hand, loose associations of interested parties (the local and central political, cultural and social ruling classes). The argument thus implicitly denies that which the experience of C.E.M.A. showed to be possible, i.e. the sense in which central state control can be a way of making art more 'democratic'. Not only did the central state control of C.E.M.A. make possible a decentralisation of performance and display, but it made it possible to go to audiences (and to involve audiences) who did not have the cultural or financial or political background and position necessary under the Arts Council 'corporate responsibility' system. A system such as that set up under C.E.M.A. does not preclude individual action and initiative, as the Arts Council implies. On these lines the Arts Council argued in 1961 that,

The inherent danger in State and municipal patronage is that it could diminish the precious sources of strength which lie in the good citizen's (sic) recognition of the value of the arts to a modern society. (30)

It is important to note in these quotations from Arts Council reports the sense in which art is something 'out there'.



That is, the form of corporate or individual responsibility and participation that is being talked about is the passive participation of being an audience - of being a buyer, a consumer, or the member of a controlling body. This 'passivity' follows directly from the Arts Council's earlier rejection of the amateur, and the commitment to central professional standards. The Arts become, and are maintained and defined as, leisure activities: activities of great moral and/or spiritual value, but outside everyday life.

It is this abstraction of art from everyday life that William Morris was most critical of, and which he diagnosed as being related to and the result of the division of labour under capitalism. It is, moreover, the sense in which art is treated as being both something essentially useless, and, at the same time, something extremely valuable, and of 'our' heritage', that I am arguing is central to the role of art as an aspect of the ideology appropriate to the ruling classes under 20th century British capitalism.

In the Arts Council's 1966 report art is most definitely a 'leisure' activity (a peripheral activity); at the same time, however, a special value is implied. Art is thus, in the following quotation, of the same 'type' of activity as "bingo" and "capers on the Costa Brava", but it is very different from these in moral value. Thus

the paramount trusteeship of the arts in Britain to-day is vested in that percentage of the population which rejects the assumption that sessions of bingo and capers on the Costa Brava are the be-all and the end-all of our new leisure. (31)

Note also in this quotation the term 'trusteeship': just as in 1956 the Arts Council had to 'maintain professional standards', so now in 1966 they talk of 'trusteeship':-- the implication is that art is a precious jewel requiring special nurturing. It is not, thus, something 'people' make and do, but rather something that special people protect and maintain. Note moreover that the producers and makers are a separate group from the "good citizens" referred to earlier, who are, presumably, the "trustees".

#### The Problem of 'Doing' and 'Not-Doing'

'Freedom' and 'individual responsibility' are two of the concepts central to the ideology of the ruling classes in 19th and 20th century Britain. These freedoms and responsibilities emerged historically in relation to the development of the capitalist economy, and in opposition to feudal social relations, commitments, and responsibilities.<sup>32</sup> 'Freedom' and 'individual responsibility', as we have seen, are central also to the ideology of art as expressed by leading members of the Arts Council and the mid-nineteenth century Royal Academy.

These freedoms and responsibilities apply and are applied (by the state and the ruling classes) differentially to the various sections of the population: thus the 19th century design schools were set up for the training of skilled workers, and were established under a department of science and art; the Royal Academy, by contrast, was set up as 'free' by Royal Charter, and provided with its own premises within which it could be self managing and self electing.

Twentieth century British capitalism has witnessed, however, an accelerating development of the state -- a development that has raised obvious problems at the level of the operation and coherence of an ideology embodying 'freedom' and 'self-responsibility'. The lower working classes are still 'done to' as in the 19th century, via the state welfare systems and education and health systems. Within these spheres and in relation to the lower working classes no major problem of the incompatibility of the ideology with the practice would appear, empirically, to have arisen. But the state is also involved now massively with all classes of the population -- not only at the level of taxation, but at the level of broadcasting, education, health, arts, general local services, and so forth.

"Self-elected corporations" are one way in which the British state has attempted to resolve the perceived incompatibility between an ideology of freedom and self-responsibility, and the actual presence of the state in all spheres of life. Thus not only the B.B.C. and the Arts Council, but tourist boards and development corporations and advisory consumer bodies are set up as if independent; and, of course, a form of constitutional independence, despite financial control and control of appointments, does result in a limited real independence.

The problem for the Arts Council was that, despite its notional independence, it still saw itself, and feared others would see it as, a state venture (as it is). In an earlier quotation it styled itself as "quasi-governmental".<sup>33</sup>

However, the Arts Council had and has a responsibility for the arts of the whole nation -- a responsibility it was

unwilling to fulfill in a direct sense, due to the extent to which this would infringe upon the concepts of freedom and self-responsibility central to the ideology of art and social democracy.

The Arts Council thus had a problem I have termed 'doing' and 'not doing' - or, in other words, a problem of how to 'do things' without appearing to 'do things'.

In the nineteenth century this problem was resolved via a two tier system; that is, the Royal Academy existed as a 'free' institution, pursuing high art, while the state art and design schools, and the South Kensington Museums, fulfilled a wider and more direct function on a broader social level.

It was in the early 1960's that the Arts Council began to move towards a possible solution to its problem of acting without infringing freedoms. This solution came through the development of the first 'Regional Arts Association' in the north of England. It was this new form of organisation that was to provide the model for the type of 'corporate' body that the Arts Council hoped for, and which would lead to a system in which the Arts Council could appear to exist as a 'buffer' between the government and the regional associations, and the regional associations could appear as a 'buffer' between performers, audiences, and the Arts Council. The system that was to result would, therefore, take the form of a four-tier arrangement: government; Arts Council, Regional Association, performers and audience.

At a later point in this chapter we shall examine how the concepts of freedom and independence can exist within such a four-tier system, and the extent to which this is a 'laissez-

faire' system that in reality only disguises forms of direct control.

The Role of Organised Labour, and the 'Capturing' of the Young

In line with its hopes for a form of corporate responsibility, the Arts Council hoped that organised labour would come increasingly to play a part within the bodies supporting the arts. Thus far, the Council commented,

The contribution which industry makes to the arts - a growing and welcome one - comes at present almost entirely from the shareholders; (34)

The workers, therefore, who, in the eleventh annual report of the Arts Council,<sup>35</sup> had been dismissed on the grounds that they only attended C.E.M.A. concerts because, in their factories, they were a 'captive' audience, were now being appealed to for money. In fact, the Arts Council argued, since shareholders gave money,

a similar response from organised labour would be a welcome act of solidarity. (36)

The lack of solidarity between the nation's shareholders, art lovers, and workers is a subject we shall have to return to later. For the moment it is worth noting it only in as far as, by the mid 1960's, lack of mass reaction to and participation in the arts was being seen as a problem the solution of which lay in 'catching' people young. Thus a lack of diffusion of art (which I am arguing must be understood in class terms) was being discussed in generational terms. Thus in 1966 the Arts Council annual report was arguing:

If now battle is joined for the allegiance of young people between the attraction of facile, slack and ultimately debasing forms of sub-artistic under-civilised entertainment, and the contrary attraction of disciplined appreciation and hard, rewarding work, then we need to know and to enlist all

the allies we can get. (37)

In the above the adjectives 'facile', 'slack' and 'ultimately debasing' are terms we might (conventionally) expect from a mid-nineteenth century cleric. The characterisation of the culture of the young (working class?) moreover, as 'sub-artistic' and 'under-civilised' is revealing of the values and morality attributed to art (and hence of its possible ideological importance). The words 'disciplined' and 'hard, rewarding work' indicate the behaviour associated with art, and the forms of behaviour that it was expected that an appreciation of art would lead to. The words 'disciplined' and 'appreciation' are linked, indicating the sense in which the participation in art being discussed is 'passive'; for 'appreciation' is a passive act, and 'disciplined appreciation' even more so.

#### A Policy for the Arts<sup>38</sup>

In February 1965 the Prime Minister presented to Parliament a major statement on arts policy, 'A Policy for the Arts - the first steps'.<sup>39</sup> The document was seen as laying the grounds for a new coherent policy for a time of greater leisure, and the thinking in the paper both echoes much that we have seen in Arts Council statements, and is further revealing of the social meaning and relations of art in mid-twentieth century Britain.

Just as the Arts Council was, a year later, to translate the phenomenon of lack of general participation (especially working class participation) in the arts into a problem in 'generational' terms, so also with the 1965 White Paper. It was noted that

too many working people have been conditioned by their education and environment to consider the best in music, painting, sculpture and literature outside their reach. (40)

This 'conditioning' could be altered in a "younger generation",  
who,

more self-confident than their elders, and beginning to be  
given some feeling for drama, music, and the visual arts,  
in their school years, (41)

will want "gaiety and colour, informality and experimentation."<sup>42</sup>

In the paragraph that follows from this the usual  
separation between high standards and culture, and light or  
agreeable entertainment is made. In this instance the latter  
is seen as a means whereby people can be brought into contact  
with the former;

Some of our new civic centres and art centres already  
demonstrate that an agreeable environment and a jealous  
regard for the maintenance of high standards are not incom-  
patible. Centres that succeed in providing a friendly  
meeting ground where both light entertainment and cultural  
projects can be enjoyed help to break down the isolation  
from which both artist and potential audience have suffered  
in the past. (43)

Much of this may be perfectly true. But, note also what is  
implied or assumed in the paragraph. In effect it is being  
argued that people will come to culture if the 'pill is sugared':  
that is, if the environment is made sufficiently seductive and  
sufficiently like 'light entertainment'. Cultural "projects"  
can then be introduced in such an environment - and one ought  
again to pause and ask, "Why?". That is, if cultural 'projects'  
are, as we are told, generally not appreciated, why all this  
effort to introduce them by, so to speak, the back door?

I would of course answer my own question by again stressing the  
ideological role of art along the lines being developed in this  
thesis. And I would also point out in the above paragraph

the ways in which certain forms of phrasing indicate again the sense of art as a thing apart, and a thing of great professional expertise (rather than a thing done by ordinary people). Thus "jealous (sic) regard for the maintenance of high standards" is emphasised, and "light entertainment" is entertainment, whereas "cultural projects" are "projects".

The 1965 White Paper did recognise the disparity between London and the rest of the United Kingdom as regards cultural provision. It was argued that "high points of artistic excellence" are required in the provinces,<sup>44</sup> and it was important, moreover, to provide these "high points" all over the provinces, for civilisation and artistic amenities were seen as closely linked;

In any civilised community the arts and associated amenities, serious or comic, light or demanding, must occupy a central place. Their enjoyment should not be regarded as something remote from everyday life. (45)

This, being written in the mid 'sixties, was of course part of the widespread optimism associated with talk of increased leisure and the white heat of technological revolution: social problems were seen as soluble and the "quality of contemporary life" was seen as a primary concern.<sup>46</sup> Note, however, that the "high points of artistic excellence", however many they may be, are "high points"; i.e. the conception is of things apart and above - things not of everyday life (as lived by ordinary people) but rather things merely scattered among them to enrich the quality of their lives (an enrichment from outside, and in relation to which the people are passive).

In discussing education the idea of 'catching' the young was again returned to. For,



If children at an early age become accustomed to the idea of the arts as a part of everyday life, they are more likely in maturity first to accept and then to demand them. . . .  
The place that the arts occupy in the life of the nation is largely a reflection of the time and effort devoted to them in schools and colleges. (47)

Earlier the White Paper presented the view that culture could be offered to people via agreeable surroundings and in the context of light entertainment. Here, much more firmly, we are being offered a particular view of education, and the extent to which it is possible to inculcate culture, and associated forms of behaviour, through a specific form of socialisation imposed on a captive (young) audience. Again one might ask why the state has to try so hard to inculcate something that is so valuable. One finds, however, that, again in discussing education, high standards are returned to, and it is stated that

Success will depend to a great extent on what is done in the places where research is undertaken, where standards are set, and where expert practitioners are educated. (48)

It is, therefore, again made evident that art, however much the wider public is to be involved, is something that is essentially produced by and performed by this group of experts. Culture is, therefore, something that can be savoured but not made by the proposed new wider public brought up to expect it in the new arts-orientated schools.

For the 1965 White Paper 'Culture' is a thing 'diffused'. Diffusion implies that there is a centre - diffusion must be from some point. That is, the concept of diffusion implies centralisation and lack of mass creativity.<sup>49</sup> Thus it is stated that

diffusion of culture is now so much a part of life that there is no precise point at which it stops. Advertisements, buildings, books, motor cars, radio and television, magazines, records, all can carry a cultural aspect and affect our lives for good or ill as a species of 'amenity'. (50)

Note in this statement the implications of the term "Cultural aspect". This conveys exactly that separation of art and design from production and manufacture that William Morris analysed; culture is being seen as an addition and an over-layer.

This 'cultural aspect' is, moreover, explicitly seen as an anti-dote to industrialisation and mechanisation;

In an age of increasing automation bringing more leisure to more people than ever before, both young and old will increasingly need the stimulus and refreshment that the arts can bring. If one side of life is highly mechanised, another side must provide for diversity, adventure, opportunities both to appreciate and to participate in a wide range of individual pursuits. (51)

Thus the arts and culture, in the form of "individual pursuits" is seen as a compensation for dehumanisation or boredom implied by mechanisation in work, and the leisure supposed to follow from mechanisation. This is very much the argument we encountered in nineteenth century material, within which culture is seen as civilising the worker, without it being necessary to make his work-place more bearable, or his work more creative.

However, never in the nineteenth century could anyone have been as explicit as in the 1965 White Paper in describing arts provision as a 'social service', as in the following:

All new social services have to fight long and hard before they establish themselves. Only yesterday it was the fight for a free health service. The day before it was the struggle to win education for all. (52)

Describing the provision of arts as a social service is, however, the culmination of trends we have noted in the 19th century, with the gradual movement from state provision for the working class being 'charity', to state provision for all classes as

an amenity. Involved in this change is the realisation by sections of the middle class that the state can provide for them.

To expand this point further, the view of arts provision as a social service represents, or is related to, changes in class arrangements between the eighteenth century and the present day. In the eighteenth century the aristocrat could employ singers, musicians, drama groups, and he could purchase his own personal art gallery. In the nineteenth century many of the new rich could also buy art for personal use. A large section of the new middle class could not, however, and cannot purchase personally all that civilisation meant and was for the aristocracy. Collectively, however, as 'public' the middle classes can. That is, through resources being collected and directed through and by the state, it is possible to have libraries, galleries, concert halls, theatres, university education, national parks, and so forth. As 'public' provision these are open to all, and are used by all sections of the community. It is on account of the relative degree of use of these facilities by different classes, and on account of the type of control of these facilities, and on account of the sorts of values and definitions of these facilities involved, that we can call these amenities 'middle class' provisions.

"We are all middle class now"

The sense in which the public provision of arts takes place within an ideological formulation that denies social and class differences is made clear again in the closing section of the 1965 White Paper, 'A Policy for the Arts - The First Steps.'<sup>53</sup>

It is stated, for instance, that

More and more people begin to appreciate that the exclusion of so many for so long from the best of our cultural heritage can become as damaging to the privileged minority as to the underprivileged majority. We walk the same streets, breathe the same air, are exposed to the same sights and sounds. (54)

And, as in the opening paragraphs of the document, so in the closing ones, the issue is translated into generational terms. Thus it is argued that the energies and activities and "revolt" of the young can be

directed, if we so wish, into making Britain a gayer and more cultivated country. (55)

This 'directing' of the young pre-supposes, of course, that the statement in the previous quotation was correct, when the writer asserted that

We walk the same streets, breathe the same air, are exposed to the same sights and sounds. (56)

The writer does not make clear whether he/she is part of the privileged minority, or under-privileged majority. He/she certainly seems unaware, however, that some streets are broad and some narrow; that some are flanked by a few big houses in spacious gardens, and some by closely packed terraces. The writer also seems unaware that some air is that near factories, and that some air is either on the other side of the city, or in the fresher rural commuter belts surrounding cities. Similarly, the sights and sounds of a cabinet office, a university, and a factory assembly line are hardly identical. The exclusion of these differences from the account is part of the way in which art ("our heritage") is presented within the ideology and social relations of art as a ruling class activity. Privilege, and under-privilege, are recognised in the above as things that have been: art ("our heritage") is introduced to unite all.

### The Crafts Advisory Committee

The Crafts Advisory Committee is the second of the post-war state agencies engaged in promoting culture and the arts that we are to examine in this chapter. In order to understand its ideology and practice, however, a short note is necessary on the development of the 'crafts' and the distinctions between different craft traditions.

### The Two Traditions

The Arts and Crafts Movement of the middle and late nineteenth century<sup>57</sup> can be seen as in many ways a reaction among certain artists to what being 'artist' meant in the middle and late nineteenth century. It was an attempt to reinstate a workmanlike concern for design, utility, and artistic quality in the production of general objects, rather than in the limited range of objects falling within the current category of art.

The Arts and Crafts Movement as a whole was a movement of artists and intellectuals; it was to have a fundamental effect upon design, and upon education in design. The very use of the word 'design', however, indicates the practical limitations of the movement. It affected appearances, and not ways of working.<sup>58</sup> However fundamental was the social content of the policies of members of the movement, the consequences have been at the level of design (appearance), and, as such, the movement inspired and instigated what can now be seen as a change of fashion.

Pre-dating the renaissance of crafts generated within the 19th century arts and crafts revival movements were the 'survivals' of the medieval craft system (thatching; blacksmithery; stone-walling; coopering; tanning; etc.).

While the work of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and

the work of the surviving rural and medieval craftsmen are both taken today as 'craft', the separateness of the two traditions must be understood. The same man may today be working within both traditions, and, as a consequence, in part of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the rural or traditional craftsman is now sometimes treated as if an artist. The separateness of the two traditions, however, is important for our understanding of some of the tensions evident today between art and craft and between different levels of craft.

Furthermore, there are now two state agencies whose activities over-lap, both concerned with the 'crafts', but each in fact set up to deal largely with one of the two traditions. Thus an agency set up to cater for rural industries celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1971. Originally titled the 'Rural Industries Bureau', and now called the 'Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas', this is an advisory and credit service, and caters for small firms (employing not more than 20 skilled employees) in rural areas. A 'rural area', however, includes not only the countryside in general, but towns with not more than 10,000 inhabitants. 'COSIRA', as it is called, is not concerned with agriculture, horticulture, or any retail business. It was established under that title (COSIRA ) Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas) in 1968 by the 'Development Commission', and is financed by grants from the Development fund. Its predecessor (the Rural Industries Bureau) was set up in 1921. The Development Commission itself is a permanent Royal Commission established by acts of parliament in 1909 and 1910.

Despite the purpose of COSIRA being to maintain and develop employment in 'underdeveloped' rural areas, its activities cover **not only** small industries and the traditional rural crafts, but also persons working within the sense of craft deriving from the Arts and Crafts Movement. Thus, one of the interviewees for this study, who was by trade a painter and lithographer, was listed in a book published by COSIRA as part of an information and promotional service to assist rural industry.

The more recent Crafts Advisory Committee similarly overlaps the two traditions: its commitment, however, is primarily towards the 'artist-craftsman' - i.e., towards that person working within the tradition of craft skill as revived among artists and intellectuals in the mid and late nineteenth century. It is with the Crafts Advisory Committee that we are concerned here, since COSIRA, being primarily concerned with rural industries and craftsmen as working producers of goods in an economic sense, falls outside the scope of a thesis concerned with the social construction of art.

#### The Activities of the Crafts Advisory Committee

The Crafts Advisory Committee (C.A.C.) was set up in 1971 by Lord Eccles, the Minister responsible for the Arts. The purpose of the committee was to "help the artist craftsman". Commenting on the term 'artist craftsman', Victor Margrie, as head of the C.A.C., said:

The use of the term artist craftsman has at times caused concern and a certain amount of confusion. We have not attempted to define it, just to use it; to content ourselves with the wide interpretation which covers those craftsmen who, though often rooted in traditional techniques, have an aim which extends beyond reproduction of past styles and methods. (59)

The C.A.C., was funded by the Department of Education and Science, and the initial grant for 1971--1972 was £45,000 for England and Wales, with Scotland, under its own provisions, receiving five thousand pounds. The Welsh Arts Council operates on the behalf of the C.A.C. in Wales, handling the C.A.C. grant in that region, while the C.A.C. in all areas operates closely with the Regional Arts Association.

The C.A.C. grant has steadily increased, totaling in 1975/5 four hundred thousand pounds.

As a government agency the C.A.C. controllers felt that there was a need for representation of craftsmen themselves, and the C.A.C. was therefore instrumental in setting up the 'independent' British Crafts Centre, which itself was an amalgamation of the previously existing Crafts Centre and Crafts Council. The British Crafts Centre now receives a substantial grant from the C.A.C.

Apart from giving advice and publicity for the crafts, the C.A.C. provides financial assistance to craftsmen, and assists in training and in interest free loans for the purchase of equipment. Bursaries are given to established craftsmen to enable them to rethink their work. These bursaries are at present £2,000 tax free, and six were awarded in the first year.

Unlike the Arts Council, the C.A.C. has avoided any long term commitments, spending about two thirds of its money on 'one off' grants. It also sets up exhibitions, and is purchasing work in order to create a national craft collection.<sup>60</sup>

One of the arguments running through this thesis is that both the concepts and practices of craft and design, as developed in the 19th century, were constructed as part of the



social relations and division of labour dominated by fine art and the associated ideology. In examining the Crafts Advisory Committee, therefore, one of our purposes is to see how the committee conceptualises its activities, its relation to craftsmen, and the extent to which the C.A.C. is instrumental in constructing 'craft' as a lesser form of art, and thus weakening the sense of 'craft' as a challenge to the separation of industrial production from art.

Firstly, however, in order to understand the C.A.C. we must examine its power structure.

The C.A.C. comprises a committee of twentytwo members who serve upon the Committee at the invitation of the Minister for the Arts. According to a CAC pamphlet, the C.A.C. is an independent body with certain administrative services provided by the Design Council.

The Committee's finance, as has been indicated, comes from the Department of Education and Science. Thus the notion of "independence" as used in the above statement must be qualified in the same way as the concept of independence was qualified in our examination of Arts Council statements. The C.A.C. is in fact set up by, appointed by, and financed by the Government.

The services offered by the C.A.C. are obviously directed to craftsmen, and aim to help them as working producers of goods. However, simply because of the number of craftsmen working, and, given the limitations on available money, it will follow that some selection procedures must be employed in determining who shall be assisted, and to what extent and how. One way in which the impact of the C.A.C. can be measured, therefore, and one way in which one can study what choices are made and

what conceptions of craft and art are involved, is by examining how the C.A.C. allocates money, and what criteria are involved.

For the C.A.C., however, giving out money is a secondary activity; its main function is as an advisory and promotional service, which

exists to promote British artist craftsmen. Its aim is to help them sell their work, maintain and improve their standards and become better known to the public at large.  
(61)

We must also, therefore, examine how this promotion is effected, and what sort of conception of the artist craftsman is being put across.

#### The Register of Craftsmen, and the Index of Craftsmen

The C.A.C. runs both a 'register' of craftsmen and an 'index' of craftsmen. These are ways of promoting individual craftsmen, and making their work and the location of their workshops and studios more widely known and available.

For the majority of craftsmen who do not get grants, loans, or bursaries, these forms of promotion and assistance must be the most important, or potentially important, aspects of the C.A.C.'s work. The 'Register' of craftsmen is a simple list of names and addresses classified according to type of occupation. The usefulness of this 'Register' will obviously depend on the extent to which the list is made publicly available. Given, however, that the C.A.C. is not a well known body, the prospective customer must either know about the 'Register' or the C.A.C. already, and write to them about craftsmen in their area, or pick up the 'Register' by chance, or through a Regional Arts Association or similar advisory or information centre.

The 'Register' is a non-selective list, and is thus available to any craftsman without judgements being made as to the standards or merits of his work.

If a prospective customer makes an enquiry to the C.A.C., however, the 'Index of Craftsmen' is likely to be more important. This Index is

a slide index backed up with biographical details of the craftsmen represented. Anyone wishing to commission work can arrange to visit the gallery, when slides are projected and information given by the Index Librarian. (62)

Given that the C.A.C. attempts to a much greater extent than the Arts Council to promote from the 'grass roots' of production, one might expect that the slide library with its biographical details of the craftsmen, could be operated, as with the 'Register', with as little screening or selection as possible. That is, with as little imposition of a central definition of 'craft' and 'art-craft' as practicable.

This is, however, not the case. I mentioned above the British Crafts Centre - an amalgamation of the pre-existing Crafts Centre, and Crafts Council. The British Crafts Centre, which includes representation on it from many other craft bodies, is a separate body from the C.A.C. However, it operates in close liason with the C.A.C. It receives money from the C.A.C., and it plays a central role in the selection of people for inclusion on the selective 'Index of Craftsmen'. The (state) C.A.C., and the ('independent') British Crafts Centre are further related in that if an individual craftsman joins the British Crafts centre (a private body), and is selected by that 'private' body for the (state) C.A.C. Index by the (private) British Crafts Centre Committee, he is then eligible to show

work at the British Crafts Centre. It is not necessary, however, to join the British Crafts Centre to be on the C.A.C. Index.<sup>63</sup>

The procedure for getting onto the C.A.C. 'Index of Craftsmen' involves two stages. First, ten 35 millimetre slides of recent work, accompanied by a first stage application form, are submitted to the Selection Secretary of the British Crafts Centre - that is, to join the Index of the state agency you apply to the selection secretary of a 'private' organisation.

Those who pass this first stage of the procedure are then required to submit not more than five examples of recent work with a second stage application form to the subsequent meeting of the Committee. The Committee meets in January, March, June and October.

The first thing that is obvious from this procedure is that there is an unexpected relation between a body which calls itself independent (the C.A.C.) but which we have seen to be in fact set up by, appointed by, and financed by the state, and another body (the British Crafts Centre) which individual craftsmen may join, and which would seem to be even more 'independent', but which we noted earlier was set up at the instigation of the (state) C.A.C. We shall have to consider further, therefore, in a moment, what the British Crafts Centre is, given its central role in operating the selection procedure for the C.A.C. Index.

Secondly, however, we must consider what is involved in the selection procedure itself. I do not wish to suggest that the selection procedure involves any bias towards any particular craft, or 'art-craft', for I have no evidence upon which to base such a suggestion.<sup>64</sup> It is, in fact, quite understandable that an organisation wishing to promote 'craft' (involving notions of

skill) would wish to make sure that that which is supported is neither shoddy, nor involved in the amateurishness associated with the 'arty-crafty' side of the crafts movement.

The two stage selection procedure, however, implies a greater rigour than might be necessary in the above. Furthermore, there are elementary economic barriers operating with such a procedure for anyone living at a distance from London, and required to submit any pottery or furniture.

These economic factors, combined with the time elapsing between the meetings of the selection committee, will tend to be off-putting to some craftsmen not working in London, or not in contact with C.A.C. members. One craftsman with whom I discussed the selection procedure was personally incensed at the whole business, arguing that the C.A.C. makes itself out to be there to assist, and not to judge. Why, he suggested, could not an officer of the Regional Arts Association (with which the C.A.C. works on the local level) simply be sent out to validate that a craftsman is a genuine full time worker with appropriate facilities to work and make at least part of his livelihood from the activity.<sup>65</sup>

This criticism has a lot of force, for, given that the C.A.C. does not follow such a simple procedure, it follows that selection of some other sort is involved.

#### The British Crafts Centre, and its Precursors

We have noted already that it is the British Crafts Centre, and not the C.A.C., who does the formal selection for the Index. We might suppose, therefore, that this separation of

functions may give the appearance that the state agency is not in fact selecting (imposing) 'taste'. Rather a craftsman is being judged by his peers. In order to understand this separation we must examine more closely the British Crafts Centre.

According to the British Crafts Centre, it exists to promote and sell the work of British Craftsmen. It is a non-profit-making body financed by subscriptions of its members, by commission on the sales of craftsmens' work and by a grant received through the Crafts Advisory Committee. (66)

Membership of the British Crafts Centre is open to all for a fee of five pounds per year, and this entitles members to invitations to all exhibitions and other functions. Furthermore, this gives a 'free' subscription to 'Crafts Magazine' -- this magazine being a monthly publication from the Crafts Advisory Committee, the state organisation.

Thus far, therefore, we understand something of the organisation of the British Crafts Centre, and its relationship to the C.A.C. In order to situate the British Crafts Centre more specifically, however, we shall have to go back to the second world war.

'Utility furniture', which in its design was connected with the tradition of functional and aesthetic design deriving from the Arts and Crafts movement, was developed under war time conditions. The Design and Industries Association was instrumental in pressuring the Federation of British Industry, and the government, on aspects of design and utility, and it was in part this pressure, in the context of war time conditions and the prospects of post war economic regeneration, and with the experience of utility furniture, that led to the establishment of the Council of Industrial Design. This Council was established by

Hugh Dalton of the Board of Trade, who was succeeded on the ending of the European war by Sir Stafford Cripps. Clem Leslie, director of the Council of Industrial design, was succeeded himself in 1947 by Gordon Russell.<sup>67</sup>

Sir Stafford Cripps was himself concerned with issues of craftsmanship, while Gordon Russell was an important designer in the Utility Furniture range, and had been deeply influenced by furniture makers in the Arts and Crafts tradition, then working in the Cotswolds.

There was a general movement to take craftsmanship, and its technique and design, and adapt it, as Russell did, for mass production - hence the Design and Industries Association with its ideology of blending utilitarian and aesthetic design with elements of the craft tradition.

Sir Stafford Cripps (Board of Trade) was also persuaded by John Farleigh, who was connected with the Board of Trade, to found and give a grant to the Crafts Centre of Great Britain, the object of which was

the preservation, promotion and improvement of the work of the designer-craftsman in the fine arts. (68)

These, therefore, are the events leading to the founding of the Crafts Centre of Great Britain, which was one of the organisations to be later incorporated into the British Crafts Centre. Note the emphasis from the first on "craftsmen in the fine arts"<sup>69</sup> as well as the origins of the Crafts Centre in the Board of Trade - the state.

The Crafts Centre of Great Britain, like the British Crafts Centre, was a federation of societies. It was composed of subscribing members,

but its Council was drawn from the crafts societies with a fine arts bias. (70)

A place on the Council of the Crafts Centre of Great Britain was reserved for the Council of Industrial Design, and another for a representative of the Rural Industries Bureau - now COSIRA. That is, the representative council (representative of the various crafts) received a state grant at its inception, and included among its members representatives of other government agencies connected with design and craft.

There is nothing sinister in that: the state quite frequently consults or brings in as advisors leading craftsmen and designers with national or international reputations. What this does mean, however, whether we approve of the policies and actions of the various councils and government and semi-independent agencies or not, is that, in this case, there was a stamp of state approval in the assistance given at the founding, in further grants, and in the Council including representatives of other state agencies. This form of finance and representation means also, of course, that individual subscribing members do not have ultimate control over how the organisation is run.

On examination, therefore, an organisation which appeared to be 'independent' or private, turns out to be linked in various direct ways to the state. A strange mixture of privateness and publicness is involved, with the possibility of private individuals 'joining' the organisation supporting strongly the appearance of privateness or independence.

#### The Significance of State Intervention

The present day (private ) British Crafts Centre is, therefore, in a peculiar position, being an amalgam of two pre-existing bodies already involving state intervention. The



British Crafts Centre itself, moreover, was set up, as we saw, at the instigation of the (state) Crafts Advisory Committee, which itself makes claims to being 'independent'.

The significance of all these forms of state involvement derives not from the degree to which the state is, or is not, involved: i.e. we are not trying to assess simple 'quantities' of state involvement. Rather state involvement is significant in a more penetrating way, because all actions become pivoted around state support and initiatives. We noted in the previous chapter the way in which the early design schools were established with assistance from the central state - that 'assistance' being related to an inspectorate system. The state therefore initiated the system, and the development of schools that were partly local and private was pivoted around a support and organisation that was central and of the state.

The extent to which the state controls by appointment of personnel, or by having representatives on councils, is important. Much more important, however, for our understanding of the way in which the state can make some ways of doing and thinking and practising and organising more possible, and others less possible, is the control of money. It is around the financial support given by the state that many private and public activities become pivoted. Thus, whatever the Arts Council may say about its money, and the allocation of it, and however much the C.A.C. may appear to operate through the Regional Arts Associations and the British Crafts Centre, the fact remains that money can be given or withdrawn. Naturally organisations throughout the country will

tend to develop in relation to state support, facilities and sponsorship ('naturally', since the state is now the major patron, and since the state now controls 55-60% of the Gross National Product). It follows, therefore, that the state is in a position to wield power by withholding money and resources from any activity with which or about which there is disagreement. However 'independent' that activity, the withholding of money will tend to make that activity less possible. 71

The state therefore can control through the financial relationship to partly private and fully 'private' bodies; it can give and withhold grants. During a period of inflation grants may be held constant in numerical terms; the reaction to this reveals the extent of state involvement. The state is also, however, involved in making initial choices concerning what to support. We saw that the development of craft organisations after the last war involved the state making an explicit commitment to organisations with a 'fine art bias'. We noted, moreover, the definite choices involved in the Arts Council's reversal of C.E.M.A. policy. This latter example indicates clearly the way in which the withdrawal of funds from certain activities destroys those activities and the possibilities they reveal.

#### The Design Council

The Design Council is the third of the major central state agencies concerned with art and visual things in the post second world war period that we are to consider. It was set up in 1944, and, in the words of Dan Johnston, head of industrial design at the Design Council, its aim is and was:

to promote by all practible means, the improvement of design in the products of British Industry. (72)

In the nineteenth century, we will recall, the state sponsored design education system, and the exhibitions of industrial design such as the Great Exhibition of 1851, were seen as having (a) a commercial purpose (improvement of trade) and (b) a moral purpose (raising of taste, aesthetic consciousness, and improvement of general behaviour). The 20th century justification for such state sponsored design propaganda is three fold, and not dissimilar;

The first justification is a firm belief that improvement in the design of British products will lead, in the short or the long run, to improvement in the commercial position of Britain in the world markets. (Dan Johnston.) (73)

That is, the Design Council represents a form of state intervention in British industry which aims at improving the efficiency of British capitalism. This was also the intention with the early 19th century design schools, and with the Great (and other) exhibitions of industrial art and design.

Dan Johnston, head of industrial design at the Design Council, continued:

The second justification is a social one. Improvement in the design of products is one way of improving the standard of life of people. If people are surrounded by products that work well, products that please, that give satisfaction in use rather than frustration, then their whole way of life will benefit. (74)

This is the modern equivalent of the notion that good design will raise taste and moral behaviour. It is argued here that a suitable environment will benefit, or make better, the "whole way of life".

I argued in relation to the 19th century that the equivalent argument as then used was one that can be seen as

an attempted incorporation of the working classes. 'Benefitting a whole way of life' may sound remote from such a formulation, but it is to be noted that one aspect of environmental design and improvement today is 'slum clearance'. While there are a great many slums, it has become increasingly obvious that 'redevelopment' can often mean the breaking up of working class communities, and their rehousing in out of town estates that 'look' like modified versions of the richer owner-occupier sector, or in inner city high-rise developments. Access to shops and pubs, and also to a variety of jobs, is diminished. House construction, and especially inter-house sound-proofing, is often less good than that in the 19th century terraces. What has been achieved, however, is a transformation in appearances; things 'look' modern. Environmental redesign can be, therefore, a way of boxing people in a different way - a way of attempting to wipe out the past through wiping out the appearance of the past.

The third justification given by Dan Johnston for the existence of the Design Council is the modern notion of conservation of resources in a finite world. This, he argues, is nothing but a belated recognition of the designer's philosophy

based on the belief that satisfaction derives from economy of means rather than from extravagance in the use of materials. (75)

Of these three justifications the first is obviously the decisive one, for, it is only in as far as the first holds true that the Design Council can be at all effective.

The objectives of the Design Council are effected in various ways. A 'Design Centre' is run, where products are displayed that are of recommended good design. This centre is a modern version of Henry Cole's venture in setting up the

South Kensington Museum.

Secondly the Design Council runs courses and conferences.

Thirdly, a great deal of factory visiting, involving the giving of advice on design, is undertaken.

Fourthly, two magazines are published: one called 'Design' is orientated towards consumer products, and the other, titled 'Engineering', is devoted to engineering industry and capital goods.

Competitions are run for design improvements, and, in this, the Council is continuing an activity first started by the Royal Society of Arts in the eighteenth century.

Finally, a Designer Selection Service exists to recommend to government, industry and commerce, designers appropriate to the clients needs: this service parallels the Crafts Advisory Committee's Index of Craftsmen.

The Design Council is given an annual grant running in 1974 at about one million pounds. Further earnings come from fees paid for the display of goods at the Design Centre, and from course and conference fees, and from the sale of the two magazines and other publications.

The Design Centre in London is a major success of the Design Council. Products are selected by Design Panels, and the manufacturer pays part of the cost of display. In the 1950's the Design Centre was attracting 2,500 people a day; in 1974 the average was 5,500 per day. Other Design Centres exist now in Glasgow and Cardiff.<sup>76</sup>

The Design Council and the 'Soft' Approach

As a magazine publisher, a conference organiser, an advice giver, and an operator of a permanent Design Centre, the Design Council is working through what I termed earlier the 'soft' method of education and propaganda. In discussing the 19th century design system, I contrasted the 'direct' method employed in the design school system ('direct', because of the attempt to inculcate particular views and practices directly into special groups of people in a 'captive audience' situation), with the 'soft' method later developed by Henry Cole through the South Kensington developments. This 'soft' approach is one aimed at a wide public. Thus the Design Centre caters for thousands of people; at the same time, however, this 'soft' approach is backed up by specialised conferences and advice programmes for factories and enterprises.

It must not be forgotten, moreover, that the 'direct' method continues to operate alongside the Design Council in the form of design courses in the present day art schools.

In being primarily orientated towards a 'soft' (education by example) approach the Design Council differs from the Crafts Advisory Committee and the Arts Council. For the C.A.C. is partly a promotion agency (it publishes a magazine and puts on exhibitions), but is also, importantly, a distributor of resources (grants, bursaries). The Arts Council adopts even less of a 'soft' approach, since it publishes no magazine (no 'public' magazine; it does publish one but only within arts administration circles) and it mounts few exhibitions directly about what art is. Rather, assuming 'art' as a given, it in fact controls art through differential distribution of resources.

The Arts Council, of course, handled in 1975 about £25,000,000, while the C.A.C. and Design Council handled under two million between them.<sup>77</sup>

One of the most important consequences of the existence of the Design Council is a tendency to promote the idea of the individual designer as an individual specialist creator in the same sense as an artist. That is, the Design Council, through its existence and its promotion of design as design, accentuates that tendency for certain designers to become known 'names'. In commercial terms being known can guarantee better sales for the designer and the designed product. This is a feature of design as art: not design as art in the conventional sense of design being an aspect of art activity, or requiring a broad fine art training,<sup>78</sup> but in the sense that the designer takes on increasingly the attributes of the artist in as far as, when successful, his creativity and personality are promoted as being his: he has 'style' and is recognisable.<sup>79</sup>

Thousands of designers, as with artists, do not achieve this status, but, increasingly, this success system becomes the form of possible career and recognised way of achieving for the successful designer.

The designer thus becomes yet further a separate and 'apart' figure in the production process. Rather than art having been reintegrated into production (as was hoped for by the Bauhaus propagandists and the organisers of the 1851 Great Exhibition), the 'aesthetic' becomes, in the person of the designer, yet further a thing separate - a thing applied, and, in Morris's terms, a thing added on and paid extra for.

I have commented already on Dan Johnston's justification for the State Design Council, and on his remarks on its work in improving the environment. This emphasis on environmental improvement should be set historically in the context of the longer term development of corporation parks, planning acts, and the campaigns in the 19th and 20th century for 'public' amenities. Glancing through any issue of 'Design' (one of the two Design Council magazines) the range and scope of the Council's concerns is revealed. Thus, for instance, the colours used to paint farm buildings; the lay-out and colouring of caravan sites; the paint used on London Corporation Park iron railings; and so on and so forth, are all included, as well as the design and 'environmental' aspects of major industrial developments. In being involved in these matters, the Design Council is part of the tradition originating with the campaigns and struggles in the 19th century for state and local government intervention in what places were or could be 'public', and how these should appear and be organised. That is, the Design Council is part of state propaganda on how the world we inhabit should be, and what is to be experienced.

### The Three State Agencies

Thus far we have tended to consider the three major post-second-world-war state agencies concerned with art, craft and design as separate entities within a historical context. Now we must try and consider their total effect and significance.

It is clear that the three organisations we have considered cover a wide range of activities, in relation to which they have considerable powers of constructing definitions. This



power rests on various foundations.

First: the organisations, in their advisory and propagandising capacities have a continuity and stability given to no organisations or societies that lack the legitimisation and finance conferred by the state.

Second: given the finance and the resources, and the extent of potential activities of the three organisations, it follows that the relevant ministers are able to invite the most successful people in various fields to serve within, or as advisors to, the various state agencies, thus giving the agencies further prestige and reputation through the experience and repute of those working for them.

In as far as people brought in to assist the organisations are usually involved in sub-committees, selection panels, and advisory groups, they are, of course, subordinate to the organisations, and are thus not able to effect control over them. Recent disputes between the specialist panels and the controlling council of the Arts Council have indicated this lack of control.<sup>80</sup>

Essentially, however, it is through the control of resources and through their function as collectors and distributors of information that the three organisations have power.

The Arts Council, as the richest of the three organisations, effects most control through how its money is spent. The form of control thus effected through the choices made by the Arts Council goes beyond merely supporting, or not supporting, chosen projects. For financial subsidy or guarantee also enables certain arts centres and projects to run as prestige centres, while others not so supported must appeal directly to audience or viewers for continuous support.

Putting it crudely, a subsidy means that a performance or spectacle or activity can be produced or continued with far less regard for the audience than otherwise. Minority cultural tastes can be catered for at prices which keep such forms of culture available. And, in this sense, a 'purity' can be maintained or constructed in various fields of art production.

In effect, therefore, the state can serve to remove certain forms of culture from the direct context of audiences and the economics that make a practice viable or otherwise. By certain practices being preserved, however, these practices are transformed into something other than that which they were. No longer subject to the demands of a continuous audience and the economics involved, the art can be pursued as an activity in itself and for itself. Consider, for example, what the Music Hall would now be were it to have been 'preserved' by state subsidy, rather than allowed to decay in competition successively with cinema and television.

The implications of state subsidy are very complex. The demand for such subsidy arose partly in the context of a decline in major private patronage, but, once the principle of state subsidy is introduced, the criteria of what to subsidise and what not to subsidise become contentious.<sup>81</sup> Rapidly the state has been forced into the position of the arts being a 'social service', as stated in the 1965 White Paper.<sup>82</sup> But, whereas private patronage is given according to definite criteria of personal taste, prestige and investment value, the assistance given by the state is given according to different, and less obvious, criteria.<sup>83</sup> Nominally the Arts Council, Crafts

Advisory Committee, and Design Council, must act on behalf of the 'public - and exploring the uses politically, socially and ideologically of the word 'public' would be a full project in itself. In as far, however, as there are a variety of groups, persons and classes competing over what shall be 'public', the state, acting as if a representative of the public, is in a very different situation as patron from a private person or institution.<sup>84</sup>

I have been arguing that in fact the Arts Council and the Crafts Advisory Committee tend to promote a particular form of fine art ideology, and that the Design Council also tends to accentuate a tendency for 'design' to become more of an aesthetic activity - more of an activity practised by men 'like' artists. At the same time, however, all three organisations, in as far as they are set up to act for, or on behalf of, the 'public', and, in as far as they are in fact only promoting particular definitions of art-craft, art, and design, are in fact also having to make claims and statements about what 'public' means. That is, it follows that the three organisations are engaged in constructing particular conceptions of who the public are (which classes, groups, persons, moralities, ideologies, practices, educational levels, etc., etc., are really those of the real public ).

#### The State and the Aggressive Marketing of the Arts

All three state organisations under discussion can be seen as aggressive marketing organisations for particular notions of what art, craft and design are. As aggressive marketing agencies they promote and market a form of ideology and practice that, in the context of changing social conditions might not have

survived in that form. Thus Dan Johnston said of the Design Council, speaking himself as a representative of the organisation, that it;

gives much more prominence now to particular manufacturers' names, and we seek out new ranges for special launching and promotion. This is in line with the increasingly aggressive marketing that is necessary in all western countries.  
(85)

Similarly, the Crafts Advisory Committee's selective Index of Craftsmen can be seen as an attempt to market a particular conception of craft - to market the conception and sell the approved practitioner's goods.

The state as patron must make choices. In this sense there can be no such thing as disinterested 'public' patronage. Private patrons promote particular forms of and conceptions of art through the sum total of individual choices, and it is expected that such choices should be made. The state however, in having to appear to act for the general interest, becomes caught between this appearance, and the reality of exercising immense power in specific directions.

To exercise this power openly and directly (as did the war-time C.E.M.A.,) would be to admit and reveal the power of the state; it would involve also a direct confrontation with what the state has become. Furthermore it would involve confronting the issues of how choices are made, and on whose behalf. The ambivalent attitude towards the state that we have noted in both the 19th and 20th centuries relates directly to this problem of choices, and of confronting the reality of the state and its operations. We noted the importance that has frequently been placed on the idea of 'freedom' in the arts over the last two centuries, and it is perhaps this insistence on the idea of

freedom that makes the problem of state patronage and the arts a particularly complicated one: that makes it a problem that those working within the state organisations find particularly difficult to discuss openly and clearly.

### State Patronage and the Press

Thus far I have examined in this chapter the three contemporary state organisations catering for the arts at a national level.

In this section I propose to examine state patronage as it has been discussed in the press.

A period of high inflation gave rise to a surfeit of comment on government and other patronage of the arts, because it was felt that inflation was putting an achievement at risk. The perceived urgency of the situation tended to encourage writers and propagandists to be unusually clear in making evident the ideological position from which they argued. A brief examination of some statements by leading journalists, politicians, and members of the 'art world' is therefore revealing not only of what state patronage of the arts is seen as being about, but also of what art itself is seen as being.

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Ronald Butt, writing in the 'Times' (4.5.1972: 'Rethinking the-Role of the Arts Council'), stated that;

In an age when the private patron no longer suffices, the principle is rightly accepted that the arts should be subsidised from the public purse. But in equally rightly rejecting the idea that the Government should be directly involved in allocating this money, the politicians have hitherto seemed inhibited even about reflecting on the broad principles within which it is distributed. (R. Butt. Times. 4.5. '72)

Butt therefore assumes the necessity for state subsidy. He assumes furthermore, however, that the independence of the arts

is real, when he talks of the equal rightness of the government rejecting direct involvement. In making these two assumptions he highlights (unwittingly) the contradiction involved in having an 'independent' arts organisation run by government. Thus when Butt castigates government for not reflecting on the "broad principles" of subsidy, he seems unaware that it is exactly this form of public government debate and policy discussion that would (a) expose the character of Arts Council Independence, and (b), drag the government of the day directly and more deeply into an open direction of state policy in the arts to an unprecedented extent.

While Butt considered that politicians have been rightly rejecting any idea that the Government should be directly involved in allocating this money, he also stated that the Arts Council was "hyper sensitive about its independence". He was presumably, therefore, unaware of the growth and scale of state involvement in the arts, for he also said that "Nobody in his right mind would disagree" with a statement by Lord Goodman, who retired that week as Chairman of the Arts Council. Goodman said that

It is impossible for sensible decisions about the arts to emerge from Government offices. (Lord Goodman; quoted by R. Butt. Times. 4.5.'72.)

Apart from illustrating the constant stress laid on Government non-interference, Butt's article (and others like it) reveal the ideology of the state in operation. For, in these brief quotations we have seen discussed as separate entities an Arts Council (financed and appointed by government ministers), and politicians, and a retiring Arts Council Chairman who also happened to be, as a Lord, a member of the House of Lords.

While in a constitutional sense these separations are real, (and thus in a sociological sense they take on a reality), the government, the arts minister, the Arts Council, its Chairman, and the House of Lords are all of the state in the sense that we discussed it earlier.

Ronald Butt wrote the above article in 1972. It was during the 1973/4 period that inflation began increasingly to strain the ideology within which notions of independence and separateness could be easily maintained.

In the 'Times' third leader of 9th February 1974 the Arts Council's annual report was discussed. In this report it had been argued that, even to keep pace with inflation, the annual grant would have to increase from 19.5 million pounds, to 25 million pounds. If this grant was not forthcoming, the 'Times' argued,

Many local and regional enterprises which have built up audiences over periods of many years would probably have to close. (Times. 9.2.'74. 3rd Leader.)

In the same piece the 'Times' reported Mr Hugh Jenkins (Minister responsible for the Arts) as enthusing on greater industrial patronage for the arts. This, the 'Times' argued, was a diversionary tactic, when what concerned most people was what the state was going to do. This easy dismissal of what would once have been a reasonable proposition illustrates again the extent to which the state is now committed as the major patron.

One of the strongest pleas for the arts and their subsidy by the state in a time of inflation was made by Norman St. John Stevas, the opposition spokesman on the arts. The article appeared in the 'Sunday Times' of November 17, 1974.

In the early part of his article Stevas argued for special grants for the National Theatre, Covent Garden, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and so forth. The gist of his argument, however, occurred in the central part of the article.

Stevas asked:

Do we regard public expenditure on the arts as a luxury, a hobby, a species of embroidery on the real stuff of life, or do we give the arts their rightful priority as activities central to the nation's happiness and achievement? (Norman St. John Stevas: Sunday Times; 17.11.'74).

His own answer was, of course, implied in the phrasing of his question. For St John Stevas a period of material cut-backs necessitated greater spending on the spiritual and cultural.

Thus he argued that

At a time when economic stringency makes it impossible to achieve our material goals there is a powerful case for declaring robustly that we intend to give the attainment of our spiritual and cultural objectives a new priority.

Stevas noted, in support of his argument, the fact that such a policy was followed during the second World War.

He argued that a doubling of the arts budget was the only thing that the arts Minister should demand, and that a doubling of the then grant of nineteen and a half million would only amount to thirtyeight or thirtynine million, which would still be a small amount compared to the four thousand millions spent on education. The increase, if given, would not only revitalise the arts scene, he argued, but would

bring immense returns . . . in national self confidence and prestige abroad, and reverberate helpfully even in that most mundane of places, the balance of payments.

Stevas, therefore, hoped that the Minister for the Arts would

mobilise in effective action all those in the nation who believe that the essence of a civilisation lies in the mind and spirit, and in the works of art that bear witness to them.



The basic ideas presented in St John Stevas's article above are those we are now familiar with. The economic usefulness of art is mentioned (though this theme is relegated to a back seat); civilisation is talked of as something essentially of the mind and spirit (here with heavy echoes of Mathew Arnold again); and finally art and culture are viewed as activities more necessary in times of economic stringency, that is, they are morale boosters and spiritual strengtheners at a time when, basically, there is less to eat.

Thus, while art and culture and spiritual things are up for sale (doubling state expenditure enables more artistic and spiritual things to be bought) these are nevertheless of greater importance than the crudely material, for art and things spiritual constitute 'civilisation'; by implication industrial production and manufacture do not - or at least only do to a lesser extent.

This position, therefore, implies a denigration of the lives and achievements of the mass of mental and manual workers. It embodies a clear statement of that ideology of art, and art within the division of labour, that we have been considering in its construction from the Renaissance onwards, and within which civilisation is not something constituted by the mental and material productions of the generality of workers, but is rather something superior that is spiritual and artistic, and that makes the lives of the masses bearable in times of economic stringency.

Similar arguments to those of St John Stevas were presented in the 'Evening Standard' shortly after. Thus, on Thursday November 28th, 1974, Michael Owen reported a press

conference given by Mr Patrick Gibson, chairman of the Arts Council, ('Arts need Extra £6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>m Government Aid.'). Mr Gibson had argued in the annual report of the Arts Council that an extra five million pounds was needed to keep pace with inflation. This figure had risen to the six and a half million pounds reported by the time the press conference to launch the report came, due to increasing inflation.

Speaking in similar vein to St John Stevas, Gibson argued that

We need the arts in bad times even more than in good and the cost of continuing the work is, in national terms, miniscule.

He suggested that

If the best of our arts institutions are allowed to wither, the damage done to an aspect of our national reputation which still stands high will be totally out of proportion to the money involved.

Finally, reverting to a theme stated by Mathew Arnold, and discussed in the previous chapter, Patrick Gibson invoked our image for posterity as a reason for maintaining and improving our arts. Arnold, it will be remembered, had asked whether it would be the Elizabethans that would be remembered for their culture, or the Victorians for their coal, implying, of course, that it would be the former. Gibson suggested that

A government which increased its support for the arts in hard times would have a real claim on the gratitude of posterity. (87)

The rhetoric of Britain as a nation, her arts, her reputation abroad, and her reputation for posterity, dominates all these discussions. Thus the 'Sunday Times' of December 1st 1974 ran an editorial lead article on Patrick Gibson's press conference, stating that

Britain's flourishing and envied arts come cheap at the price.

There is a marked lack of serious analysis in many of these discussions. There is little about who the arts are for, or what the subsidy is for - so axiomatic had it become that state subsidy was (a) necessary, and (b) for the 'public'. Brief discussions are often included in the press on the relation between spending on the major arts institutions, and the smaller ones, but, given that discussion, the argument then is resolved into the simple question of how much can be afforded. Thus, what sort of creators are to be subsidised, or whether it is the audience or the producer that is to be subsidised, and which of the many varieties of activities are to constitute the arts, is rarely touched on.

It could, perhaps, be said that it is only the equation of the British nation as a cultural centre with London that makes many of the assertions about Britain's achievement in the arts possible, for Britain would compare badly on a provincial level with several other European countries in terms of theatres, opera houses, and picture collections and galleries.<sup>88</sup>

A letter in the 'Times' from Keith Lucas, (Times; 12 December 1974), is illustrative of several points. Lucas argued that

No other arts have ever made so direct and forceful an appeal to so broad a public as film and television.

and he suggested that, in a remarkably short time,

the cinema has built up a rich cultural heritage---in the works of Chaplin, Renoir, Griffith, Bergman, Stroheim, Fellini, Eisenstein, Kurosawa, and scores of other artists whose works stand comparison with the finest literary or graphic achievements of their time.

Lucas argued that most art forms would survive, even without

government aid, whereas the basic material of film does not survive without careful conservation and collection. The material costs of film and television production necessitate large capital outlay, in a way that opera, theatre, painting, and ballet, do not. The latter do not disappear when not performed, and can be presented without elaborate and costly settings. T.V. and film, by contrast, need material support to ensure their survival "as independent art forms.

Lucas's letter is illustrative of three things.

First: he indicates, through his argument, the sense in which state aid is partial, and is directed towards prestige projects. It is partial because it excludes film; it is directed towards prestige projects because resources are lavished on presenting certain performances in a much more elaborate way than is necessary.

Second: Lucas illustrates the way in which the concept of art can be manipulated. This manipulation involves the demand that an activity not hitherto generally considered as art be considered as art (rather than, in this case, simply as film, or television, or as 'entertainment' ). This is part of a continual process of art being constructed in new ways, through the expansion of alteration of that which is to count as the content of art.

The Crafts Advisory Committee's emphasis on the craftsman as artist-craftsman is also illustrative of this. Note also in Lucas's letter the particular group of film makers he cites - film makers of the cultural avante-garde who are partly recognised as artists already, and on the backs of whom the whole group or activity can be reclassified.

Third: Lucas's letter illustrates the tendency for state support and intervention to expand in the arts. For, given that the state already supports certain arts (and accepts the commitment), others (such as Lucas) demand that activities not yet supported be supported (or be recognised as arts, and hence eligible for state aid).

An article by Mr. Hugh Leggatt, an art dealer, in the 'Times' of 27 December 1974 further illustrates the sense in which the state, once having become involved in the arts, is forced into further and further commitment. Mr. Leggatt discussed the proposed wealth tax, and its possible effect in forcing onto the open market many works of art now in private hands. Leggatt argued that, if the state introduces a wealth tax, it must also take the consequences, and be prepared to buy and conserve those works forced onto the market. Leggatt further lists the various enquiries into conservation and local museum services, and examines the refusal of successive Ministers to take the problems in these fields seriously. That is, he argued that the state must expand its conservation and local museum services if only to maintain the stock of objects and pictures already acquired.

Leggatt argued his case strongly. For our purposes, however, what is to be noted is that he is demanding further state intervention. The conditions that make such a demand possible, plausible, and almost inevitable, are those we have been examining. That is, state intervention in the arts built up during the 19th and 20th centuries, and a situation where now the state absorbs 55-60% of the gross national product,

means that increasingly 'problems' are thrown at the door of the state. The state is presented as merely giving assistance and subsidy, but, increasingly, it is demanded that it make policies. The 'laissez-faire' ideology we have been examining becomes, therefore, increasingly unviable.

The very existence of a minister with special responsibility for the arts highlights this situation. For, prior to the creation of a special minister in the mid 1960s, the government could 'appear' to be assisting various bodies, without actually having to formulate policies. But as soon as a Minister exists, policies become more explicit, and policies and power are embodied in that Minister. The arts appear to be more directed: policy statements are demanded from the minister; specific forms of intervention are requested.

Jennie Lee was the first Minister for the Arts - and the minister concerned with the 1965 White Paper reviewed earlier. She intervened in the 1974/5 debate on art finance with an article in the 'Times' of January 29th 1975, entitled "The Case for Art in a Cold Climate". As with St. John Stevas, she was arguing for increased spending during a period of economic recession:

It is when the going is hardest that heart and mind need the refreshment of something more than material things. That is how we have always reacted, in war and in peace, in times of crisis. So why not now? Or have we completely lost our nerve?

To add weight to her argument she invoked the success of the Festival of Britain, and reminded readers of the arguments raised against that. But, she suggests:

There was pride in the air then, belief in our future and some of the glow of war-time comradeship still remained.  
(J.Lee; Times; 29.1.1975.)

Jennie Lee recognised in her article that the arts were still a minority pursuit; she argued, however, that they should be made more relevant and "accessible". Also, the arts must be freed from "the sad waste caused at present by out-moded class divisions."

Lee's argument is, therefore, the one we are familiar with within which art and culture are uniting influences. Art boosts general morale, and, in a country of extremes in matters of riches and poverty, power and non-power, art somehow unites those who might be divided by recession. Not that poverty or power is discussed, however, for class divisions are to be thought away by simply being designated "outmoded". As part of the thinking away of class divisions note also Lee's use of the first person plural as in, "we have always reacted in war and in peace"; "have we completely lost our nerve"; belief in our future". This phrasing is the same as that employed in the 1965 White Paper, 'A Policy for the Arts - the First Steps', where it was said that "we walk the same streets".

Any sociological enquiry must question such uses of "we" and "our", and ask, 'Who is the we being referred to?' This is especially important here, given that Lee talks of making the arts more "accessible". If 'access' is given to something, it is implied that someone or some people have this something, and others have not, and the first group can use their control in order to make available to the second. 'Access' is something that can only be given to a pre-defined and pre-made phenomenon; participation could imply a little more; but neither access nor participation mean creativity or control. Lee therefore implies and assumes the existence of the very

power relations she dismisses as "outmoded".

### The Significance of a Minister for the Arts

Jennie Lee, as the first Minister for the Arts, makes the beginning of a more explicit centralisation and control of the arts. This results in the undermining of the possibility of the 'independence' and 'laissez-faire' ideology so central to thinking about the state and the arts in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Something of the tensions resulting from the appointment of a Minister were made evident recently in a dispute between the Arts Council drama panel, the Arts Council itself, and the then Minister, Hugh Jenkins. The dispute was reported in the Guardian of Monday, March 3rd, 1975.

The Drama panel, as with all the Arts Council specialist panels, makes recommendations which then go to the Council. It is the Council which is empowered to make actual decisions. Thus, if the members of the Council wish, they can ignore the recommendations of the specialist panel (the latter being the forum through which selected practitioners of the various arts can express their views). The Drama panel voted on this occasion that the Council should have to provide the specialist panels with a précis of its comments and views on panel suggestions, and the actions taken as a result of a specialist panel recommendation. This proposal was rejected by the Council on the grounds that it would be a breach of confidentiality. Nicholas de Jongh, writing in the Guardian (Monday, March 3, 1975), commented that

The significance of the move is that Mr Hugh Jenkins, Minister for the Arts, has already told the council that it must try and make itself more democratic.



This event illustrates not only the extent to which the Arts Council is undemocratic (it excludes control by a meritocracy of practitioners, so central to Alexander Beresford Hope's programme as outlined in 1863)<sup>89</sup> but, more importantly, the sense in which the Minister now becomes involved in disputes, and in issues of control, policy, organisation, and so forth, and is thus seen to be in the position of 'putting on pressure'. In putting pressure on the Arts Council the Minister is in a powerful position since the government controls finance and appointments. Without altering the charter of 1946 the Minister cannot direct the Council in a day to day or immediate sense, but, over time, he can alter personnel, and, on an annual basis, he can withhold money.

#### The Arts as National Prestige and International Cultural Exchange

The arts as a form of prestige for a nation, and as a form of international diplomatic currency, is something we have alluded to in discussing nineteenth century developments. These aspects of the ideology of art as part of ruling class culture are, however, central not only to understanding recent expansion in state patronage, but in understanding the whole post-Renaissance social construction of art.

Art as a form of prestige and adornment for aristocratic houses and life-styles is frequently referred to. The development of a state controlled arts system in the France of Louis XIV, furthermore, is a classic example of the arts being developed as part of the prestige, display, and status of a 'nation'. Here I intend to examine the more recent use of art in this manner in contemporary Britain through the words and actions of

J.W.Lambert (a member of the Arts Council, and literary and arts editor of the 'Sunday Times'), and Sir Harold Wilson (then leader of the Labour Party, and Prime Minister).

Lambert wrote a major full page article in the Sunday Times of March 23rd, 1975. He wrote largely of the threat facing the British theatre, but many of his remarks are more widely relevant.

In his opening remarks Lambert acknowledged "political uncertainty", "social flux" and "economic absurdity" as being the context for his discussion. He argued, however, that

in one field at least we can speak out proudly. The arts are the flower and fruit of any civilisation; and in the arts Britain since the war has proved miraculously fertile. (J.W.Lambert. Sunday Times. 23.3.'75. 'Requiem for British Theatre' ).

Thus he stresses again the theme of art and civilisation which we have seen stated by Mathew Arnold, St. John Stevas and Jennie Lee. Lambert goes on to say that

Our painters and sculptors, our instrumentalists, conductors, singers and dancers, our theatre companies and our dramatists' plays are in demand all over the world.

It is therefore no wonder, he commented, that Mr Harold Wilson spoke in Moscow the other day of "the important role of cultural links", and of the desirability of promoting

fuller mutual knowledge of achievements in literature, art and other fields of cultural activity. ---  
(H.Wilson; quoted by J.W.Lambert, op.cit.)

Wilson here shows how a form of culture, defined a-priori as politically neutral (a neutrality which follows from culture being defined as of civilisation which, by definition, is of the highest achievement of any social order of whatever colour), can be used as a form of soft diplomacy - a form of national self-presentation, and a context within which the hard

diplomacy of trade deals and armament talks can take place. Culture as 'soft' diplomacy can open up further possibilities, or be used as a 'cement' for a diplomatic inter-change that has already taken place. Culture also gives the hard facts of real diplomacy a 'human face', and is thus a way of presenting diplomatic deals within the home country.<sup>90</sup>

Sensitive to these uses of culture, Mr. Lambert asks in his article if Mr. Hugh Jenkins (Minister for the Arts) has told Mr. Wilson of the financial plight of the arts in Britain. Lambert outlines what this plight is, and goes on to point out that the British achievement has been built on state support which compares badly with that given in many other countries.

The effects of inflation on the arts are interesting in themselves; what is significant for our purposes, however, is the manner in which Lambert directs the whole problem at the state. This illustrates again how the involvement of the state in the first place has generated further involvement and demands. In this particular article, however, Lambert is not simply drawing out the logic of state intervention, but is placing especial stress on the way in which art and culture are used by governments as forms of prestige and diplomacy. He is saying, in effect; 'If you want to use culture as a political weapon, make sure your weapon is in good functioning order.' In his own words, he said:

please, Prime Minister, for the sake of Britain's tottering honour, stop promising the Russians or anyone else cultural and artistic exchanges which we shall not be able to make. Stop boasting of our achievement while refusing to keep it alive.

The appeal to the Prime Minister is perhaps again indicative of the increase in state involvement in the arts.

Lambert's article received a certain amount of attention in the media, and he was interviewed on the following day on the B.B.C. 'World at One' news programme (Monday, 24th March, 1975 ). The interviewer suggested that our "present plight" rendered increased money for the arts out of the question. Lambert pointed out that Paris received as much support for the arts as the whole of Britain, and that

Russia, China, places like that, spend far more money than we do; and as for our being able to afford it, the amount of money is tiny.

Lambert further re-emphasised his attack on governments that boast about the arts, without increasing spending:

I do get awfully tired of hearing members of the Government and other spokesmen for Britain boasting, quite justifiably, about our achievements in the arts - our standing in the world today in this field - whilst at the same time they won't take what I regard as the tiny step necessary, not for a monstrous expansion, but simply to keep the nurseries of talent and our actual achievements going.

It is perhaps significant that when Lambert, above, gave examples of countries where more money is spent on the arts than in Britain he cited the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China - both countries where private enterprise support is out of the question. That is, private enterprise support did not enter into his consideration in Britain in 1975. Only Mr Hugh Jenkins, as the member of the government responsible for the arts, still seriously talked of private enterprise support, and such talk was dismissed by the 'Times' as merely diversionary.

#### The Regional Arts Associations and the State

The Arts Council, Crafts Advisory Committee, and Design Council are all 'national' organisations catering for the arts and the visual and designed environment. It is the

Regional Arts Associations, developed largely during the 1960's and 1970's, which represent, within the ideology of art, forms of local, independent, decentralised control of arts financing and organisation. In this section I intend to show that the Regional Arts Associations are not only of the state (in the sense that the state was defined earlier), but that notions of 'independence' and 'local control' must be qualified by understanding the direct subordination of the Regional Arts Associations to the local and national state.

At the end of 1961 there were only two Regional Arts Associations - the South West Arts Association (1956) and the Northern Arts Association (1961).<sup>92</sup> By 1967 four more had been added, three of them 'regional', and one of them an 'area' association. After this developments were more rapid with five associations formed in 1968 and 1969, and a further three in 1970 and 1971, and a second Area Association also being formed. A further two have been formed since the end of 1972.

From 1969 to 1974, the grants to Regional Arts Associations, given by the Arts Council, increased from about one quarter million pounds, to nearly one and a half millions.<sup>93</sup>

The system by which grants are allocated by the Arts Council to Regional Associations is somewhat haphazard, being the result of historical accident, rather than a coherent pre-defined policy. Thus, Hugh Jenkins, then Minister for the Arts, explained in June 1974 that

The amount of direct grant the associations receive from the Arts Council is partly a consequence of their age, partly of their population and is, of course, related to the range of their activities. The two oldest, for example, were receiving over a third of the total for England in 1972/3 for a population less than one-sixth of the total. The figures for 1974/5 show a broader spread, but the largest

sum, £300,000, still goes to the north with its population of 3m, whereas with a similar population the east midlands receives under £80,000, and the south east only £27,000. (94)

The Regional Arts Association is, however, only one aspect of regional policy in the arts. In a speech to the Regional Studies Association conference of June 1974 the Minister for the Arts discussed broad arts policy in terms of a three tier system: first, the national level run by the Arts Council; second, the regional level, catered for by Regional Arts Associations; third, the local level, catered for by local government. The Arts Council, however, operates not only at the national level, but undertakes some direct sponsoring in the regions other than that directed through the Regional Arts Associations, while local government itself is involved not only in direct sponsorship or subsidy, but also contributes towards the finances of the Regional Arts Associations.

The complexity of these ways of financing the arts is in part a consequence of the post war Arts Council's refusal to appear to sponsor directly within the regions. That is, a refusal to appear to be directly involved and administratively involved across the country, has led to resources and information being channelled through a variety of bodies and organisations. One consequence of this, as we have seen, has been the great differences in the amounts of central support given to the various regions. In addition to this, the support of the local authority varies from region to region. In 1971/2 local authority contributions to regional funds per thousand of the population ranged from under £2 in Greater London and the West Midlands, to ten times that figure in Lincolnshire, West Wales, and the North, and as high as £34 in the mid Pennines.<sup>95</sup>

Were the Regional Arts Associations genuinely rooted in the regions they cover (in terms of their finance and control) one would expect great variations from area to area across the country: local priorities, objectives and resources would determine what sort, if any, of arts association was to exist, and what it would do.

Hugh Jenkins (then Minister for the Arts), speaking at the Regional Studies Association conference (June 1974), indicated, however, a very different approach to local self government in the arts. He stated that

The question of decentralisation is a proper one to raise . . . The associations are at an uneven stage of development, and, naturally enough, their readiness and their ability to take over some responsibility from the Arts Council will vary. I would think myself that in the years immediately ahead the task will be to bring all of them to a satisfactory level in all respects and then perhaps to look again at what powers ought to be delegated. It is obvious that real regional development implies decreasing reliance on the centre, but this in turn implies growth in responsibility in the regions and in the localities. (96)

This statement indicates that all talk of decentralisation and independence must be treated with caution. For Hugh Jenkins talked in the above of wanting to 'bring' all of the associations to a 'satisfactory level', and he said this would involve a growth in 'responsibility' in the regions and localities. That is, 'bring' is used as an active verb - the actor being the central state, Arts Council and/or government, while the object being 'brought' is the local association. Furthermore, 'responsibility' is defined by the central state; thus independence and the 'delegation' of power will follow only from and within the terms set by central government and the central state.

Further light was thrown on what decentralisation and local control could and could not mean when the Minister

for the Arts asked the rhetorical questions:

Can the same confidence be reposed in the Regional Arts Associations to distribute financial support with the kind of informed justice which is necessary and which is generally believed to be characteristic of the Arts Council record in these matters.

And if not everyone thinks the Arts Council is as good as I do, would not devolution of patronage on a large scale risk bringing the whole process into disrepute? (97)

Jenkins is implying here that one of the achievements of the Arts Council is that it has become respectable, and could therefore confer respectability on that which it patronised. Jenkins indicates, therefore, a possible danger in devolution as being that the local group would not carry the respectability and power of legitimation that the Arts Council had acquired. To weaken the central control of the Arts Council, therefore, would be to run the risk of lessening the power of the state to define what is, and what is not, art.

More importantly, however, the above quotations indicate something of the relation between central state and the Regional Arts Associations. The sense in which they have not got power is indicated by the talk of possibly giving them power, and the sense in which they are seen as part of a system dominated by the central Arts Council is indicated by the earlier quotation in which Jenkins talked of 'bringing' the Regional Associations to a 'satisfactory level'.

Hugh Jenkins was, however, well aware that the role of the state in relation to art was changing, and was bound to change, due to the expansion of state control and provision in the field. Thus he noted that the sums of money involved in state patronage had so far,

not been huge and the idea of support has been so new and so welcome that people have not been disposed to question.



But as the help of the state becomes the norm and gets taken for granted, so more and more people begin to question not only the distribution of the state's help but the methods by which those who make the decisions are chosen. (98)

It was, however, because he was aware of these problems that Hugh Jenkins wished to keep the power of financial and definitional control within the orbit of the central state. For, although he stressed that it was important that

decisions are taken by persons who will enjoy the confidence of those affected by them

he went on to stress that such persons (who take decisions) should not be elected:

I do not believe they should be elected but I do think that there should be more consultation before they are appointed and that this consultation should be formulated into a process of nomination. (99)

Thus the power of defining activities, and the control of material resources, were to remain firmly in the hands of the central state (the Arts Council and Minister for the Arts) with the addition of a little 'consultation'. As was stressed earlier, the power of appointment is central in an understanding of state control and the nominally 'independent' organisations.

#### Control without Directives

Mr. Patrick Gibson, Chairman of the Arts Council, further discussed issues of 'independence' and 'control' in a paper to the same conference.<sup>100</sup> He reminded the conference that in the 'fifties' the Arts Council had operated through a number of branches (he was talking in fact of the Council's inheritance from C.E.M.A.), and reminded the conference that it was only during the 'fifties' that these had been abolished. Thus, he said,

except for Scotland and Wales, the State's patronage of the arts became basically centralised and until the advent of the first Regional Arts Associations there was no devolution at all. (101)

Yet now, he pointed out, devolution had become a feature of expressed Council policy. Rhetorically, therefore, Gibson asked why the regions should not be assessed as were Scotland and Wales in terms of need and population. In answer he argued that

The regional arts associations are independent, they have grown up spontaneously, though with encouragement from the centre, but, unlike the Arts Council, they do not automatically qualify for support from public funds. How, then does the Arts Council assess them? (102)

The theme of 'independence' appears again therefore - though on this occasion independence would seem almost a financial liability. We must, however, explore this independence further, in order to dissolve the concept and establish the real links between the central state, local state, and the Regional Arts Associations.

Gibson argued that the Regional Arts Associations had proved themselves a better means of fostering the arts than the local branches of the Council could ever have become. Because of course the way to plan and execute a policy for the arts is to put it in the hands of people who know the region concerned. (103)

This is an important statement, for, even if "people who know the region" are not necessarily to be elected or to be representative of the region it is at least stated that there are people in the regions whose knowledge and understanding of the regions is greater than that of those at the centre, and who can therefore more effectively carry out and construct arts policy.

To return to Gibson's question, then, how does the Arts Council assess the regions (given that the regions are said

to contain people whose local knowledge is better than that of the assessors.)

Mr Gibson listed eight criteria by which the quality of and the schemes of local associations were to be judged. Certain of these criteria are purely financial; others, such as the Regional Association displaying

a thorough knowledge of the region,

and

A responsiveness to the needs of the region, both expressed and unexpressed

are revealing of the contradictions inherent in Gibson's position. For these two criteria imply that the central body (Arts Council) shall have regional knowledge by which to judge the regional knowledge and competence of Regional Associations who have been defined as having greater regional competence and knowledge than the central body could ever have. In other words the criteria are to be those of the central body.

Further contradictions are raised, therefore, when a further criterion by which to judge a Regional Association is said by Patrick Gibson to be that the Regional Association should have

A real independence . . . . They must not become merely the agents of the Arts Council in the dissemination of metropolitan culture. (104)

With this "real independence" the association should, he stated, show

A readiness to cooperate with others - whether with the Arts Council . . . .

and so forth. Thus, in sum, the local association is to be judged by the central body on its local expertise; on its independence of the central body; and on its willingness to cooperate with and fulfill the criteria of responsiveness to the

region of the central body. If the regional body fulfills these contradictory criteria it is eligible for state funds.

I am not arguing here that the central state (or local state) should, or should not, supervise the ways in which 'public' money is spent by an 'independent' body. Rather I am drawing out the contradictions that have arisen from a practice of establishing each sector of state provision in the arts as being (nominally) independent, and I am attempting to show the actual forms of control that operate and exist. In other words I am attempting to show the manner in which constitutional independence (an appearance) is in fact limited within certain definite structural constraints. It is perhaps appropriate here to remind the reader of Alexander Beresford Hope's phrasing in saying that "Self elected corporations . . . are of the genius of the English constitution", -- emphasising here the word "constitution". The word 'constitution' here implies that coherence and inter-connectedness that official spokesmen so frequently disguise.

I have already indicated that the Arts Council seeks to support Regional Arts Associations in proportion to the support received from the locality itself. The Council aims at a balance between central and local provision of funds; in practice this is rarely realised. Mr Gibson, however, stresses that the Arts Council tends to respond most where local support is greatest.<sup>105</sup> This further indicates the constraints upon a Regional Arts Associations potential 'independence', for in practice this arrangement means that where local and central state are in agreement, the Regional Association will be well funded. The Arts Council is willing to delegate a certain

amount of responsibility to the local state (through being willing to contribute heavily when the local state also does so).

In other words, to some extent the central state (Arts Council) is willing to reinforce the local state (local government) in the local state's assessment of the merits of the local Regional Arts Association.

There is no reference in this discussion to the ability of the local authority to assess and respond to the needs of the locality: this ability is assumed. And, lest we become seduced by the constitutional appearance, it must be remembered that the local form of the state is becoming increasingly integrated with the central state, not only through the local government reorganisation legislation, but through the rates support grants making the locality ever more dependent on the financial contributions of the central exchequer.<sup>106</sup>

Altogether the gist of Gibson's speech with reference to the Regional Arts Associations implies that, in order to receive finance and be independent, the Association must, (a) please the local authority, for, the more the authority gives the more the Arts Council gives; (b) also please the Arts Council separately for, while they will tend to back up local government, they will also maintain their right to withdraw support without reference to local government actions.

The system being described here is not one of control by directives: rather it is one in which control is exercised through fields of operation being defined. Probably there exists little coherent local government policy on the arts; rather the representatives of the local authorities act as individuals. But the potential is always there for vetoing particular projects

or general policies - a veto not exercised by direct command but through the long term threat to withdraw financial support.

Patrick Gibson, Chairman of the Arts Council, discussed local authority support and control of the Regional Arts Associations as follows:

Unfortunately when it comes to the funds received from the local authorities the latter subscribe in most cases a relatively small proportion of the total. In spite of this the part played by the local authority representatives on the regional arts associations is very large. Indeed, it could be said that they are almost in a position to control policy. We want them to play a large part, but we want the local authorities to put their money where their representatives are. (107)

In some cases, he points out, the Arts Council contribution to the Regional Arts Association is as high as 80% of the total; the least the Arts Council contributes is 60%, in the case of Northern Arts.

#### Local Authorities as Patrons of the Arts

Until 1964 local authority provision was limited in terms of explicit direct sponsorship of the arts.<sup>108</sup> Museums, art galleries, art schools, and so forth, were supported, but often as peripheral commitments inherited from the past. Education must, of course, to some extent be listed as a 'cultural' provision, but that is and was seen as 'education' rather than as part of 'cultural provision'.

I do not intend, however, to outline in any detail the changes since 1964 in local authority provision for the arts, involving certain forms of direct sponsorship being extended, and arts festivals being more regularly organised. It is not the purpose of this thesis to describe all that is available or that is done: rather I am selectively examining aspects of arts provision in order to illustrate and extend an

argument concerning the general logic and historical development of art as a social fact.

In mentioning local authority provision, therefore, I wish to note in passing only some of the consequences of local government reorganisation as it has affected the arts. <sup>109</sup>

Services which, prior to government reorganisation, had developed on a piecemeal or 'one-off' basis have now tended to become structured on a much wider regional basis, and policy has become more clearly defined. Intervention in the fields of recreation and culture at the regional level has tended to become, therefore, a positive facet of policy, rather than a peripheral aspect of administration.

General reorganisation of local government has resulted in various forms of umbrella departments of recreation and/or culture. Thus, to take two examples, the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport has a "Recreation and Culture" division, and, on the district level, Bedford District Council has an "amenities" department which includes the art galleries.

The significance of these developments for our purposes here is the sense in which this institutional codifying of local policy represents a tendency for local state provision to become more explicit, formalised, and, hence, directed. State intervention becomes less haphazard, since definite personnel exist to further and promote forms of action.

Just as the creation of a Minister for the Arts in the 1960's led to the state having to more explicitly formulate policies (and thus run into direct confrontation with the ideology of independence within which the Arts Council operated) so also

the institutionalisation of arts and cultural policy at the local level is likely to have the same consequences in relation to the regional arts associations. Not only will there in future be a Regional Arts Association demanding money from the authorities in its region, but there will be competing local authority commitments - and local authority officials and policy makers who may wish to spend the same sums of money in other ways, or for direct provision and sponsorship. This may at the least lead to greater pressure being put on Regional Arts Associations to spend their money as the local authority would itself wish to spend it.

#### State Expenditure on the Arts

Given that money spent on the arts comes from and goes to a variety of institutions, and given that certain forms of expenditure, such as that on art teachers in secondary education, and on art schools absorbed into polytechnics, is concealed within more general education budgets, a full assessment of state spending on the arts is not possible. However, some statement on the general level of spending is desirable so that the reader can assess the scale of state intervention.

According to Mr Hugh Jenkins, then Minister for the Arts, central government grants to the arts increased from £25.5m in 1970/71, to £52.9m in 1974/5. These figures cover expenditure on national collections of art in Great Britain, and on the Arts Council, and on other arts as specified in the appropriation accounts.<sup>110</sup> The figures exclude expenditure on libraries, and on the maintenance of historic buildings and ancient monuments in Government ownership, and they



exclude the grants given by the central state towards the maintenance of privately owned houses.

These figures for central state grants were given in the House of Commons on 16th February 1976. The Guardian newspaper reported on Saturday, April 3rd an increase in the Arts Council budget of about ten million pounds to £36m, plus about £1.15m for building purposes.

"Local Authorities are the other major source of financial assistance to the arts", said Mr. Jenkins in a written reply in the House of Commons on 16 February 1976. Information is not available on local authority spending on the arts for the 1970--1975 period, but a special survey in England by the Arts Council in 1972/73 showed that expenditure totalled between £14.7 and £15.5 millions.

Information given by Mr. Jenkins on local authority expenditure on local museums and galleries showed an increase from £6.8m in 1970/71 to £20.9m in 1974/5.

Taking these figures, and making certain allowances for inflation, a total of local and central government expenditure on the arts and related activities, but excluding libraries, historic buildings, ancient monuments, privately owned houses, and art schools, is arrived at. This would be roughly £94,000,000.<sup>III</sup>

#### Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter I have been dealing with the forms of organisation through which the state can and does act to define, construct and reinforce definitions, practices and

concepts of art, craft, and design. I have covered in some detail the Arts Council, the Crafts Advisory Committee, and the Design Council as agents of central government. The setting up of a Minister with special responsibility for the Arts has been examined, and, at the local level, I have dealt with both the creation of direct state provision through C.E.M.A., and the withdrawal of this support by the Arts Council of Great Britain after the war, this withdrawal being followed some years later by the re-creation of a different form of provision through the Regional Arts Associations.

I have left out of this account, therefore, the major forms of state provision for the social construction of art which I traced in their development in the 19th century in the previous chapter - education and museums and art galleries. I have also not considered, for example, the influence and effect of book publishing in the arts, and the ways these are made available through public libraries.

These omissions were made necessary by the limited space available, but they are, of course, still important - especially given the post second world war expansion of education, and the new moves and debates on how to make museums and galleries more attractive, more inviting, and yet, at the same time, maintain their role as centres of scholarship, research and information.<sup>112</sup>

A chapter in itself could, for instance, have been devoted to the policies, public statements, exhibitions and choices made as part of the programmes centreing on 'Architectural Heritage Year'. Here an analysis of the television programmes produced, and the sorts of buildings featured in local exhibitions, and the sorts of statements made, would have been very revealing

of the sorts of ideology being examined in this thesis.

I directed attention instead to the aforementioned major forms of state provision because they are developments since or during the last world war, and because any account of them needed to be sufficiently detailed to break down their apparent separateness and indicate the pattern and coherence - a pattern and coherence not only hidden by the nearness in time of the events discussed, and the fact that these government agencies at all levels present themselves to our experience as discrete entities, but by the extent to which spokesmen for these agencies emphasise so frequently an ill defined concept of independence.

I have sought both in this chapter and the previous chapter to examine why 'independence' is such an important issue within the ideology of art - why it is seen as a precondition for genuine artistic creativity ( a theme not only emphasised by post-war spokesmen for the state art-promotion agencies, but also by sociologists such as Jean Duvignaud <sup>113</sup> ).

I have described the forms of organisation resulting from institutions emphasising an ideology of independence as 'laissez-faire' - using the term to describe a form of disguised control (a control exercised through control of money, appointments, and committee representatives).

It will have been noted that the forms of state provision for theatre, for culture, for our national heritage, for our museums and art galleries, for our archaeological sites, for art schools, design schools, art galleries, and so forth, is administratively chaotic. Various ministers and under-secretaries of state hold differing national or regional responsibilities, while, at the local level, differing departments handle different

responsibilities. Within this the proliferation of constitutionally independent government bodies further complicates the picture. This 'chaos' is a consequence of and is fundamental to the ideology of independence (laissez-faire control) that is being examined as an aspect of the ruling ideology under a form of social democratic capitalism in England.

I have attempted also therefore in this chapter to illustrate the contradictions that arise from this system, and that force a greater state intervention and formal codification of control and policy.

I have attempted, in other words, to indicate that the ideology, or 'appearance' (laissez-faire system) within which state direction of the arts has developed since the 1830's is coming increasingly under strain, due to the need to effect some measure of control over the increasing amounts of money being spent, and due to the need to make ever more explicit choices between what is to be promoted and what is not to be promoted. These choices are not forced on the state through the internal logic of a bureaucracy; rather they are forced on the state by others, and as a consequence of the relations the state is part of, and as a consequence of the logic of the intervention of the state in the first place, and as a consequence of the position the state now holds in British society.

The extent to which there now exist strong pressures to further codify and centralise state provision has been indicated. This phenomenon is further illustrated by an article in the 'Times' newspaper, by the Labour M.P., Andrew Faulds. Andrew Faulds was shadow Arts Minister during the last Conservative government -- ("I feel I was prematurely ejected for my anti-

Zionist views": A.Faulds. Times. 27.10.'75. 'Saving the Arts from Cultural Malnutrition' ). Faulds said that, while shadow minister, he prepared a policy paper in which he

argued for a reorganisation of departmental responsibilities with a separate departmental budget. The minister . . . should take over the whole range of our cultural life and historic heritage, as is the practice in countries where such matters are better managed. The care of archaeological sites and historic houses should be moved from the Department of the Environment's unwieldy diocese to the arts parish, for the keeping of such places is more properly a cultural concern where, incidentally, the happy marriage of properties and collections could be more conveniently arranged.

. . . . . At some stage soon a minister is going to have to consider governmental support of properties run by the National Trust and much greater financial provision for the conservation of church buildings whether the outmoded ecclesiastical exemption is abandoned or not. Such matters will not abide the state's prevarication since stone rots and moth corrupts without benefit of ecclesiastical edict or government fiat. The necessary reorganisation of Britain's museums, the establishment of a museums staff college, and a proper career structure, and acute problems of conservation and the need for a conservation institute must await a later article.

Faulds extends his argument of a whole range of subjects, outlining the need, as he sees it, for government intervention and direction from a central ministry. Faulds did not, of course, become minister responsible for the arts (for whatever reason), but the sentiments of his article echo the many demands by various groups for greater financial assistance and coherence in state policy.

My broad aim in both this and the previous chapter has been to ask, in an almost naive manner, 'What is it that the state is doing in these areas at all?'; 'What has the state to do with these forms of ruling class culture?'. On a more sophisticated level I have been looking at the long term consequences of state support. Thus state support has not only meant that certain artistic practices and ideologies have been

maintained and/or expanded when these would otherwise have been transformed or disappeared (as with the Music Hall,) but state support has also provided the preconditions for certain ways of doing and thinking. State support, for instance, provides the preconditions for the continuance of an ideology of 'art for art's sake', for state support makes it possible for an activity to tend towards being a 'pure science'.

It must not be forgotten that the art we are discussing in this thesis was, in the 18th century, largely the preserve of a small minority of the population, and that in the 19th and 20th centuries most people's contact with art and culture (as presently defined) has been and is through the state education system, the state art schools, the state and private museums, and the exhibitions and performances assisted by the national and local state.

The naivete in the question, therefore, 'What is it that the state has done and is doing?', is a naivete that attempts to distance the reader from the naturalness of the existence of the present forms of provision, and to force the question, 'What are the consequences of this?'; 'What were and are the alternatives?'; 'What would art and culture be but for this?', and so forth. Rather than asking, as is so often done in discussions of arts policy, 'How can we best further an assumed and accepted value or practice?', I am seeking to sociologically examine what this value is - what social relations it is part of.

This line of argument returns us, therefore, to the thesis and analysis undertaken and presented by William Morris, and examined in an earlier chapter. It is the concept, practice, and social relations of art and culture, analysed and understood by Morris as part of a developing capitalist division of labour

and of classes that is being and has been constructed, reinforced and maintained by the various state agencies and organisations. The division art is part of is one that opposes two clusters of concepts, including on the one side, art, culture, leisure, recreation, value, national heritage, and morality, and, on the other, work, idleness, entertainment, the mundane, and the immoral. These divisions are themselves part of social relations involving differential access to power, sources of definitions, control of values, and material resources.

The development of state intervention in and control of the presentation, definition and distribution of art and culture must be understood within this context. The statements by ministers and Arts Council personnel that we have examined are part of these developments and social relations, and only, I have argued, make sense within this form of analysis.

NOTES TO PART THREE



notes to chapter five

1. On the PreRaphaelite Brotherhood see; Fleming.G.H. That Water Shall Meet Again Michael Joseph, Ltd. London. (1971).  
Fleming.G.H. Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood  
Hart-Davis, London. (1967).  
Holman-Hunt.D. My Grandmothers and I Hamish Hamilton, London.  
(1960).  
On the Arts and Crafts Movement see; Naylor.G. The Arts and Crafts Movement Studio Vista, London. (1971). See also bibliography  
in same.
2. Not only "within the social relations of developing capitalism", but "as part of the....." etc.,etc.
3. The 'content' of contemporary painting has, of course, changed: what has not changed is the ideology of art - the definitions, values, and the basic character of the social relations.  
It was my intention to include in this thesis a chapter exploring the change in content and the negation of the significance of this change on a general level ('general', because the change is significant for the painter and the person who appreciates painting). What has not changed is the way art is defined, revered, sold and bought, displayed and so forth. The impact of the anti-art movements has been enclosed (see Hannema.S. Fads, Fakes and Fantasies - The Crisis in the Art Schools and the Crisis in Art Macdonald, London. (1970), chapters 6 and 7.)  
However, space does not permit such a chapter. I believe, however, that the material in chapters six, seven and eight makes the point clearly enough on the level of the ideology of art, and the way in which art, as part of the practical and conceptual division of labour, has not changed.
4. My earlier remarks about the analytical separability of 'art' and 'painting' should be borne in mind here. Art implies something more than, or other than, painting. It implies also creativity in relation to non-creativity.
5. Marcel Duchamp. (1887--1968). Duchamp's 'Bicycle-wheel' (a wheel on a wooden stool) dates from 1913; the 'Bottle Rack' from 1914; the 'Fountain' (a porcelain urinal) from 1917.  
see on 'Dada' in general (and with frequent reference to Duchamp, see index); Dada Richter.H. Thames and Hudson, London. (1965).
6. quotation from letter of 10 November 1962 to Hans Richter.  
see Dada above, note 5.
7. On Dada and Surrealism, see reference above (note 5) and; Pearson.N.M. 'Lévi-Strauss and the Surrealists'. Dyn vol, 2. (1972).
8. It is not possible here to enter into the theoretical debate about the nature of the state. Rather theory will have to be tested as the material is worked through.
9. Gramsci.A. Selections from the Prison Notebooks. ed.trans. Q.Hoare, and G.N.Smith. Lawrence and Wishart, London. (1971) p.244.

10. *ibid.* p.258. On the state in general see Gramsci.*op.cit.* pp. 257—264.

11. Corrigan.P. from 'Socialist Construction and Marxist Theory; Essays from the Political Economy Group, Durham.' by Corrigan.P., Sayer.D. and Ramsie.H. Draft version of forthcoming book.

12. To expand this remark about ambiguity we must cite a few examples of what the state does; for it not only enforces the property laws necessary to capitalism, and provides the education necessary for a particular mode of production, but legislation is passed which may act against particular capitalists. Thus factory acts in part enforce certain ways of working, and prevent others, and, in the field of the arts, the state design system in the early nineteenth century is an attempt to create a certain reserve of technical skill; capitalist industry is, in this case, cajoled (without great success) to utilise this reserve; at the same time, the middle classes begin to take advantage of the design school provision as a 'service' - a subsidised form of fine art provision for middle class young ladies; (see Macdonald.S. The History and Philosophy of Art Education University of London Press. (1970) ). In the present day the Arts Council does two things: first, it exists to support certain practising artists, and, second, it exists in a major form to provide selected arts for the 'public'; this latter is a 'service,' but (and here is the ambiguity) a reading of Arts Council documents, of newspaper reports, and of reactions to the Arts Council in the interviews for this thesis (see appendix) reveals a deep suspicion of 'state control'. This suspicion of the state (evident in many areas of industrial, social and cultural life) can be summed up in saying it is seen as a 'very necessary evil'. Thus, while the state is part of the apparatus through which the ruling class maintains its hegemony, it is, at the same time, part of the relations of capitalism, and, as such, it is defined by those relations (of which it is part) and acts from its existence as of those relations. Thus the state can be seen as acting as part of the social system - and hence its ambiguous relation to any one section or group within the ruling class. One could with some truth say that the state is only the apparatus through which or by which the ruling classes maintain power in the sense that the state is part of the way in which particular historical relations are maintained, reproduced, defined and supported. In as far, therefore, as the state is supportive of a particular set of relations of production, it is also supportive of the groups who do best out of a form of production; these groups, however, do not 'run' or control the state; both they and the state are part of and a product of the particular relations of production.

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 notes to chapter five
 

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13. Instrument of Foundation, 1768. On the history of academies in general Academies of Art by Pevsner.N. Cambridge University Press. (1940). New edition due out now.

14. Within Britain, despite the identification of 'state' with 'public' and 'nation', the state is generally seen as being 'political'. The importance of being 'state' and 'not-state' at one and the same time is, therefore, that this also implies being not-political. See, B.B.C., Arts Council, Tourist Boards, Design Council, C.O.S.I.R.A., etc.

15. see; Sayer.D. 'Method and Dogma in Historical Materialism'. The Sociological Review vol.23. No.4. New Series. November, 1975. p.779.

Corrigan.P. 'Dichotomy is Contradiction: On 'Society' as Constraint and Construction---Remarks on the Doctrine of the 'Two Sociologies'.'. The Sociological Review Vol.23. No.2. New Series. May 1975. p.211.

Corrigan.P. and Sayer.D. 'Class Struggle & Morality'. Radical Philosophy Twelve Winter 1975.

16. On appearances see Sayer.D. op.cit (n.15).

17. see, for example; "Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and of the principles of design among the people (especially the manufacturing population of the country): also to inquire into the constitution, management, and effects of institutions connected with the arts...." 1835. (598) IX. 1. Committee also appointed following session for same purpose;- 1836 (568) IX.1.

Royal Academy: "Number of exhibitors: Works of art exhibited: Number of Professors' lectures required; and number which have been delivered by each professor". 1836 (in 568) IX. 356.

Royal Academy: "Conditions on which apartments at Somerset House were bestowed on the Royal Academy: Period for which granted &c." 1834 (404 XLI. 485).

"Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the present position of the Royal Academy in relation to the Fine Arts, and into the circumstances and conditions under which it occupies a portion of the National Gallery, and to suggest such measures as may be required to render it more useful in promoting art and in improving and developing public taste". 1863.

see also: Hutchison.S. . A History of the Royal Academy Chapman and Hall. (1968).

18. Note the parallel here to modern debates about whether the giving of public (state) funds to private industry should, or should not, involve 'public' accountability.

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 notes to chapter five
 

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19. Maclise, Daniel. 1806—1870. (Maclise claimed he was born in 1811 - see Dictionary of National Biography.). An historical painter. Elected as Royal Academician in 1840. 1855; acted as juror of Paris Exhibition. 1871; D.G. Rossetti wrote a paper on Maclise, published in Academy, 15th April 1871. Maclise designed the Swiney Cup for the Society of Arts; a medal for the International Exhibition of 1862; a Turner medal for the Royal Academy of Arts.

20. Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire "into the present position of the Royal Academy in relation to the Fine Arts, and into the circumstances and conditions under which it occupies a portion of the National Gallery, and to suggest such measures as may be required to render it more useful in promoting art and in improving and developing public taste;" 1863. paragraph; 1545.

21. see note 20 for full title of inquiry.

22. Alexander James Beresford Hope: 1820---1887. 1841; M.P. for Maidstone, till 1852. 1857, re-elected. 1859; tried in vain for University of Cambridge seat, and in 1862 tried in vain for Stoke on Trent. 1865, M.P., for Stoke. 1868, M.P., for University of Cambridge, till his death.

He was an ardent church supporter. Wrote in 1851 a series of letters to the Morning Chronicle, on religious liberty. 1855, wrote in Chronicle 'The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art'. Hope was interested in archaeology, ecclesiastical history, and a firm advocate of Gothic principles in art.

1865—1867; President of Royal Institute of British Architects. 1879; Trustee of the British Museum.

He was also President of the Ecclesiological Society; of the Architectural Museum; and a trustee of the National Portrait Gallery.

1858; Hope published The Common Sense of Art  
 1861; published The English Cathedral of the Nineteenth Century  
 1863; The Condition and Prospects of Architectural Art  
 1863; The World's Debt to Art  
 1864; The Art Workman's Position

23. I discussed the connection between prestige, commercial success, and social control, in chapter four when discussing the general development of Academies. Louis XIVth, France, serves as a good earlier example with the combination of mercantilist commercial principles, and prestige for the Monarch, both relating to the setting up of a tightly controlled academy.

24. see page 148.

25. Eastlake, Charles. see Lady Eastlake's 'Memoir' of her husband, prefixed to her edition, 1870, of his Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts.

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25. Eastlake, Charles; continued from previous page: The following notes are taken from Victorian Taste by John Steegman, published by Thomas Nelson and Sons, London. (1970.). Born Plymouth, 1793. educated at Plympton, and later Charterhouse. Left Charterhouse early to work to be painter. During 1814—15 period in Paris (Louvre at time full of Napoleon's looted pictures from Italy and elsewhere). Travelled in Greece and Italy. Taken up by such as Jeremiah Harman, the banker and collector, and Lord and Lady Ruthven. 1819—20 in Rome. Met there Earl Spencer; Sir Humphry Davy; the two Miss Berrys; Tom Moore; Samuel Rogers.

Up till 1840 Eastlake's reputation based on his painting. After 1840 reputation based increasingly on his expertise in matters connected with art scholarship. During 1840's he was invited to accept the Curatorship of the pictures at Greenwich, and the Directorship of a proposed English Academy at Rome. Also invited to accept the Superintendence of Government Schools of Design.

Through influence of Sir Robert Peel Eastlake was appointed Secretary to the National Gallery, in 1843. This lasted till 1847. 1850 elected President of the Royal Academy.

"Eastlake, it is reported, was profoundly reluctant to become P.R.A., but the Queen, Prince Albert and Peel had all insisted that he should accept the office if the Council of the Royal Academy offered it to him." (Victorian Taste: Steegman.p.195).

Appointed as Director of the National Gallery in 1855, while continuing as President of R.A.

Eastlake "transformed the National Gallery from an awkward adolescent institution into a collection of the very first importance, if judged by quality rather than quantity." (Victorian Taste: Steegman; p.195.)

Died December 1865. "He was . . . the most important figure in the international art-collecting world of his day." (Steegman.p.193.)

26. see Victorian Taste, John Steegman. Thomas Nelson and Sons, London. (1970). chapter six, 'Art and the State'.

27. see note 20.

28. *ibid*; paragraph 556

29. It is worth noting that the general opinion of artists interviewed for this study (see appendix) would seem to be the reverse of Ruskin's. That is, while the commercial market is disliked, or simply accepted as a commercial venture which just happens to deal with pictures, the assistance of the state is seen as more dangerous on the grounds that the artist may become pampered, and on the grounds that the rules by which state assistance are given are not clear.

30. 'freedom' here in the sense of the concept relating to the intellectual and gentlemanly status of art as a noble pursuit - a Renaissance and post Renaissance idea.

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31. 'assistance without control'; this applies only to the upper regions of artistic production, for only in fine art is freedom seen as necessary. Applied art and design require only the application of truths and principles discovered in fine art. This was and is the division operated. See interview five in the appendix for the experiences of a designer trained as if 'artistic', and employed as if 'technician'.

32. paragraph 4208 of 1863 Commission of enquiry into the Royal Academy; see note 20.

33. As a generalisation this statement overlooks the highly significant forms of workers' self organisation, on which see E.P.Thompson's The Making of the English Working Class Victor Gollancz, (1963); revised Pelican Edition, (1968). see also; J.F.C.Harrison's Learning and Living, Routledge and Kegan Paul. (1961).

On mechanics institutes see: Royle.E. 'Mechanics Institutes and the Working Classes; 1840 - 1860.' in The Historical Journal Vol.XLV.No.2. (1971). also; Lea.J.T. 'The History and Development of Mechanics Institutes'. published in Research in Librarianship October 1968.

34. William Ewart. 1798--1869. A barrister. In 1828 became M.P. for Bletchingley, Surrey. 1830 became M.P. for Liverpool. 1831, 1832, 1835, re-elected. 1837, defeated. 1839 became M.P. for Wigan.

1841, elected for Dumfries district of burghs. Retired 1868.

Ewart advocated the opening of public museums and galleries with as few restrictions as possible - they, for instance, should be open during the working classes' leisure periods. 1836 Ewart drew up the report of a Select Committee he had obtained on the connection between arts and manufactures. This report contributed towards the setting up of the state schools of design. (See Ellis.S. 'Ewart, Haydon, and the Select Committee . . . 1835-36.' in History of Education Society Bulletin, 15, (1975).pp.15-23.)

1850 carried Bill for establishing free public libraries

35. Report, 1835 (598). V.375. Reappointed following session; Report; 1836 (568) IX.1. The Select Committee was "appointed to inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and of the principles of design among the people (especially the manufacturing population of the country): also to inquire into the constitution, management, and effects of institutions connected with the arts . . .".

36. Now the "Royal" Society of Arts...: see; The Story of the Royal Society of Arts Abridged from Sir Henry Trueman Wood's Official History, and brought up-to-date by G.K. Menzies, C.B.E., Secretary, with a forward by J.A.Milne,C.B.E., Chairman of the Council and an appreciation by E.V.Lucas, C.H. published by John Murray, London. (1935). see also references to the Society in Steegman.J. Victorian Taste, Thomas Nelson and Sons, (1870).

37. Haydon, Benjamin Robert. 1786—1846. An historical painter, born in Plymouth.

1822 petitioned parliament to grant money for the decoration of churches and other public buildings with paintings. 1834 petitioned for spaces to be left for pictures on the walls of the new Houses of Parliament; petition approved. 1835 scheme for schools of design accepted by William Ewart's Select Committee. 1835 Haydon began lecturing at London Mechanics Institute on painting and design.

1837—1839, he assisted Ewart and others to establish Savile House.

Lectured all over the British Isles - as mentioned in main text.

His publications include;

1816 'Judgement of Connoisseurs upon Works of Art compared with that of Professional Men, in reference more particularly to the Elgin Marbles.'

1818. 'New churches considered with respect to the opportunities they afford for the encouragement of painting'.

1829. 'Some enquiry into the causes which have obstructed the course of historical painting for the last seventy years in England.'

1839. 'On Academies of Art (more particularly the Royal Academy) and their pernicious effect on the genius of Europe.'

1842. 'Thoughts on the relative value of fresco and oil painting as applied to the architectural decorations of the Houses of Parliament.'

1844-6. 2 vols. 'Lectures on painting and design'.

38. Beaumont, Sir George Howland. According to the Everyman Encyclopaedia ed. Boyle. A. pub. Dent and Sons, London. (1913)., Beaumont was the seventh baronet of the ancient family of the Beaumonts of Stoughton Grange, Leicestershire. Born 1753, and educated at Eton, he was a distinguished amateur of the arts, and friend of artists. He himself had some skill as a landscape painter. Donated many works to the British national collections. He died in 1827 without issue.

39. see Steegman, J. Victorian Taste Thomas Nelson and Sons, (1970). pp. 139--141.

40. Joseph Hume. 1777—1835. Politician. India as an army surgeon in 1797, where obtained lucrative positions, returning to England in 1808 with a fortune. Entered parliament in 1812 as Tory M.P. for Weymouth. Under influence of James Mill became Benthamite philosophic-radical. As M.P. was successively member for the Border Burghs, Middlesex, Kilkenny, and Montrose. Career marked as an M.P. by his rigid insistence on financial regularity and the checking of expenditure. Supporter of humanitarian measures, such as suppression of flogging and of the press gang. see Memoir, by his son, J.B.Hume, (1855). Source, as in note 38.

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41. Between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries the usage of the word 'public' undergoes many changes. In the 1750's it meant leisured adults not engaged or dependent on menial work; (see, Edward Burke; Letters on a Regicide Peace, from the 1790's, quoted in R.J.White; Waterloo to Peterloo, penguin, 1968., p.48). In William Ewart's use of 'public', the working classes are included (incorporated). The public are to have access to a public building wherein they would find a display of materials selected and displayed according to middle and ruling class criteria.
42. Poulett Thomson. no information in D.N.B.
43. see; MacDonald.S. The History and Philosophy of Art Education University of London Press, (1970). This is a very useful book for descriptive material, and has been drawn on heavily for this chapter. The 'history', however, is presented as tending towards, or deviating from, the author's own ideas on what art education should be; there is little attempt at historical or sociological analysis. Where I have repeated or drawn from his material, therefore, I have done so in order to structure it and analyse it.
44. Colborne, Lord. no information in D.N.B.
45. Charles Robert Cockerell. 1788--1863. Architect. Educated Westminster School; travelled extensively in Greece; 1819 became surveyor to St Paul's; 1829 A.R.A.; 1836, became R.A.; 1840--57 was professor of architecture at R.A.; his work includes the Taylor buildings at Oxford. (Everyman Encyclopedia Dent & Sons, London. (1913) ).
46. On the early history of the Design Schools see note 43 above.
47. We noted in the last chapter that in the French Academy of the 17th century figure drawing was practised, the practice not being allowed elsewhere. The exclusion of this from mass art education in Britain is therefore of the same pattern - keeping it as a practice for the highest form of art undertaken by the Royal Academy.
48. MacDonald (op.cit.n.43).see pages 69--75.
49. Regulations such as these are interpreted in various ways by writers on the subject. MacDonald, (see note 43, above) tends to see them as negative, on the grounds that they prevent the development of a fully fledged fine art education system; Sjoerd Hannema, by contrast (Fads, Fakes and Fantasies; Macdonald, London, (1970) ) sees the regulations more positively; he interprets them as attempts to set up a genuine 'design' orientated education, rather than a design-system that was merely a spin-off from fine art. This latter may certainly be a consequence of the regulations.



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50. John Papworth. 1776--1847. Architect and designer. see Life and Works Papworth, London, (1879). One of the 18 original members of "Associated Artists in Water Colours", founded in 1807. One of original members of "Graphic Society" founded in 1833. In 1835 he gave evidence before William Ewart's Select Committee of the House of Commons on Art and Manufacture. Papworth was appointed Director of Government School of Design in Somerset House in 1836 - Somerset House having been vacated by the Royal Academy, who had moved to the West Wing of National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. Papworth was eight times vice-president of the Institute of British Architects, and was one of the 12 who signed the resolution on which the society was based.

Papworth was a man who believed that artisans should neither be shown High Art nor allowed to study the live figure, lest

"young men might be tempted to leave the intended object to pursue that which is more accredited and honoured."

(Sessional Papers; 1834; Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, p.93 ).

Sources; D.N.B.; MacDonald, op.cit.).

51. see indented quotation to note 50 above.

52. On the early history of the Design Schools see in particular Report from the Select Committee on the Schools of Design 1849. (576) XVIII.I. "appointed to inquire into the constitution and management of the Government School of Design and to report their opinion thereupon;" Set this report against the earlier report of William Ewart's Select Committee on Arts and Manufacture of 1835, which led to the setting up of the schools. see also; Bell.Q. The Schools of Design Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, (1963).

53. see MacDonald.S. The History and Philosophy of Art Education University of London Press, (1970). Particularly chapter nine, and pages 170 to 176; discusses fee paying students, and the differences between rural and industrial design schools, and the student composition of the schools.

54. see; Select Committee on Schools of Design (see note 52 above). This is an important document, investigating as it does the organisation and effects of the school, as well as the responses, often negative, of manufacturers. Henry Cole's intervention is particularly worth noting, given his future importance in the school system (to be discussed later in the chapter).

55. *ibid*

56. *ibid*; introduction.

57. My sources in what follows are largely secondary; my intention, however, is not to present a story, but to interpret and analyse it. Primary sources include the Parliamentary Committees; secondary sources include MacDonald and Bell; (see notes 52 and 53).

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58. Dyce, William. Painter, scientist and administrator. Born, 1806, died, 1864. Born at Aberdeen, he studied painting in Edinburgh, London and Rome. He was elected R.A. in 1848. One of his best known works was the Arthurian Frescoes, in the robing-room of the House of Lords. (sources; Dictionary of Art and Artists; P & L Murray. Penguin Books; third edition (1972).). Also; The Everyman Encyclopaedia; ed. Boyle.A. Dent and Sons Ltd. (1913) ).

59. On Mechanics Institutes see; Lea.J.T. The History and Development of Mechanics Institutes published in 'Research in Librarianship' series; October (1968). Also; Royle.E. Mechanics Institutes and the Working Classes: 1840--1860, an article in The Historical Journal. Vol XIV. No.2. (1971).

60. William Ewart is here illustrative of Gramsci's statement, quoted earlier in the chapter, on the importance of private initiatives for the capitalist state. William Ewart, as an M.P. and promoter of the state system, is here involved in a private institution, set up outside the state system as a counter example that serves to put pressure on the state system to move towards a fine art system. The 'private initiative' thus serves to help shape the state system.

61. John Zephaniah Bell. Possibly the John Bell, the sculptor, born 1811, died 1895.

62. quoted by MacDonald.S. in The History and Philosophy of Art Education, University of London Press, (1970), p.84.

The reference to German or French design is a rhetorical question, the accepted response to which was 'French'. The French schools were fine art orientated; hence Haydon's point: fine art = artists + good design.

63. Jackson, George.

64. quoted by MacDonald (see note 62 above), p.86.

65. "bourgeois": In this thesis I shall be using the word in the following senses. Bourgeoisie: (noun). The dominant commercial and entrepreneurial classes of capitalist society; also the professional and intellectual classes related to the dominance and legitimacy of capitalism. Bourgeois: (adj); of the dominant classes of capitalism. Bourgeois Ideology; the ideology relating to, produced by, and legitimising, the dominant classes of capitalist society: an ideology appropriate to the social relations of capitalist society.

66. quoted by Steegman, J. in Victorian Taste, Thomas Nelson and Sons, (1970). pp.142-3.
67. *ibid.*
68. see note 65.
69. This is an argument totally alien to that of William Morris. Morris advocated popular control and popular creative possibilities. Jackson is offering individual social mobility through art, and general access to a predefined art sector.
70. see page 143 of this thesis.
71. para. 99 of A Policy for the Arts - The First Steps February 1965. Cmnd.2601.
72. The growth of 'oral history' groups illustrates the attempts now being made to reconstruct alternative 'cultural heritages'. See also, for example, the Oxford based History Workshop Journal first issue, Spring (1976).
73. Through the way in which activities become pivoted around 'national' (central) assistance, alternatives become less viable, because local resources become absorbed in relation to a 'national' effort. In the late 20th century this is particularly so, since taxation levels effectively ensure that there is insufficient money under the control of potential spenders, (a) to set up local organisations under their own control; (b) to compete with 'national', taxation-assisted/supported, efforts.
74. see MacDonald, S. The History and Philosophy of Art Education, University of London Press, (1970), pp.84--89.
75. Wilson, Charles Heath. 1809--1882. Studied art under his father, Andrew W. 1826 went with father to Italy. Seven years later returns to Edinburgh, where he practised as an architect. Also he taught ornament and design there. He was a painter of landscapes in water colours. 1835 elected A.R.S.A., but resigned in 1858. In Edinburgh he wrote in collaboration with William Dyce, a pamphlet, "The Best Means of Ameliorating the Arts and Manufactures of Scotland". Shortly after this Dyce was made Director and Secretary of the School of Art at Somerset House. Dyce resigned in 1843, and Wilson, who had been Director of the Edinburgh school, took over Somerset House. In 1848 he resigned this. 1849 took the Headmastership of the new Glasgow School of Design. 1869, Wilson and family moved to Florence, where became centre of an artistic and literary circle. Wilson was awarded the 'Corona d'Italia' by Victor Emmanuel.

(source: D.N.B.).

76. This is an example of the state being forced to intervene against a particular section of the bourgeoisie in order to attempt the promotion of capitalist efficiency (through good design). This action illustrates the sense in which we can talk of the state as a relation of production within and as part of the capitalist social structure, rather than as an instrument 'controlled' by any one group.
77. Quoted by MacDonald, S. in The History and Philosophy of Art Education University of London Press, (1970). p.116.
78. See the comments on such people in Interview Five, Appendix to this thesis. Consider also the image and reputation of 'Habitat' shops for design-products, as opposed to the image of 'Woolworths'. Habitat as 'art-products'; Woolworths as 'everyday-products'.
79. From 'The Gothic Revival. II', in LeMire.(ed) The Unpublished Lectures of William Morris Wayne State University Press, Detroit, (1969). p.88/9.
80. "bourgeois": the word is being used in the following senses: Bourgeoisie; the dominant commercial and entrepreneurial classes of capitalist society; also the professional and intellectual classes relating to their dominance, and the legitimacy of capitalism. Bourgeois; of the dominant classes of capitalism. Bourgeois Ideology; the ideology relating to, produced by, and legitimating, the dominant classes of capitalism; an ideology appropriate to the social relations of capitalism.
81. In the early 19th century state provision was 'charity' - i.e. for the lower classes. It is during the course of the 19th century that state provision comes gradually to be seen as 'public' in the sense of 'public service' (for the middle classes). Thomas Kelly, in his, A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain, The Library Association, (1973), illustrates this change in the library field. It is worth examination as a comparison to the material being examined here, and will be referred to later in the thesis.
82. Thirdly, of course, they were fine art schools for artists.
83. Rev. St. John Tyrwhitt. Handbook of Pictorial Art, Clarendon Press, Oxford. (1968).

84. Report of the Select Committee on the Government School of Design; published 1849. Chairman: Thomas Milner Gibson. Terms of reference: 'Ordered, that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the Constitution and Management of the Government School of Design and to Report their Opinion thereupon to The House.' (1849. (576) XVIII.1.
85. Select Committee on Schools of Art. July 1864. "appointed to inquire into the constitution and working, and into the success of the Schools of Art wholly or partially supported by Government grants, or otherwise assisted by the Government, and into the system upon which the sums granted by Parliament for the promotion of National Education in Art are distributed and administered.
- 86.
87. The ideological significance of art within British industrial capitalist society does not rest, however, upon the numbers who 'do' it, or are taught it, or know about it. Its main ideological significance relates to whether or not art is accepted as being a legitimate form of activity and discourse. If it is accepted, so also are the related definitions of work and 'self' as less creative and less important.
88. "bourgeois"; see note 80.
89. see page 141
90. Henry Cole. 1808--1882. Born at Bath, and educated at Christ's Hospital. Appointed Assistant Keeper of Records, and helped to establish the Records Office. K.G.B. 1875. Much of his activities relating to art are covered in this chapter. for a full account of his life see his autobiography; Fifty Years of Public Work, George Bell and Sons, London. (1884).
91. Report from the Select Committee on the School of Design. 1849. (576). XVIII.1. "appointed to inquire into the constitution and management of the Government School of Design and to report their opinion thereupon."
- The Committee stated in the report: "For the teaching of ornamental art necessarily presupposed the students having attained to a certain proficiency in elementary studies, and this proficiency few, if any, were found to have acquired, so that it has been necessary to impart it at the beginning of each man's education. The demand for such teaching has been so great in proportion to the means which the schools possess of supplying it, that they have of necessity assumed more of the character of elementary institutions than was originally expected."Report.p.iv.

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92. It is interesting to note that Cole, like many of his contemporaries, felt a certainty in the existence of universal, a-historical, principles of taste. As a witness to the 1849 Select Committee on the Schools of Design [1849; (576); XVIII.1.], he was asked, during a discussion on the running of the schools:

"Supposing the difference of opinion arises upon a question of taste?---/Cole/ I do not think it is possible to arise upon a question of taste: taste has its principles as well as morals, which people understand and know; the same principles regulated good taste in Greece, in Rome, in the middle ages &c."

It is interesting in Cole's statement, however, to note that his idea of taste is not stylistic; that is he sees the same principles as underlying the medieval and the classical.

93. see; de Montmorency.J.E.G. State Intervention in English Education. University of Cambridge. (1962)  
 Bishop.A.S. The Rise of a Central Authority for English Education. University of Cambridge Press. (1971).

94. See as an example of this position the statement by Rev. Tyrwhitt, quoted on page 173 of this thesis.

95. This is before the time when state provision came to be seen as normal, and as a general public service. In 1849 Henry Cole was asked by the Select Committee of inquiry (see ref. note 92)

"The gratuitous working is the working which you have objected to throughout the course of your evidence?---/Cole/ Unquestionably; I agree with what Mr Berbert said, "Give nothing for nothing.""

96. This even more so in the eighteenth century. On the 18th century see; Steegman.J. The Rule of Taste MacMillan, (1936). And for a discussion of the 19th century, and the class changes in patronage, see; Steegman.J. Victorian Taste, Thomas Nelson and Sons, (1970).

97. I use the word 'public' here to indicate a move towards 'public service' and state provision, where 'public' implies a move towards middle-class groups as consumers of the services; in this sense 'public' implies middle class dominated, while 'charity' implies provision for the lower classes.

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98. see on museums; Harrison, M. Museums and Galleries Routledge and Kegan Paul, London (1973). also; Lee, S.E. (ed). On Understanding Art Museums. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. ( ). also; Hudson, K. Social History of Museums. Macmillan, London, (1976).

99. see, for instance, the 'Museum of English Rural Life', Whiteknights, Reading, Berkshire.

100. The British Museum is an interesting example, having been a private collection donated to the nation, and for a long time restricted in access - treated as an aristocratic palace to which the 'public' had no automatic right of entry. On the British Museum, see: Watson, V. The British Museum. Quartet Books, London, (1973). also: de Beer, G.R. Hans Sloan and the British Museum. Oxford University Press, (1953). also: Miller, E.J. A Brief History of the British Museum. Pitkin Pictorials, London (1976).

101. On the Royal Society of Arts, see: The Story of the Royal Society of Arts, published by John Murray, London, (1935), abridged from Sir Henry Trueman Wood's Official History, and brought up-to-date by G.K. Menzies, C.B.E., Secretary, with a foreword by J.A. Milne, C.B.E., Chairman of the Council and an appreciation by E.V. Lucas, C.H.

102. see; Cole, H. Fifty Years of Public Work, George Bell and Sons, London. (1884). Chapter entitled "Establishment of the Department of Practical Art and Commencement of South Kensington Museum".

103. On the educative function see as in note 102. Also note that Henry Cole, as witness to the Select Committee on the Schools of Art, - published 1864, defined the purpose of his department as being:

"To improve the taste and art-knowledge of all classes of the community, having especial reference to the influence of that taste and knowledge upon the manufactures of this country."

Thus the aim was in a broad sense general education, this reflecting back upon manufactures. Cole had shifted away from the method of direct technical instruction as the main object: (see on this paragraphs nine and ten of the evidence of the Select Committee Report.). Note also his comments on the importance of state aid for museums in paragraph 4315 of the same report.

104. Engels, F. On the Housing Question. Progress Publishers, Moscow. ( ). pages 42--45.

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105. On the development of Museums, see: Hudson.K. The Social History of Museums, Macmillan, London. (1976).
106. from an "Introductory Address on the Functions of the Science and Art Department" delivered by Henry Cole, Secretary and General Superintendent on 16th November, 1857. Published in volume two of Cole's Fifty Years of Public Work, George Bell and Sons, London, (1994). see pages 290-291.
107. *ibid.* p.293.
108. MacDonald.S. The History and Philosophy of Art Education University of London Press. (1970). quoted on pages 180--189.
109. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 is important for an understanding of the 19th century state. For an effect of this measure was to centralise the power of the state through formalising the situation. The central state became responsible for making activities possible at the local level, through the central state being responsible for legislating both the duties of the corporations, and the forms of possible action of the corporations. The various museum and library acts can be seen as following from the Municipal Corporations Act, in the sense that once the Municipal Corporations Act had been passed, the central state (parliament) had to legislate to make possible that which, prior to the 1835 act, would have been, or could have been, possible. Liverpool is perhaps an example of a Corporation active prior to the 1835 act.
110. from: "Mr. Cole's Speech at the Distribution of Prizes to the Students of the Nottingham School of Art." 15th January 1873. printed in volume two of Fifty Years of Public Work, by Henry Cole, published by George Bell and Sons, London, (1884).
111. On Cole's connection with the Royal Society of Arts, see chapter, 'The Society of Arts', in Cole's autobiography, Fifty Years of Public Work George Bell and Sons, London, (1884).
112. On Cole's work as 'Felix Summerly', see the documents in chapter entitled, "Work With Technical Arts and Art Manufactures" in vol.2. of Fifty Years of Public Work (op.cit.). See also: page 36 of The Story of the Royal Society of Arts published in 1935 by John Murray, London.



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113. Henry Cole. Fifty Years of Public Work, George Bell and Sons, London, (1884). Vol. 1. p.391.
114. As put forward in the latter part of the Division of Labour
115. See note 110 to this chapter.
116. Henry Cole. Fifty Years of Public Work, George Bell and Sons, London. (1884). Volume 2. p.345.
117. ibid.Vol.2.p.363.
118. ibid. Vol.2.p.363. (again very Durkheimian).
119. ibid. Vol.2.p.366.
120. Redgrave, Richard. 1804--1888. English painter. Established a reputation by his 'Gulliver on the Farmer's Table', exhibited in 1837. Was Headmaster of the Government School of Design, and later superintendent of art in the Science and Art Department. Painted landscapes, and also sentimental versions of the struggles of the poor. (Source: Everyman Encyclopaedia, (ed) A.Boyle. pub. J.M. Dent and Sons, London, (1913).).
121. Redgrave.R., quoted by MacDonald.S., in The History and Philosophy of Art Education. University of London Press, (1970). p.263.
122. Poynter. Sir Edward John. b.1836. d.19 English painter. Studied at Rome under Leighton, and in England under Dobson, and in Paris under Gleyre. He became Slade Professor of Art at University College, London, (1871--1875). He was Director of the art department at South Kensington, and Principal of the National Art Training Schools, (Royal College of Art). Resigned 1881. Succeeded Burton as Director of the National Gallery (1894-95). From 1896 he was President of the Royal Academy. Made a Baronet in 1902. K.C.V.O., 1913. He Published Ten Lectures on Art (1879 & 1897).
123. Classic and Italian Painting by E.J.Poynter, R.A., and P.R.Head. in the series of 'Illustrated Text-Books of Art Education', edited by E.J.Poynter. This volume published by Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, London. 1885. The 'Preface' under discussion runs from pages ix to xxiii, and is dated May 1880.

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124. These issues we discussed earlier in looking at Renaissance developments, and at statements by J.Reynolds, in chapter four, pp.119--123.
125. Poynter's preface; see note 123.
126. *ibid.*
127. *ibid.*
128. *ibid.*
129. *ibid.*
130. *ibid.*
131. See J.Reynolds, as quoted in chapter four, pp.119--123.
132. Poynter's preface; see note 123 to this chapter.
133. *ibid.*
134. *ibid.*
135. *ibid.*
136. Similarly in 1975 there was an evident contradiction in higher education. Lord Crowther Hunt (Times Higher Educational Supplement, 25th, July, 18th July, and 11th July, 1975), advocated the streamlining of higher education towards the job requirements of society, this streamlining conflicting with the ideology of education as a value in itself, and an enrichment valid on the personal level. I would argue that the appearance of education as a value in itself, and a pursuit unshackled by the 'demands' of the economy, is one of a set of features necessary to social democracy in a capitalist society, for the 'appearance' provides part of the reality to the meaning of 'freedom'.
137. See John Berger's discussion of the art historian, in Ways of Seeing published by The British Broadcasting Corporation, and Penguin Books, (1972). pp.22/3, and 106--108.
138. On Eastlake, see note 25 to this chapter.
139. From the;'Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the present position of the Royal Academy in relation to the Fine Arts.' 1863. paragraph 619.
140. *ibid.* paragraph 621.

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141. *ibid.* paragraph 662.
142. Redgrave. see note 120 to this chapter.
143. see page 200 of this thesis.
144. *ibid.* paragraph 1013.
145. *ibid.* paragraph 1026.
146. *ibid.* paragraph 1027.
147. *ibid.* paragraph
148. Thus far had the Medieval guild system, of masters of an art, teaching apprentices their whole craft, been destroyed. Teaching had become a specialism in itself - a transmission of codified knowledge by one who knows more about the transmission of knowledge, than the knowledge itself, and the practice of an art.
149. As note 139, paragraph 1061.
150. David Roberts. 1796--1864. Scottish landscape and figure painter. Became a Royal Academician in 1841.
151. As note 139. paragraph 1179.
152. *ibid.* paragraph 1180.
153. An examination of the interview material contained in Volume 2 (Appendix) of this thesis reveals the way in which the resisting of outside interference, and the asserting of professional competence, are attempts to maintain control over work - attempts to avoid being a technician within the division of labour, for the technician neither creates nor administrates in relation to his/her own work.
154. On Alexr.J. Beresford Hope, see note 22 to this chapter.
155. from "Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the present position of the Royal Academy in relation to the Fine Arts". 1863, paragraph 4208. N.B. I have used some of these quotations earlier in the chapter, when introducing certain discussions of the state. I reproduce parts again here, and add further material, so as to present Hope's position with its full impact. As I indicate, I consider Hope's statements of particular significance, given the coherent way in which they illustrate

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a particular, and dominant, type of response to the state and British class relations.

156. *ibid.*

157. *ibid.*

158. "bourgeois"/"bourgeoisie": I use the words in the following manner. Bourgeoisie: The dominant commercial and entrepreneurial classes of capitalist society; also the professional and intellectual classes related to the dominance and legitimacy of capitalism. Bourgeois: of the dominant classes of capitalism. Bourgeois Ideology: the ideology relating to, produced by, and legitimising, the dominant classes of capitalist society: an ideology appropriate to the social relations of capitalist society.

159. "Report" as in note 155, paragraph 4225.

160. *ibid.* paragraph 4208.

161. *ibid.*, paragraph 4244

162. The relation of the Arts Council of Great Britain to the state, and to the Minister with Special Responsibility for the Arts, and to the ideology of independence so frequently insisted upon, will be discussed at length in chapter six. The parallel between Hope's identification of a possible form of organisation, and the reality of that organisation in the late 20th century, will then become all the clearer.

163. "laissez-faire". I use the term "laissez-faire" in this thesis to describe a situation in which the state operates a system which appears to work without direct control or intervention on the part of the state: the state appears to be merely supportive. I use the word 'control' at various points in conjunction with "laissez-faire" to indicate the manner in which the appearance of non-intervention and non-direction disguises the actual choices that are made in 'support', and the extent to which the apparent passive support is in fact active promotion. This is a promotion, however, in which the state appears to be non-involved, due to the organisation and presentation within the laissez-faire ideology. I do not use the term "ideology", moreover, in a cynical sense, but to describe a social reality distinguishable from other social realities. For, in as far as a state operates within an ideology of non-interference and non-direction, the ways in which it can, or does, intervene and direct are limited. Within the laissez-faire system of

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control, for instance, there is scope for Beresford Hope's form of professional independence and/or élitism - the laissez-faire system is in fact in many ways bound up with this. Similarly in British secondary education, the ideology of non-direction by the state operates to some extent, and results in a system which, while being a 'state' system, and subject to state control in a very direct sense, (e.g. the change from the Grammar, Secondary Modern and Technical system, to the Comprehensive), is very different from the French system, which is subject to central state direction in a very detailed sense.

164. Beresford Hope, as witness to the "Commissioners appointed to inquire into the present position of the Royal Academy in relation to the Fine Arts". 1863. paragraph 4210.

165. *ibid.* paragraph 4247.

166. *ibid.* paragraph 4262.

167. On the Royal Society of Arts, see note 36 to this chapter.

168. as note 166, page xiii of the Commissioners Report.

169. Matthew Arnold; from Culture and Anarchy, (1869), p.9. extract reprinted in Industrialisation and Culture: 1830--1914 edited by C.Harvie, G.Martin, and A.Scharf, published by Macmillan, for the Open University Press, (1970 & 1975).

170. Matthew Arnold. 1822--1888. Poet and critic, and son of Thomas Arnold of Rugby. Arnold spent most of his life as a government inspector of schools.

171. by Norman St. John Stevas, see 'Double our Money', an article in the Sunday Times of 17th November, 1974. In similar vein, see Jennie Lee's article in The Times of 29th January, 1975, entitled, 'The Case for Art in a Cold Climate'. Extracts from these, and other, articles are discussed in chapter six.

172. from Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy, (1969). reproduced in Industrialisation and Culture, (op.cit.note 169), p.174/5.

173. *ibid.*

174. The death of Noel Coward coincided with a coal mine disaster in England. I particularly remember in the radio news programmes of that day the extensive and detailed treatment given to Noel Coward's life, while the names of the dead miners

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were not given. They were numbers in an industrial tragedy, while Coward was a hero of popular mass media culture.

175. The Royal Commission on Fine Arts was set up in the early 1840's 'to take into consideration the Promotion of the Fine Arts of this Country, in connexion with the Rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament'. Robert Peel, then Prime Minister, appointed the twenty-two year old Prince Albert as Chairman; he had been in England less than two years.

The Royal Commission appointed a Select Committee on the Fine Arts, which issued its first Report in June 1841 - 'Report of the Committee on the Promotion of the Fine Arts. . . . Evidence, Appendix and Index. June 1841.'

The Commission itself reported 13 times. Its full description was the Commission "appointed by Your Majesty for the purpose of inquiring whether advantage might not be taken of the rebuilding of Your Majesty's Palace at Westminster . . . for the purpose of promoting and encouraging the Fine Arts in Your Majesty's United Kingdom, and in what manner an object of so much importance might be most effectually promoted." First Report 1842. 2nd, 3rd and 4th Reports in 1843, 1844, & 1845 respectively; 5th and 6th Reports in 1846, 7th Report in 1847, 8th Report in 1849, 9th in 1850, 10th Report in 1854, 11th in 1858, 12th in 1861, and 13th in 1863. At this point wound up on account of it being felt that (a) its job was done, and (b) it would not be appropriate to continue after the death of Prince Albert - an active Chairman, influential in matters of art and design well outside the limits of the Commission.

176. from Art Union magazine, 1st March 1848. Extracts reproduced in Industrialisation and Culture: 1830--1914 (eds) C.Harvie, G.Martin, & A.Scharf. published by Macmillan, for the Open University, (1970 & 1975).

177. *ibid.*

178. *ibid.*

179. *ibid.*

180. *ibid.*

181. *ibid.*

182. Berger.J. Ways of Seeing, The British Broadcasting Corporation, London, and Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, (1972), p.21.

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183. I do not consider the recent spate of mail order sales of fine art prints and reproductions in the Observer and Sunday Times Colour Magazines to be examples of such a practice, (a), because much of the work for sale is that of the 'star' artists in the trans-atlantic scene, and (b), because the prices are way above what such forms of reproduction make possible. For the price of many of the reproductions advertised in the Sunday Colour Magazines, you could buy a genuinely original work by a living artist.

Certain of the firms who have engaged in mail-order sales of work through the Sunday Magazines have been, shown, moreover, to be suspect. See Value Today 3 January 1975, "Art Prints---a Value Today Investigation".

It may also be pointed out that fairly good reproductions of works of art are now available at low cost through poster shops, and it may be argued that this is using the possibilities of technology. I would point out, however, that such reproductions are treated as 'references to' the original, and not as things in themselves. Moreover, the poster shops are again dealing with a limited range of 'known', 'star' artists.

I was recently at an exhibition in London where, aside from the individual works, there were prints of drawings. These were selling at three pounds a time, and the draughtsman had had one hundred printed at a cost of ten pounds to himself. Enough were sold to cover the cost of printing. The point is, however, that this is an indication of the way in which things could be done at low-cost in the same manner as, for example, Long Playing Records.

184. as note 182.

185.

186. The Prince Consort, as husband of the Monarch, is here involved in a "private" society. Robert Peel, as we noted earlier, had also made him Chairman of the Commission on the Fine Arts. Thus in the latter the husband of the Monarch is involved through the intervention of the Prime Minister. These various instances emphasise the need to see the relationship between private initiatives and actions, and the state.

187. The Story of the Royal Society of Arts, abridged from Sir Henry Trueman Wood's Official History. John Murray, London. (1935). p.35.

188. see Fifty Years of Public Work, by Henry Cole pub. George Bell, London, (1884). pp.178--207 of Vol.2. Note again the blurring of the public/private distinction in Cole's involvement with the Society

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of Artists, and his acting as a designer under a pseudonym.

189. see The Story of the Royal Society of Arts (op.cit) p.36.

190. ibid.

191. ibid. pp.36-7.

192. see Steegman.J. Victorian Taste: Thomas Nelson and Sons, London, (1970). pp.207-8.

193. quoted by Henry Cole, in his Fifty Years of Public Work, George Bell, and Sons, London, (1884). p. 165 of volume One. Cole's source was Life of Prince Consort vol.ii.p.285-6 and p.290-1.

194. ibid.

195. Prince Albert's opening speech of 1st May 1851, published in the Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition. Part reproduced in Industrialisation and Culture: 1830--1914 (eds). C.Harvie. G.Martin & A.Scharf. pub.Macmillan, London, for the Open University, (1970 & 1975). see p.236. see also on the Great Exhibition, 'Extracts from the Preface to the Catalogue of the Exhibition of 1851', reproduced on pages 208--220 of Henry Cole's Fifty Years of Public Work, Volume 2.

196. from the Introduction to the Fine Arts Section of the Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition (1851). 3 volumes. Vol.2. p.818.

197. Steegman.J. Victorian Taste (op.cit.n.192). p.222. See in general on the Great Exhibition his chapter, entitled 'The Great Exhibition'. Also Henry Coles work cited above.

198. see Steegman.J. op.cit.p.229.

199. On Lady Eastlake, wife of Charles Eastlake discussed at various points in this chapter, see frequent references in Steegman.J. Victorian Taste (op.cit.n.192).

200. Lady Eastlake, writing in 1854. Journals and Correspondence, quoted by Steegman.J.op.cit.p.231.



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201. Henry Mayhew. 1851; or the Adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Cursty Sandboys and family who came up to London to "enjoy themselves", and see the Great Exhibition. Part reproduced in Industrialisation and Culture; 1830--1914 (ed) Harvie.C. et.al. Macmillan, London, for the Open University, (1970 & 1975). p.247. Extract runs from p.243--249.
202. For material introduced in this discussion see Kelly.T. A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain, The Library Association, (1973).
203. Charles Henry Bellenden Ker. 1785?--1871. Legal reformer. Active in promoting parliamentary reform from 1830--1832. Member of public records commission. An advocate of popular education and the diffusion of literature and art. Active in 'Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge'. Interested in Schools of Design, and helped to promote the establishment of Department of Science and Art. source: D.N.B.
204. Henry Peter Brougham. 1778--1868. M.P. Lord Chancellor. Legal reformer. Writer. Frequent contributor to Edinburgh Review. Founder of University of London. General concern with education. An active judge and active parliamentarian. A somewhat extravagant figure. See the lengthy D.N.B. entry.
205. on Mechanics Institutes see the witness of Charles Toplis to William Ewart's 1835 Select Committee "appointed to inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and of the principles of design among the people (especially the manufacturing population of the country): also to inquire into the constitution, management, and effects of institutions connected with the arts..." 1835 (598) v. 375. 1836 (568) ix.1. On Mechanics Institutes in general see also references given in note 59 to this chapter.
206. Benjamin Hawes. 1797--1862. M.P. from 1832--1852, part of time for Lambeth, and part for Kinsale. Retired as M.P. in 1852 to devote himself fully to being deputy-secretary at the War Department. 1857 became permanent undersecretary at the same. Stayed in job till his death. It was by Hawes' motion in 1841 that the Fine Arts Commission was appointed. Also due to him that the British Museum was opened on holidays.

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207. Circulated in 1834; summarised in Quarterly Journal of Education, Vol.X, (1835), pp.284--306. Published in full in Parliamentary Papers, 1836, (in 440), X.550.

208. "Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the extent, causes, and consequences, of the prevailing vice of intoxication among the Labouring Classes of the United Kingdom, in order to ascertain whether any legislative measures can be devised to prevent the further spread thereof;" 1835 (559) viii.315.

209. *ibid.* - from the Report.

210. William Ewart, in Hansard. Parliamentary Debates 3rd series. Vol XLVIII. 1839. Col.91.

211. Edward Edwards. 1812--1886. Librarian. Active as a writer, and campaigner for free libraries. Provided William Ewart with material for his work on the subject as an M.P. Worked at the British Museum, and later at the first free library at Manchester. (source.D.N.B.).

212. E.Edwards. The Fine Arts in England.

213. As source for the description of the events described here see Kelly.T. A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain. The Library Association. (1973). see also the various Parliamentary Reports and Select Committee Reports Cited. James Silk Buckingham's 1834 Select Committee on Drunkenness cited above is of particular interest, since it explicitly pursues the subject of public education and amenities as anti-dotes to other perceived vices. Francis Place's witness to that inquiry is of interest for his somewhat moralising (or defensive?) attitude to the London poor.

214. Public Libraries Act of 1850. 13th & 14th Victoria, chapter 65. "An act for enabling Town Councils to establish Public Libraries and Museums" 14th August 1850. This act repealed and supplanted the Museums Act of 1845.

215. Colonel Sibthrop. Hansard. Parliamentary Debates 3rd series. Vol.CXI. 1850. col.1174/5.

216. see Kelly (op.cit.n.213) p.26 & footnote.

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217. see E.P.Thompson. The Making of the English Working Class Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, (1968). Especially on Corresponding Societies - see Index.
218. This point has become increasingly important, with the state today taking over an increasingly large sector of facilities and production - handling between 55 and 60 per cent of the G.N.P. National Health, Public Education, Arts Councils, etc., all 'do' what could be done through people's self organisation and direct control.
219. see Kelly, op.cit. chapter one.
220. Access to the British Museum was, in the early days, very tightly controlled - entry by appointment only, and then a rapid conducted tour.
221. A reading of the issues of the Museums Association 'Bulletin' and 'Journal' over 1974 and 1975, and of the Museums Association's Presidential address at the Associations 1975 annual conference, reveals a constant concern with 'rethinking' the role of the museum. Much of the discussion centres on the idea that the museum should cease to be simply a 'backwater' where objects are simply collected and stored. Rather, it is argued, the museum should develop an active educational role. This, as we have seen, was in fact one of the objectives of the 19th century museum. The policy under discussion now, moreover, of creating 'centres of excellence' (a centralisation of specialist facilities for use over an extended area), is, far from being a new idea, simply a restatement of the original policy of the South Kensington Museum (V & A) under Henry Cole. Even 'new' developments within the structure of the services are, therefore, not always so new.
222. page 9 of Cultural Policy in Great Britain by Michael Green, and Michael Wilding, in consultation with Richard Hoggart. pub. UNESCO, Paris, (1970).
223. A Policy For The Arts - The First Steps H.M.S.O., London. Cmnd.2601. (1965).p.20.
224. This in the context of discussing the relation between ideologies of freedom and independence, and the reality of state intervention and potential or actual control.
225. The practice of the new rich 'buying themselves a culture (stately home and works of art) is indication of the sense in which 'having culture' (owning culture) is part of a badge of office.

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The ridicule of the new rich, however, by the established upper classes, evident in 19th century literature, is indication of the way in which the correct understanding of culture is used to define subtle differences between groups.

226. see note 217.

227. I am not talking here so much of the old image of the public library as being full of tramps and the poor on wet, cold, winter days (although this is part of the picture). Rather I am talking of the library/museum/concert-hall/gallery/school, as a public-facility/palace-of-culture/extension-of-a-cramped-home. That is, we can't all afford pictures, books and private tutors, but we have them in a 'public' sense.

Henry Cole was very aware, as we saw earlier, of the V & A as an alternative to cramped dwellings and squalor.

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1. In this section I use the word 'type' (of state intervention) in opposition to 'degree'. Thus, while significant developments in the numbers of museums and art schools took place between 1870 and 1939, these developments were of the same 'type' as those of the 1830 to 1870 period. In the 1939-1975 period new forms of state intervention were developed (Arts Council, Crafts Advisory Committee, Design Council). I shall argue that these new organisations are similar in effect and ideology to the forms of intervention developed in the 1830--1870 period. New 'type' refers, therefore, to new kinds of formal organisations.
  
2. Two changes that come immediately to mind were the recruitment of women into the labour market, and the introduction of 'ordinary' people as characters in films. The war, being on a large scale, necessitated a degree of central state planning and a disregard for traditional interests or privileges in favour of unifying ideologies and practices unprecedented in Britain.
  
3. Quotation from The First Ten Years, - the eleventh annual report of the Arts Council of Great Britain, (1956). Note reference to "Committee"; C.E.M.A.'s title was changed from "Council for..." to "Committee for...".
  
4. *ibid.* p.8.
  
5. *ibid.* p.9.
  
6. *ibid.*
  
7. *ibid.*
  
8. *ibid.*
  
9. *ibid.* p.10.
  
10. *ibid.* p.11.
  
11. We could leave it saying that, in late 20th century British society, centralised administration is compatible with decentralised production in the arts, and decentralised administration is compatible with centralised production. In fact, however, we could say more strongly, that they are not only compatible but, 'tend to go together'. C.E.M.A. illustrates the former, and the Arts Council the latter.

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12. see pages 216--224 of this thesis.
13. see chapter one, section two of Bax ndal.M. Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy, Oxford University Press, (1972) - an indication of the lack of freedom for the artist during one of the "great" periods of artistic production.
14. The First Ten Years (op.cit.n.3 ).
15. ibid.p.15.
16. ibid.p.14/15.
17. ibid. p.15.
18. ibid. see pages 15--17, and, in particular, p.23.
19. Eastlake, before the 1863 inquiry; see chapter five. Reynolds; see last part of chapter four.
20. The First Ten Years (as above) pp.18/19.
21. There is insufficient space to substantiate these points in the text of the thesis. The reader is, therefore, directed to the report itself, which is brief enough to be read in its totality to verify these 'impressions'.
22. The First Ten Years, op.cit.p.23
23. In the Sunday Times of 6th June 1976 there appeared a short but bitter article by a Professor of English at Cardiff University. In it he complained of the amounts of money being spent on the National Theatre at London - a theatre which he had no contact with as a Professor of English in the capital city of Wales - 'National', therefore, being equivalent to 'London'. If he, as a Professor of English, experienced the National Theatre this way, he asked, what were the experiences of those not even in (so to speak) the business?
24. The First Ten Years, op.cit.p.21
25. see note 12, above.
26. Partners in Patronage - 16th annual report of the Arts Council of Great Britain, (1961).
27. ibid.p.6.
28. ibid.
29. ibid.p.7.

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30. *ibid.*p.8.
31. Partners in Patronage, *op.cit.*p.9.
32. Marx's statement on page 1083 of Capital, Vol.1. Penguin, Harmondsworth, & New Left Review, London, (1976), is such a concise and neat expression of these relations that it is worth quoting here;

Although the formation of capital and the capitalistic mode of production are essentially founded not merely on the abolition of feudal production but also on the expropriation of the peasantry, craftsmen and in general of the mode of production based on the private ownership by the immediate producer of his conditions of production; although, once capitalist production has been introduced, it continues to develop at the same rate as that private property and the mode of production based on it is destroyed, so that those immediate producers are expropriated in the name of the concentration of capital (centralisation); although the subsequent systematic repetition of the process of expropriation in the 'clearing of estates' is in part the act of violence that inaugurates the capitalist mode of production - although all this is the case, both the theory of capitalist production (political economy, philosophy of law, etc.) and the capitalist himself in his own mind is pleased to confuse his mode of property and appropriation, which is based on the expropriation of the immediate producer in its origins, and on the acquisition of the labour of others in its further progress, with its opposite; with a mode of production that presupposes that the immediate producer privately owns his own conditions of production - a premiss which would actually render capitalist production in agriculture and manufacture, etc, impracticable. In consequence he regards every attack on this latter form of appropriation as an attack on the former and indeed as an attack on property as such.

The underlined words are italicised in the penguin text.

33. see page 272.
34. Partners in Patronage. - 16th annual report of the Arts Council of Great Britain, (1961), p.8.

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35. The First Ten Years - the eleventh annual report of the Arts Council of Great Britain, (1956).

36. as note 34. Note that the impression given here by the Arts Council that industry (shareholders) were giving generously, and on an increasing scale, would appear to have little foundation. According to the Arts Council's 'Research Bulletin Number 3', entitled Fund Raising from the Private Sector - The Experience of the Regional Arts Associations, (issued December 1974), the contribution from the private Sector would appear to be negligible. In the financial years 1972-3 the eleven RAAs in the survey had a total income of £1,847,599. Of this £182,052 (10%) came from sources other than L.As & the Arts Council. Of this £182,052 only £71,966 came from business, industry, broadcasting companies, universities, trusts, foundations, and private patrons, including membership other than local authority membership. The remainder came from promotions and sales, income carried over from the previous year, investment income, and grants from the British Film Institute and Crafts Advisory Committee. Only about 4% therefore came from private sources, 'private' including broadcasting companies and universities. (L.As, above, = local authorities).

37. Key Year - 21st annual report of the Arts Council of Great Britain, (1966). p.9.

38. A Policy for the Arts - The First Steps. Presented to Parliament by the Prime Minister by Command of Her Majesty February 1965. Cmnd.2601. H.M.S.O., London, (1965).

39. *ibid.*

40. *ibid.* para.7.

41. *ibid.*

42. *ibid.*

43. *ibid.* para.8.

44. *ibid.* para.10.

45. *ibid.* para.14.

46. *ibid.*

47. *ibid.* para.58.



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48. *ibid.* para.64.
49. This idea of diffusion is the same as that we have seen expressed by Eastlake, Reynolds, and others.
50. A Policy for the Arts, *op.cit.* para.71.
51. *ibid.* para.91.
52. *ibid.* para.98.
53. H.M.S.O., London (1965), Cmnd.2601.
54. A Policy for the Arts, *op.cit.* para.99.
55. *ibid.* para.100.
56. *ibid.* para.99.
57. see on The Arts and Crafts Movement, Gillian Naylor, pub. Studio Vista, London, (1971).
58. see S.Hannema, Fads, Fakes and Fantasies, Macdonald, London, (1970), p.54.ff. on the impact of the Arts and Crafts Movement on education and design.
59. Victor Margrie, in the Museums Journal Vol.74.No.3. Dec.1974.p.117.
60. On the Crafts Advisory Committee, see: The Work of the Crafts Advisory Committee 1971--1974, pub. Crafts Advisory Committee, London, (1974). Also a variety of information sheets on the CAC's activities, available from the CAC at 12, Waterloo Place, London.
61. The Craftsmans Art, Crafts Advisory Committee,, (1973), p.103.
62. Index of Craftsmen. CAC information sheet.
63. This information is based on various information sheets from the CAC, including "Index of Craftsmen".
64. Beyond the evidence from the Crafts magazine, published by the CAC, in which a bias towards a perception of and promotion of the craftsman as artist (as individual creator more important than his product?) is evident.
65. i.e. the officer would see whether the craftsman/woman was 'professional' or 'amateur' in the sense of having, or not having, the necessary facilities, and attempting, or not attempting, to make part or all of his/her living from the work.

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66. British Crafts Centre information sheet.
67. see The Craftsman's Art, The Crafts Advisory Committee, London, (1973), p.10.
68. quoted in The Craftsman's Art, op.cit, p.10.
69. ibid.
70. ibid.
71. Universities are nominally independent. Crowther-Hunt's speeches on manpower planning, however, and the reaction to these, indicated how sensitive many universities were to the reality of control, or potential control. Schools, at the primary and secondary level, are controlled by the local state - yet the central state could impose comprehensivisation even on unwilling areas. Direct Grant Schools are in a much more real sense 'independant', yet state withdrawal of the partial funds allocated to them force some to consider closing, and others to go entirely private (become 'public' schools) or entirely public (state). In all these cases state control of resources, or the construction of activities in relation to state funds, is crucial.
72. Dan Johnston, in the Museums Journal, Vol.74, No.3. December 1974.p.118.
73. ibid.
74. ibid.
75. ibid.
76. ibid.p.118ff.
77. More recent figures on current finance appear at the end of this chapter.
78. see 'letters' in the Design Council's Design magazine for November 1974.
79. see also the comments by interviewee five on the named designer, his designs, and the money he can make (appendix).
80. see 'Power feud in Arts Council', in the Guardian of Monday, March 3rd, 1975. Article by Nicholas de Jongh, the Arts Reporter.

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81. A reading of newspaper reports and articles on state patronage for the arts reveals general agreement on the desirability of state patronage, but dispute over what should be patronised, and to what purpose. (see articles cited in bibliography of selected newspaper reports).
82. A Policy For the Arts: The First Steps: February 1965, HMSO, London. Cmnd.2601. Paragraph 98; "All new social services have to fight long and hard before they establish themselves. Only yesterday it was the fight for a free health service. The day before it was the struggle to win education for all."
83. It is noteworthy that many of the interviewees (see appendix), while resenting the aims and organisation of the London Art Market (seeing it as being concerned with making money through selling a commodity that only happened to be art) seemed to feel 'safer' with the art market than with state patronage; with the former you know the rules; with the latter you do not. A dealer will back you if he considers you a commercial proposition, or if you pay sufficient rent for his gallery; the state will back you if the personnel concerned consider you worth backing (criteria vague).
84. Sometimes state organisations can attempt to avoid making choices. I had a short conversation in June 1976 with a man who works for a local government Arts Centre in Essex. There the picture gallery is available on a 'first come, first served' basis: i.e. anyone can show work and choices are not made by the Arts Centre.  
I do not know how successfully this particular centre works, but I would suspect that in such situations some full-time painters might avoid the gallery on the grounds that it is dominated by amateurish or un-professional people, work and display. This is not to criticise the attempt of the gallery personnel to lessen their own control; simply to indicate once again the way in which not making choices can result in a form of choice, because the gallery exists in a social situation that is already structured and defined in various ways.
85. Dan Johnston, in the Museums Journal of December 1974. No.74. p.127.
86. In this section I shall be giving title and date of articles in the text, since the date of writing is often important, given that the discussions developed in the press during a period of rising inflation, and threats of government cuts in various fields.

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87. For reviews of the same press conference, see also; Kenneth Gosling in Times November 24th, 1974, article titled 'Inflation threatens to destroy Arts Council achievement'. see also: Sunday Times, December 1st 1974, 'lead article'.
88. Germany, for example, has a far more decentralised arts system in opera and galleries. Gelsenkirchen, for instance, as an industrial town next to Essen, and a half hour travel from Düsseldorf (with its art collections and theatre) has a magnificent opera house with (in Christmas 1970) five resident conductors.
89. see pages 216--224 of this thesis.
90. Most people's knowledge of recent diplomatic exchanges with the People's Republic of China probably go no further, for instance, than jade treasures, travelling art exhibitions, and panda bears.
91. see early part of chapter five.
92. On Regional Arts Associations, see:  
Regional Arts Associations, C.A.C. information sheet with names, addresses and dates of foundation. Jan.1975.  
Support for the Arts in England and Wales, by Lord Redcliffe-Maud, published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, London, (1976), p.88 & 180. ff.  
 also the following papers delivered to the meeting of the 'Regional Studies Association', held at Sussex University in June 1974:-  
 "The Arts Council's Regional Policy" by Patrick Gibson, Chairman of Arts Council.  
 "Speech made by the Minister for the Arts to the Regional Studies Association at Sussex University", by Hugh Jenkins.  
 "Regional Arts Associations: Where to Now?" by Karen King.  
 "The Role of Regional Arts Associations" by Lord Feversham, Chairman of Standing Conference of Regional Arts Associations.  
 "The New Local Authorities and the Arts" by C.J.Davies, County Treasurer, Tyne and Wear.  
 "The purpose of regional arts programmes: sustaining regional initiative and character or sharing out national activity." (no author stated).  
 "The Arts and Regional Development". by J.Goldberg, Chairman of North West Arts Association, and member of North West Economic Planning Council.  
 "Summing up" by Prof.Roy Shaw, (then) Chairman of Arts Council Regional Committee.  
 see also; Fund Raising from the Private Sector - The Experience of the Regional Arts Associations  
Arts Council of Great Britain Research Bulletin  
 No.3. (Dec.1974) by R.Hutchison.

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93. Note that £1½m. is only the same sum as that estimated in 1974 as necessary as a state grant for the proposed, and then partially built, National Theatre.
94. Hugh Jenkins, Minister for the Arts, in speech to the 'Regional Studies Association' meeting, 28th June 1974, Sussex University.
95. Ibid. p.2. of speech as available from the Regional Studies Association, 28-32, Shelton Street, London WC2H 9HP.
96. *ibid.*
97. *ibid.*p.3.
98. *ibid.*
99. *ibid.*
100. Gibson.P. The Arts Council's Regional Policy, paper to Regional Studies Association meeting, University of Sussex, 27th June, 1974.
101. *ibid.*
102. *ibid.*
103. *ibid.*
104. *ibid.*
105. *ibid.*
106. This dependence becoming ever more explicit in July 1976 as central government pressures local government to curtail or cut expenditure, and the rates support grant becomes a clear means by which to exert pressure.
107. as note 100, p.3 of speech. With reference to the dominance of local council representatives, the following is a breakdown of the Executive Committee of the East Midlands Arts Association, as presented in the 1974-5 report.  
 Chairman, Cllr. R.Dilleigh, Northamptonshire County Council. Vice-Chairman, Cllr. M.Gallagher, Nottinghamshire County Council. Hon.Sec., A.N. Fairbairn, Leicestershire County Council. Hon. Treasurer, G.E.Daniel, Nottinghamshire County Council. Hon.Solicitor, J.E. Fursey, Northamptonshire County Council. Of the 47 other members of the Executive Committee, 25 were councillors, five were representatives of higher educational institutions, one was C.B.I., one T.U.C., one was Arts Council, one was Dept. Education and Science, five were from

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arts societies and organisations, and seven were individual members. One further councillor was an observer. Well over half the members, therefore, were Council representatives.

It is clear from the constitution of the Association that it is the executive committee which holds the power in the Association. At annual meetings the membership of the Association (open to organisations and individuals) can in practice simply approve what has happened - perhaps question long term policy. It is to be noted, however, that any fifteen members of the Association can call other meetings of the Association - thus there is the possibility of a wider involvement on the part of those organisations and members who, in actual fact, contribute little financially to the Association.

108. see paper by C.J.Davies to the 'Regional Studies Association' conference (op.cit.). 'The New Local Authorities and the Arts'. Davies is County Treasurer, Tyne and Wear. see also: Support for the Arts in England and Wales by Lord Redcliffe-Maud, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, London, (1976), esp.pp.102--105. see also; Municipal Entertainment and the Arts in Greater London. S.K.Ruck, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, (1965).

109. see references in n.108, and also: Goldberg.J. 'The Arts and Regional Development': a paper delivered to the Regional Studies Association Conference (op.cit.). Goldberg was Chairman of North West Arts Association, and a member of the North West Economic Planning Council.

110. figures given in House of Commons by Mr. Hugh Jenkins on 16th February 1976.

111. This figure is arrived at as follows:-  
The Museums Bulletin, vol.15.No.12, March 1976, reported Mr.Hugh Jenkins as giving the following information in the House of Commons on 16th Feb.1976. Central Government Grants (covering expenditure on National Collections in Grt.Britain, and on Arts Council, and other arts as specified in the appropriation Accounts, but excluding expenditure on libraries and on maintenance of historic buildings and ancient monuments in Government ownership, and excluding grants towards privately owned houses ).

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1970--1	1971--2	1972--3	1973--4	1974--5
£25.5m	£31.5m	£37.7m	£42.5m	£52.9m

Local Authority spending is the second major source of finance for arts. There are no figures in the 1970--1975 period as a whole, but a special survey in England in 1972--3 showed that expenditure was between £14.7 and £15.5 millions.

Mr. Jenkins gave information on local authority spending on local museums and galleries as follows:

1970--1	1971--2	1972--3	1973--4	1974--5
£6.8m	£9.0m	£10.2m	£13.7m	£20.9m

Therefore, if we take the 1972--3 figure for spending on museums and galleries, and subtract it from the Arts Council 1972--3 figure for local authority spending on arts as a whole in England, we find that the spending is at least five million more beyond the museum/gallery figure - probably much more given N.Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

Now, local authority spending on museums and galleries doubles between 1972--3 and 1974--5. If the total local authority arts budget doubles, then the extra five million we calculate for 1972--3 becomes, in 1974--5, ten million.

Therefore:

National arts budget ('74/5) =	52.9
Local Authority gallery/museum spending ('74/5) =	20.9
Our calculated extra for total L.A. budget is at least	10.0

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83.8

On Saturday April 3, the Guardian reported on page one an increase in Arts Council budget to £36m, plus about £1.15m for buildings. The increase was about ten million.

Our figure of 83.8 does not allow for inflation or increases in 17 1975-6 except in that we can add this extra ten million to it, making 93.8.

This figure excludes, of course, all spending on art education, which, until its absorption into the Polytechnic sector, could have been separately assessed. A final figure, therefore, of at least a hundred millions is very conservative.

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112. see Museums Bulletin, and Museums Journal, published by 'The Museums Association'. see also: Presidential Address to the Museums Association by Frank Atkinson, delivered at the annual conference in Durham, 1975.

113. Duvignaud.J. The Sociology of Art, Paladin, Granada Publishing Ltd, (1972).



PART FOUR  
THE ART MARKET, AND THE  
SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION  
OF ART

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## Chapter Seven

### The Art Market, and the Social Construction of Art

#### Aims of this Chapter

In Part Three of this thesis (chapters five and six), I outlined and analysed the development of state intervention in the arts, and indicated the ways in which state intervention has had the consequence of maintaining, expanding and reproducing a set of concepts, values and social relations which, themselves, are part of the over-all division of labour in 19th and 20th century British capitalist society. In this chapter I intend to develop the understanding of how the values, concepts and social relations of art are maintained and reproduced through examining, (a), the assumptions about art implicit in the existence of the present day art market, and, (b), the ways in which the art market and the state, together, can affect changes in the content of art (by adding to the range of productions defined as art).

I must stress that, in examining the art market, I am not attempting to describe it, or explain how it works. Rather I am simply trying to indicate the way in which the art market as it at present exists is, of necessity, bound up with a hierarchy of values within art, and relating art to other forms of production. In other words.

I am seeking to indicate the ideological pre-conditions for the art market.

In the latter part of this chapter, where I shall be considering the ways in which the art market and state agencies can, together, effect changes in the content of art, through a process whereby a form of production hitherto considered only as itself becomes defined or constructed as art, I shall be taking, as an empirical case, what has happened to photography in the last ten to fifteen years.

"Without covetousness you are not going to have an appreciation of art"

Mr Peter Wilson, Chairman of Sotheby's, has stated that

Without covetousness you are not going to have an appreciation of art. And I think that if covetousness by some magic was destroyed art would come to an end. It's very rare to be able to appreciate art without wanting to own it. (1)

Let us treat this statement as a hypothesis, and set it next to a story recounted by Michael Kustow in the Guardian of 30th December, 1974.

Kustow's story concerned an Italian artist named Piero Manzoni:

Like many artists today he was appalled at the way art works are turned into commodities, at one and the same time sentimentally over sanctified and cynically over-priced.

Perhaps wishing, therefore, to go one better than Marcel Duchamp (with his urinal)<sup>2</sup> if the art market

was not to treat his (Manzoni's) offering with the glad applause which, in the end, surrounded Duchamp's urinal, Manzoni proceeded to go out and have a good and large meal.

He waited till his bowels were bursting, excreted, collected the result, had it canned into small tins, gave it a title---"Merda d'Artista"---signed each can . . . . and put the work on show. (3)

Shortly before the writing of this article, Michael Kustow was at a Sotheby's auction, with Mr. Peter Wilson presiding as auctioneer, when one of the Manzoni tins came up for sale:

The bidding began at £50. And as the heads nodded and the fingers cocked in the robot ceremony of the saleroom, I had the distinct impression that the room was full of mechanical puppets and an unmistakable smell struck my nostrils, and it didn't emanate from that tin held between white-gloved fingers. It was the stagnant odour of the state of the arts in foreseeable times to come. (4)

Kustow concludes by noting that:

That tin of shit has been sold for £400. If you don't believe me, ask Sotheby's. (5)

Returning to the statement by Peter Wilson, therefore, I think we could possibly agree with him that there is an element of "covetousness" involved in the purchase of Manzoni's 'Merda d'Artista'. But somehow Wilson's thesis is not altogether satisfactory.

Geraldine Keen has suggested in her book, 'The Sale of Works of Art' that the art market reflects the relationship between art and society. She argues that the art market is:

in a way a bridge between the intangible values of the human spirit and the human intellect and the material considerations that dominate everyday life, a link between immeasurable human aspirations and down to earth economics.

The art market, therefore, is the place where the "intangible" and the "immeasurable" are measured and touched. The market in art exists, she argues, because:

of the very natural pleasure that most people take in possessing beautiful things . . . . From the moment that two people want to possess the same picture, a market for that picture exists. (6)

'Pleasure in possession' is, therefore, an important factor with Keen, as also in Wilson's statement. She also stresses, however, that the 'market' exists in particular because there are more than two people gathered together in pursuit of the same thing.

The coming together of several people all desirous of possessing a tin of Manzoni's shit may, perhaps, explain why that sample of his excretia sold at £400, while most of his excretia is, presumably, disposed of by the Italian sewage authorities at a small cost to himself.

I do not wish to question, however, the simple economics involved in saying that when two or more people with money to spare come together in pursuit of one object, they may outbid each other and thus raise the price of that object. Rather I wish to examine why the "natural pleasure . . . in possessing" mentioned by Keen, or the covetousness

referred to by Wilson, are directed towards a very limited portion of the products of the world, and, moreover, are directed towards such a limited section of those productions created by artists, or defined as art.

In the case of Manzoni's tin of excrement, the thing that made it worth four hundred pounds was presumably that it was art, and furthermore, it was art because it was produced by a recognised artist who exhibited the tins in the way that art is exhibited.

A further example of an art sale, however, will allow us to extend our argument.

In December 1960 a painting catalogued as 'French School', abstract subject, and entitled 'Woman and Child' was sold for £375 at a London auction. A few months later the picture appeared at an exhibition called 'Masters of Surrealism' in a London gallery. In the catalogue it was described as 'Mother and Child' by Joan Miro, the Spanish Surrealist. This time it sold for £1,500. At Christie's six years later this picture was sold at an auction of Impressionist and Modern work to the Findlay Gallery of New York for £4,725. Upon the gallery sending a photograph of the painting to Miro himself, he disowned it saying, 'this painting is not by me'. The value of the painting became, therefore, only a fraction of the £4,725 paid.

Now, if the art market is about financial values for aesthetic objects - about buying things

that are essentially of the spirit, what has happened to this painting of 'Woman and Child' that took its value from £375 to £1,500 to £4,725, and then crashing down again? The painting, and therefore, presumably, the aesthetic experience of looking at it (or the pleasure of owning it) has remained the same throughout.<sup>7</sup>

Two further incidents. In 1955 the National Gallery's 'Virgin with Child and Angels' by Francesco Francia was removed from the walls, after having been proved to be not the original, which had been sold at Christie's a year earlier.<sup>8</sup>

The Louvre in Paris bought the Tiara of Saitaphernes and put it in a prominent place of display. This crown of about 200B.C. was visited by some 30,000 people a day, until it was discovered to have been made in 1896.<sup>9</sup>

Now, again, in these cases, the objects have not changed. If they were beautiful, they remain beautiful. If they excited and stimulated aesthetic senses, their ability to stimulate the senses will (presumably) not have diminished.

#### The Original Work of Art

The monetary value (and interest value) of the Francia painting, the Miro painting, and the Greek Crown, fell upon it being discovered that these works of art were not the original works of art by the known artists of acknowledged reputation.

John Berger has written fully on the relation between originality of works of art, the given tradition of art as constructed over time, and the authentication of works of art and the construction of history by art historians. It would therefore be a redundant exercise if I were to repeat his arguments.<sup>10</sup> The result of the argument could be summed up in saying that the question, 'What is art?', can, at one level, be answered in saying that it is to do with the relation between authentication of the originality of works of art, fashion, the critic, and the art historian.

I do not wish to explore, therefore, how it is that the original work of art has come to be sanctified (and highly priced) in a sense separate from the reproducible image (wherein lies, presumably, the aesthetic pleasure). I do wish, however, to explore further some of the implications of this sanctification of some originals, and I also wish to examine why it is only some originals that become valued at a level that bears no relation to labour, time, or material costs.

#### The Art Market and Scarcity

The upper end of the art business is a very lucrative field. The existence of the art market, and, in particular, this lucrative upper sector, depends, however, on a scarcity of art deemed worth owning. This is a socially constructed



scarcity, and its existence has implications going well beyond the groups who engage in selling, purchasing and exhibiting the great artists of the past, and the famous artists of the present.

One estimate puts the number of artists working in New York at 50,000: in Paris at 15,000, and in London at 10,000.<sup>11</sup> An estimate in 1960, based on a survey, claimed that there were 40,000 painters in England of whom only 30 or so lived by their art.<sup>12</sup> Maurice Bradshaw, secretary of the Federation of British Artists estimated, moreover, that in 1968 there were over 100,000 trained artists in Great Britain, and 46,000 art students in art schools: only fifty were employed full-time in painting and sculpture.<sup>13</sup> Robert Wraight, art critic, journalist, and author of 'The Art Game'<sup>14</sup> stated that no more than one percent of contemporary art would survive. Barrie Sturt-Penrose asked Wraight about this statement, and Wraight commented on what he had said, saying:

That's just a figure relating to the absurd production of painting and pseudo art; everybody's on the bandwagon to paint. Of course, very little of it will survive. There are 50,000 painters working in New York alone--- how much of their work will live? (15)

My argument in this chapter is that this contemptuous dismissal of 99 percent of artists now working is not only necessary to the existence of the art market, but is implicit in it. Were the 99 percent not dismissed, there would be no scarcity.

Latching onto Mr Wraight's dismissive remarks about the majority of painters, Peter Wilson of Sotheby's added that:

The survivors are the best of every school, the best of every school of painting. This remains more or less constant throughout the ages, but as the paintings get scarcer and scarcer, because they go into museums and private collections, on purely economic grounds they must go up in value as long as there are people who appreciate painting. (16)

This is a neat and optimistic way of suggesting that the art market is, somehow, only an inevitable consequence of art appreciation. It would be a reasonable statement if it were true that that which sells for high prices through the art market was (a) the best work of all generations, and (b) that much better than the work produced by the dismissed 99 percent by a factor relating to the differences in prices, and (c) was not amenable to high quality reproduction.

I would not suggest that all works of art are equally good or equally bad. Wide disparities in quality are easily observable. I would suggest, however, that there is in numerical terms more good work available by little known artists for relatively small amounts of money outside the London art market, than there is good work by well known artists for high prices available through the art market. This is, of course, a purely subjective statement, as is that by Peter Wilson, above.

### The Technology of Reproduction

It may be purely subjective on my part to say that I liked very much the work of interviewee nine (see appendix), and that, had I had the money, I would never pay at least ten times more than the price of one of interviewee nine's works for a tin of excrement by Manzoni. The art market may be right in having thus far not taken much notice of interviewee nine, while taking greater notice of Manzoni, and considerable notice of Monet or Renoir.

It is not a subjective statement, however, to say that the technology is now available to reproduce paintings extremely well. And I am talking here not simply of an even matt or glass reproduction of oil paintings with a 'canvas' texturisation, but of high quality reproductions of colour, texture and finish. The cost of reproducing a painting that sells for fifty pounds may be sixty or a hundred pounds - price depending presumably on the number of reproductions. At that level the technology would not be worthwhile. But, if a Picasso is really worth £250,000, it would presumably be that much more wonderful if we could each have our own copy at only fifty or a hundred pounds?

It is this possibility which forces one to examine more closely the easy correlation between art appreciation, scarcity, and the art market, offered by Wilson or Keen.

### The two Art Markets

I quoted Geraldine Keen, earlier, as saying that the market in art exists because

of the very natural pleasure that most people take in possessing beautiful things . . . . From the moment that two people want to possess the same picture, a market for that picture exists.(17)

What she is doing here is confusing two separate institutions; first, the art market as it exists in the form of a limited range of top dealers, and, second, the sale and purchase of paintings and sculpture outside that network. These two markets are not only different in scale, but different in kind. The first is the market where top names are sold through international networks to major institutions and collectors; this is the art market as reported in the Times. The second is the forum through which less known artists sell their work for far smaller amounts of money, and, crucially, in this second market, one is able only to sell work to people who 'like' the work.

I do not wish to imply that the two markets are not related, or that the first does not feed off the second, or that many people who buy in the first, do not do so also because they like what they buy. But the difference is important, and it is the first that is usually thought of as the art market. It is interesting that most of the interviewees for this study seemed to make the same distinction. Thus, when I asked them about their financial or contractual relationship to buyers,

customers, galleries, and so forth, they replied in very different terms to those used when answering a later question on what they thought of the art market: that is, the way they sold, and the institutions through which they sold their work, were not conceptualised by them as being the art market.

The second art market (the 'ordinary' art market we could call it) is the mass of artists exhibiting and attempting to sell their work. In a few cases this is in order to attempt to make a living, and, in many cases, where the artists are also teachers, this is in order to attempt to, at least in part, maintain themselves as professional artists as well as as teachers.

It is the first art market (The London Art Market's top dealers) that is the market that affects the definition of and social construction of art. It is this first market, moreover, that we normally think of when discussing art as investment.

### Art as Investment

The idea that art collecting is largely the collecting of beautiful things by rich people<sup>18</sup> with the investment value being only a minor aspect has become increasingly untenable over the last few years. Not that there are not rich people who do wish to collect original and well known works of art for the sake simply of owning them, but the extent to which art can and is being used

as a hedge against inflation is becoming increasingly apparent. Thus:

In his 'World Currency Report,' Dr Franz Pick claims that in 1965 French porcelain appreciated on average by 15 per cent; Chippendale furniture by 30 per cent; silver by 40 per cent; and old masters by 50 per cent. Snuff-boxes were down by 30 per cent.

Richard H. Rush, an American investment banker, in his 'Art as an Investment' (Prentice-Hall, 1961) claims that the works of Van Gogh, Gauguin and Cezanne appreciated by 4,833 per cent between 1930 and 1960. (19)

It is clear, however, that, to use the art trade as investment does require a spreading of the risks; that is, for example, anyone whose great grandfather had invested in the most famous works of the late nineteenth century in Britain (such as work by Lord Leighton) might well find that, despite the steady devaluation of the currency, the sums realised on the sale of the works now would be as little as a tenth of that originally paid, comparing the sums in figures, and not in real terms. Furthermore, while many of the early twentieth century modern masters are dead, and their output is therefore known, and the prices likely, therefore, to be stable or to rise, it would not be safe to invest in modern living masters, such as Henry Moore, whose output is prodigious, and whose works could, at some point, flood the market. In order to 'play it safe' investment must be spread.

An important factor, as I have mentioned, in the value of much art (the art of the dead) is the scholarly attention paid to them. The greater

the scholarly research, and the more that is known about the artist and the biography of each of his works, the more valuable his work may become.

Geraldine Keen illustrates this point in the case of Rembrandt:

no definitive catalogue of Rembrandt's drawings existed until the 1950's when Otto Benesch published the results of his long years of research. Around 1950 three drawings catalogued as 'School of Rembrandt' were sold at Christie's for about £100 . . . .; another, attributed by Sotheby's to one of Rembrandt's contemporaries, fetched only £9 . . . . By the time Benesch's catalogue was published, its inclusion of these drawings had raised their value to something like £10,000--£15,000 . . . each. (20)

One wonders what increases of from ten to one thousand fold had to do with increase in the aesthetic qualities of these drawings.

Moreover, despite the denials by people in the art business that fine art is sometimes or often primarily an investment, reports such as the following in the Times (22 nd of March, 1975) indicate otherwise on a major scale;

Lord Glendevon, chairman of the Historic Buildings Council for England and a former Conservative Minister of works, Sir Geoffrey Agnew, chairman of the London Society of Art Dealers, and Mr. Ivan Chance, chairman of Christie's International, have lent their names to the latest art operation, the Middle East Fine Art Investment Company.

The aim of the company was to invest about ten and a half million pounds of Middle East money in works of art.

The company is incorporated in the Cayman Islands and 'will not be subject to any Cayman Islands income tax, withholding tax, capital gains tax, estate duty or other forms of taxation'.

Furthermore, except when on loan to museums or galleries, the works of art were to be kept in the company vaults in the free port of Geneva, and:

The company 'will not be liable to Swiss federal or cantonal taxes'.

The scheme itself was the idea of Mr Charles Farrell, who was:

chairman of Montagu Fine Art, the Midland Bank subsidiary which owns a 51 per cent stake in Richard Green and Frank Sabin, the West End art dealers. He is also on the board of Christie's Contemporary Art, a firm 55 per cent owned by Christie's the auctioneers, which sells modern graphics by mail order.

The Middle East Fine Art Investment Company could hope, through spreading investment and taking a long term view, to 'make' a great deal of money.

And, so far as the risks of the art market are concerned, it is to be noted that those involved in the organisation are to such an extent 'in' on the operations of the international art trade that the investment is as 'safe' as any could be.

Recent institutional investment in art works has also been reported. Thus the British rail pension fund purchased, on December 11, 1974, a sketch by an eighteenth century Italian artist, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, for £195,000, and also a pair of views of Rome by another eighteenth century Italian, Giovanni Paolo Panini, for £40,000.

Investment in art by such funds has been, to some extent, alarming dealers, who fear the consequences of a sudden boom in the market, if followed by a slump.



This 'alarm' or jitteriness among dealers was often discernible in sale-room reports of recent years. It is in part a consequence of the art and antique trade prices having inflated so rapidly, in a situation where no obvious criteria exist by which to assess prices. Thus, while for example the prices of second hand houses may rise or fall according to how many people with how much money are chasing what sort of houses, there is always, in the long term, a base level relating to the cost of erecting an equivalent house if new.

By contrast, art prices for the big contemporary names bear little relation whatever to material cost and labour time, and old masters are not measured in any sense in relation to the cost of producing new masters. Further (and this is an important point) what are sometimes talked about as changes in fashion, or 'discoveries' of new areas in art, can be highly dangerous for the dealer, given that, through such changes in fashion or 'discoveries', some of that 99 per cent of art that we discussed earlier, and which had not been constructed into the history of art, becomes 'discovered', and brought into the history.

Given that the manipulation of scarcity in art is an important factor in art dealing, it is easy to see why rapid inflation, a boom in the market, and rapid changes in fashion, may lead to a certain jitteriness among dealers. The boundaries between the established art, and the outside 99

per cent are, at such times, unreliable.

It could also be (and this is also discernible in newspaper reports) that a certain jitteriness over the art boom was induced by a suspicion that the marriage of fine art as value (both spiritual and intellectual) and as money does not look too good. For, although art is investment, it is not supposed to be shouted from the roof-tops. Geraldine Keen, the Times sale-room correspondent, indicates in her book, 'The Sale of Works of Art', how seriously the idea of art as value (art, in her case, as religion) can be taken, and, if we take it that the religious role of art is as central as she says, it is easy to see why a boom in the art market and in art as investment would upset the ideology of art as value. She writes as follows;

The religious aspect of art and the art market is perhaps the more fascinating, as well as being fundamental to the long term health of the art market, and is interwoven almost inextricably with the financial aspect. The twentieth century has proved a tough period for the idealist. The Christian Church has been seriously undermined and is dismissed by many as an anachronism. Few have managed to maintain their faith in Communism in view of developments in Soviet Russia and China. Charity has rather gone out of fashion, as its role has been steadily usurped by the State, and even the most up-to-date idealist, who devotes himself to the economic development of the third world, is not encouraged by seeing his work destroyed by political intrigue and corruption. The traditional values of society have been knocked one by one from their pedestals. Yet the belief in the value of art, which is out of the main line of fire, has survived. This makes patronage of the arts one of the few respectable forms of do-gooding that are left. (21)

If, therefore, Keen is right in saying that the "religious aspect" is "fundamental to the long term health of the art market, and is interwoven almost inextricably with the financial aspect", it can be understood why some dealers became worried by the explicit way in which companies like the Middle East Fine Art Investment Company, or the British Rail Pension Fund, use art purely as a source for financial gain.

The recent art boom which led to fears about the art market began in a big way in October 1972. Thus in 1973 both Sotheby's and Christies reported a seventy per cent increase in turnover, and in 1974 Sotheby's reported a world wide turnover of £90.3 millions, which was 26 per cent up on the previous year, while Christie's was 30 per cent up with a turnover of 44.3 million pounds.<sup>22</sup>

The sorts of money involved in the boom in the art trade was indicated by looking at any sale room report. One in the Times (6th April 1974) by Geraldine Norman mentions prices like £100,000 for Manet's "Isabelle au manchon" ("a mere £100,000, far below the expected price"); £210,000 for a Lautrec drawing entitled "Au Cirque Fernando"; Lautrec's "Monsieur Paul Viaud" for £205,000;

A beautiful portrait by Berthe Morisot was very modestly priced at £44,000, and a highly important Pissarro landscape of 1869 was not expensive at £106,000. But Picasso's oil and pastel sketch, "Les Morphinomanes" of 1900 ran well beyond expectations to reach £120,000, as did the elegant Degas pastel, "Salle de danse", at £142,000. (23)

The highest price for the week was the sale of a Picasso, "Femme à la mandoline" , sold at Christie's for £273,000 - "a very healthy sign for the Picasso market".

Evident in Norman's reports was the concern felt by dealers and auctioneers that the prices in the art market should conform to the estimates given pictures by art historians and critics. That is, the relation between the selection and construction of art history, including judgements of relative aesthetic worth, should determine relative prices. There was a tendency during the peak of the boom for prices to come out of line with the established criteria of relative greatness. This disjuncture between established aesthetic judgements and relative prices would, again, have the effect, of upsetting the apparent correlation between the market and religious values. I have argued that it is a precondition for the art market that 99 per cent of work be defined as not good. For this definitional process to work, there must be a correlation between the judgements and history of the critic and the art historian, and relative prices. The breakdown in the relative price structure was, therefore, a threat to the ideological preconditions of the art market: a threat moreover to the ability to control and manipulate scarcity.

In the Times of the 6th of April 1974

Geraldine Norman was able to report with some satisfaction that sanity had returned to the art market.

She reported that

in spite of the critical economic problems that face the richer countries of the world there has been no crash in the art market.

There have, of course, been ups and downs, but the best works have generally met competitive bidding, the middle-rate has fetched roughly what was expected and unworthy works by great names have tended to see a healthy drop in value. (24)

In other words the correlation between judgements of relative aesthetic worth (as socially constructed) and relative prices had been re-established.

#### The Major Dealers and Auctioneers

I have mentioned already the manipulation of scarcity as being an element in the art market. I have discussed this in the sense of there being implicit in the art market a rejection or denial of the output of the majority of working artists, this rejection or denial being intimately bound up with the intellectual productions of the art historian and the critic.

There exists also, however, a much more straightforward manipulation of scarcity practised by the major dealers and auctioneers. I intend in this section, therefore, to take a closer look at a major dealer, and at the two major auctioneers, in order to indicate how certain artists, and schools of art, can come to be constructed as great art,

and therefore as valuable art.

Frank Lloyd owns one of the world's biggest chains of showrooms. Started after the last war, 'Marlborough Fine Art' has become the most successful commercial art dealing enterprise in post war history. And it is Lloyd who summed up his success in his reported advice to his staff, "Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money."

Marlborough Fine Art is controlled from galleries in Albermarle Street, London, and 57th Street, New York, with branches across the world including Munich, Toronto, Rome and Tokyo. All the galleries across the world are linked to Marlborough A.G. (Liechtenstein), which is owned by Lloyd's family controlled trust. At least seven other Liechtenstein satellites exist, some galleries, some providing finance for the purchase of art, and some serving as intermediaries for transactions between different Marlborough galleries.<sup>26</sup>

As of December 1973 the New York gallery had an annual sales turnover of over twenty million dollars, and maintained art works valued at around thirty million dollars. Lloyd's personal wealth alone (built up only through his activity as an art dealer since the Second World War) has been estimated at around twentyfive million dollars.

Born in Vienna in 1911 as Franz Levai, he worked before the war in coal, oil, and finally a chain of petrol stations. Fleeing to England he

fought in the British Army, and there met Harry Fischer, an art connoisseur. In post-war London these two pooled their resources, and started a small art dealing business. Lord Ivor Churchill, son of the then Duke of Marlborough, was financially involved in the early days, and the firm took its name from him. David Somerset joined the business in 1948, this being an important step forward for the firm, as he was heir to the Duke of Beaufort, and he and Churchill together gave Marlborough Fine Art access to the great houses of England. Expensive to maintain, and short of money, Lloyd saw that the owners of these houses would be ready to sell some of their art works to meet death duties and estate costs; meanwhile, he saw that industrialists and speculators would be those who would have the money to buy. Hence the initial success of Marlborough Fine Art.

The major area in which Marlborough Fine Art now operates is modern art, and it is here that the firm has been innovatory on a major scale. It is in the modern art movements that money was to be made, given (a) the relative scarcity of the defined great masters, and (b) the relatively low profits to be made on the great masters - bought at high cost and sold at an only marginally higher high-cost.

Lloyd introduced into England the practice of putting living artists under contract; he would promote the artist's work, and arrange to handle

their estates after the artist's death. This not only gave the artist a guaranteed income, but Marlborough could guarantee to have the work shown to all major collectors, museums, and investors.

Marlborough tends to handle only known and established artists - hence resentment on the part of smaller dealers and galleries, who do not have the financial or promotional ability to offer artists the returns and guarantees given by Marlborough. The small gallery has to find its own artists and build them up, while Marlborough is then in a position to take over the most promising, and reap the returns on the small galleries' work.

For the artist under contract the situation is a good one: he has a stability over the long-term available to few artists. From Marlborough's point of view the system enables the gallery to control the art market, for the gallery's control of work by the artist both during his life and after his death guarantees that a flood of work by the artist does not appear on the market. The gallery can create and/or manipulate a scarcity.

Criticism has been expressed concerning the high rates of commission charged by Marlborough on work sold - from 30 to 50 per cent. From the point of view of the artist, however, the increase in sales and rise in his prices consequent upon being under contract to Marlborough will easily compensate for this.



Included in the Marlborough stables are many of the best known British and American artists. For our purposes in this study, however, the Marlborough organisation is simply illustrative of how the most successful end of the art market works.

The system is very close to that of a pop-star, with the contract, the exclusive handling and selling rights, the international distribution, the control of an effective promotional organisation, and so forth. The manner in which the big company does not seek to find its own artists, but rather collects and promotes the successful or the rising artist (promoted earlier by smaller companies) is also indicative of the manner in which art selling at the top end of the market is the selling of a packaged commodity in order to "collect money". Promotion of the little known artist would be akin to charity, and charity has little to do with business.

It is the massive business organisation of the Marlborough type which lies behind many of the best known contemporary artists, and which maintains their success. Success means, however, not only being known and making money for the artist; it means that an artist contracted to a firm like Marlborough has a financial freedom and stability: he is free simply to be an artist. The man or woman, by contrast, who has to organise his/her own

exhibitions, take part time jobs, carry work round to dealers and collectors, and work with a fluctuating and unstable income, has not got the freedom to simply work as an artist. In this manner success in art is self sustaining, for the contract with a dealer guarantees the freedom to work - to be an artist, and maintain the output of a professional artist.

### The Auctioneer as Big Business

While the movement towards international monopoly business organisation is evident in art dealing, innovations of a similar sort have been occurring also in the auctioneering field.

Traditionally the auctioneer is someone who handles goods which he sells on behalf of a client; his sole activity in money-making terms is taking a commission on the sale. The auctioneer does not, therefore, control prices or manipulate the market. He merely provides a forum for the exchange of goods, charging a commission for his service. In recent years this situation has begun to change. And, in part, the change relates to the increase in the scale of the business handled by the major art auctioneers.

The annual turnover of Sotheby's has grown from three million pounds gross in 1958, to seventytwo million pounds net in 1974.<sup>27</sup>

Part of this success is a reflection of the general rise in art prices, and the increase in

the numbers of collectors. However, throughout this period Sotheby's has also been spreading its activities into fields only loosely allied to fine art auctioneering. Thus it went into fine art insurance in collaboration with Commercial Union, and into cultural tours with Clarksons ('Heritage Travel'). While it withdrew from these ventures, it has further developed a publishing offshoot, in Sotheby Publications, and has entered the television cassette business with a series on Romanticism and Classicism by Kenneth Clark. The company has also purchased James Bourlet, a long established firm of packers.<sup>28</sup>

The cigarette marked under the trade name of Sotheby, by Wills, enabled Sotheby's to buy further property in Bond Street. Sotheby now owns two thirds of the quadrant formed by Bond Street, Conduit Street, George Street, and Maddox Street. The property boom and related rent inflation rendered both the value of this and the income from it greatly increased.<sup>29</sup>

The most significant innovation, however, has occurred in-actual sale room practice; this includes the introduction of a guarantee system, whereby the seller is offered a guaranteed price. On accepting he would pay Sotheby's a higher commission up to that price, and normal commission thereafter. Sotheby's has also gone into purchasing art works outright on its own behalf, thus becoming the owner and vendor, rather than an intermediary. The auctioneer

thus becomes more of a dealer, and less of an auctioneer. Finally Sotheby's has started giving estimates of prices in published catalogues, this being seen by some as an attempt to control the buyers through suggestion. Sotheby's were also reported to be introducing into England from (Sotheby) Parke Bernet in America a customer counselling department, which is an unusual innovation for an auctioneer whose interests lie primarily with the seller, and the gaining of the highest price - hence the highest commission.<sup>30</sup>

Sotheby's and Christie's together control most of the upper end of world fine art auctioneering. The nearest rivals are the Paris auctions. Through Parke Bernet, Sotheby's are the leaders in New York, and have a new branch in Los Angeles.

The significance of the Sotheby developments were expressed by Geraldine Norman in terms of possible misuse:

The power held in owning, cataloguing, estimating and advising could easily be misused. (31)

That is, presumably, Sotheby's might behave unethically according to the conventions of the auctioneer. From the point of view of this thesis, however, it is not whether or not Sotheby's is ethical (by whatever criteria) that is significant; rather it is the way in which a major auctioneer is moving into a position where, inevitably, it will play an increasing role in defining what is art, what its worth is in relation to other art, and so forth.

The auctioneer, in fact, becomes more like the major dealer.

It should be noted, however, that thus far it has been Sotheby's, under the chairmanship of Peter Wilson, that has been most innovatory in the ways described, while Christie's has tended to remain more traditional.

### The Art Reproduction

A recent development in the art trade has been the mass sale of art reproductions. I propose here to consider only a relatively small section of the art reproduction field, namely that which has been advertised in the Sunday colour magazines of the Observer and Sunday Times newspapers. I shall examine this section of the art market not in order to show how it works, but rather in order to indicate the way in which assumptions about art are used in the sales promotion. Through this examination I shall further elucidate certain ideas about the nature of the 'original' work of art, and the relationship between art and investment. In the sales promotion the ideology of art, and appreciation, and investment, and heritage, is often very explicit. I approach the advertising material, therefore, in terms of the question, 'Under what social conditions is it possible for such statements about art to be successfully employed in order to sell art reproductions, and what do these statements therefore indicate about the social relations of art?'

First, as a point of information, it should be noted that an 'etching' 'by' an artist is conventionally said to be by the artist, in the same way as if he had painted it. Similarly, with autolithography, a reproduction is by the artist. In the case of photolithography, or other forms of reproduction in which the artist is not involved, the copy is said to be a reproduction of a work by the artist. In the case of autolithography, a person other than the artist may carry out the printing, but the lithographs be by the artist if it was he who prepared the plate.

However large a printed edition, therefore, an etching or lithography 'by' an artist is an 'original' work of art, as opposed to being a reproduction of an original work. Thus it is quite possible to have a thousand or more 'originals'. Normally, however, it is the custom that the artist will run off a limited edition, number these and sign them, and then destroy the original plate. The more limited the number of prints he takes, the higher the price he will ask for each.

For an artist, therefore, the etching or lithograph can be a means of producing a larger quantity of cheaper works, while making a reasonable financial return. As far as the potential art investor is concerned, the edition being limited is crucial (given, of course, the reputation of the artist).

In the 'Sunday Times' Colour magazine of March 23rd, 1975, an advertisement appeared from "The Fiehl Art Collection" of 23-4 Great James Street, London. The framed works for sale by mail order were relatively less known names, ranging from Spiro, the one time surrealist, to Myrian Bering, who, we are assured, though only 23, has had her name in international 'Who's Who' in art since 1972. Four artists works are offered, ranging in price from £35 for a "Pommes et Fleurs" still life by Bering, to £50 for "Le Pont de Sens" by Bouyssou.

Given that two of the works were being sold in editions of five hundred, one in an edition of three hundred, and the Bouyssou in an edition of three hundred and eightyfive, these prices were extraordinarily high. The editions are too large to maintain a moderate market price so far in excess of the cost of production.

The emphasis, however, of the Fiehl Art Collection advertisement was on possession and the work being the 'original'. Thus, they suggest that

The desire to possess original works of fine art is shared by most discriminating people, but very few are still able to afford them.

Stress is laid, therefore on the possession of originals: on the reader as discriminating: and the use of "still able" conjures up some image of a past in which the reader reclined among works of fine

art at a time when such things could be afforded.

Next the advertisement introduced the idea of art as investment;

Mass produced prints may seem an attractive alternative, but they have no real worth.  
(underlined in original).

Note here that there is no specification of the meaning of worth; is it financial, or is it aesthetic?

I suspect that we are intended to experience something of a mixture of the two. That is, we are to feel that anyone can have an ordinary reproduction, for it is cheap, therefore worthless, therefore common, vulgar, and not beautiful.

By contrast Fiehl Art offered "to collectors" their "limited editions". Thus the buyer is given a little flattery, making him a "collector" (and already he has been alleged to be discriminating). "Limited editions" is slipped in as a reassurance, and it is pointed out that

Original works by these artists have been increasing in value and we believe they will continue to do so in the future.

So, it is implied that the "discriminating" "collector" of "limited editions" of "original works of fine art" will, as likely as not, end up making money out of his purchases too.

A whole complex of elements in the fine art ideology have been neatly woven together, creating a marriage of prestige, private possessions and ostentation, aesthetic discrimination, and the making of money through wise investment.



A point to note with this advert from the Fiehl Art Collection was that they did not actually specify how their prints were produced;

Each and every work in the Fiehl Collection has been painstakingly reproduced from the original and then personally approved, signed and numbered by the artist. original

"Painstakingly" is, in this context, a rather meaningless word. All we are told is that the artist's work has been reproduced, and, presumably not by him or her, for he/she is then asked to "personally approve" - which could mean as little as saying that the reproduction certainly looks a lot like a painting he/she once did. If it were a photographic reproduction, or photolitho reproduction, the artists numbering and signing in his own hand (in two of the cases five hundred times) would not render the reproduction worth much more than the production costs.

In the 'Sunday Times' of April 13th 1975 the Fiehl Art Collection were selling framed Turner reproductions and so could not emphasise the 'originality' of the reproductions in the same way. Instead they contented themselves with reproducing Turner by an "exclusive method" that gave a "breath-taking beauty and visible depth of reality." And, while since these were reproductions rather than artist's prints, there was no point in claiming a limited edition, the Fiehl Art Collection did make much play on the fact that they had only reproduced

five hundred of each of the five Turners offered. They implied that stocks would run out fast, and suggested we parted quickly with our £35 a time for a framed reproduction.

'Templeton and Rawlings' started advertising 'original' works of art in the Sunday colour supplements in October 1973. Of all the firms in this field Templeton and Rawlings have stressed most regularly the investment angle, and their products being "Originals---not reproductions".

An example of their work was that in the 'Sunday Times' of November 10th 1974. For sale was a Braque, at £35: a Vlaminck, at £35: a Pierre Bonnard, for £30: a Dali for £35: and finally a Picasso for £40. All but the Picasso were advertised as "original etchings" and were signed in the plate (which means you get your artist's signature back to front in your print). The Georges Braque picture was described as a "rare original etching" - and in none of the cases was there any specification of the edition being limited. In fact there would have been little point, for they conceded with the Pierre Bonnard print that, "This original etching" has "strike marks". "Strike marks" are in fact scratches across the plate which 'cancel' the plate after the 'original' limited edition has been run off.

The Picasso print was a woodcut, "created and signed in the block by Picasso in 1926".

Emphasising the investment angle Templeton and Rawlings stated that if you were not completely satisfied that your purchase was a "wise investment" you could have your money back, but;

We believe, however, it is a purchase you will take pride in and enjoy for many years and one your heirs will value for generations.

Thus, in a sense, they are playing on the idea that you can buy something of Europe's artistic heritage—something that will last for generations, and is eternal.

This sort of advertisement, and the Fiehl advertisements, reveal something of what sort of a market is available, and what sort of assumptions, aspirations, ideas about art, ideas about artists, and so forth, exist and can be exploited. It is not our concern here, however, to illustrate a form of business exploitation of art, but rather to indicate what sort of ideological relations are available to be drawn on in creating sentences with which to milk a middle range market.

It is not relevant to this discussion, therefore, that Templeton and Rawlings were later shown to be very suspect in their business operations, or that certain of the claims made were in a legal sense fraudulent.<sup>32</sup>

A business operation such as 'Christie's Contemporary Art' are legally respectable. That which they sell as originals are (in the legal sense) originals. And, whereas Templeton and Rawlings

suggested that

It is possible that some of these masterpieces will soon never again be available,

and that the prints were "an investment your heirs will value for generations", Christie's Contemporary Art do not play on the investment idea. They do, in certain cases, however exploit the mail order business in as far as certain of their works available by mail order can be bought elsewhere for a fifth of the price charged by Christie's Contemporary Art.<sup>33</sup>

The significance of these mail order firms for our purposes is that they, like the major international dealers who handle real investment art, are both working within and through and as part of the same set of ideas about art and the artist, about creativity, and about heritage. The art market at all levels relies on the aesthetic sanctity and religiosity implicit in the ideology of art. John Berger has suitably summed up what is happening in a paragraph in his 'Ways of Seeing':

The meaning of the original work no longer lies in what it uniquely says but in what it uniquely is. How is its unique existence evaluated and defined in our present culture? It is defined as an object whose value depends upon its rarity. This value is affirmed and gauged by the price it fetches on the market. But because it is nevertheless 'a work of art' - and art is thought to be greater than commerce - its market price is said to be a reflection of its spiritual value. Yet the spiritual value of an object, as distinct from a message or an example, can only be explained in terms of magic or religion. And since in modern society neither of these is a living force, the art object, the 'work of art', is enveloped in an atmosphere of entirely

bogus religiosity. Works of art are discussed and presented as though they were holy relics: relics which are first and foremost evidence of their own survival. The past in which they originated is studied in order to prove their survival genuine. They are declared art when their line of descent can be certified. (34)

### The Social Construction of Art - Photography

Photography, and, in particular, nineteenth century photography, is one of the forms of production that has been most recently subject to being constructed as art. I wish to examine here briefly what takes place when a set of objects are thus constructed as art, and in particular I wish to note the change in what is done to the object.

The construction of photography as art is particularly interesting as an illustration of the process of art being constructed (with the associated deification of the original, and of the photographer as artist) on account of photography being in fact one of the most reproducible and democratically available media.

I indicated in the opening chapter that 'art', as a word, has both evaluative and denotative meanings. A phenomenon that is being constructed as art (re-defined as art) will often fall ambivalently between being described as art in a denotative sense and being praised as art in an evaluative sense. This ambivalence is illustrated by interviewee fifteen (see appendix) who is a film maker. He commented that

in film 'artist' is a word that's given to you, rather than that you would take it for yourself.

This is different from the situation with a painter. A painter could be described as 'not a real artist', with the term being used in an evaluative sense, but this usage would remain separate from his nevertheless being an 'artist' in as far as he was a painter, however good or bad he may be. With a film maker, however, interviewee fifteen pointed out that

if you said, 'I am a film artist', in the ambience of film-making, that would be considered pretentious. And, I suppose... But, if you make a film which is judged in a certain way, then someone will say, 'He is a film artist'. I'd be happy to reach that position.

### What Photography Is

In its early days photography had an ambivalent relationship to high art, in as far as it was seen as a threat to high art; hence the slogan associated with the beginnings of photography: "From Today Painting is Dead."<sup>35</sup> Not, of course, that painting was dead. As Guy Brett has pointed out, the camera as such could not imitate the painting, for reality could not be moulded into the conventions of the painting - even though photography could mould it in many other ways,

the revealing thing about photographs imitating paintings in the Grand Manner is that the materiality of things is just too awkwardly real. The drapes and vases refuse to behave like props. And the human body refused to behave like a classical nude. (36)

Photography did not come to replace painting, and;

the question whether photography would kill painting was overdramatic because photography itself is really just another graphic medium. (37)

However, being a photographer was no easy matter in the early days. The equipment was heavy and cumbersome: exposures were long, and development elaborate. There was no mass production of cameras, nor could film be handed in to a chemist for rapid processing.

The simplification of the camera, and of developing and printing the film, has meant that a form of graphic reproduction which was at first only available in a limited sense, has now become increasingly available to anyone who will use it. Given these developments, the photographer as an expert has become increasingly to hold an untenable position. No longer does it make sense to take the family for an annual portrait photograph, when for relatively little cost holiday snapshots of a far more personal kind can be produced by the family themselves (even if the developing and printing is not undertaken by them directly.)<sup>38</sup>

Given this democratic availability of the photograph, and given that it is no longer in competition with the painting (painting, in its content, having broken with the Renaissance high tradition), photography has tended to be seen and used as photography; this despite occasional discussions of it as an art form, and the propagandising by some magazines for it to be raised to 'art'.

Photography as 'art' has, furthermore, had to carry the burden of the use of the term 'art-photographs' as a euphemism for photographic erotica.

As photography, pure and simple, the photograph has come to be used in innumerable ways for communication, commemoration, the capturing of 'news', propaganda, advertising, personal record, and so forth.

### The Construction of Photography as Art

The context of the construction of photography as art has been the general growth of interest in (and prices of) things Victorian. This growth of interest in things Victorian is reflected in price terms in the growth of the antique market,<sup>39</sup> and in 'environmental' terms in a changed attitude towards the Victorian city and built environment, and in academic terms in a growth of academic scholarship on the Victorian period.

In museums these developments are reflected and expressed through numerous exhibitions of local history in which photographic records of the former appearance of the city or locality are employed. Old photographs have also reached a mass audience through the publications of the Hendon Publishing Company, (Nelson, Lancashire). Hendon publishes the series of photographic books on individual towns, such as "Durham as it was", "Sunderland as it was",



"Leicester as...", "Manchester as...", etcetera.

In museum exhibitions and the Hendon Publishing Company books the photograph has tended to be used and presented as a source of information. The photograph is presented for historical and communicative purposes - the skill and accomplishment of early photographers only being noted as of secondary interest.

To view a photograph as 'information' is to gather from it something about objects or events that the photograph captures. The photograph is part of a relation between the viewer and an event or object.

To view a photograph as 'art', however, is to view it as a distinct thing in itself: as a composition: as a form of expression: as a self-contained unit. As art the photograph is in part a relation between the artist and the viewer, and in part it is of a relation between the viewer and himself as he reacts with the photograph.

A distinctive characteristic of many of the exhibitions in museums employing old photographs in the last few years is that the photographs were not presented as art. Rather they were organised to a purpose in communicating information. They were a means, rather than an end.

The construction of photography into art in recent years has in part followed from an increasing interest in the individual biographies of early photographers.

An exhibition of the work of one early photographer has implicit in it a tendency towards the photograph being viewed as art, because the coherence of the exhibition comes to rest not on what the photographs represent, but rather on who made the image. This form of presentation of photographs is part of the construction of photography as art, but is in itself not necessarily such construction.

The argument that in the last ten years there has been a significant shift towards photography being treated as (and defined as) art is based on observing a set of inter-related phenomena. I shall examine here three examples: one an exhibition involving a contemporary photographer; the second an exhibition put on by the Arts Council of old photographs; the third the prices paid for certain Victorian photographs in the mid nineteen sixties and today.

#### The View from Beaford

An exhibition of photographs at the 'Museum of English Rural Life', Reading, held in 1974, can be taken as an example to illustrate both certain uses of photography as photograph, and certain uses of photography as art (aesthetic object ). The exhibition comprised both old and new photographs of North Devon. The exhibition was not in itself a promotion of photography as art, and both the location of the exhibition in a specialist (rural

life) museum, and the geographical focus of the exhibition (North Devon) indicate a purpose to which the photographs were subordinate as means to an end, rather than their being objects to be considered for their own sakes.

However, the proportion of the photographs in the exhibition that were modern were all by James Ravilious. Ravilious, born in 1939, studied art at St. Martins School of Art, taught painting and drawing for seven years at Hammersmith College of Further Education, and is now working full time for the Beaford Centre, North Devon.

It is in the catalogue to the exhibition<sup>40</sup> that we find that process of art and artist being constructed which I am suggesting is a tendency gathering force in relation to photography in the last few years. Thus, in the introduction to the catalogue it is stated that

James Ravilious is an artist in the great tradition of objective naturalism, topographical landscape, portraiture and social document. He captures the passing moment and, as Baudelaire wrote 'of all the suggestions of eternity that it contains'. Ravilious, no more nor less than thousands of his contemporaries for ever capturing on film the scenes and images of their lives, is an artist who relishes the material world. He loves the earth, its people, where they live and the light which illuminates the common round. In all this he is no different from many. (41)

There is in this the clear assertion that the photographer is 'artist' "in the great tradition of" etc., etc.... The list of great traditions of which Ravilious is a part is backed up by the

citing of Beaudelaire, all reinforcing the assertion that Ravilious is artist, and hence his work is art. Later in the introduction the point is further reinforced with

like Constable and Bewick in the nineteenth century the subject of his work is defined by a circumference which can be reached by a good days walk from home and back;

There is a second line of thought running through the extract I have quoted, however, which may appear at first sight in opposition to the claims made for Ravilious as artist. This is the assertion that Ravilious is only one of many: thus

no more nor less than thousands of his contemporaries for ever capturing on film the scenes and images....

and;

In all this he is no different from many. (42).

It is the second line of thought, however, which transforms the claim for Ravilious as an individual artist into a claim for photography in general to be art. I would suggest, however, that the 'democratic' tone of this second argument is lost in the over-all effect produced by the listing of the great traditions of which Ravilious is part.

A third element in the piece further obscures the democratic element in the second element. This third element is a sentimentalising of the artist; the artist is made on the one hand unreal, and, on the other, a figure built up into something larger than life. Thus the phrase, "the scenes and images

of their lives", and the statement that the photographer "relishes the material world", and "loves the earth, the people, where they live and the light which illuminates the common round", all present a very Wordsworthian image of the artist responding to the common and the rural.

This form of writing about the artist I call sentimentalisation because it is a form of description that can be called 'rural romantic'. Ravilious is made out to be, in part, of the stuff of the earth, and, in part, specially responsive to the "common round". Given this sentimentalisation of Ravilious, the assertion already quoted that "In all this he is no different from many" can be seen as only a part of that very process of sentimentalisation.

Thus, while the writing suggests that photography is a democratic art (i.e., done by many), at the same time the form of words and the references to the great tradition, and the sentimentalising of the artist builds up and reinforces a very different kind of picture;- Ravilious as a special kind of man: an artist with the camera, because of his special gifts.

This exhibition is just one example of the sorts of presentation of photography within small exhibitions all across the country. What is significant is that it was, in 1974, possible to present photographs and talk about photography in such terms.

Far more significant socially in terms of a purposeful intervention in photography as art was an Arts Council exhibition held in 1975.

The Real Thing:

The Arts Council Exhibition, held at the Hayward Gallery, was entitled 'The Real Thing'.<sup>43</sup> The exhibition was not 'about' something in the sense that an exhibition of old prints of a locality are 'about' the locality, or the just cited 'View from Beaford' exhibition was about North Devon. Rather the Arts Council exhibition was about photographs - and essentially about many hundreds of photographs taken out of their context of use or away from any clear 'purpose', and hung all together in a major art gallery (The Hayward).

Paul Overy, reviewing the Hayward exhibition in the Times<sup>44</sup> commented on the transformation of photography into art embodied in such an exhibition:

While it is good that the photograph is now being taken seriously, there is also an increasing danger that it will be taken for something that it is not. An 'Art object' with a high monetary status and rarity value, which is what original nineteenth-century photographic prints are becoming in the sale-rooms.

Overy argued that a more important event in the history of photography than the discovery of the methods for fixing the image

was the perfecting of photomechanical reproduction at the end of the nineteenth century. This meant that the image could be reproduced endlessly.

And, he noted, that with the invention of the Kodak

with its slogan, "You press the button, we do the rest", the photograph became something that belonged to everyone. However,

the easier photography has become, the more there has been a tendency to introduce mystification to 'protect' the professionals. (45)

Marina Vaizey, reviewing the same Hayward exhibition and other exhibitions of photography in the Sunday Times, took up the point of how a photograph is to be looked at, and the implications of what was being done to photography at the Arts Council exhibition. She pointed out that

Much of what is on view was not meant to be looked at as framed, glazed, wall-hanging pictures but destined for family albums, aide-memoires, or documentary archives, published in books, or in newspapers and magazines. (46)

She noted that in the Hayward exhibition

We don't see the look of the page and the way image combines with text. (47)

For viewing photographs behind glass, on a wall, in a major art gallery, involved not merely taking the images from one context of use to another; it involved rather transforming the meaning of the image. The particularity and context of the original image was destroyed through the image being placed with so many others, and the images as photographs were all subordinated to 'art'. The fact that the exhibition was a major event in the calendar of the Arts Council of Great Britain only emphasised this.

While the exhibition itself was a 'one-off' event, the Arts Council's efforts in the field of

photography have been developed over the last four years through a series of grants;

In 1976/77, for the fourth year, the Arts Council is running a programme of grants in the field of photography. The overall aim is to assist in the contribution made by photography to our culture. (48).

The Arts Council also now has a special photography officer.

### Photography and the Art Market

As I have been indicating in this chapter, the existence of the art market, and the high prices that some art will fetch, is fundamental to the existence of the social relations and ideology of art today. In photography being constructed as, and accepted as, art, therefore, the transformation of photographs from being simply photographs to being a high-priced commodity is important. It is doubly important with photographs, given that they are of all media so subject to reproduction, and thus so unlikely to be amenable to being categorised into 'rare originals' and 'mere reproductions' - a division so central to the art market. As Marina Väizey commented:

Photography, certainly modern photography, is infinitely reproducible; why should prints be marketed almost as unique art objects at high prices? Exclusivity, by price or jargon, is a vice photography can and should do without. (49)

It was in 1975 that the Government first used the powers vested in it to put a temporary stay of export on art treasures, in relation to photographs.



The 'work of art' in question was the 'Herschel Album' of Victorian portraits, by Julia Margeret Cameron. The album contained 94 pictures by Cameron, and needed £52,000 to be purchased by the National Portrait Gallery.

Helmut Gernsheim, one of the world's leading historians of photography, was brought in to help the campaign to raise the money, and it is the varying fortunes of his attempts to gain recognition for 19th century photography that illustrates the construction of photography as art in recent years.

Over a series of years, while resident in Britain, Helmut Gernsheim collected "a priceless collection of historic photographs compared to which the present album pales in importance".<sup>50</sup> Gernsheim's collection contained 240 Cameron portraits, 33,000 photographs, 4,000 albums, and various historical cameras and pieces of equipment. Between 1951 and 1964 Gernsheim attempted to give the collection to the British nation. No suitable home was found, and in 1964 he left England, and the collection went to the University of Texas.

Something therefore happened between 1964 and 1975: something which the nation could not afford to house if given free, had become something worth buying at great expense in small quantities.

I quoted Paul Overy earlier saying that

While it is good that the photograph is now being taken seriously, there is also an increasing danger that it will be taken for something that it is not. An 'art object' with a high

monetary status and rarity value, which is what original nineteenth-century photographic prints are becoming in the sale room. (51)

It might be true to say, however, that being taken "seriously" and being transformed into high-priced commodities are at present one and the same thing. How many good copies of the Margeret Cameron portraits could have been made for the National Gallery's £52,000? The copies, however, would not have been originals, and even though the copies could have been distributed all around the British Isles, so that many millions of people could have seen them, would it have been the same if the copy was only worth a few pounds?

#### The Consequences of Photography Becoming Art

I distinguished earlier the uses of photography as information, communication, record, document, and so forth, from the existence of photography as art. I mentioned furthermore the extensive use of old photographs in local museums in exhibitions of local social and historical interest.

A possible effect of photography being constructed as art was indicated in an editorial by Elspeth King of the 'People's Palace Museum, Glasow, published in 'Mag News' (the magazine of the Museum Assistants Group) of March 1976. She indicated that

a London-based Sunday newspaper is currently bemoaning the fact that there is no "National" (London?) Museum of Photography, and is inviting

readers to send in their photographs for publication, and ultimately for the collections of the National Portrait Gallery. There are two big inducements for readers to do so: £25 cash for photographs published, and the fact that "some will be acquired by the NPG and will eventually be part of Britain's historical heritage."

It is interesting that, in the newspaper she quotes, the photographs only become part of Britain's historical heritage when in a museum. However, she points out that

The article pre-supposes that (1) local museums have no interest in preserving photographs in their own areas (2) we are all ignorant of the social history value (here equated with cash) of old photographs (3) only in London can such a collection be considered as "part of Britain's historical heritage."

Rather angrily, therefore, she indicates the consequences of the newspapers campaign and any possible establishment of a 'national' (London) photographic museum for the provincial museum:

good photographs from particular areas will be consumed by a national museum. What local museum can offer £25 and momentary fame in a Sunday supplement? In the event, protest will probably be fobbed off with promises of temporary/travelling exhibitions and copies (at a price). The question of copyright and reproduction fees will raise its ugly head, time and again. As regards local knowledge of topography and architecture, who in the NPG can declare what is important to Dundee, Doncaster, Derry or Denbigh? Photographs rejected by the NPG as being not of sufficient quality, may be of tremendous significance in local history terms. (52)

The root of her problem is that photography had become art, and, in becoming art, it had become a commodity with a high monetary value.

Her problem, it could also be said, is maintained and aggravated largely by two factors. The first is the existence of state involvement in the arts. The state, as the major patron of the arts, promotes, reinforces and reproduces the social relations within which art exists as something prestigious and of 'our national heritage'. The state's intervention in art was of assistance in transforming photography into art (through such exhibitions as the Arts Council's 'The Real Thing'). Finally, in as far as photography becomes art, it is the state through the National Portrait Gallery (and any other specialist institution that may be set up) which takes the product now defined as art and 'protects' and 'conserves' it through collecting and storing it in the prestige centres, which 'happen' to be in London. Whatever local uses the product now defined as art may have had, it has become too valuable to be left in the provinces, where an insufficient number of people will see it, and where sufficient facilities do not exist (so it might be argued) to look after the products now defined as art.

The second factor that maintains and aggravates Elspeth King's problem is the art market. It is through the existence of the art market that the photographs of social and historical use in their locality had become too valuable and special to remain mere documents. If photography had become

an art form, and if, therefore, certain photographs must be examples of the highest peaks of that art form, then also it must be that the aesthetic merits of certain photographs must be measurable in monetary terms. And, while only certain photographs, such as those by Cameron, are really valuable (£52,000 for an album of 94) it also follows, according to the practices of the art market, that all other photographs of that sort become in some sense art, and therefore old photographs become worth something - perhaps the £25 the Sunday paper was prepared to pay.

#### The Authentic Work of Art

Jean Duvignaud, in his book, 'The Sociology of Art', discusses and offers us a definition of the 'authentic' work of art. He argues that

it depends on two factors; the force of conviction in a work (bearing in mind its explicit aims) and its detachment from financial, ideological and political concerns - in other words, the authentic work of art cannot serve as a justification for any other activity except itself. (54)

It is a common assumption, in fact, that art is something which is appreciated for its own sake. I have already criticised Duvignaud for his ideological stance, and the sense in which his sociology bears little relation to observable data. I believe, however, that our examination of the art market, and of Elspeth King's editorial, indicate clearly that it is not as art that something is free from

ideological, political and financial concerns: rather, the opposite. It is when photographs (or other products) become defined as art that they become intimately bound up with financial, political and ideological concerns. Elspeth King's problem was that photographs as art cease being just photographs; a personal document ceases being a personal document; a portrait ceases being a portrait; and a photograph of an old lady in a Glasgow street ceases being simply that.

### Conclusions

In this chapter I have attempted several things.

First, to indicate a relation between the ideology of art (as value, as intellectual and aesthetic experience, as something special and rare, and as an form of thought appropriate to the ruling classes of 20th century Britain) and the existence of the art market.

Second, I have attempted to demonstrate that there is implicit in the art market a rejection of a large part of the work of living artists now producing art. The existence of the art market, that is, is intimately bound up with the construction of a hierarchy of good, less good and bad, among artists. This hierarchy is said to relate to artistic merit, because the prices of the art market are said to be a reflection of spiritual and/or aesthetic value.

Third, I have indicated the manner in which a rejection of the possibilities of reproduction of images is implicit in the art market - the art market, in fact, embodying a rejection of the 'image' in favour of the original piece of material on which the image happens to be.

Fourth, through examining photography, I have tried to show how a set of objects can come to be transformed into (defined, or constructed, as) art, and what the consequences of such a transformation are.

In chapter two of this thesis, when presenting William Morris's analysis, we noted the way in which art had been constructed as part of the division of labour in society, and how the ideology of art negated the creativity possible in other work. That is, that which is not artistic cannot be creative and intellectual: it must, therefore, be menial and manual.

It can be seen how the values of the art market reinforce and reproduce such relations. For, if Rembrandt, or Picasso, or Sutherland can produce in such a space of time something which is now recognised as being worth so much, how much greater they must be (it appears) than those who cannot do the same, or whose products will not fetch the same price. The same applies to the ordinary painter, who finds it hard to sell his work for £20 to £40, while the great masters sell for £20,000 to £400,000, and more.

NOTES TO PART FOUR



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1. Peter Wilson, quoted by Peter Fuller, in "Why a wealth tax could bring private art collections into the open". in The Times 10th May, 1975.
2. Marcel Duchamp's urinal story; see pages 19 & 20 of this thesis.
3. Michael Kustow, writing in The Guardian, 30th December 1974.
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*
6. The Sale of Works of Art - a Study Based on the Times-Sotheby Index, by Geraldine Keen. Thomas Nelson and Sons, London. (1971). p.17.
7. On Miro's picture, see The Art Scene, by B.Sturt-Penrose. Paul Hamlyn, London, (1969), p.132.
8. *ibid.*p.130.
9. *ibid.*
10. Berger.J. Ways of Seeing pub. British Broadcasting Corporation, London, and Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, (1972).
11. figures quoted in The Art Scene (op.cit.n.9.)p.67.
12. Short Survey of the Situation of the Artists in England: Visual Arts, by The Congress for Cultural Freedom, (1960), quoted on page 24, of Green.M. and Wilding.M. Cultural Policy in Great Britain, UNESCO, Paris, (1970).
13. Green.M. & Wilding.M. Cultural Policy in Great Britain, UNESCO, Paris, (1970), p.25.
14. The Art Game, R.Wraight.
15. The Art Scene, B. Sturt-Penrose, pub.Hamlyn, London, (1960). Wraight quoted on page 71, in discussion with various dealers, auctioneers and journalists.
16. Peter Wilson, quoted in same discussion as note 15.

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17. as note 6.
18. I emphasise again that it is quite possible for most people to be art collectors; they will, however, have to confine themselves to the little known, or less known. And, as long as they are not worried by not owning works worth £5,000---£500,000, they will find that they can buy work for a few pounds just as good as much of the work of great monetary value. A point I am making in this chapter, however, is that few people will have the individual strength and conviction to reject the assumptions implicit in the art market, that something selling for £250,000 must be more worth having than something selling at £40--£50. The owner of a 'cheap' work of art by a little known artist is left with the statement (and conviction), "I like it, and I know what I like": the owner of a work costing £100,000 can be convinced that it must be good because it cost a lot, and is written about by academics and journalists, and works by the same artist are on view in public galleries.
19. B.Sturt-Penrose, The Art Scene, Hamlyn, London, (1969). p.65.
20. The Sale of Works of Art, Geraldine Keen, Thomas Nelson & Sons, London, (1971), p.40.
21. *ibid.*p.26.
22. G.Norman. 'The Year Investors Turned the Art Market Upside Down'. The Times, August 2,, 1974.
23. G.Norman. 'Season of Modern Picture Sales Draws to a Close'. The Times. 6th, April 1974.
24. *ibid.*
25. Peter Deeley, 'The Million Dollar Art Wrangle'. The Observer, 30 December 1973.  
See also on art dealers and auctioneers the excellent book by Bonnie Burnham, The Art Crisis, Collins, London, (1975).
26. Peter Deeley, *op.cit.*
27. G.Norman. 'Sotheby's: New Masters of the Art World' The Times, April 6th 1974.
28. *ibid.*
29. *ibid.*
30. *ibid.*

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31. *ibid.*
32. see 'Art Prints: Who gets Hung?' by Miles Chapman, in Value Today, No.3. January 1975, published by Richard Holme, for New Perspectives Publishing, London.
33. In the Value Today article (see note 32), Miles Chapman points out that "at least nineteen of Templeton and Rawlings' sixty-plus prints are not quite what the advertisements suggest." However, "Not all mail-order art prints need come under suspicion. Some of those offered by two major companies in the business---Christie's Contemporary Art and Observer Art (Patrick Seale Prints)---have proved good investments" - although some of the prints sold by Christie's Contemporary Art have been available elsewhere considerably cheaper.
34. John Berger, Ways of Seeing, BBC, London, & Penguin Books, Marmondsworth, (1972), p.21.
35. see: 'How the Nineteenth Century Responded to the Magic of Photography', by Guy Brett, in The Times, Wednesday March 15th, 1972.
36. *ibid.*
37. *ibid.*
38. This is not to say that some professionals are not good. Some possess a skill and judgement not only in 'taking' the picture, but in what they select to print, and how they print it. They are in a class of their own - as they should be working at it full-time. Nevertheless, not only can most people now afford their own camera, but also simple developing, printing and enlarging equipment is relatively cheap. The 'professional' may be generally better than the 'amateur', but to introduce the distinction between artist and non-artist (amateur photographer) is something else again.
39. see on Sotheby's growth and development: The Crisis in Art, by Bonnie Burnham, published by Collings, London, (1975). chapter Eleven, 'The £100 rule - The Growth of Art Auctions'.
40. The View from Beaford, Museum of English Rural Life, Reading, (1974). Introduction by John Lane, of the Dartington Hall Trust, Totnes, Devon.

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41. *ibid.* from the 'Introduction' by John Lane.
42. *ibid.*
43. see review by Marina Vaizey, entitled 'The Eye of the Beholder' in Sunday Times, 23 March 1975. also review by Paul Overy, entitled 'Photographs and People' in The Times, March 25th 1975. There was an exhibition catalogue which I did not buy on account of its exorbitant price: presumably titled 'The Real Thing', and it will have been published by The Arts Council of Great Britain, (1975).
44. Paul Overy, 'Photographs and People' in The Times March 25, 1975.
45. *ibid.*
46. Marina Vaizey. 'The Eye of the Beholder' The Sunday Times, March 23, 1975. The article also contains information and reviews of other photographic exhibitions of a smaller and more specialised, less art orientated, kind.
47. *ibid.*
48. 'Photography Grants 1976/77': information sheet from the Arts Council of Great Britain.
49. Marina Vaizey. as note 46.
50. Caroline Tisdall. 'Fading Prints?' Guardian Wednesday April 23rd 1975.
51. as note 44.
52. Mag News, magazine of the 'Museum Assistants Group'. No.1. March, 1976.
53. Jean Duvignaud. The Sociology of Art, Paladin, Granada Publishing Ltd., (1972). p.37.
54. *ibid.*

PART FIVE

DEFINITIONAL CONFLICT

## Chapter Eight

### The Ideology of Art, and the Working Classes:

#### Art as Social Control

One could consider the declining position of the Royal Academy as an indicator of the decreasing power of the artist over what is to be art. In the nineteenth century the Academy, as a body comprising the self-chosen leading artists (the élite) occupied the position now taken by the Arts Council of Great Britain (a body of administrators and officials who only "consult" artists). As we saw earlier, however, the Royal Academy, as with the Arts Council, can be considered as an aspect of the state, and as a body for defining, promoting and structuring what is to be art and what art is in a 'public' sense.

My aim in considering the development of the state in relation to art, through the 19th and 20th centuries, was, in part, to indicate the sense in which the ideology of art exists and existed as a form of ideological incorporation of the working classes: a manner of defining experience and the world: a way of defining work, leisure, creativity, human values, and so forth, in a sense appropriate to the ruling classes of 19th and 20th century Britain.

I have stressed how the ideology of art operates both as a form of incorporation/inclusion,

and as a form of rejection/exclusion - the latter in the sense that pinnacles of artistic performance and expertise were and are constructed as being beyond the everyday, and beyond most people, but, nevertheless, as being representative of what life could and should be about: what civilisation is and was about: and what the achievement of the past and of the 'greatest minds' has been.

The ideology of art acts, therefore, both to include people at one level (by attempting to construct certain common definitions of the world), and to exclude at another level, (by creating pinnacles of achievement and experience beyond the ordinary - by definition requiring special sensitivity, skill and genius).

In the context of modern British social democracy, the experience of art is offered as being 'for all' (public); in as far as this social democracy is a class divided society, however, this experience is denied to all. And, because this is a class divided society this offering 'for all' is also a way of defining 'for all' from above. Thus there is an offering and a with-holding: a tempting and a denial.

In as far as the ideology of art is a form of social control, therefore, it is 'control' not because of the extent of participation in art, or on account of the numbers who consume art, but rather because most people accept the ideology of

art (and the existence of art as at present organised) as legitimate; they accept it as a 'good thing', even if they do not personally care for it. That is, if the ideology of and existence of art is to operate as a form of social control, it can do so in as far as it is generally considered that the experts, connoisseurs, critics, administrators, collectors, and cultured, are right to revere their art, and to talk about it and experience it in the ways they do.<sup>1</sup>

#### Participation and Legitimation

In considering the question of lack of working class participation in the experience of art, there are, therefore, two separate issues. First, there is the issue of the numbers who 'participate'. The Arts Council would, according to its publicity, like greater public participation in the sense of larger numbers taking advantage of offered access. Second, however, there is the issue of the extent to which the legitimacy of the existence of art (and associated social relations and ideologies) is accepted, and accepted as part of the general division of labour, and division of power, and division of educational opportunity.

The sense in which the aim of the Arts Council includes the incorporation of the working classes into a pre-defined way of thinking and understanding the world was made clear by Patrick



Gibson, chairman of the Arts Council:

If we are to remain a coherent society with common aims and shared values we must try to create a world in which we are brought together by shared experience. The arts can have this unifying effect, because they can provide bridges between people of different backgrounds through shared artistic experience. I believe this is the fundamental justification for what we are all trying to do through state patronage of the arts. (2).

This statement of policy expresses very clearly the idea of incorporation of others through the defining of experience. Art becomes, in this formulation, explicitly a political tool (political in the sense that it is used by one group in power to soften or lessen the antagonism between those in power or benefiting from a system, and those governed or not benefiting from a system, when these two groups relate differentially to the means of production, and the ownership of wealth and exercise of power.)

Note in Gibson's statement the different uses of the first person plural, "We". First: "We must try to create a world": this speech is delivered to a Regional Studies Association conference comprising people concerned with the arts and regional policy, and involving speakers from local and central state agencies, the regional arts associations, and the mass media of communication. The "we" can only be these people - the controllers of artistic patronage and production. Second: "a world in which we are brought together by shared experience." This "we" is clearly a "we" that includes the common

people: it is the "we" for whom the first group referred to as "we" (the state and mass media of communication and regional associations) were to "create" a world. Third: "this is the fundamental justification for what we are all trying to do through state patronage of the arts." This "we" is the same as the "we" in the first usage: it is the "we" who do the creating of a world, and not the "we" who come together for the created shared experience.

Thus the use of the same word disguises two different groups. There are the creators of experience to be shared, and there are those brought together with the creators to share it (and note the creators in the "we must try to create a world" seem to be the administrators and organizers of state policy - not the artists). The arts thus created are to have a "unifying effect" upon people from different "backgrounds".

For Patrick Gibson, therefore, art can overcome differences of background: we noted earlier the sense in which also for Jennie Lee art could overcome outmoded concepts of class, and for Norman St. John Stevas art could assist, unify and build morale in times of economic stringency. All these formulations come to the same thing: art can be used as a means of social control and bring those who are not like "us" to at least share an experience given to them by "us".

Lord Goodman, as chairman of the Arts

Council, expressed the idea of social control in terms of "capture". His formulation is reminiscent of discussions of religion as a form of social control:

I believe that there is a crucial state in the country at this moment. I believe that young people lack values, lack certainties, lack guidance; that they need something to turn to; and need it more desperately than they have needed it at any time in our history--- certainly, at any time which I can recollect. I do not say that the Arts will furnish a total solution, but I believe that once young people are captured for the Arts they are redeemed from many of the dangers which confront them at the moment and which have been occupying the attention of the Government in a completely unprofitable and destructive fashion. I believe that here we have constructive work to do which can be of inestimable value. (3)

Art here is not simply, as with Gibson, a way of defining experience: rather it is a positive anti-dote to perceived social problems, defined in generational terms.

#### Lack of Participation

It is one thing, however, to talk about capturing people, or defining their experiences; it is another thing to get them together to have their experience defined, or to be captured. Lord Goodman was perhaps thinking of the possibilities in schools - there the audience is certainly 'captive' if not necessarily 'captured'. Gibson, however, was talking in more general terms.

What evidence there is indicates that in general in matters of arts consumption the working classes are conspicuous by their absence. Marck

Blaug and Karen King, in discussing the effectiveness of the Arts Council, point out that

the evidence continues to point overwhelmingly to an educated, middle class audience, with a conspicuous absence of the working class. The composition of audiences cannot have changed significantly during the past 28 years of the council's existence. Nor is there any indication that a change is in the making. Even if it were, the council would hardly be aware of it. It has commissioned only three audience surveys in its entire history, all of which date from the late 1960s, and the only comprehensive survey of London audiences was in fact undertaken privately by two Americans.

Furthermore, the Arts Council's 1969 'Report on Opera and Ballet'

contains results of surveys carried out in Leeds and Glasgow, and at Sadler's Wells in London, which showed an average of 5 per cent of the audience to be manual workers. But the same report blithely talks of opera and ballet attracting a growing audience from a cross-section of the community; (4).

An example of an arts organisation which laid great stress on attracting the young in general (à la Lord Goodman), but which failed to gain general working class involvement, is 'The Midlands Arts Centre for Young People'.<sup>5</sup> This centre, standing on a 15 acre site in central Birmingham, and catering for the whole Midlands area, has close contact with schools, and runs a variety of activities of both the mainstream arts type, and of the jazz or folk music type. Financially the centre is very unusual, since by May 1968, of half a million pounds spent, only ten per cent had come from central government, and only fifteen per cent from local government.

While by many criteria the centre has been a great success, criticism has been voiced over the class composition of membership:

the most substantial criticism has been that the centre's membership consists largely of the already interested and to a certain extent catered-for children of professional people---very rarely of children from a working class background, new to the arts. (6)

Green and Wilding argue that the failure at this level was not through want of trying: rather:

The barrier to working-class participation is that joining the centre involves assimilating, and probably conforming to, a whole middle-class style of life, a set of values and manners, entirely foreign to the home environment. It must appear that this gap can be overcome only on middle-class terms. (7)

This lack of working class involvement, or participation, indicates that on one level the ideology of art and the state sponsorship of art, does not work: people do not become incorporated as consumers of artistic spectacle. However, while not participating as consumers, people may nevertheless accept the 'rightness' of that which they do not participate in; in fact they may not only accept it as right, but see it as being something worthwhile in a higher sense than that which they themselves are involved in. --

#### The Ideology of Art as Legitimizing the Status Quo

Very little work has been done on working class leisure activities, and why, for various reasons, the working classes in general do not participate in certain activities. Lynn F. Pearson

has noted, however, a tendency for considerations of leisure activities among the working classes to be written about in an often derogatory manner - implying passive consumption. Arguing from the results of a small interview survey carried out in the Birmingham area she suggests that not only is this view wrong, but that other factors are of immediate importance. These include both the exhaustion of physical labour and child rearing, and the average wage of the families interviewed, (£40 a week).<sup>8</sup>

Of particular interest for our purposes was that she noted among her interviewees a frequent allusion to the idea that they 'did nothing' with their leisure time. This 'doing nothing' she suggested was a concept derived from outside their experience, and relating to ideas in the press and media, (and, we might add, deriving from the values communicated in their educational experience). It can be seen that such an idea relates to the kinds of statements on art we have considered, in which it is implied or stated that involvement in art is a positive, constructive, or useful alternative to less valuable forms of activity. Lynn F. Pearson concludes that:

Although it would seem that both the Arts Council and the Sports Council spend a great deal of such people's money in promoting and subsidising activities in which they /those interviewed for her survey/ are not interested, or for one reason or another cannot use, nearly everyone interviewed thought sports centres, theatres and such like were "a good

thing". . . . The respondents, in this small study at least, seemed to be resigned to a situation in which their forms of leisure would not be promoted or subsidised and they would have to make the best of it. (9)

While Lynn F. Pearson's survey was limited in scale, and therefore not conclusive, her results do conform to what we would expect, if my analysis of the place of art and the ideology of art within the division of labour and the social relations of British society, were correct. Both the state agencies promoting art, and the art market examined in the last chapter, embody definitions of life, experience, creativity, and the positive aspirations of men and women. The ideologies and social relations of art exclude the mass of the population, and yet that which is defined as being special, is offered for passive consumption: that which is defined as being not special ("the common round") is defined as non creative and less valuable. If these ideologies are accepted, we would expect generally negative self-definitions as a response to a survey on leisure activities.

#### Being Active, and Being Passive

Earlier I quoted Lord Goodman as claiming that

once young people are captured for the Arts they are redeemed from many of the dangers which confront them at the moment. (10)

It is in fact a common feature of discussions on the extent of public (working class) involvement in

the arts (when such lack of involvement is viewed as problematic) that either developments or expansions in the education sphere are argued for. It has been generally noted, however, that, despite the expansion of facilities in the schools over the past thirty years, there does not seem to have been a dramatic rise in involvement (especially working class involvement) in the arts at the adult level, this being an involvement which should follow through as the generations age, if the problem is a generational one (as we noted in chapter six it was seen, by many, to be).

The idea that greater child-involvement in art while at school will lead to greater use of and participation in arts facilities in later life, is, however, based on a basic misunderstanding of the activities offered to the adult and to the child.

The child at school is offered a class situation in which, as 'painter', he is the 'doer' and the maker. He is, in the senses emphasised by William Morris, the controller of his product, and the shaper of his environment.

The provision of galleries, theatres, and arts centres for the adult is something entirely different. Here the adult is not the maker (the 'doer'), but the consumer. In the gallery the adult views the works of other people. These works are, moreover, selected by other people and judged



worth displaying according to the standards and judgements of other people.

Art education in schools has been extensively liberalised since the last war. The child thus has a great degree of freedom as maker, controller, and constructor. He or she is the creator. The adult situation when viewing paintings in a gallery, however, is more akin to conventional teaching of English literature, where the child is offered someone else's notions of excellence, sensitivity, and appreciation. With English literature the child may be encouraged to be a critical consumer, but he remains, nevertheless, a consumer.

With theatre we may note a similar situation. School productions involve the students themselves, and, for those who are 'audience' there is a closeness of contact with the performer. By contrast as an adult the child enters a world dominated by the professional - the unknown expert. The performer is only brought closer to the audience through the 'star' system, which operates in a double sense, in that, through making certain actors 'stars' they are both brought into being as everyday 'personalities' and, at the same time, removed from everyday experience through the inflation of those personalities to a level above or separate from the everyday.

Being the consumer or audience for the Arts Council, or for the art market, involves being 'cultured'. Being 'cultured' is to be educated.

and sensitive and knowledgable in a particular way. This particular way does not involve making culture. It involves only consuming culture. The child, by contrast, as painter or performer at a play, does not have to be cultured: he simply has to do and produce. He is active rather than passive. Appreciating the 'national' culture promoted by the Arts Council involves being passive - being a consumer. Painting a picture, or performing a play, is to be active and a producer.

We could extend the distinction between 'active' and 'passive' to cover the general arguments of this thesis. In such terms we would be discussing the transformation of creativity from being an active part of making and doing many things in pre-Renaissance Europe, to being art - a particular specialism to be produced by a few and passively consumed by others. The failure to understand the difference between being active and being passive in the arts is at the root of the general failure to understand why the involvement of the working classes in art at school does not extend into adult life. The issue, as William Morris made so clear, is one of control, and lack of control. It is hardly appropriate to describe people as being apathetic, when all they are being asked to be in the first place is passive.

## Chapter Nine

### The Position of the Producer

#### The Purpose of this Chapter

The account of the social construction of art presented in this study focusses deliberately on the ruling class, the state, and the art market, in 19th and 20th century Britain, since it is being argued that the defining and socially making possible, of art, craft and design, as concepts and practices, is located in the sets of relations dominated by the major agencies of the state<sup>1</sup>, the art market, and the ruling classes, and that, in respect of the defining and using and appropriation of art, the majority of the people, including the producers of art, are in a situation of having to cope with or make choices within a range of possibilities defined within the dominant social relations of British capitalism.

It is not being argued that any one group 'conspire' to force a particular set of definitions and practices; the constraints, rather, operate at all levels, and are inherent in the given social relations. It is being argued that certain ways of doing and conceptualising are made more likely, and others less likely, within the social relations of art as constructed through and as part of the growth of British capitalism.

In this chapter it is proposed to examine

very selectively statements from fifteen practising artists, craftsmen and designers, and to attempt the location of some of these statements within the historical development of the ideologies and practices of art as examined in this thesis. Through so doing, we shall be able to fill out, modify, and develop our understanding of the pattern of social relations under study. Full transcripts of all fifteen interviews appear in the appendix<sup>2</sup> to this study.

The interviews do not constitute a 'survey' of artists, craftsmen and designers in a quantitative sense; rather they cover a range of different practitioners, all working as professionals, and representative of the majority of artists, craftsmen and designers whose life's work is art, craft or design, but who are generally not represented in the 'top-league' of the London art-scene and art market. That is, these interviews are representative of the majority of professional producers, rather than the small number who are publicly recognised at a 'national' level.

#### Examples of Being Commissioned

Most artistic and craft work is today bought 'off-the-peg': i.e., the artist or craftsman makes it, exhibits it, and it is thus available for purchase on the open market. Only occasionally is a work commissioned for a specific purpose or

place. The examples of artists and craftsmen being commissioned to do a specific piece of work are therefore of interest, indicating as they do possible ways of perceiving the problems of working as an artist or artist-craftsman, and some of the uncertainty evident in the relation between the producers and their potential publics.

The uncertainty and confusion evident in the relationship of commissioned/commissioner reveals not only the extent to which this relationship is now uncommon, but also the tension between the artist as 'expert' (attempting to maintain control of his own work) and the artist as technician (losing control over his own work through becoming merely someone who carries out the instructions of another.)

#### Example One - Interviewee Two

As part of his reply to question fourteen interviewee two recounted the following incidents;

I have, actually, undertaken commissions, and I did one very recently -- a very difficult one -- a painting of an inside of a cathedral. And I enjoyed it to some extent, because it was a great relief, in a way, to sort of know that (having agreed to do it, mark you - I was quite free to turn it down; having agreed to do it), that there is somebody to tell you what to do. At the same time.... to a certain extent I became involved, you know, on a personal level. But, in the end, it was the sense of a dead-line which spoilt it for me. If I'd been told, 'Look; take as long as you like; I want a perfect job; I'll pay you really well;' - you know, a thousand pounds, or two thousand pounds; 'And you can take just as long as you like, and this is what we want; we want this particular subject to hang in such and such a place' - then I would say, 'Fine'. And I think I really would make a good job of

it, and I would get personally involved in it, and it would become as meaningful as my own work; it would be my own work, really.

I think it was just this feeling that...., that - first of all, I forget how much it was; I think it was about a hundred pounds plus expenses, and so I did have this feeling, I must admit, that, after a few weeks, that I began to think, 'God; I'm only being paid, you know, less than the dustman.' And this made me feel that, you know, 'O.K. If I'm really interested in this subject then I don't mind being paid a pittance for it'. But then I had this feeling - 'Well, it's not actually what I would have chosen to paint.' And so I tended to rush it a bit after a while - not at first -, but, eventually, I thought, I must just see this thing through and make a good job of it and cut my losses. It wasn't as good a painting as I would otherwise, perhaps, have made. But I finished it, and so the thing, in the end, became a dead bore.

The central point I wish to bring out in the above is the feeling he expresses that the work he ended up producing was not really his own. Thus he outlines how he feels he could work under commission (more time and better payments), and comments that, under such conditions

I would get personally involved in it, and it would become as meaningful as my own work; it would be my own work, really.

In the incident above, however, this is the opposite of his actual experience. While he starts out experiencing "a great relief" because he knew that "there is somebody to tell you what to do", he comes round to the feeling that, "Well, it's not actually what I would have chosen to paint."

Essentially interviewee two is drawing a distinction between his own work, and, work that he does which is not his own. This distinction is not in terms of ownership: it is to do with how work is

produced. Work that is his own can, for him, be sold and remain his own in the sense that it is 'of him'. As a commissioned artist he experienced a control and direction of his work from outside that rendered work he did not 'of him'.

#### Example Two - Interviewee Eleven

Interviewee eleven's story concerned a commission for a church: this was recounted in the context of question seventeen:

The only thing I can draw upon, from my own experience, here, is doing a job for a church, which was a large roundel ceramic to go on the outside of a church in Newcastle. And I was conned into it initially; in fact I knew I was being conned into it. It was a friend of a friend, sort of thing. I was very unhappy about it - particularly as an atheist. But I was given a free hand. And then, after I'd agreed to do it, the free hand began to dissolve, and they asked for drawings which would give them some indication of the sorts of things I was thinking of - which at first sight seemed reasonable, I suppose. So I was reasonable and gave them some drawings. And they picked on examples, and said, Yes, that was nice; that's the sort of thing they want. And it went on from there, and the free hand eventually completely disappeared, and I was being dictated to very precisely about what they wanted, how they wanted it. And it finished up with them effectively beginning to do my design for me.... And, in the end, I made the compromise. I said, 'Well, O.K., that's what you want; you can have it.' I did it; went away, and gratefully forgot about it.

Again here one can sense the distinction between work that was his, and work that was not his. "They" ended up taking over his design, and virtually doing it for him.

More fundamentally, in the above, there is evident a conflict between the artist as visual

expert, and the specific demands of those who commissioned him (who bought his expertise). This is a situation that many architects will be in frequently.

The problems in this situation are in part acute because of the fragmented state of contemporary art in terms of style and content. Artists now tend to work for themselves in a fashion we could call individualist and purist. This is a tendency which can be seen as resulting from artists taking the only option seen open to them (and enabling them to maintain control over their own work) but which also makes the gap between the commissioner and the artist (as expert) all the greater.

The Renaissance artist was frequently dictated to down to the specific colours to be used, and their quantity and quality.<sup>3</sup> In the Renaissance, however, the artist was working within a given system of meanings, contents, understood references, and a developing style; this rendered the conflict between the artist as visual expert, and the commissioner of his work, less acute. Also, of course, being commissioned was a more normal way of working in the Renaissance: that was how many artists lived. In the late 20th century the situation is unusual, and thus the relationship between what the buyer specifies, and the preserve of the artist as expert, is ill-defined.



Example Three - Interviewee Twelve:

Both interviewees two and eleven were, at the time of being interviewed, employed as lecturers in art. They both exhibited and sold their work, but, as I have argued earlier, it is important in understanding the development of 19th and 20th century art to remember that many practicing artists are also teachers, and that this alternative source of livelihood as art-teachers is not only a supporting condition for a 'purist' attitude to art, but is a condition which has made possible the decline in the direct interaction of artists with potential publics.<sup>4</sup>

Interviewee eleven saw himself as an "artist-teacher", and, while expressing some liking for the idea of teaching less, and thus having more time to be "artist", certainly expressed no wish to cease teaching altogether. Interviewee two, also, while saying he would rather be a full-time artist, appeared nevertheless to be also a committed teacher.

Interviewee twelve, by contrast, as, at the time of being interviewed, a part-time teacher, pointed out that "Teaching wouldn't see me for the dust", were he able to live totally off his work as an artist and craftsman. His account of a commission occurred in answer to question fourteen.

Well, here I think I like to please my customer, shall we say, and please myself. Now, take an example: I have a design to do for a label for a collection, which was to be a little oval design of lettering with a design in the middle; the collection was actually of things called 'drainers', which are rather

obscure. They're ceramic inserts to meat dishes to let the gravy go through. And I thought at first that this was quite crazy, but, seeing all these drainers on the wall, I realised that they're really very beautiful. And I quite saw why the collection was made. Now, the problem there for me was that the person who commissioned the design had a very clear idea of what they wanted, and it was not the design that I wanted. But I felt myself that it was my job to offer alternative designs, and then fall in with their wishes and make the most of it, - do as good a design as I could, under those circumstances - something that I wouldn't be ashamed of showing afterwards. I think I succeeded in that, but this problem can arise, and you've just got to use tact and a little know-how.

Again we see here the 'problem' of the commissioner controlling the work of the artist. The design demanded was "not the design I wanted." Interviewee twelve wanted to make something that he "wouldn't be ashamed of showing afterwards." Again, therefore, there underlies this the distinction between work that is 'of him', and work that is not 'of him': a problem of being alienated from his own productions.

Interviewee twelve, however, as a print-maker, is more used to the situation of being commissioned, and there was a greater degree of interaction between the producer and the commissioner - the producer using his expertise as producer to modify the ideas of the commissioner, so as to produce, through his skill and understanding as producer, something based on the original intention of the commissioner, but, hopefully, perhaps even more successful than the design originally in the mind of the commissioner.

It is this sort of direct interaction

between producer and buyer/user that I have suggested is lacking in the present-day art situation. The artist either teaches and sells pre-made products on the open market, or is mediated and directed through dealers, critics, and the London art market. Thus, in the absence of the face to face contact described by interviewee twelve, institutions such as the Arts Council, the press, critics, the art historian, and so forth, become the principle interpreters and definition-makers in art.

I made the point earlier that, while the recent introduction of subsidies and grants by the Arts Council and Crafts Advisory Committee may act to 'cushion' the artist/craftsman (to remove him, in effect, from the necessity of interacting directly with the customer) this has, in fact, been going on since the 1830's as a consequence of artists being teachers. Being removed from the need to sell, and, not needing to sell, the artist is 'free' to pursue his own art as, almost, 'research': it becomes an activity unto itself - art for its own sake. This means also, however, that public 'taste' (a word I have to use for lack of any alternative) ceases to be shaped by any form of regular interaction between producer and purchaser, in the sense described by interviewee twelve, above.

It is worth noting that it is during the period 1830--1970 that new classes have achieved an affluence sufficient to enable them to buy art and

craft productions, and that it is also during this period, when artists could have been seeking these new audiences and buyers, and exploiting new technologies and ways of selling, that a greater and greater number of artists came to be supported as teachers. Arts Council and Crafts Advisory Committee subsidies, while enabling more artists and craftsmen to 'experiment' and produce work that expresses their own integrity (is 'of them') will also further separate the artist and craftsman from potential audiences, through removing the need to find new audiences and ways of selling. Experiment remains a private affair that is marketed and displayed only at the discretion of the few galleries, institutions and state agencies concerned with the arts.

The idea of truth to oneself as a professional artist (as an art expert), can be seen as in part a defence against the various constraints and threats to an artist's work - the sorts of threats experienced by artists being commissioned. The possibility of working purely as an artist true to oneself, however, rests on there being alternative ways of financing oneself - in this case a hundred and fifty years of teaching support, and now, state subsidy. The contemporary experience that living by selling one's work runs dangers of being forced to 'pander' to the lowest common denominator is thus in part a consequence of the artists' retreat from acting directly on the public.

Boots and Woolworths framed 'originals',

high-street art-poster shops, mail-order print firms, - all these have taken over a possible market for art. The few galleries selling new work by living artists therefore dominate the art-scene in terms of what shall be available. Where artists could, collectively, have run galleries, have opened high street shops, and could have marketed new prints and posters, and could have got potential publics used to the idea that paintings and prints are things that can be bought directly at reasonable prices from living producers, they have instead generally opted for teaching, or part time work. Each choice was a rational individual decision; the end result is the separation of most artists from potential buyers, and one symptom of this separation is the uneasy relationship between commissioner and producer evident in the examples we are examining.

#### Example Four - Interviewee Three

Interviewee three, in the context of answering question nine, is our fourth example of the conflict experienced by an artist being commissioned. In this case the conflict between work experienced as 'mine' (true to myself) and work that is experienced as 'done by me' but 'not-me' is particularly striking:

I think being professional would mean that I would do something... If I carry out a panel, which might be as a result of a commission, or might be as a result of an idea of my own, I should like to carry it out as well as I possibly could, without any outside interference,

and satisfy myself as to the end result. I think I'd probably interpret professional on that term as far as my work, my own personal work, went. I have a commission at the moment, which I have not completed, and about which I feel guilty that I've not completed. This is for somebody who's exceedingly ill, and I jolly well ought to get a move on and do that before I do anything else, for fear that the person for whom it is going to be made may die before I complete it. But I just can't do something quickly for that person; I ought to do something which is me, and which is as well as I could possibly do, and, I am afraid, if she dies before I complete it to my satisfaction, she dies. Although it may sound really ruthless, this may happen, I think.

Thus, again, note the separation between "something which is me", and other work.

It will be recalled that William Morris, in describing the social relations of production of the medieval craftsman, emphasised the control of the craftsman over the totality of his work.<sup>5</sup> Having described the relations of work of the medieval craftsman Morris went on to say:

Now if you have followed me you will take note that these are the conditions under which artists work; and in fact the craftsmen of the middle ages were all artists. (6)

In the light of Morris's analysis it can be seen that the 'purism' of an art in which the artist seeks to be true to himself (to produce work that is "me") to the exclusion of all else is in part a defence against the loss of control over his own work. The ambivalent relationship between producer and commissioner is an ambivalence rooted in this threat to control over work as artist. As 'workman' the 20th century artist becomes 'technician', and loses control over his work; as 'artist' he suffers from

isolation and mystification, but retains control over production - even if over little else.

The only sense in which the artist can retain control over his work as an expert- as an artist - is as 'artist'; and being an artist involves a lot more than simply being a producer of paintings, ceramics, prints or tapestries.

#### The Artist and Craftsman: Definitional Manipulation

Central to William Morris's critique of late nineteenth century British capitalism was his analysis of the division of labour - a division that includes that between 'art' and 'not-art', and the divisions internal to artistic activity, between art, craft and design.

The artist is the main 'aesthetic' creator of the period from the Renaissance to the present day. Within the divisions of function that emerged from the late medieval period onwards, he was the embodiment of visual imagination, and creativity. The 'designer', as we have noted, is a later development, emerging largely in industrialising 19th century Britain. The designer emerged as the applier of art - the man who was taught the 'findings' of the artist, and who applied these 'findings' in a skilled manner to manufactured industrial objects; the designer himself, however, was not considered to be 'artist' in the sense of 'creator'.<sup>7</sup>

While the concept of the designer has

changed over the last 140 years, and the concept of 'applied art' has been dropped, I would argue that the designer remains still an applier of technique, and of visual expertise, and that, despite campaigns by people such as Herbert Read<sup>8</sup> to integrate design, function, form, purpose, etc., the designer remains an applier of adornments and a shaper of exteriors.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of 'craftsman' has, by contrast, a more complex history.<sup>10</sup> Up until the mid-nineteenth century the crafts were a survival of a pre-industrial mode of production. The few remaining thatchers, ornamental plasterers, and smiths, that survive today, are the remnants of this tradition.

The Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th century represented something new, however. In emphasising a unity of art and craft and design, the members were attempting to challenge in a practical manner the constraints inherent in the divisions between art, craft, and design, and between the mental and manual aspects of work.

The emphasis today in Crafts Advisory Committee literature on the 'artist-craftsman' can be seen part of the same attempt to challenge the divisions between art, craft and design; what is lacking, however, in this latter case, is the Art and Craft Movement's basic challenge to the division between art and not-art, and between art and industrial manufacture.



The problems of being only artist, or only craftsman, or only designer, were evident in the interviews. Thus interviewee one, a potter, commented that

a lot of harm has been caused by making these rather arbitrary divisions between the three.

Pottery is traditionally seen as a 'craft' activity, but, he pointed out, that 'craft', "in a sense, has a bad connotation": 'craftsmanship', he argued, must be qualified by saying, "creative craftsmanship"; for, otherwise, he argued, "you are just a journeyman." In fact, he said:

there is always a feeling that I wish to be thought of primarily as Artist, rather than Craftsman; this must be part of the general attitude to functions, with, somehow, the implication that craft is uncreative.

The term 'artist-craftsman', which he applied to himself, refers, he said, essentially to "one who performs all the processes - designing and making"; thus he emphasises again the importance of over-all control of his work.

The 'problem' in being simply 'craftsman' is not simply a matter of status or self-esteem: much more fundamentally being simply 'craftsman' involves problems of the attitude of others towards oneself. Thus, as 'craftsman', a potter runs the risk of being treated as a mass producer and copier of designs; as 'artist-craftsman', by contrast, he can assert his own expertise and competence in all the processes involved in production; he can maintain over-all control over his work.

Interviewee three also described herself as an "artist-craftsman". Her field is embroidery, by which she meant not necessarily stitching, but

I also mean knitting, and peculiar experiments with fabric that the traditional embroiderer would say, 'This is not embroidery'.

Her work is largely for wall-hanging, and she called herself an artist-craftsman, "because if I have an idea I would rather carry it out." Thus she emphasises again the need for total control over conceptualising and making. She saw her work as being "Fine art, rather than domestic things to sit upon", and added that she probably had "a fine art bias in the work" that she did.

In thus emphasising fine art, she implies a distinction between fine art, and design for use in the sense of "domestic things to sit upon." Thus she is using the term 'artist' and 'art', (as applied to activities traditionally defined as craft) to imply not only a different way of working and attitude to her work, but, also, a different sort of market and use for her work. Describing her work as 'fine art' implies, therefore, that the work is to have a primarily aesthetic function, as opposed to any other.

In emphasising the idea of 'craft' the late nineteenth century Arts and Crafts Movement members were not only reacting against the specialness of the artist as mental visual specialist within a narrowly defined field, but were asserting the

aesthetic, design and creative aspects of the making of ordinary objects. In challenging the division of labour between conceptualising, designing, producing, and so forth, the members of the Arts and Crafts Movement were, moreover, inevitably challenging mass machine industrial production. The challenge to mass industrial production, furthermore, has led to the Arts and Crafts Movement being seen as impractical and romantic (although, as we noted earlier in discussing Morris<sup>11</sup>, his position is in fact a more sophisticated one in which he opposed particular uses of machinery as part of the capitalist mode of production.) Whether or not the romantic, impractical, and idealistic image of the Arts and Crafts Movement is deserved, however, the influence or effect of the Movement in the 20th century has been supportive of an emphasis on goods that are 'hand-made' as superior to goods that are machine made, or machine assisted in their production.

It is this heritage of 'craft' meaning 'hand-made' in a rustic or 'arty-crafty' sense that has to some extent bedevilled the late 20th century craftsman, forcing him to emphasise that he is an artist-craftsman, rather than a pure craftsman.

Thus interviewee three argued that

an awful lot of craftsmanship, from the nineteenth century upwards, has suffered from the idea that that which is made by hand is automatically superior to that which is made by machine.

She suggested, moreover, that

'Craftsman' does give you the idea that you may have made something beautifully, but you might not be responsible for thinking about it.

Here, therefore, she is using 'craft' to mean 'skilled work'; many of the interviewees used the term in this sense, using 'art' to imply 'creative thought'. The craftsman has, therefore, to take unto himself something of the artist in calling himself 'artist-craftsman', and, in so doing, he emphasises or asserts his total control over conceiving and producing, as implied by the term 'art'.

Interviewee three succinctly summarised what it was that she was distinguishing herself from in calling herself 'artist-craftsman', when she referred to the

grotty arty-crafty, bare-foot, sandal, hand-woven-skirt attitude.

### The Artist: Definitional Manipulation

In the interviews, and through other contacts, I have found that it is the craftsman who is most unhappy with his situation as craftsman, needing to emphasise his position as an 'artist', in order to protect his own position, and assert his own control over his own work. Those who see themselves as purely artists, by contrast, tend to be happier with the designation of artist - although not always altogether happy with everything that artist implies in terms of how others see you.

I referred to interviewee fifteen, a film

maker, in chapter seven. He considered himself to be an "artist-craftsman", and said that

a lot of the work that I do I would consider as craft, in that one is working on a given project for a given aim in view, where you are trying to make the best article - the best film - you can, within those confines. But, at the same time, I would have thought parts of it would qualify as... would qualify for the designation 'art'. And design; well, I think as regards film, the whole film is design anyway.

Thus he is using 'craft' to designate high quality production, and 'art' as an evaluative term to designate something extra.

Elaborating on the use of 'art' as a term applying to film he stated that

in film 'artist' is a word that's given to you, rather than that you would take it for yourself,

and,

If you said, 'I am a film artist', in the ambience of film-making, that would be considered pretentious. And I suppose... But, if you make a film which is judged in a certain way, then someone will say, 'He is a film artist'. I'd be happy to reach that position.

He thus makes clear that, in film, the term art is used largely in an evaluative sense, rather than in a denotative sense, as with the traditional fine arts of painting or sculpture.

Interviewee eight interestingly falls into two categories (art and craft) in as far as he is both a weaver (craft) and a painter (fine art). Asked whether he saw himself as an artist, craftsman or designer, he said,

It's much more to the point to say I paint, and design and weave tapestries.

He was thus trying to emphasise what he did, in

order to escape being bracketed, and thus regarded as artist, craftsman, designer, or artist-craftsman. Again, however, the problem arose of his having to assert his expertise over the non-expert, for he added later:

I suppose I've thought of myself as being a professional artist, compared with quite a number of people for whom art is basically a hobby.

Thus, while wishing in the first statement to be regarded simply as a person who makes certain things, in the second we see that he is compelled to stress that he is an artist, for, only as an artist is he regarded as competent and able to control his own production (designing and making). As a maker of tapestries he would be regarded as a technician; as an artist who makes tapestries he is regarded as a creative person for whom tapestry happens to be a favourite medium.

Interviewee eight had been for many years a painter and a teacher of painting. At the time of interviewing, however, he had left teaching to become a full-time producer of not only paintings, but, also, tapestry. It was perhaps in part this change from an activity normally considered in a denotative sense as 'art' (painting) to one that traditionally is considered a craft (weaving) that had led him to be suspicious of any categorisation of himself or his products within the art/craft/design hierarchy. Most potters, silver-smiths, weavers, etc., who are now working in a traditional

craft, but call themselves 'artist-craftsmen', are attempting to manipulate the definitions of their activities from a lower to a higher position in the art/craft/design hierarchy. The more they could be 'artist', the more seriously they might be treated, and the greater the control over the work and the freedom in work they might enjoy. Interviewee eight, the weaver and painter, is therefore unusual in having worked for a long period strictly within a traditional art (painting) and then moving into a traditional craft (weaving). Commenting on the relations between art, craft and design he noted that

one has tended to think of art as being somehow a superior activity, and craft has been relegated to something inferior, and design has come somewhere inbetween. And I think this creates a lot of problems because so many people now are working across these rather more traditional areas.

He also observed that people's reactions to the producer varied according to what the producer called himself. Thus, people are

inclined to take you more seriously if you say you're an artist. If you say you're a craftsman they tend to feel you are belittling yourself. If you say you're a designer this is respectable enough now, because this is a well paid profession which has established itself.

The analysis of the state and art in 19th century Britain, presented in chapter five, demonstrated the manner in which the fine arts have tended to dominate and absorb other activities. Design was constructed as a subsidiary of art, and, as we have seen in these interviews (and in chapter

six), craft producers tend to struggle for greater freedom as producers through defining themselves as artists, or artist-craftsmen. The power or strength of the ideology of fine art resides in its power as an ideology of value and quality and civilisation within the ideologies of humanity, national heritage, and purpose of life, characteristic of the ruling classes in 19th and 20th century British society. Art is also part of that division of labour between mental and manual, and between work and leisure, that form part of capitalist social relations. For the artist, furthermore, being artist involves having control. Interviewee eight touched on these matters in the following. As head of an art department in a college of education he explained that he had

been responsible for arranging the work for pottery, textiles, painters, weavers, print-makers... what else?... sculptors... I've noticed a tendency among the painters for them to feel that they were the superior people, somehow; that what they were doing was feeding directly into everything else. For example, all students, we decided at one point, are to draw much more; this is taken by the painters to feel that they are really doing more 'Fine Art'; I don't feel that this is really the right approach to it. I think it's far better, in that sort of situation, to drop the idea that this is an art activity -- this drawing -- and that you then go on and become a craftsman later, and that you've learnt, somehow, through the fine arts, how to express your ideas. I think this is making a division between -- an artificial division -- that you are expressing two kinds of idea, one through fine art, and one through your medium; and if you're a painter that this is a better medium, and that, somehow, you're able to express ideas more effectively. I think this is supported by examiners, very often, in the educational system, very many of which have been brought up to accept



the idea that fine art is a superior activity - fine art being painting and sculpture. I've felt it necessary to work against this, particularly in recent years, and particularly since I've begun to use another media, which in the eyes of many would be a craft medium, rather than an art medium. I think there wants to be a levelling up; I can see the problems that a potter, who has made useful pots, realises that if he can make art objects - non-functional pieces of pottery - he will be taken seriously by painters and sculptors, by gallery dealers, by people who are selling his pottery. But I think this tendency is a wrong one.

A further tendency that interviewee eight noted was a move towards a greater intellectualisation of art within education. This links up with the whole post-Renaissance construction of art as an intellectual activity, as opposed to a manual activity. Thus he said that

I've been a victim of a situation in a college of education where you were expected not only to teach what you knew about, but to engage in more intellectual theorising about art. Not just teaching art history, but theorising about art; I think it's quite nice to sit down and talk about it; to discuss it from time to time; but, when it begins to be written into examination papers, then...

In a sense, therefore, he experienced the ways in which teachers in art education, through attempting to increase or maintain the academic respectability of art, have further reasserted that intellectual and manual definition of art (as opposed to its being a practical mental and manual activity), and therefore made life more difficult for those who see themselves primarily as working producers of a usable product.

I have already indicated before in this thesis that, when talking about the value ascribed to art, or the ideologies and social relations of

art in a class society, we are not necessarily talking about the social status of the artist. During some periods in time the artist, or some artists, have achieved high status with their art; this is true of late nineteenth century Royal Academicians. But it is probably true to say that, generally, the artist has never been as important as his art.

The struggle during the Renaissance, and since, <sup>(2)</sup> for the artist to be a gentleman - a respected member of respectable society - can be understood in the light of this difference. So now also, when being a 'gentleman' is not a common social goal, we can understand a different struggle for some artists to become intellectually respectable - to break away from the image of being a bohemian illiterate, and achieve the status of the higher education academic. There is a constant tension evident between the artist as producer of paintings, sculpture, tapestry, etcetera, and the artist as intellectual, theoriser, and critic.

The Royal Academy made art respectable through the Academy being an academy - a place of learning. The state design and art school system set up in the 1830s instigated a new shift towards art as a thing associated with education - education being something, of course, largely concerned in its present forms with verbal and intellectual-verbal dexterity. However, until the early 1970s art education, as a part of general higher education,

remained a distinct and separate sphere. As a result of this it was possible for art schools to be largely concerned with making art. The recent tendency in art schools towards introducing a greater element of 'liberal' studies, and to move towards "A" level entry, preceded the absorption of the art schools into the Polytechnics, and the introduction of B.A. degrees in the former art schools. But, it would appear likely, now that art schools have been destroyed as independent institutions, and merged into institutions concerned largely with verbal and examinable knowledge, that the art schools will come under increasing pressure to introduce a further academic element into their work.

This academicisation of art education, as commented on by interviewee eight, is already evident, as he points out, in the colleges of education. Colleges of education too, of course, are increasingly under pressure to produce Education B.A.'s, and to become subsidiary institutions of universities or polytechnics, seeking validation for their courses from universities and polytechnics. This has again forced colleges of education to introduce a greater academic element into their art courses, thus reinforcing again the 'academic', intellectual, and non-manual existence of art.

#### Furism, and the Art Schools

The increase in the intellectual-academic

content in art education, and the increase in the number of academic qualifications demanded prior to entry to art education, is one tendency observable in art education over recent years.<sup>13</sup> Other interviewees, in commenting on the art schools, touched on what I have called the 'purist' attitude within which art and art training becomes almost a form of personal research - an activity in itself. Such a 'purist' attitude is in no way 'wrong' (and I have suggested earlier that it was very much forced on artists); rather a 'purist' attitude to art, in which art is seen as a personal exploration for the artist, is in many ways incompatible with other expectations an artist may have about his public and his work being bought, used, seen, understood, and so forth. The problem involved in compromising a purist attitude is, however, that indicated earlier when discussing artists being commissioned, for, part of a purist attitude involves the work of the artist being 'of him' ('me' as opposed to 'not-me'). Work being 'of him' also means that he must have total control over its production. The comments on the experience of being commissioned indicated how difficult it can be to both retain one's integrity as an artist, and work under the direction of someone else.

All three interviewees who commented on the art schools (as they had experienced them) reacted against what they saw as a casualness, an

over-protectiveness, and an obliviousness to the problems and discipline and compromises of being a working artist, craftsman or designer outside the art school situation.

Thus interviewee nine commented on how little preparation he had experienced in art school for the problems of work after the art school period:

there's very little preparation for working alone, after you leave the place - a kind of cushioning between the two states. You know, you are there, protected by a system with a grant, which gives you enough to live on at least (I don't object to the grant: that's fine), but that's just how it turns out, that a lot of people aren't strong enough when they leave the place to, kind of, continue working the way they'd like to. A lot of compromise involved. Which may be a good way of filtering out some of the elements anyway, but... it's an artificial kind of...

Again now, in the above, note that the problem he is talking about is essentially one of 'control'; thus the art school system as he sees it leaves a lot of people not "strong enough . . . to . . . continue working the way they'd like to." They are not strong enough, thus, to resist that which destroys their control over their own work - the integrity of their own work.

Interviewee five, a fabric designer, had experienced as a working designer more fully than any other of the interviewees the destruction of the possibility of her controlling her own work. She retold her experience of first being at art college, and then, later, going back to the college to do some teaching.

I think, during four years there, I did /consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory/; but now, I'm becoming more and more anti-art-school, just from my own experience - because I did go back and teach at the same art-school, a few years later. And, in-between I had a job which was designing for a firm, and I went back to talk to and help people who would be, eventually, designers in the same situation. And they were still very much wrapped up in their own ideas, and it was probably their final year, which meant they should be thinking a little about what would happen to them. And they seemed so unaware of it all - unaware their ideas would be crushed the minute they arrived on a Monday morning. They would have very little freedom - there's so much freedom in an art college, even if you're given a project, you're allowed to go away and work on it, and come up with the end product, in the end. Also their lack of understanding of time; on a normal working-day you have to produce something - usually by a deadline of some sort; when you work on a project in an art college you can have weeks to do it..., maybe work in your own time as well..., no sense of urgency..., somehow slow; that comes as a terrible shock - it did to me - that you can't sit around for about three hours, and say, 'I'm being inspired'; the machines are churning round on one side, and people are wondering where you'll fit in. So, No; I'm very disillusioned with art-colleges at the moment.

Thus, in art school she had experienced a total control over her own time and work as a designer -- this control within the art-school bearing no relation to the sorts of demands, restrictions, organisations, and time schedules she would have to fit into outside the college environment as a working designer.

Interviewee fifteen told of a very similar experience in relation to film schools, and the film departments of art schools:

I have worked with a few of them, and one of the things you've got to do when making a film... film-making is a social business; you have a group of people: necessarily a group of people working together making a film. And discipline is an essential part of this. Say, time-keeping; starting at the right time in the morning, and working on

it. But I've actually been with people from the Royal College where the director doesn't turn up till mid-day, and people are hanging around waiting for him, and he said he didn't feel like it. This to me is what I would call 'un-professional': this to me is the difference between amateur and professional. And he had people from acting school hanging around, and had his other colleagues hanging around, and nothing gets done; so the whole project gets frittered away. And I would say that film-making has this central discipline about it; there's a discipline about film-making - whatever kind of film making. And art schools don't seem to me to have engendered this at all. That's a very quick summary; there's a lot more to be said. I can go on for hours on that one.

All the three above comments on art-schools are essentially focussing on the question of discipline in work.<sup>14</sup> It could be counter argued that the art-school should not have to conform to the sort of society it serves, but, rather, should offer the maximum freedom in working, given that this will be one of the few opportunities in a person's working life when he or she can create and make without problems of finance, time, or the dictates of employers or commissioners. On the other hand, however, the three criticisms above are suggesting that the schools are sending students out unprepared for the situation within which they will have to earn their living and attempt to protect their freedom in work.

More fundamentally, however, we can see that the attitudes to work criticised by the three interviewees are all attitudes which relate to a situation in which many of those who teach in the

art schools, and many of the students being taught, do not, or never will have to, support themselves full time as artists. Many students will become art teachers, and others will cease being practising artists. Some will attempt to make their living from their own work. But, as a teacher, one can take time over one's art - one can seek inspiration and avoid commissions. Within the ideology of art developed since the Renaissance the artist has become constructed as a special kind of mental or intellectual inspired worker. The attitude to work and discipline criticised by the three interviewees quoted above is an attitude that can be seen as being part of such an ideology.

Being a full-time artist involves a different way of working.<sup>15</sup> One must accept commissions, and one must steadily produce sufficient work to exhibit regularly and sell regularly. 'Inspiration' must be present as part of involvement in the work, rather than as a fleeting state of mind to be waited upon.

In as far, therefore, as the three characterisations of art schools given above by the interviewees are representative of art schools in general<sup>16</sup>, they indicate yet one further way in which existing social relations of art are reproduced. A particular attitude to work, to art, and to creativity is made possible and/or engendered, and art can be seen as being practised in a manner closer to 'play'



than to work: 'Play', here, in an intellectual and dilettante sense.

The art-teacher, however, is not simply significant on account of the conditions under which he works as artist making possible a particular attitude to work. He also has a more direct effect on the artist attempting to work full-time as an artist and live as a working producer of pictures or sculpture or tapestry. For many art teachers (and in particular those teaching in higher education) consider themselves to be professional artists (as is made clear in the interviews). As professional artists they hold exhibitions every now and then. However, since they do not require to sell their work in order to live as artists, the prices they charge are often not economic prices, in the sense of being prices that would give a reasonable return on work done so as to earn sufficient income to continue working. Given, however, the numbers of art teachers who exhibit and sell, it can be seen that their selling their work below what we could call an economic price will tend to have a depressing effect on prices in general. In other words, the fact that art-teachers tend to under-price their work, makes it harder for full-time artists to sell at prices yielding a reasonable return.

One painter with whom I had a brief conversation on this point said, Yes; that was a

point of view, but he liked his work to go to good homes, and be appreciated, even if this meant under-pricing his work.

It is of course the cumulative effect of attitudes such as this held individually that makes it harder for the full-time artist to sell his work. It compels the full-time artist in the end, in fact, to seek to either break into the 'big-time', in which case he ceases selling on 'ordinary' markets to ordinary people, or else to cease being a full-time artist.

It is in this sense, of course, that state provision for the arts, and state provision of employment for artists, has further had the consequence of separating the artist from his possible publics.

### The Designer

Interviewee five, a designer, exemplifies the anti-thesis of the freedom to work as an artist in total control of one's own work with time to be 'inspired'. Interviewee thirteen, by contrast, was also a designer, much enjoyed-much greater control over her work. Interviewee thirteen has a long and successful career behind her, while interviewee five is younger, and experiences much more acutely the fragmentation of work involved in being an industrial designer who has not got (as is the case with interviewee thirteen) a national

reputation, had hence an ability to insist on control over her work and what is done with it. Interviewee thirteen's greater control over her work is not a function of her greater experience, but of her reputation, and the sorts of firms she has worked in.

Interviewee thirteen defined design as being:

different from art in so far that it is interdependent; it is done for a specific purpose, whereas art is not.

However, in defining art thus, she was differentiating design from what art is, rather than from what she felt art could be. For she saw art, in a different situation, as being something which would not be limited to simply the fine arts:

art should be something one lives with. All the things one lives with should be beautiful.

This attitude to what art could, or should, be, is, of course, close to that of William Morris. She went on, in fact, to react adversely to the way in which artists become special named individuals - a phenomenon which we have noted in this thesis to be linked to the development of art as a practice restricted to a limited range of 'fine arts'. Thus, while noting that "artists on the whole are rather on a pedestal, and so exposed", she also commented that

The Japanese never signs his work, at all; and that's why it's so good. Because they don't think of it as a work of art.

Earlier, in discussing the craftsman and

the artist-craftsman, we noted the tendency for craftsmen to assert themselves as 'artists' - an assertion which, if accepted, led not only to their having greater control over their work, but also to a greater individualism and non-functionality in their work. Consistent with her view that Japanese work was "so good" because "the Japanese never signs his work", and "they don't think of it as a work of art", interviewee thirteen also reacted against the tendency for craftsmen to become 'as if' individualised artists:

I'm dead against all the individual... you know, art-craft; ceramics which pretend to be pottery, or pottery which pretends to be sculpture, and weaving which pretends to be tapestry and painting.

As a weaver-designer interviewee thirteen had worked in a factory where she, as designer, got to know the whole process and supervise all processes. This was, for her, a good working situation, for it meant that

they are not allowed to change the colour, or they are not allowed to change the yarn.

That one's work is altered in these ways is a very real problem for a fabric designer, for, as interviewee thirteen pointed out,

If you work as a free-lance person, and you sell your designs, they can do anything they like, and you're.. in the end you are absolutely shocked what comes out.

This situation of being a free-lance designer, with no control over the use of your designs, or the fabric to be used, or even the

colours you have arranged, is the ultimate loss of control for someone working in the art/craft/design fields. Interviewee five, the younger designer, was in this situation. Describing her work interviewee five said that

you start off being very very inspired, and then, suddenly, you come down to this little tiny idea which will be mass produced, or whatever, and, possibly.... in my case I never really see my designs finished in any shape or form. Once I've painted up the design, which can be perhaps, six inches square, that is the last I see of it. So I don't even have the satisfaction of seeing colour weaves, or even a piece of fabric, ever.

Previously interviewee five had worked in a factory, where she was able to see the end product. The divisions between designers, technicians, machine operators, managers, and co-ordinators that she experienced there are expressed clearly in her account:

you are never thought of as someone who is inspired. I mean, if you told someone that you need inspiration before you could produce anymore ideas, it would get a kind of gentle laugh - they just don't believe it. I remember once bringing in some flowers, some real flowers, to draw with, because I thought by that I'd perhaps have an idea come out of it, and, it was unheard of. To sit there drawing flowers, - there was no connection between that and rolls of fabric at the other end of the room. I think mainly because - perhaps not just in the knitting industry, but I suppose it's less so in the print - most of the people who work in the firm are technicians. They have a technical training, and not an art training. And the mind is just divided. And I've also worked for someone who was known as a design co-ordinator, which meant that he chose the designs, brought in designs from other people, chose colours for the fabrics, and would also put the final range together. And he was just a technician; he had no idea - no artistic training whatsoever. He would ask my opinion

but really, my opinion was there, and he would be the one who would have the last word. So, I think there's just a division between two sets of people in the firm.

Again in the above we see the issue of power (control) and the division of labour as central to her account. As a designer she was as-if technician, and was seen as one who applied skills in the same sense as applying art in the 19th century usage of the term, 'applied art'. The designer is in the above not seen as a creator, but as an applier of the discoveries of others. As but one part of the division of labour within the production process she had no control over her work. She suggested, however, that

If I'd woven a piece of fabric, I'd have much more feeling for it, because I would have actually put it together.

And this comment can be seen as embodying the distinction encountered earlier between work that is "me" and work that is "not-me". As a designer in a factory she was alienated from her own product, just as two of the four interviewees examined earlier in relation to being commissioned to produce a specific piece of work ended up feeling alienated from their own work.

Interviewee thirteen had experienced a much greater degree of control over her work. She explained in her interview<sup>16</sup> that sometimes she designed directly onto the power loom (this involving other people having to assist in changing wools, unpicking pieces, and so forth). This form of

work, she explained, was very frustrating, even though it was she who had control over what was done. She preferred working directly onto a hand-loom, creating there a prototype for the power loom. This latter way of working gave her total control over her design, as well as giving her the direct experience of weaving the design - the experience that interviewee five stated would have enabled her to have "much more feeling" for her work.

Interviewee five, the younger designer, was working, at the time of being interviewed, as a free-lance selling to an agent. As a free-lance her control over her work is minimal:

I may, for instance, say it will be red, white, and blue, - and it may be on the finished drawing; but, by the time the manufacturer has bought it, and he's thought about it in relation to all his other fabrics produced for that season, it may turn out to be brown, orange, and red. It will change so many times. Quite often designers have been infuriated - especially if they have a name which they feel should be protected at all costs. They just don't recognise their fabrics when they're produced.

It is this sort of experience which contrasts so strongly with her experience of art school, cited earlier. The only possible protection against this total lack of control over one's own production is "if you have a name" - and, as she indicates, even those who have names to protect do experience this sort of transformation of their work into unrecognisable forms.

Being a named designer is generally,

however, very different from being an ordinary designer. As a 'named' designer (a designer with a reputation) you are, in a sense, 'as if' an artist: your work is seen as being individual, creative, requiring inspiration, and, somehow, it is aesthetic, rather than simply technical.

The cult of the individual, named designer is not new, but it has developed strongly over the last few years (the fashion field being an obvious example).<sup>17</sup> In being 'named, one is a 'star' - a personality; in being a star and a personality, one is like an artist in the fine arts. Most importantly, in being like an artist, one also has, to a degree, the control over one's work common to the artist. Interviewee five pointed out that

if you have a name, you can sell them /designs/ for an incredible amount - just an ordinary print design, also an ordinary knitwear design.

Just, therefore, as the craftsman in being a named artist-craftsman can hope to exercise greater control over his work through being a named artist-craftsman, so the designer, by becoming a named special individual (like an artist) can gain greater control. Lacking that control, and lacking that reputation, one is in the situation of interviewee five:

I know I've got to produce a certain number this week. So I've changed. I'm now a person who produces things I don't particularly like. Only in that field of fabric designing. If it was something like embroidery, or weaving, then it would be much more me. I wouldn't be so separated from it.



### The Dilemma

As a craftsman, or designer, who is not an artist one is treated as a technician: you have no control over your own work. As an artist you experience other constraints - the sorts of constraints referred to by interviewee eight.<sup>18</sup> As an artist you work within a form of production dominated by the sorts of ideologies and attitudes which it is the aim of this study to discuss. However, from the point of view of any working individual, the main difference between being an ordinary craftsman, designer, or worker, and being an artist, artist-craftsman, or artist-designer, is that being considered in one of the latter senses you have a greater control over your own work.

William Morris, and others, attempted to revive the crafts as forms of production in which the producer had direct control over his work and direct contact with his product. However, as we noted in chapter two, Morris came to consider it impossible to effect any change in art or general production, through individual actions. Morris ended up selling his goods to the rich, and making what became, in effect, luxury goods. Craft production since then has continually faced this dilemma, and has tended towards the production of luxury goods, with the craftsmen themselves being promoted 'as if' artists.

As a successful artist, however, you tend

to become sucked into the relations dominated by the London art dealers, the national critics, the major galleries, and the small public that relates to these institutions. As an artist, you have control over the production of your work, but, often, not of its use. As an unsuccessful artist, however, you will be lucky to be able to continue being an artist at all. As a teacher, you will have the opportunity to, so to speak, 'keep your hand in', but 'art' is not how you make your living, and the difference between teaching art while also producing some, and simply producing art and living by the sale of that art, is fundamental.

William Morris's experience of being artist and craftsman led him to analyse and present a critique of the very division of labour that the artist, craftsman and designer are part of. It is through that analysis that we can locate and understand the differing reactions of those interviewed to their various situations and experiences. The division of labour is about the division and fragmentation of power and control over work, and it is about the experience of the product of work being 'me' or 'not-me'. The attempts, similarly, by craftsmen and designers to manipulate the definitions of themselves so as to be 'artist'-craftsman, or 'artist'-designer, can be seen as attempts to achieve different positions within the division of labour - positions that give the producer maximum control over work, and the greatest chance of producing

work that is 'of him'.

The 'Problems' of being an Artist

I have referred in the preceding discussion to the 'problems' of being an artist. I mentioned in passing the mystification of the artist, as well as referring to the general arguments of the thesis concerning the ways in which the state agencies and the art market separate the artist from possible publics, interpret his work to possible publics, and lessen his possible control over how his work is exhibited, distributed, sold and used.

Many of the references which exemplified the problems of being 'artist' (as opposed to craftsman, or designer, or technician), in the statements by the interviewees centred on the reaction of the 'public' to art. Thus, interviewee twelve, a print maker and draughtsman, suggested that:

when it comes to the living artist they /the english public/ are as frightened as anything: because they haven't the courage of their convictions to buy what they like, and, what is worse, they don't know what they like.

This position contrasts with that often experienced by the craftsman, for, while 'art' is often seen as a closed book - a field in which people do not feel safe to venture opinions - the crafts are often too much the reverse: hence again the efforts by some craftsmen to elevate themselves to the position of artist, or artist-craftsman.

Interviewee 11 commented on the attitude of the public to art in similar vein to interviewee

twelve, when he said that

the public these days are terrified of being made a fool of, made to look stupid; they can't comprehend what's going on in the world of art, and so they, in a sense, are anxious to get back at the artist in some small way or other. And I think it's perfectly understandable - indeed to be expected.

The public being "frightened" (interviewee twelve) and "terrified" (interviewee two) of venturing their own judgements on work is what we might expect if my arguments in this and earlier chapters are correct. Thus, if (a) the employment of artists as teachers has tended to produce a situation where artists both interact less with their public, and, as a corollary; pursue a 'purist' attitude to their art, and, (b) experience of art by the public is now extensively mediated through the Arts Council and that which it supports, and through the international art trade as based in London, and through state art galleries, and through the national press as based in London and linked to the international art trade and national collections of international art in the major public galleries, then, it would follow that any confusion (fear or terror) as to what art is, on the part of the 'general public' is only to be expected. 'Art', if my argument is correct, relates to the 'general public' very little. And the artists, unless they cease being so involved in education, and make more effort to interact directly with possible publics, relate to the general public even less.

Interviewee twelve pin-pointed one source

of the confusion over art on the part of the general public when he bemoaned the fact that

There's this dreadful tendency of only seeing the fashionable, and not recognising excellence over a wide field. This I do think is serious, because if you're on the band-waggon, and producing whatever's acceptable, you're away; and if you're ploughing your own particular furrow, and sticking to what you want to do, and what you know is right for you - if it doesn't happen to coincide with that, you've had it.

The 'fashionable' that he talks of is, of course, a fashion which is the embodiment of history being written as it happens; the art market, the critics, and the buyers and galleries, together produce fashions which in turn are written up as if these represented what was actually happening in art in a general sense at any particular time.<sup>19</sup>

Interviewee four, a painter and engraver, indicated another problem in the present situation of art and being an artist when he argued that:

the artistic vision is so disconnected by the way the world is construed in its economical aspect; it's just an adjunct; it's just a decoration in fact. You know Victorian art symbolised the whole outlook of art that developed since then, and just hasn't been shaken off.

This view is close to that of William Morris, when Morris argued that

so far from beauty being a necessary incident to all handiwork, it is always absent from it unless it is bargained for as a special separate article having its own market value.

The domination of art by fashion referred to above is of course made possible by the very peripheral nature of art as an "adjunct" - a

decoration added to objects and environments, rather than integral to form, content or purpose. It is also the very peripheral nature of art today which is part cause of the confusion of the general public referred to earlier.

While art may be a peripheral element today, both interviewee eleven, and interviewee thirteen retold incidents which are revealing of a potential interest in and wish to understand art. Interviewee eleven said:

I don't know if you've ever had the experience of being in a gallery, and seeing someone give a lecture. It's incredible; they collect a whole host of people who are really nothing to do with the lecture. They may start giving a lecture to ten students, or ten people, and finish up giving a lecture to fifty. So people do like others to help them understand, and to respond to work.

He went on to tell of his own experience of this happening to him:

We were in the National Gallery (I've got two daughters), and they asked me something about materials, and so, very quietly, I started to talk to them, and, I forget what was being said, but I then took them and showed them a tempera painting, and a fresco, and early Flemish, and Venetian - and it was done very quietly, me just talking to my kids. But, when I got to the third gallery, I realised there were about eight people all standing around behind listening to me talk to my young children. And I think people like to know, want to know, more.

Interviewee thirteen recalled a similar incident when discussing the war-time activities of the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts:

I lived during the war.... I worked in a factory in Bolton, and I was also very active in.... I played violin in those days, and used to see a lot of friends who did music. And I met the young man who played in the Halle Orchestra, and he said he'd like to go to the local art gallery where there was an exhibition of modern paintings, and I said, 'I'll meet you there on Saturday afternoon'; and so, I started talking to him about the paintings. And, within about ten minutes, I had about twenty people, and I was there all afternoon, and had an enormous audience, you know; and I felt how much people wanted to be taught about these things and have paintings explained. It became very interesting, and you know, they just followed round, picture to picture.

Both these examples illustrate both people's lack of knowledge/confidence, and a possible desire for greater understanding of art. It may be significant that both the incidents recounted are 'casual' and 'informal'; this is not a situation as with an official tour around a stately home: rather these are incidents in which two practicing artists and designers are talking about other people's work.

While neither of the interviewees above were talking, in the galleries, about their own art, they are both artists or designers talking about art. This is half way towards the sort of face to face self-explanation of what "we" (as artists) are doing and trying to do, that I have suggested is generally lacking, and which, if it took place more often, might to some extent, bridge the gap between artists and publics, and break the hold of the gallery, the art auctioneers and dealers, and state art agencies, over the presentation and definition of art.<sup>20</sup>

In the absence of direct face to face

contact between artists and publics, artists will continue to experience (and bemoan) the extent to which some of them are mis-represented. One traditional image of the artist is as a man who is partly psychotic - a visionary mad-man. Commenting on this image of the artist interviewee thirteen noted that

Artists on the whole are rather on a pedestal, and so exposed, and so these things are noticed much more. But, when you really come down to looking at the everyday man in the street, you find a lot of different types, and I think you... I don't know. I have a feeling that it is because they get named - they are regarded as individual - all this becomes rather over-exposed, and over-discussed.

The artist, therefore, being a named and analysed individual, is researched and dissected; his mental states and attitudes and statements are surmised and displayed; the artist is, therefore, transformed into a special individual - often a heroic or anti-heroic individual - while those the artist is implicitly compared with (the ordinary men or women) are not examined or explicitly set up for comparison.

Interviewee nine, a painter, noted that

people attribute all kinds of states of mind to you - the artist - which are totally unreal.

And,

The artist has been mis-interpreted, all over the place. Whereas there was an age when the artist fitted into that structure equally. I, sort of, yearn for that kind of structure, where the artist was integrated - possibly at a privileged level.

Being mis-interpreted, and being faced with an uncomprehending public, are the prices the



artist pays for being artist - for being visual expert, creator, and the man who carries out all the processes involved in the making of his product. For, being artist, is to be protected against encroachment on the integrity of one's work, but that very protection is also to make oneself mysterious: the artist is an initiate into the mystery - 'mystery' in the archaic sense of craft, skill, practice, knowledge. Interviewee six, a painter, echoed earlier comments when she said:

They people will quite happily say whether they like or dislike a thing that's specifically a more craftsmanship thing. I mean, there's so much handmade jewellery now, and they go and select quite happily without having to feel the need for a professional judgement behind them; but, I think they're quite different when they come to judge paintings of any sort really. They seem to want to be told; they can't trust their own judgement. I think that's the sort of hierarchy that's built up around art, with the galleries, and the names, and the money that's involved, really.

Thus with craft people feel no "need for a professional judgement behind them"; with art, by contrast, they do. People need the sanction of legitimate expert knowledge: one who is an initiate of the mystery must reinforce personal perception, or actually dictate judgements.

The artist, however, is rarely his own commentator: he is not the dominant element in the social relations of art, nor is he the creator of the ideologies of art and culture. That is not to say that individual artists cannot and do not try continually to be something other than that

which they are made to be. As interviewee seven, a painter and draughtsman, said:

people think of an artist as something rather special. But I don't feel that in my own work at all, because that... my attitude is not like that.

And, as she explained later:

I like selling to ordinary people; I don't put very high prices. And ordinary people like my pictures. For example, I've just had an exhibition at Ely, at that place which is also a restaurant, and two of the waitresses have bought pictures. . . . . that sort of sale always pleases me very much.

### Conclusions

In this chapter, (the first of two on the producers of art, craft and design), I have indicated briefly something of the artists experience of working, or trying to work. I have attempted to show how the producer is, essentially, a person responding to a situation dominated by the galleries, the art market, the critics and interpreters, all of whom in turn separate the producer from his public.

I have furthermore tried to show how an analysis of the division of labour of which the artist, craftsman and designer is a part is fundamental to an understanding of the experience of artists. The producer makes a product; what is done to that product, how it is defined, and what he can do with it, can be understood only by broadening the analysis, and this broadening of the analysis, I am arguing, should take the form of an historical and sociological understanding of the social relations through which

art is constructed as art - through which it is defined, presented, interpreted, and held up as something distinctive from other things.

In the chapter that follows I shall examine the notion of freedom in the arts. The idea of freedom and independence, as I showed in chapters five and six, has been a recurrent theme in discussions of artists, and in discussions of how to organise state patronage for the arts.

In the next chapter, therefore, I shall continue the examination of the position of the producer of art, craft and design, through showing the very different understanding the person who makes the goods has of 'freedom', from those who organise state intervention in the arts, and interpret the artists' work.

## Chapter Ten

### Freedom in the Arts: the Attitude of the Producer of Art

#### Freedom in the Arts

The idea that 'freedom' is a necessary pre-condition for the production of art is a theme we have seen running through and underlying pronouncements on art throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the post second world war period we saw that a 'laissez faire' 'support rather than direct' policy was emphasised by the Arts Council, and served as the justification for the dismantling of the war-time CEMA organisation. And, again, in the last chapter, we saw ways in which artists, craftsmen and designers are more or less free (have more or less control over their work) and how important this is to a producer. The distinction we noted between work that is "me" and work that is "not-me" follows from the experience of both situations in which the artist produces according to his own personal standards, and of situations in which his work is controlled or directed by others.

Freedom, however, can itself be a constraint, if that freedom is synonymous with isolation and lack of understanding on the part of others.

In order to examine the issue of freedom more closely, several of the questions in the

interview questionnaire were directed towards the concept of freedom. Thus the questions on the art market, on local government employment of artists, craftsmen and designers, on how each individual sells his work, on what other job he/she does or does not hold, on the Arts Council, Crafts Advisory Committee, and Design Council, all were directed, in various ways, towards the attitudes of those interviewed on what freedom meant to them.

There are, broadly speaking, three avenues open to an artist or craftsman as artist or craftsman in order to support himself as such.

First: he may take a job, preferably connected with art (usually teaching) and thus take the income from that job as his staple income. The restrictions imposed by taking such a job include restrictions on time as a practising artist, and, in a sense, the seduction of not having to 'pander' to customers. Intellectual factors may be involved as well, in the sense that full time teaching involves, or may involve, a self-conscious communicating of art/craft, which is very different from the experience of continually doing/making in a studio or workshop.<sup>1</sup>

Second: the artist/craftsman may gain, or campaign for, some element of state support, university support, bursary, or grant, which will give him the financial backing or cushioning either to build up his stock and contacts, or to

work in a manner or style that he/she feels may not sell, or may not sell sufficiently to live off.

Third he may attempt to 'go it alone'; this is none too easy, and may often involve taking part-time jobs on an ad hoc basis. Some artists who work 'independently', moreover, do have 'private' incomes, or are aware that an inheritance is due. In these cases such an income or support will cushion them against some of the problems involved in 'going it alone'. Also, some artists who work full-time as artists may be supported by their wives or husbands, and in these cases again they are somewhat protected. In all these cases, however, the protection or cushioning to someone trying to work full-time is often more on the lines of providing a breathing space during which the artist can build up stock and contacts.

Interviewee one is a practising potter, who is also employed as a lecturer, teaching pottery. He said he sold his work largely "through retail sources... contacts with buyers in shops." Asked if this was a satisfactory arrangement he said:

I would wish that there were more satisfactory means of selling work, other than through the retail trade. This is particularly true of pottery - and indeed of all the crafts. That there is so little facility for exhibiting and selling direct to the public.

Such outlets, or lack of them, are thus to an extent a constraint under which he has to operate - a restriction on his freedom. Commenting on the art market in general (which most interviewees seemed

to talk of as if something other than the sorts of outlets, galleries, etc., they used - i.e., the art market to them was the major London network), interviewee one said:

I think it's extremely well organised for making money; I think it's doubtful what service it offers to art in general. The insistence on style and manner which so often occurs in galleries has a pernicious effect on the young artist, imposing a pressure on him to work in a certain manner, or perhaps to sustain one phase of his development, because this appears to be popular.

For interviewee one, therefore, this is a general constraint on the freedom of art. His attitude towards the state can be understood in this light, for he suggested that

If the state were to free him /the artist/ from the strait-jacket of the galleries' demands - this might well be a healthy thing.

For he felt that the artist

to some extent . . . should be supported by society, if he's to remain a truly free artist.

He added that

I think he /the artist/ has a right to be supported to practise his art; but whether he should expect to make a living by the sale of his art is a different matter.

In the above the concept of the "truly free-artist"-is central. This is not the freedom of the market place: this is a freedom from the market place - the market-place being here, of course, the limited number of major London dealers, and the many smaller ones. Thus he says "it might well be a healthy thing" if the state were to "free" the artist "from the strait-jacket of the galleries'

demands." He is talking, thus, of a very different sort of freedom from that stressed in Arts Council literature, and in various nineteenth century texts we have examined. In fact, in commenting on the direct intervention of the state in art during the second world war by CEMA he said that he did not think

that there's any evidence that that sort of intervention was bad, or would be bad. It's obvious that the artist requires a patron, requires a sponsor, - he doesn't exist otherwise.

Interviewee two was also a lecturer in art. He was a painter, and taught painting, regarding himself primarily "as an artist - who teaches." While regarding teaching seriously, he nevertheless regarded himself first as an artist,

because that's the thing I'd really like to be doing. And that's the thing that I started doing.

He added that he "wouldn't teach if I didn't have to..." For interviewee two, therefore, being a teacher was a major constraint on his being an artist. Being a teacher and an artist meant that

one has in fact very little time to be an artist, and therefore professional self-discipline is all the more important.

Interviewee two sells his work "quite casually. I have had exhibitions from time to time". Also, however,

People come to the house, and they see something, and they like it, so they might buy it.

Significantly, despite his objections to teaching, he was quite satisfied with this way of selling:

I wouldn't wish it to be otherwise. I think, if I was immensely productive, and I had a lot of



work, then I would certainly wish to have an outlet for it. I think I'd wish to sell rather more in the way I do sell them - that is that people come into the house; I wish that were more often. I wouldn't like to have a contract with a dealer or anything like that.

Thus, while wishing that he had more time to be artist, rather than teacher, interviewee two wishes to steer clear of the gallery circuits, and we might deduce from this that teaching thus gives him at least the freedom to work as he wishes. Commenting on the art market in general interviewee two echoed interviewee one's comments in saying that it really had very little to do with art:

I have, in my time, felt bitter about this kind of thing. But, really, on a rational plane, they're entitled to buy and sell. Where I think the situation is extremely unhealthy is that there is just no outlet, or very little outlet, for work.

And he pointed out that

there are lots of really good people around this country, and in other countries no doubt, who are working seriously, who make a lot of personal sacrifices, who produce really good work, and they cannot sell it, or they cannot exhibit it, show it;

The lack of sufficient outlets for work is perhaps the major constraint on artists at present. Outside the major London galleries commission on work sold is high, and often the artist may have to pay a high rental for the exhibition space in the first place. In the case of interviewee two, while he sees teaching as being a constraint on his being an artist, his preference for continuing to sell on the casual basis he mentions indicates that, for him, the constraints of teaching are preferable

to the constraints of the gallery system. For, in the statement quoted above, he referred not only to the general difficulties of selling, but said that even if he could get a contract with a dealer, he would not like that. Teaching, therefore, for him, offered the maximum freedom within the given constraints as he sees them.

I asked all the interviewees about the idea that artists could be employed by local councils, and asked whether they thought this would improve the visual environment. Interviewee one thought that this would not work

in any self-conscious way; I think if the time is not ripe, and if this doesn't happen in a spontaneous way, then it doesn't produce anything of great interest - it becomes stilted, and rather self-conscious.

Interviewee two thought the idea a good one, but doubted that it would necessarily improve the visual environment unless "done in the right way". He brought up a further objection touched on by many of the interviewees, and which is echoed in the assertions by the Arts Council that it is an 'independent' organisation.

You've always got to run the risk of what, I think, is called 'committee-art', where a committee of twenty people decides what artist is going to be employed, and immediately you get the lowest common denominator.

This fear of 'committee-art' is again the fear of being controlled, and of the artist not being treated as a visual expert. The doctor's patient does not tell the doctor how to perform

the technical side of his medicine, but the artists quoted earlier, discussing being commissioned, had experienced their customers dictating to them what they should do. The artist, therefore, must steer a path between 'committee-art', the 'art-market', and gallery control, and between the problems of 'pandering to customers' if trying to go it alone, and the constraints of being a teacher, if seeking full-time employment.

Only as an art-teacher can the artist find employment relating to being an artist, yet which does not involve any dictation of how he works as an artist in the time available. Thus interviewee two referred to the importance of the art-schools as patrons of artists:

on the fine art side, I think one important thing to remember is that the art schools do provide patronage, virtually, for a large number of teachers; it gives them time to do their own work. One of the worrying things about the art schools going into the polytechnics, is that they may lose some of that research time - and so it's a loss.

Interviewee ten is an artist who paints and sculpts, and lives partly from selling his work, and partly from some teaching. He holds regular exhibitions at a well-known London gallery. He said he was satisfied with his sales and exhibitions, but, in a general comment, he did argue that

In England in particular a great dis-service has been done by the dealers, who are in a sense parasitic on artists' work, and yet, on the other hand, do very very little to, sort of, encourage younger artists.

He suggested further that

If you wanted to know what was happening in English art you... it would be impossible to find that out from a visit to the London galleries.

This is an important point, and emphasises what I have said earlier: namely that there are many hundreds of artists working in this country whose work is of high quality, and who are never heard of in the national newspapers or arts-press, or seen in the major London galleries. Their work is diverse in style and content, and it is this work which constitutes what, loosely, is, in real terms, British art at the present time. The changing fashions and styles which rise and fall in the major galleries are an imposition upon this mass of work - and the insistence by many dealers and critics that they recognise, know, and promote only what is best is nothing but an insult to the mass of artists working in this country.

For interviewee ten, however, freedom in the arts meant a market freedom. He argued that

the public need the arts to be free and need them to be liberating and need them to be non-functional and need them to be irrational or whatever.

For, while he thought that the Arts Council has, on the whole, "been rather good", he nevertheless gets slightly alarmed at the size of the operation, for "it goes almost into 'state control' of the arts." "Market pressures," he said,

may not be all that life's about, but at the same time one has a slight horror of the sort

of green house situation, where you're pampered, and there are terrific dangers that low standards may be maintained, when a little frost may do them good.

In saying this interviewee ten echoes interviewee eleven, who said that

in a sense, some artists who have a sine cure tend to lose their edge, tend to be more prepared to make the wrong sorts of.... what I would regard as the wrong sorts of compromises.

Interviewees ten and eleven are not here objecting to state support so much on the grounds of what sort of control may be exercised over the artist, as on the grounds that it might be a 'soft option': the artist will lack the external discipline necessary for work.

Interviewee six, an artist who paints, undertook some teaching. She was "fortunate in having a private income" which meant that she has

the freedom to do my own work without having the pressure to sell every bit of it.

Being able to support herself through a little teaching, a private income, and, additionally, the sales of her work, she was, in many ways, one of the most 'free' artists as regards having control over her own work, and the ability to experiment.

While her teaching and her private income obviously removed the pressure to sell work, she pointed out that

I certainly need to sell - just as a matter of confidence.

and she added that

it would be more stimulating if I sold a bit more;

This need to sell is often over-looked when considering how artists work: for selling is not only a source, for many, of the necessary income to live off, but is also a way of being appreciated, reacted to, used, - a way of being a real professional artist, rather than an accomplished practitioner of a hobby. Thus interviewee seven, when asked if she agreed with a quotation which read:

"Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living,"

agreed that art is "part of the artist's self, as he is", but thought the statement wrong, for

what I love is to sell that; to be able to stick to painting that, and to sell it.

'Freedom' in being an artist is, therefore, often more than simply being able to afford to do what one wants within one's own studio: it also means being able to exhibit this work, and, hopefully, sell it. And selling it is, ultimately, also the precondition for being able to go on producing it as a full-time artist, rather than as a part-time artist. Thus interviewee eight reacted similarly to interviewee seven when confronted with the same quotation from question 22: he said,

I would agree that "art is something which is part of the artist's self," but, at the same time, I would say that in the right conditions, the artist produces work to earn a living.

It is therefore a considerable constraint on an artist (a real limitation on his freedom) when

interviewee eight can say that

the conditions of selling are not as good as they should be. The arrangements for seeing and selling are not as good as they should be.

Or, when, in a slightly different vein, interviewee six explains that

I've seen very few galleries. One hesitates to get involved even, I think, because the ones that are going to push you are going to bleed you as well.

Interviewee four, a painter and engraver, was more positive in his attitude to teaching than most of the teachers interviewed. He is a full-time teacher, and he saw the function of the artist, as being to teach; this was, for him, to participate socially. As a teacher, he should

try to knock down this status that art has had: this ivory tower syndrome.

He sold largely through personal contacts, and was ambivalent about how happy he was with such a situation: "sometimes yes; sometimes no. At the moment, no." But, as regards having exhibitions, he suggested that

if you wish to work by having exhibitions, you are really under the thumb of a gallery director, who would wish you to be his own particular and personal property.

Teaching was thus, again, an alternative to such restrictions. Nevertheless, he was sensitive to the dangers implicit in earning a living through teaching; "it tends to make you slightly dilettante".

I suggested to him (interviewee four) the idea of the Arts Council paying artists a wage, and the Council exhibiting their work. He was worried

in such a situation, he said, about the criteria to be used for choosing the artists:

you're going to be at the whim of a certain committee, though, aren't you. And I'd perhaps rather have a gallery owner to that; at least you know that the policy of a gallery... and it's not something a bit vague.

Again, therefore, we see the suspicion of committee control and a committee setting taste. The dealer is preferable not because his motives and ideas are better, but because they are at least clear and defined. As interviewee four said,

A dealer's a dealer; it doesn't matter what it is: if you're a dealer you deal in it. A painting's just the same as a potted fruit, or a box of chocolates; it's a commodity that people want, and it's the job of the painter to concern himself with the painting.

Just as interviewee four was suspicious of the risks of committee art and of being at the mercy of a dealer, so also interviewee three avoided both. She was being supported in her work, and sold very casually. She was happy with this situation, for

It allows me to be independent, it allows me to experiment, and it allows me to do what I want to do, and, if somebody happens to buy it, then that is simply lovely; it's an extra bonus, to have one's work bought, when one wanted to do it anyway.

Interviewee three's lack of a feeling of a need to sell contrasts with interviewees eight, seven, and six. Interviewee three's suspicion of committee art, however, was expressed when she too rejected the idea of artists being employed by local councils, for she felt that:



there would be a fair amount of graft involved, and people getting their friends in who'd been at school, or school with their wives.

However, while she obviously valued her own independence, and was suspicious of state patronage, she indicated also that she thought that 'Art for art's sake' "can be very stultifying", and she suggested that

you could argue, that all the best art has been produced under patronage of the church, or, under the patronage of individuals who knew what they wanted.

Interviewee eight was similarly suspicious of the idea of 'art for art's sake'. This concept, which he suggested had, at the time of Cézanne, been a "necessary way of survival" was no longer satisfying, for:

it's more liberating to think that you can be making something which is still made for the pleasure of making something 'truer and wiser', but, at the same time, in a different sort of context, where you're making it in order to fit it into a situation where it's going to be appreciated and where it's going to give a reasonable form of remuneration.

This returns us, therefore, to the idea that one version of 'freedom' for the artist can be a situation in which he can work well as a selling artist producing objects that ordinary people want.

As with others of the interviewees, interviewee eight, when asked about the idea of employing artists in local government thought that:

the wrong people would get the job, and, that once having got the job, they would function like the city architect, the planner, the city housing inspector, - they would produce rather mediocre work.

Interviewee eight's reply to this question is similar to interviewee eleven's comment on the

Arts Council, in which he expresses the same suspicion of the 'wrong' sort of people getting the jobs:

The Arts Council tries hard, in, I think, a very difficult situation. The trouble is with the Arts Council, and I suspect it's not so much a criticism of the Arts Council as a criticism of human beings, it tends to function very much on the traditional old-boy net; it's a different net from the public-school net, but it functions on a pretty clear network.

The reaction to the idea of state patronage which criticises it on the grounds that it might engender mediocrity is perhaps to be expected, given that this 'problem' is so fundamental to the whole way in which state intervention in the arts has been conceptualised over the past one hundred and fifty years. Official art is seen, by the Arts Council, as the antithesis of healthy art. The frequency, however, with which the interviewees reacted against the idea of the employment of artists by the state on the grounds that there would be forms of nepotism and corruption, or the wrong people being selected, or the friends of the administrators being selected, is perhaps more surprising. It could be that the frequency of this reaction is illustrative of, or indicative of, the artist's experience of not only the Arts Council organisation, but the general hierarchies and social organisation of art schools and the art world in general.

An element in 'freedom' for the artist involves, therefore, not working "for the wrong people", or being dominated by the "wrong people". Interviewee four, we noted, in choosing between working

for the wrong people in a possible state system, and the wrong people as he saw them in the art market system, chose the art market system.

This is an interesting choice, and relates to replies by others of the interviewees. Essentially, the art dealer is there to make money. He will impose on the artist in as far as he feels some work is more, or less, commercially viable. He may also be interested in the art as art, but, in order to be a dealer, he must concentrate on that which he can sell.

The state, by contrast, in dealing with art, is concerned with art as art. That is the threat to the artist - his expertise and control over his own work is threatened by the administrator or the politician or the cultural advisor.

Interviewee three's worry that if artists were employed in local government people in government would get their friends, school friends, or the school friends of their wives, into the jobs, is part of the same perception that state patronage lacks strict rules. For, if an art dealer promotes the work of his friends, he is still bound by the possibility of his friend's work selling or not selling: if it does sell, it is legitimate commercial dealing to sell it: if it does not sell, he will be forced to cease promoting it. The state, by contrast, is bound by no such constraints. It can promote one kind of work, or another; it can be corrupt,

or not corrupt. Corruption itself can be actual promotion of friends, or more subtly working through a given net-work of establishment groups. Pressure could be brought to restrict the former, but perhaps not the latter. Interviewee eight offered an interesting comment on this when he said:

I was reading recently some painters and others rejected the idea of applying for bursaries or grants on the grounds that they're competing against each other in a strange sort of field in order to get money out of the state; and they have rejected this and said, "Look, I prefer to be left in my studio to sink or swim". And many of the good artists might react against this kind of system... they might feel as uneasy as many art teachers feel in the educational system - because they are working for the wrong people.

Almost all the interviewees were suspicious of being controlled or assisted by the "wrong people". As interviewee nine said,

one would have to have very sensitive people in the position of making decisions as to what exactly was used.

He saw no way in which this could be easily achieved, but, more fundamentally, interviewee nine raised a point about whether or not artists themselves could be more influential in making decisions:

These people /administrators/ obviously influence, because they have money to help artists survive, what is seen, and what isn't. But, whether they're really qualified to have that position or not is another question. That position could be taken by artists themselves on a short term basis, or part-time, or something.

This is, of course, what, to a limited degree, and for the privileged few, the Royal Academy was in the

nineteenth century. The programme put forward by Beresford Hope, M.P. in 1863<sup>3</sup> was for a Royal Academy fulfilling many of the present functions of the Arts Council in the visual arts, but being itself a body of artists - not administrators. It is clear, however, that the Royal Academy does not match up to interviewee nine's prescription for an Arts Council more responsive to the needs of artists, for the 19th century Academy was opposed by many artists - artists who were outsiders in relation to the established group, the power holders.

Interviewee fifteen, a film maker, indicated in his interview that he encountered many of the same problems as those working in the traditional arts and crafts. Thus he felt that the commercial system was restrictive, for, in film,

the brakes that have been put on communication by the commercial system and the sponsored system are too strong.

And, in response to the statement attributed by the Observer Newspaper to Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art: "Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money," interviewee fifteen said that

the whole of the commercial film world is based on exactly that. This is the thing that's held back the development of the cinema - in the West, anyway.

As to what alternative system might exist, he pointed out that

there is no organisation which exists which will support making films which are in any way experimental on a larger scale, which I would like to see.

'Experimentation' for him meant the producer, the maker of the film, could have greater ability to communicate through the film, through having greater control over the film, for he added that

if you got down to what you might term freedom, you should still have enough self discipline not to be just self-indulgent.

The issue of 'freedom' is, therefore, again one of control in the film world - control by those who make the film, or control by others. Freedom involved control by the makers of the film.

Touching on the general problem of the artist in relation to state institutions, interviewees fifteen suggested that these institutions were

just promoting to the masses, the widest audience, the established forms of art - the accepted forms.

And, commenting on the composition of the state agencies concerned with the arts, he suggested that

They seem to me to be loaded committees with all the wrong sorts of people on them. I don't quite know how I'd reform it, but something... They do seem to be full of establishment do-gooders, rather than creative people. This is not entirely true. But... You do get the exceptions... But...

Again, therefore, we are returned to the theme that those who control the state institutions are not 'creative people'; they are not the artists and producers. The issue is one of power and control over one's own productions.

### Conclusions

These conclusions cannot be said to

represent the views of any one interviewee. Certain generalisations can be made however.

Thus, whether the art market was accepted as an inevitable fact of life, or castigated for its relation to art as a commodity, one very strong feeling was that the art market as such had little to do with art or artists. Outside the big league art market, moreover, several interviewees noted a lack of sufficient other facilities through which to sell their work.

The reaction to possible local government employment of artists, was similarly generalisable, such employment being seen as either stultifying through cushioning the artist, or dangerous in that the wrong sorts of people would get power and influence. Similarly comments on the Arts Council, and other state agencies, indicated a suspicion of these as 'state control' of art, this being criticised and/or feared sometimes for what that control might promote, and, sometimes, on account of the paucity of creative people involved in the control and management of the state agencies. And again, some criticised the Arts Council for being too greatly concerned with only the 'established'.

'Freedom' as artists we saw to be an issue that was important for most of the interviewees, this freedom meaning that they should not be dictated to by either the state or the art market. Hence many of them taught. Some taught and saw

teaching as something they wanted to do, but most who were full time teachers (and some who were part-time) would rather have not taught. Teaching was nevertheless seen as giving a financial support, as well as it being a job relevant to work as an artist or craftsman or designer.

The interviewees make clear that few of them would want to do a job of work at someone else's bidding as artists or craftsmen or designers, if this job involved being employed as a producer who was directed by the employer; interviewee five, who, as a designer, had been employed in a factory, made clear the problems in such a relationship. Furthermore, few interviewees were happy about the idea of state support on a selective basis - for they did not trust the selectors. Few of the interviewees, also, were happy about working through the major London art dealers. In all these cases their own expertise and independence would be threatened: they would lose control over their own work, and it would cease being 'their' work, in the sense of being 'part of themselves'.

While teaching was a generally accepted preferable option, it must be pointed out that, out of the twelve who were not designers or film makers, seven did either no teaching, or only part-time teaching. Most of the interviewees were, or had been, involved in exhibiting, and were or had been involved with galleries, and some had sought, or



were seeking, or had been involved in, state support to a limited extent. What is significant is their reactions to all these, and the extent to which choices made, all are indicative of attempts to seek the maximum individual control over their own work, within and through and despite the given constraints.

I have sought, in reproducing these interviews and statements from them, to illustrate the other side of the question being discussed in the bulk of this thesis. That is, I have sought to show how the producers of art, craft and design, are not the dominant factors in what I have called the social relations of art. The producers accept some, and reject others, of the ideologies and definitions of art that we have examined in earlier chapters. But, I have tried to show that they accept or reject these according to their understanding of the extent to which they are protecting, or not protecting, their own control over their own work. The problem for them is how to be artists, craftsmen or designers, without compromising themselves to the point where their work ceases to be experienced as being of themselves.

To an outsider, the totality of responses to the interview questions may seem either confused, or negative, in the sense of being unrealistic; the interviewees seem unable to make the normal compromises in life. I would remind the reader, however, of two points: first, artists on the whole suffer a

considerably greater degree of mystification than other groups in the way they are written about, presented, sold in the market place, made into heroes, or made into bohemians, and, second: artists are generally in the unusual position of actually being in control of how they work, in as far as they have ideas, design, manufacture, and perhaps frame and glaze their products too. The sensitivity over issues of freedom and compromises must be understood in these terms, for they do have something to lose.

It is of course also true, that the extent to which an artist has control over how he works and what he produces, is also bound up with the ways in which how he works is mystified by the art historian, critic, art market and state agencies. He is presented as a special kind of man, and anyone who tries to break out of being presented as a special kind of man, as did William Morris, soon finds that (a) his attempt to break out of the 'trap' is interpreted as being yet another indicator of how special he is, and (b) he is fighting a very lonely and isolated battle.

NOTES TO PART FIVE

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notes to chapter eight

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1. The recent case of the Tate Gallery's purchase of the notorious 'bricks' is instructive, for while the purchase was held up to ridicule in the popular press, the bricks were not seen as reflecting on art; rather, in asking the question, 'Is this Art?', the accepted judgements on what art really should be were being employed to criticise the purchase of bricks.
2. Patrick Gibson. 'The Arts Council's Regional Policy'. A paper delivered at the Regional Studies Association Conference in June 1974.
3. Lord Goodman. 19th April 1967.
4. Blaug, M. and King, K. 'Is the Arts Council cost-effective?'; New Society: 3 January 1974.
5. see: Green, M. and Wilding, M. Cultural Policy in Great Britain. UNESCO, Paris, 1970. pp. 51--3.
6. ibid. p. 52.
7. ibid. p. 53.
8. Lynn F. Pearson. 'Workers Playtime'. New Society. 13 November 1975.
9. ibid.
10. as note 3.

notes to chapter nine

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1. Arts Council of Great Britain, Crafts Advisory Committee, Design Council, the National art galleries, the provincial art galleries, the art education system, including not only the art schools and the art departments of secondary schools, but also the art history departments of universities. (etc).
2. see volume two.
3. see Baxandall.M. Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy. Oxford University Press, London, (1972).
4. I stress the word 'direct' here, in opposition to the indirect interaction when mediated by institutions such as those detailed in note one above.
5. see chapter two.
6. as note 41 on page 89 of this volume.
7. this comes out very clearly in interview five, (appendix).
8. Herbert Read: see bibliography in volume two.
9. I discuss Read on pages 51--53 inclusive (chpt 2); my comments there indicate why Read's position served only to emphasise the abstraction of design.
10. see The Craftsman's Art, from the Crafts Advisory Committee, London, (1973).
11. see pages 64--67 inclusive of this thesis.
12. see chapters three and four.
13. see references on page 308 and 309 of volume 2.
14. S.Hannema's attitude to the art schools is very similar, in his Fads, Fakes, and Fantasies, Macdonald, London, (1970).
15. Or, in Morris's terms, the artist will relate to his work differently: there will of necessity be a direct control over his work and an integration of his work into his life. If it's your job, you cannot be dilettante.
16. see note 14.
17. see interviewee five's comments on this in appendix.
18. see pages 477--481, volume one, and full transcript in appendix.
19. on the emergence of the concept of style see Allsopp.B. Style in the Visual Arts Oriel Press, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, (1968). The concept of fashion as used in the arts relates to the concept of style.

1. This is a problem which is perhaps acute for an artist who works in a visual medium, but teaches in a verbal environment. It is, however, a contradiction inherent in many teaching situations. Thus, in the case of sociology, there is evident tension between sociology as something taught, and sociology as something practised. As teaching, administration and marking encroach upon an individual's time, he becomes more a teacher and less a sociologist: his or her sociological output becomes geared to his/her teaching, and the quantity is determined by the time demands of teaching. The essence of sociology as social research and applied social research becomes subordinated to the production of teaching material.

2. The situation would appear to be somewhat better on the Continent. In Germany, for instance, art is not centralised via galleries, dealers and major critics in one major city. Press coverage of exhibitions, therefore, covers several cities, and galleries featured in the national press are available to a greater number of people through their being in various cities.

3. Cited in the discussion of the Academy in chapter five.

PART SIX  
CONCLUSION

## Chapter Eleven

### Conclusion and Summation

In the foregoing chapters I have argued that art is a social, as opposed to natural, phenomenon, and that, historically, the construction of the concept and practice of art is associated with the development of capitalism in western Europe, and the related changes in the class structure and division of labour.

I argued that sociologists, hitherto, have tended, in examining art, to take the existence of art for granted, attempting to relate 'art' and 'society' in a manner that analytically separates the two. I suggested, by contrast, that the sociologist should examine art as part of society; he should examine, for example, the conditions under which painting and sculpting came to be constructed as art, and he should examine the social relations through which the ideologies and practices of art are maintained and reproduced.

I argued that William Morris's analysis of art was one of the most important theorisations of the subject yet produced, and, taking Morris's analysis of art as a starting point, I developed and expanded his thesis in four areas.

First, I examined the development of state intervention in the arts in Britain in



the period 1830--1975. Second, I examined the ideological pre-conditions for, and assumptions implicit in, the present-day art market. Third, I examined the impact of the ideologies, practices, and presentation of art on the working classes. Fourth, I examined, through interviews, the present position and experiences of artists, craftsmen, and designers.

Through examining these four topics, I endeavoured to present, as a total structure, a picture of the social relations of art - locating art within the division of labour, and as a part of the ideologies associated with the dominant groups, interests, and classes in 19th and 20th century British society.

The thesis is primarily an attempt to answer, both sociologically and historically, the question, "What is art, and how did certain objects and practices come to be separated from other objects and practices and designated art?". However, in answering this question, I was led, by the nature of the empirical material necessary for answering the question, to focus my attention on material relevant to the current debate on state patronage in the arts, and the future development of state patronage in the arts.

It was not my objective in writing the thesis to produce a study that was

necessarily relevant to the debate on state patronage for the arts. A thesis that examined the nature of art as a social phenomenon, however, would obviously have a bearing on a debate in which the nature of art is usually taken for granted.

In as far as a major part of the thesis is concerned with the consequences of state intervention in the arts, however, and, in as far as various of the questions asked of the interviewees relate to the varieties of possible ways of working and being supported as an artist, much of the material presented has a direct bearing on the current debate. Rather, however, than the thesis offering any formulae for what should, or could, be done, I believe that the material presented can serve as a foundation for a more thorough analysis of state policy towards the arts - an analysis based on a sounder understanding not only of the relations and structures the state is part of, but also of the working-situation of the artist, craftsman, and designer.