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THE SOCIOLOGY OF AN ARTISTIC MOVEMENT:  
ART NOUVEAU IN GLASGOW 1890-1914.

WILLIAM PAYNE EADIE.

Submitted in Fulfilment of the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy.

Department of Sociology, University of Glasgow.

May 1989.

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William Eadie, April 1989.

SUMMARY

The thesis attempts to present a controlled sociological examination of Art Nouveau in Glasgow from the eighteen-nineties into the first decade of the twentieth century. The phenomenon of Glasgow Art Nouveau (its ideological groundings, its socio-cultural base, and the nature of its artistic production), provides a case-study of avant-gardism. The main intention is to illustrate, with historical exemplification, to what extent Art Nouveau can be interpreted as a radical social critique underpinned by specific theoretical and ideological concerns.

I begin by examining (a) the analytic means whereby satisfactory criteria are developed for the purpose of defining Art Nouveau as an artistic style; the specific manifestations of this style in a variety of European countries, and its transformation from organic/symbolic to abstract/geometric form-language; and (b) Art Nouveau as a distinctive cultural movement which was attempting to transform the public sphere in accordance with artistic principles. The second chapter has a dual purpose: firstly, it examines the status of Art Nouveau as an avant-garde movement, and, secondly, it attempts to construct the basis for a specifically sociological theory of Art Nouveau by bringing together the arguments of certain social theorists who have made significant reference to the phenomenon.

Subsequently, it is demonstrated that, within the sphere of influence of the Glasgow School of Art, continental avant-gardiste trends at the end of the nineteenth century provided the frame of reference for the understanding of new artistic movements in Glasgow. This leads to an analysis of Mackintosh's extant writings in order that a reconstruction of the essentials of Scottish Art Nouveau's distinctive ideology can be presented. It is argued that Glasgow Art Nouveau had a coherent viewpoint in many respects deriving from the formulations of the Edinburgh sociologist and theorist

Patrick Geddes. As well as demonstrating the closeness of Mackintosh's theorising to that of certain Viennese Art Nouveau exponents (Wagner, Hoffmann) with whom he had contact, it is shown to what extent Scottish Art Nouveau was attempting to transcend the traditional distinction between the utilitarian and the artistic, and address the issue of a social environment transformed in accordance with modern social needs.

The remainder of the thesis substantively examines crucially related aspects of the Glasgow cultural context. Firstly, it focuses upon the Art School as institutional context within which Art Nouveau emerges, and demonstrates the relevance of the implementation of an experimental approach to art teaching there. Secondly, it examines the issue of the actual and potential production of goods manifesting the new form-language. Thirdly, the nature of the reception given to the new form-language is investigated; this involves an analysis of relevant reportage in Glasgow. The reasons for the failure of the movement to gain ground in Glasgow are shown to be connected with a number of complex factors ranging from moral outrage at its 'decadence' to the absence of the kind of technical expertise capable of consolidating its innovations for a mass society.



*INTRODUCTION.*

The following work examines the phenomenon of Art Nouveau in Glasgow in a rather different manner from previous studies. It does not focus exclusively upon the figure of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, nor is it concerned only to examine the products of Art Nouveau practitioners. In addressing a contrasted set of issues from previous work on the subject, the main intention is to bring into sharper relief the socio-cultural context within which Glasgow Art Nouveau emerged as a movement. This movement is analysed as an instance of *avant-gardisme*; that is to say, as a coherent cultural movement which fostered new ideas and techniques, the aims and ambitions of which, it is argued, are capable of being specified for analytic purposes.

Unlike Thomas Howarth, whose 1952 monograph on Mackintosh has long since achieved near-classic status, I consider the movement around Mackintosh to represent a significant instance of Art Nouveau as such. Howarth argued that Mackintosh was a modernist *per se*, and not actually an exponent of Art Nouveau style. In adopting an art history perspective, Howarth abstracted Mackintosh from the social situation of which he was a part. One crucial result of this was that Mackintosh could not be meaningfully related to either the group of Art Nouveau designers centred on the Glasgow School of Art, or the group of architects who shared certain ideals, and who employed a similar form-language in their work. By separating Mackintosh from these contexts, Howarth was unable to explain the interweaving of artistic and technical, decorative and functional, concerns, in Mackintosh *and* in his *avant-gardiste* associates. It is argued here that Art Nouveau cannot be properly understood unless this particular process of interweaving is acknowledged as having had a central role to play in the whole endeavour.

Pared down to its essentials, the main argument I present is as follows: in its initial stages, the Art Nouveau venture involved a symbolic return to origins. This focused upon two fundamental categories, namely, *nature* (the origins of life), and

*history* (the origins of culture). The former of these has tended to be over-stated as providing the key to what Art Nouveau was essentially about. The fascination with the *historical evolution* of architecture, which connects Mackintosh in Scotland with Wagner in Vienna, encompassed a deeply-rooted preoccupation with the origins of vernacular forms. This reflected, in turn, intensified concern over the perceived erosion of the traditional functions required of architecture. In confronting a plethora of meaningless historicist styles, Art Nouveau attempted to establish a new form-language capable of universal application. In setting out to re-define the social role of the artist in the future from its vantage point of a difficult to grasp present, it expressed the kind of high ideals which later came to characterise modernism. Art Nouveau employed abstraction in its endeavour to create imagery that was distanced from immediacy and the (socially) real. In the early stages, it demonstrated how much it had come to view with suspicion the depictions of social history furnished by traditional naturalism. Also, Art Nouveau confronted technical forces of production through the understanding that these were reflective of nature, as that which operated via the mediating forces of human culture. Technology was perceived as being objective, and thus external to subjectivity; but it was also apprehended as providing the potential for an enhanced human life process. The central dialectic of Art Nouveau is represented by two opposed trends - (a) escape into an aestheticised world of stylisation; and (b) the aestheticisation of social reality through intensified determinacy over artistic *and* technical means towards this end. In other words, Art Nouveau embodied escape into the domestic interior and the world of the self, but it also desired *escape from* a self that had been constituted through a redundant past history. It is, I would stress, in direct relation to this schema, that the Scottish movement can best be understood.



Chapter one searches for the essence of Art Nouveau as a form-language, as a range of cultural activities, and as a system of ideals. I illustrate the view that it is not easy to fix the origins of Art Nouveau in a specific 'beginning', and that these origins emanate from various socio-cultural levels and contradictory directions. Hence, a variety of sources need to be acknowledged as having become combined within a process which demanded intellectual renewal. What I consider specific about Art Nouveau is its theoretical concern with cultural regeneration, its vision of a social order within which aestheticism and technology are unified, and its commitment to a developed form-language (what I term visual ideology).

Chapter two is primarily motivated by the need to address the question of the extent to which social theories of Art Nouveau relate to the historical material and factors of an empirical nature. I examine the basis upon which Art Nouveau can be considered as a genuinely progressive movement in social terms. Finally, the basis for a sociological theory of Art Nouveau is outlined.

In chapter three I discuss artistic movements in Glasgow in direct relation to cultural events in Europe. I illustrate the importance of making a distinction between the avant-garde project for transcending art for art's sake through the fusion of art and functionality, and a populist welcoming of attempts to improve the social environment with the aid of art. The latter part of the chapter is devoted to an investigation of the kind of problems that have been created for the understanding of Art Nouveau in Glasgow by writers who, in establishing their criteria for describing what has become known as 'Glasgow Style', have rigidly separated the spheres of decorative art, and architecture, respectively. I argue that such views operate with a simplistic portrayal of the active components within the processes of cultural production.

For chapter four I introduce the term 'Scottish Ideology' in order to highlight the main theme of the analysis at this point. I present the argument that Scottish Art Nouveau saw itself as being in tune with the authentic spirit of the present, and that it wished to manifest this through a visual ideology of newness, which yet bestowed coherence on contemporary social reality. Genuine newness was seen to be only possible when a knowledge of the best architecture of the past had engendered an historical aesthetic consciousness. I stress, with exemplification derived from Mackintosh's expressed ideas, the concern of Scottish Art Nouveau to make architecture *make sense* to all of the members of society, and thus render it both meaningful and popular. It was acknowledged that the arousing of intense experience in spectators required the interplay of thought and emotion. The critical and creative *imagination* of the architect, in being revealed through cultural works constructed on principles which combined spatial structuration with 'beautiful simplicity' - that is, scientific *and* artistic principles - was to be the medium for the activation of the intellect and imagination within others. In developing this argument, I emphasise that the significance which Scottish Art Nouveau attached to the interpenetration of intellect and emotionality lay with the insight - which it derived from Scottish Hegelian Idealism - into the essential contrast between beauty in nature, and beauty in art, respectively. The static beauty which art purveys becomes the paradigm for the culture of the future, precisely because it is artificial and synthetic. In being apprehended as having enduring qualities, art is to be utilised, on the basis of knowledge of its underlying principles, for the composition of symbolic forms that are universally comprehensible. The rationalism inherent within Scottish Art Nouveau engendered an architecture capable of *expressing* ideals through an economy of means. I show how the importance that was attached to simplicity in design was rooted in the fundamental desire to combine analysis with synthesis, knowledge with creative imagination, through a comprehensible form-language. Fundamentally, Scottish Art Nouveau represented a



determined attempt to transcend the traditional distinction between the utilitarian and the artistic.

Chapter five focuses upon the Art School in Glasgow as the institutional location within which an avant-garde emerges. I am concerned to elucidate the precise nature of the ideology of art education which existed in Glasgow, both before, and after, the period in which Art Nouveau appeared. Not only were the spheres of technical and artistic education emphasised in terms of their relative distinctiveness within the School prior to 1890, but activities and attitudes crucial for an incipient Art Nouveau mentality were being welcomed. I examine the implications of these factors in a way which relates the Glasgow School of Art, as a formal organisation, to (a) the British-national nexus of organisations to which it belonged; and (b) the local socio-cultural system. I demonstrate the kind of changes that were made possible by the appointment of Francis Newbery as Headmaster in 1885, and I discuss how the subsequent enhancement of control over the School, from the direction of the Scottish Office in Edinburgh, facilitated the actualisation of his objectives. Documentary evidence is presented to illustrate that within the Glasgow School in this period, an art-educational ideology stressing the desirability of freeing innate artistic propensities was integrated within the national curriculum as practised at Glasgow. This was in contrast to the state of affairs in Manchester, where a progressivist course under Walter Crane, which also emphasised artistic experimentation and spontaneity, was alienated from the main course.

I argue against the 'orthodox' view of Newbery as the virtual creator of Art Nouveau in Glasgow. It is only at a certain point in time that Newbery begins to express distinctively Art Nouveau ideas. By contrasting these particular ideas with others articulated previously by Newbery, my objective is to pull into focus the specificity of a mentality, fully in concord with that of Austro-German late Art Nouveau, that can



only be meaningfully explained, in the Glasgow context, as a dimension of Scottish Hegelian Idealism. A considerable portion of this chapter is, therefore, devoted to analysing the implications of the Art School in Glasgow reflecting, in its ideology of art education, the aesthetic theory which was fostered by the University-based exponents of this philosophy before Newbery arrived in the city. I consider it crucial to elucidate in what ways, and to what extent, Art Nouveau appropriated Hegelianism in articulating its historicist aesthetics, its biological romanticism, and the notion of the 'ideal' as medium between thought and feeling, and between subjectivity and objectivity.

The sixth chapter demonstrates the reasons for the continued inability of the Art School in Glasgow to forge important productive links with industries for artistic design within the local social system. The issue of Newbery's anti-commercial bias, which was raised in the previous chapter, is further elaborated on here, with the aid of the kind of contemporary data capable of illustrating significant conjunctures within the School which had a direct bearing upon what the wider social environment could expect of it as a cultural producer.

This chapter also examines the avenues through which Art Nouveau was manifested. It is argued that Art Nouveau in Glasgow suffered as a consequence of the non-application of the kind of production techniques - clearly welcomed by Mackintosh - which could have ensured its wide dissemination. The Art School's preoccupation with elaborate craft teaching is shown to be directly implicated in this failure. The new movement only affected a proportion of production because of the local horizontal division of *types* of production, which effectively perpetuated the kind of distinctions it wished to go beyond, e.g. the separation of architecture and furnishing.

In the main, chapter seven is concerned with (a) exhibitions which presented avant-garde style; (b) the social background to these exhibitions; and (c) interpretations, responses, and reactions in the local press to the new attempts at 'artistic' design. Focus is placed upon the role of the lower middle class, who, through their access to the popular press (leisure journals), were instrumental in engendering a particular type of perception of 'the artistic'. The theoretical grounding of this analysis rests with aspects of the thought of sociologist and theorist Patrick Geddes which derived from the writings of Hegel, Spencer, and Durkheim, and which, I show, were of central significance for Art Nouveau theory in Scotland. Geddes's discussions of art for art's sake and 'decadence'; the synthesis of art and science; and the role of cultural education in the struggle for cognitive coherence in the face of cultural fragmentation, are related to developments throughout the Art Nouveau period, including the Glasgow Exhibition of 1901, in which Geddes was actively involved as an educationist.

In conclusion, in chapter eight, I consider the reasons for the collapse of the avant-garde movement in Glasgow by focusing attention upon such issues as the nature of the stance taken by Art Nouveau in relation to mass production, and the implementation of new techniques in architecture. The implications of the absence of an extensive market for new forms of 'artistic' production, and the problem of a non-existent, avant-garde-supportive, intelligentsia are dealt with.

## CHAPTER ONE

### WHAT IS ART NOUVEAU?

The main intention of this first chapter is to provide a clear and succinct account of what the designation 'Art Nouveau' can be taken to mean. Initially, this requires some examination of the attempts made by analysts of the phenomenon to specify the most distinctive attributes of what was ostensibly an innovative artistic form-language or 'style'. The motivations behind the drive to engender a 'new art' need to be carefully elucidated in order to demonstrate at the outset what was (a) actually being opposed in cultural terms; and (b) how Art Nouveau was attempting to engender 'appropriate' new ideas. In respect of the latter, the philosophical assumptions underpinning Art Nouveau are investigated since these are of crucial importance for the understanding of the style itself.

The question of the relation between Art Nouveau and cultural movements that were important for the form which it took - symbolism, aestheticism, rationalism, Arts and Crafts - requires to be handled with some rigour because here we are not always dealing with easily specifiable historical sequences, where one cultural 'development' gives way to another. Art Nouveau presents a complex subject-matter for the analyst of culture, not least because of its temporal 'overlap' with other phenomena with which it may well share certain characteristics. The central theme of the chapter is the delineation of an underlying structure common to the diverse manifestations of Art Nouveau which appear within a number of geographically contrasted contexts.

The chapter begins by examining the theory of Art Nouveau presented by Robert Schmutzler in the 1960's. This remains the only attempt by an analyst to sketch the sociological background to the phenomenon.

### 1. Seeking the Specificity of Art Nouveau

Art Nouveau, says Robert Schmutzler,

"is indeed a style of the upper bourgeoisie, that of the cultured and urbane middle class in the heyday of classical capitalism. It is essentially the first genuinely universal style of a period which was no longer under the domination of the clergy or



aristocracy. Like Impressionist paintings, its creations were not commissioned by patrons but were offered directly to the purchaser by the artist".<sup>1</sup>

Having thus outlined the sociological background of Art Nouveau, Schmutzler, in illustrating the socio-economic milieu of "the leading Art Nouveau artists", presents a succinct catalogue of selected examples of their work in order to illustrate the social placement of both the artists themselves and the purchasers of their creations: Gaudi's *Palau Güell*, claimed to be the most expensive contemporary private dwelling, was built for the architect's friend and patron the industrialist and shipping magnate Don Eusebio Güell; Whistler's *Peacock Room* was commissioned by Frederick Leyland the Liverpool shipowner for his elegant and spacious house in London's Hyde Park Corner; Burne-Jones was by reputation the highest paid painter of his time; the well-to-do Arthur Mackmurdo, "whose designs were the first expressions of Art Nouveau", published the journals Century Guild and The Hobby Horse for his personal enjoyment; although the Brussels architect Victor Horta (who later entered the Belgian nobility) built the *Maison du Peuple* for the Belgian Socialist Party, most of his work was for upper middle class and capitalist patrons (e.g. the 'princely proportioned' mansion for the industrial magnate Solvay); the symbolist painter Fernand Khnopff, son of patrician parents, inhabited a 'labyrinthine' house in Brussels.

For Schmutzler, nothing characterised the actual life-style of the majority of practitioners of Art Nouveau so much as aesthetic comfort and self-indulgence. But although the concept of (economic) class can be expanded to include cultural factors outwith the specifically economic - as Schmutzler does in describing Art Nouveau as an upper bourgeois art style - it is important, as T. J. Clark points out, to "be clear about the liberties being taken and beware, for example, of calling things 'inherently bourgeois' when what we are pointing to is relation, not inherence".<sup>2</sup> For class is an extremely complex matter, the reality being that, what might, quite legitimately, be collectivised - various social fractions - under this general heading, will always

comprise "the many and various".<sup>3</sup> We may well ask, consequently, if Art Nouveau is to be portrayed as an inherently bourgeois style, what is the *relationship* between the (phenomenally expensive) *Palau Güell*, intended for the exclusive use of wealthy individuals, and Hector Guimard's iron railings for the Paris underground stations? Or between Josef Hoffmann's luxurious and private *Palais Stoclet* and Charles Rennie Mackintosh's designs for Miss Catherine Cranston's public tearooms? What legitimates the practice of collectivising such apparently diverse cases *apart from* the attempt to make a sociological point about the links between social class and cultural production?

In describing Art Nouveau as a 'universal style' - since such was its original intent - Schmutzler seems primarily concerned to illuminate ways in which fundamental notions, concepts, tenets, design philosophies, and ideologies, link a wide diversity of cultural phenomena as expressions of an all-encompassing Art Nouveau sensibility (a sensibility pursuing beauty, so Schmutzler claims, at the same time as manifesting introverted narcissistic self-admiration *and* exhibitionism through its creations). A widely-perspectived cultural awareness such as Schmutzler's, which allows an acknowledgement of what Gresleri calls "the cultural diversity born out of the complexity of the historical moment",<sup>4</sup> would appear to provide the ideal starting point in the search for criteria of relevance *vis-a-vis* Art Nouveau.

Schmutzler proclaims that certain lines by William Blake - "energy is eternal delight" and "no individual can keep these laws, for they are death to every energy of man and forbid the springs of life" - are emblematic of the central element in Art Nouveau which portrays movement as the fundamental source of life: movement, that is, within a "connected whole and, if possible, a structural homogeneity".<sup>5</sup> Blake's own 'illuminated' books form a case in point: "out of originally heterogeneous elements, a calligraphic synthesis of homogeneous forms and signs . . . are all subjected to the same rhythm".<sup>6</sup> Thus in the 'prehistory' of Art Nouveau, Blake's dual talents as painter-poet exemplify the kind of "reciprocal osmosis through inner affinity"<sup>7</sup> (Ernst



Michalski) which came to typify what Art Nouveau artists were attempting to achieve with combinations of forms and genres. This is demonstrated, not only in the relationship between poetry and decoration in book design, or between poems and paintings (such as with William Morris, Beardsley, Rossetti, Swinburne), but also between the plastic and graphic arts and music, and between music and literature. Furthermore, as regards the relationship between the theory and practice of Art Nouveau, it is apparent that numerous artists have added clarity to their own work whilst providing information or acting as teachers, through the (back-and-forth) process of adding literary and theoretical expositions to their artistic creation (Dresser, Owen Jones, Morris and his pupil Walter Crane, Obrist, Endell, Gallé, Guimard, Sullivan, Loos). Blake anticipates Art Nouveau, claims Schmutzler, by rigorously developing the *principle of form* in ornament, illustration, lettering, ensembles of books and structures, rhythm, conception and signification: he was a 'universal artist' "who was not only poet, painter, book illustrator, and printer of his own works, but who might also have designed furniture and everything else for the home".<sup>8</sup>

According to Schmutzler, the 'great inclination' of Art Nouveau, exemplified by the reflecting and conscious attitude of its "artists of higher than average intelligence",<sup>9</sup> is towards *synthesis*, to be achieved through the fusion of form and content, of structural and decorative elements. Baudelaire and Wilde explicitly viewed music as art's 'ideal type' (a term much used by Walter Pater for the same reasons), within which form and its object, and object and technical expression, are synthesised. As specified by Pater, the artistic ideal was to be independent of intelligence, a matter of pure perception, with form and matter unified in creative productions. In his opinion, this ideal was most completely realized by music:

"In its consummate moments, the end is not distinct from the means, the form from the matter, the subject from the expression; they inhere in and completely saturate each other; and to it, therefore, to the condition of its perfect moments, all the arts may

be supposed constantly to tend and aspire. Music, then, and not poetry, as is so often supposed, is the true type or measure of perfected art".<sup>10</sup>

A passage such as this (from 1873) illustrates that a preoccupation with music as representing the 'perfect' artistic form characterised the theoretics of the Aesthetic movement long before Art Nouveau appeared. What then does Schmutzler have to say about the significance of this aspect of Aestheticism for Art Nouveau?

He points out that Whistler, "the most consistent advocate of *l'art pour l'art*"', attempted to exemplify such an ideal with his decorative, ornamental and musical attitude toward his art. In the 1870's, Whistler combined visual and aural elements, the names of colours with musical terms (*Nocturne in Blue and Green; Symphony in White; Harmony in Violet and Yellow*), in such a manner as to anticipate the colour harmonies that would later typify the Art Nouveau style (the combination of yellow and violet; blue and green; the use of white). Gaudi's *Palau Güell* in Barcelona is said to have been constructed around the music room, and Fritz Warndorfer, who financed the foundation of the Wiener Werkstätte, commissioned a music room from Mackintosh after the latter had exhibited for the first time in Vienna. The significance of music in the drive towards the attainment of synthesis ("the time; 1892. Its spirit; the musical element", noted Hugo von Hofmannsthal) is illustrated by Schmutzler through a cultural 'cross-referencing' which links some of the most significant modern developments in musical technique directly with various innovative cultural notions and trends which exemplify the Art Nouveau influence to a greater or lesser degree:

"Setting to music Mallarmé's *L'Après-midi d'un faune* and Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and blending aural and visual elements, Debussy created a mixed type of ballet and opera; Oscar Wilde's *Salome* became the libretto for an opera composed by Richard Strauss; the young Schonberg, a late Romantic who was by no means a stranger to Art Nouveau, composed his *Gurrelieder* on poems by Jens Peter Jacobsen, while typical *Jugendstil* poems of a minor sort constitute the text of his *Pierrot Lunaire*. From the very beginning, Stravinsky tended toward 'applied music', that is to say ballet and a synthesis of aural and visual elements. His titles, *Diseau de feu, Sacre du Printemps* (a periodical was similarly entitled *Ver Sacrum*), are as intimately allied to Art Nouveau as Scriabin's *Poème de feu* and *Poème d'extase*. Besides, Scriabin also composed *Promethean fantasies* where the abstract totality of the work consists in tones, colours, and moving lights. There even exist paintings by the Lithuanian composer Ciurlionis representing 'painted music' which are almost abstract and very close to Art



Nouveau. In Holland, Toorop produced a drawing entitled *Organ Tones*; in his *Cry*, Munch painted sound waves, and his paintings in general were once described in *Pan* as 'emotional hallucinations of music and poetry'.<sup>12</sup>

Music is thus made the aesthetic centre of gravity drawing the cultural consciousness towards a clearer concept of form, more specifically, of form embodying synthesis (object and technical expression *within* form).

According to John Russell Taylor, Art Nouveau sought "above all to find form inherent in the formless rather than to impose on it a preconceived form from without".<sup>13</sup> Paul Barker, in distinguishing Art Nouveau from the Modern Movement, discovers that the "chief credo of the modern movement was truth to materials. For Art Nouveau, form came first".<sup>14</sup> Having acknowledged that "the fewer the formal elements present, the less appropriate is the term Art Nouveau",<sup>15</sup> Madsen distinguished four different main aspects of Art Nouveau form "which to a certain degree are conditioned by nationality"<sup>16</sup>: 1. An abstract and plastic conception (Belgium); 2. A linear and symbolic aspect (Scotland); 3. A floral and markedly plant-inspired style (France); and 4. A constructive and geometrical style (Germany/Austria). Almost everywhere, in all the phases of Art Nouveau, there is apparent an asymmetry of form (for example, with the ornamental characteristic of the asymmetrically undulating line that terminates in an energy-laden movement) which signifies life and activity, movement and equilibrium: "All the swinging, swirling, throbbing, sprouting, and blossoming is intended to be an unequivocal sign of organic life, of living form".<sup>17</sup> Themes of water, marine life and lower organic life commonly decorate Art Nouveau textiles, ceramics, wallpapers, silverware etc. But it is far less organic life in the sense of aspects/elements of 'nature' popularly understood, as of the metaphysically conceived fundamental forces and sources of life. As Schmutzler emphasises,

"Art Nouveau did not choose to favour forms that are similar to sea anemones and other such lower organisms, half plant, half animal, for their flowery elegance and ornamental form alone, but also because they are close to those forms which first appeared when life was beginning".<sup>18</sup>

The true significance of this is to be found with the acknowledgement that Art Nouveau was attempting a universal regeneration of art and life through a symbolic return to the 'original source' of reality. Only such a radical manoeuvre could free art from the burdensome and stultifying weight of archaism, historicism, eclecticism and moralism restricting it at the end of the 19th. century. Even in the abstract forms apparent with High Art Nouveau, that is, in the second half of the 1890's when practically every European genre manifested the style, movement and life are suggested despite the absence of themes derived from the natural elements; for example, in the alive and abstract dynamism exemplified by Horta's metal scaffoldings, or van de Velde's merging of illustration and abstract decoration. Macleod talks of the 'curious ornament' gracing Mackintosh's work having a natural source, and recounts a retrospective description of Mackintosh peering through a microscope at a segment of a fish's eye "and then drawing the image with great delight",<sup>19</sup> (Thomas H. Bryce, the owner of the microscope in question, described Mackintosh returning to his premises in the search for further inspiration; the fish's eye had already been used "in all sorts of permutations and combinations in many decorative schemes").<sup>20</sup>

Schmutzler argues that with the attempt of the Art Nouveau movement to establish some kind of contact with 'original traditions' through an adoration of life, Art Nouveau

"contained a kind of self-frustration within itself, not so much because of its strong element of decadence, of *fin de siècle* and *morbidezza* as because its romantic nature made it shrink from the harsh reality of modern industrialization".<sup>21</sup>

Schmutzler appropriates a section from Ernst Robert Curtius's book on the novels of Proust to illustrate the sociological background of Art Nouveau as he understands it:

"the delicate iridescent blooms of this art grow from the creative substance of a great mind. But such a seed could prosper only in the favourable, well-prepared soil offered by the material comfort of cultured and wealthy homes . . . the capacity for enjoyment, refined through many generations . . . finally, the security of inherited wealth; here is the soil in which this art is rooted".<sup>22</sup>

The key figures of Art Nouveau are the Aesthete and his brother the Dandy. Dandyism is itself a 'decorative art' (Max Beerbohm), but since the Dandy does not produce any work



of art himself, he turns both himself and his life into a 'work of art' ("One must either be a work of art or wear a work of art", quipped Wilde), and the Dandy, who sometimes united within himself the critical Aesthete and the productive artisan, was the representative of the state of culture who, through the nature of his demands for the beautification of life, "best determined Art Nouveau".<sup>23</sup> For Schmutzler, therefore, the Dandy represents the medium through which a traditionally afunctional and autonomous art achieves functionality through being 'applied' to use objects.

The 'harsh reality' of industrialization had been confronted on a number of fronts by artists, thinkers and social critics throughout the 19th. century. But between

"the weighty pressure of the materialistic and the technical development on the one hand, and, on the other, the artist's aesthetic approach and escape into trends whose problems are the concern only of the elect"<sup>24</sup>

there was certainly more than one standpoint adopted. If Ruskin viewed mechanization with its corresponding division of labour as being responsible for the decay of art, and as a consequence exemplified a Romantic enthusiasm for what were ostensibly medieval forms of production (handicraft, domestic industry, guild), Morris, who shared such enthusiasm, recognised that technical inventions could have progressive applications, and that the real problem lay in the manner in which these applications were organised and utilised within contemporary capitalism. Art, through its involvement with objective, material activities in society, was acknowledged by Morris to be, not essentially moral/spiritual, but rather sensual/technical. This involved arguing that objects both beautiful *and* functional must outrank works of art which could only be one. The major aim and programme of the British Arts and Crafts movement, which represented a more determined approach to the crafts than was apparent with the Gothic revival, was to turn artists into craftsmen and craftsmen into artists (to paraphrase Crane, who, as president of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society helped to organise exhibitions, lectures and demonstrations around the country). The formal

centre of the movement, the Art Workers' Guild, was committed to the promotion of craft work and the unification of painting, sculpture and architecture.

Morris's own reluctance to apply modern methods of production in his workshops meant that all of his work was expensive to produce, a situation repeated in the Wiener Werkstatte, which derived its central aesthetic aims from Morris, where costly designs were placed "effectively beyond the range of all but the wealthiest patrons and collectors of the *avant-garde*".<sup>25</sup> In both cases a refusal to compete with mass production, accompanying an idealized conception of craftsmanship, led to a tension between the desire for a true contemporary art accessible to all, and a concern that mechanization would erode artistic quality. Morris, at the end of his life, attempted to confront the problem which he himself had, in part, created. Hence he asserted the need for contemporary producers of culture to become "the masters of our machines", and to employ them "as an instrument for forcing on us better conditions of life".<sup>26</sup> This was precisely the view expressed by C. R. Ashbee (1863-1942) - founder of the Arts and Crafts-inspired 'Guild and School of Handicraft' (in 1888) - at the stage in his career when he rejected what he himself had previously pejoratively termed the 'intellectual Ludditism' of Ruskin and Morris. The practical experience of the Guild's failure to compete with modern methods of manufacture had, by 1908, led to the acknowledgement that "Modern civilisation rests on machinery, and no system for the encouragement or the endowment of the teaching of the arts can be sound that does not recognise this".<sup>27</sup>

On the continent, it was with the Belgian Henry van de Velde, the most influential exponent of Art Nouveau, that the ethical concern with social transformation, deriving from Arts and Crafts thinking, became crystallised within a context of conscious concern with the formulation of a 'new art'. Van de Velde coined the term ('*un art nouveau*') in his essay *Deblaiement d'art* (The Clearance or Excavation of Art) in 1894. This concern was pointed directly at those Aesthetes and Decadents, who, for van de Velde, exemplified a moribund, spiritless dependence on *old* works of art, including



easel paintings. The latter he viewed as part of the defunct tradition of bourgeois art, a tradition that had, through the commodifying of paintings, attempted to perpetuate the erroneous view of the work of art as a unique expression of the artist's personality. It has to be said, however, that, if the Aesthetic movement did not harmonise with the Arts and Crafts movement in terms of the ideologies of social reform and utopian socialism, its journal The Yellow Book, with Beardsley as Art Editor, illustrates agreement on the desirability of a synthesis of all the arts. The graphic and decorative style of the Mackintosh group in the early 1890's, in subsequently being applied to interior design, quite clearly illustrated its debt to the Aesthetic movement, in particular, to Whistler and Beardsley. At the 'Architecture and Design of the New Style' exhibition held in Moscow from December 1902 until January 1903, the Scottish contributions elicited comment from Diaghilev on "Mackintosh with his light, white furniture, with his refined and so-slightly Beardsleyesque panels and the whole airy charm of his interior",<sup>28</sup>

The first clear point that can be made with regard to the specificity of Art Nouveau, at least in the stages during which the latter was becoming established, is that Art Nouveau initiated an anti-historicist form-language based on the synthesis of ornament and structure. The concept of synthesis, of works of art embodying a unity of form with content, Art Nouveau derived from aestheticism. But Art Nouveau was concerned also with unity between the fine and the applied arts. The fact that Art Nouveau can be said to have employed natural forms for the purpose of avoiding historicist imagery is not in itself a distinctive trait. What is distinctive is the manner in which nature was apprehended and depicted. In the following section we will examine this issue in some detail.

## 2. The Genesis of Art Nouveau.

Examples of what Madsen terms 'proto-Art Nouveau' are first encountered in England with the Arts and Crafts milieu of the 1870's and 1880's (Crane, Dresser and Mackmurdo being among the leading exponents). English trends in the applied arts, according to Madsen, are suggestive of continental Art Nouveau in the 1890's; Crane's nursery wallpapers from 1875 manifest a "wealth of floral ornamentation" and a "flamelike and whiplike rhythm".<sup>29</sup> However, in Britain (sic),

"Fully fledged Art Nouveau was not really established, the artists instead continued the cultivation of an elegant style developed from the Arts and Crafts movement".<sup>30</sup>

However, as Thomas Howarth pointed out, the latter lacked a clearly defined and conscious attempt by artists and designers to evolve a style totally independent of tradition. The appearance of Art Nouveau on the continent (applied arts, interior decoration, architecture) is generally described as being a relatively sudden phenomenon, and the focus of attention, subsequent to research by Nikolaus Pevsner and Siegfried Giedion, was placed upon Brussels, where the first Art Nouveau exponents - Horta, Hankar, Serrurier-Bovy and van de Velde - were active. When Samuel Bing, the Parisian art dealer, opened his new shop in the Rue de Provence in 1896, he commissioned van de Velde to decorate a number of apartments. In 1897 five craftsmen presented an exhibition of the new decorative art at the *Galerie des Artistes Modernes*. Such events undoubtedly furthered the acceptance of the style in France by such as Galle, Majorelle (Nancy school) and Guimard (Paris). Van de Velde provides a link with Germany (he exhibited in Dresden in 1897) where *Jugendstil* subsequently emerged in Munich, Leipzig and Darmstadt. A group of young German artists had already been experimenting with new decorative forms; August Endell (1871-1925), Otto Eckmann (1865-1902) and Hermann Obrist (1863-1927). The trend of *Jugendstil* to turn the human figure into an ornament was wryly commented upon by the Viennese cultural critic Karl Kraus; with the *Jugendstilman* "the very convolutions of his brain became ornaments".<sup>31</sup>



The actual name *Jugendstil* was based upon the periodical *Jugend* which was established in 1896. Art Nouveau was, to a quite unique extent, associated with periodicals. This suggests a significant connection with manifestoes promulgated by the avant-garde. As Madsen pointed out,

"During the 1890s no less than a hundred art periodicals were founded in Europe. They were all of them the outcome of an intense desire to renew art, and reflected the strong interest which existed particularly in the decorative arts. The spate of periodicals also helps to explain the rapid spread of the style".<sup>32</sup>

But were periodicals the only means by which the style became known? The evidence would appear to indicate that other cultural processes were significant also. An article on 'Scottish Artists' in *Dekorative Kunst* (November 1898) refers to works by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Herbert MacNair (wine glasses, fabrics, windows) as having a similarity to designs by Koepping, Obrist and van de Velde. The first link between the Glasgow designers and the continent had been through the 'City of Liège Arts and Crafts Exhibition' (1895) where numerous exhibits by members of the Glasgow School of Art were shown. This was subsequent to an exhibition at the School which had attracted a significant amount of attention. The Secretary of *L'Œuvre Artistique, Liège* wrote to Francis Newbery, the Head of the School, to express his admiration of the work that had been seen and to stress that

"what has above all astonished us in your work is the great liberty left to the Pupils to follow their own individuality".<sup>33</sup>

He commented also upon the apparent advancement of the Glasgow School by comparison with those in Belgium. It is difficult to believe that such continental connections did not foster the kind of cultural reciprocity which would lead to the importation of certain Belgian ideas into Glasgow's artistic circles. But in fact significant Glasgow contacts with the Belgian avant-garde actually pre-dated this.

In the last two decades of the 19th. century avant-garde art practice could be said to centre on Brussels. The journal *L'Art Moderne* was founded there as early as 1881 by Octave Maus, an art critic and musical impresario, who also created, along with 19

other founder members, the *Cercle des Vingt* in 1884, which was to organise the first exhibitions combining products of the applied arts (such as decorated books from England) with avant-garde paintings. Van de Velde became a member in 1889. Maus also established the association *La Libre Esthétique* in 1894. Ten annual exhibitions of the *Societe des XX* took place between 1884 and 1893 (when the society 'voluntarily' disbanded itself). Those exhibiting included James Ensor, Theo van Rysselberghe, Willy Schlobach and Fernand Khnopff, all of whom "had recently seceded from an earlier free society, *L'Essor*, because they thought it 'too bourgeois'".<sup>34</sup> At various stages, *Les XX* exhibitions manifested the influences of realist-impressionism (Courbet, Manet, Fantin-Latour, Whistler, Monet), Symbolism (Khnopff, Toorop), Impressionism (Schlobach, Vogels) and neo-Impressionism (Willy Finch, Georges Lemmen, van de Velde). Included among those invited to exhibit in 1893, was the Glasgow artist E. A. Hornel, who sent four paintings, one of which, 'The Brook', had already been purchased by Herbert MacNair.<sup>35</sup> The *Libre Esthétique* exhibitions of 1894-5 presented Morris fabrics and carpets, Beardsley designs, Ashbee silverware, and examples of architecture by Voysey.

In *L'Art Moderne* (1st. and 15th. March 1891) Georges Lemmen wrote two comprehensive essays on Walter Crane in which he emphasised the importance Crane attached to "the capacity of expression contained in forms, lines, and arabesques".<sup>36</sup> Lemmen later demonstrated aspects of Art Nouveau style in some of his own creations (especially *Deux Têtes de Jeunes Filles*, 1895); he was a painter who also designed jewellery, metal-fittings, bookbindings and tapestries. Crane himself would write, five years after Lemmen's articles, that

"The revival in England of decorative art of all kinds culminating, as it appears to be doing, in book design, has not escaped the eyes of observant and sympathetic artists and writers on the Continent . . . In Belgium particularly . . . the work of the newer school of English designers has awakened the greatest interest".<sup>37</sup>

The forms, lines and arabesques in Crane's work, to which Lemmen referred, have long since been acknowledged to constitute a distinctive *ornamental style*, employing "long



sinuous asymmetrical line" (Pevsner), which originated in Britain. Henry Russell Hitchcock<sup>36</sup> argued that it is highly likely that Horta, when he designed the *Maison Tassel* in 1892, was already acquainted with English decorative work, more particularly, the linear 'Art Nouveau' style of English wallpapers and bookbindings, such as the pre-Raphaelite George Heywood Sumner's tulip pattern wallpapers. If, at this stage, an attempt is made to establish a succinct definition of Art Nouveau, it must inevitably be felt that, in the light of what was said above regarding the deeply-rooted metaphysical concern with the sources and forces of life, Pevsner's claim about the leitmotif of Art Nouveau being the long sinuous asymmetrical line, must appear somewhat inadequate. According to Fern, in order to actually define the style adequately the serpentine curve that is present must be "a twisting, living thing".<sup>39</sup> Selz described Art Nouveau's general aims as being a "desire for symbolic-organic structure".<sup>40</sup> Clearly, we need to know more: where does this particular desire emanate from?

Madsen's view is that several of the features distinguishing Art Nouveau can indeed be traced back to the British pre-Raphaelite school.

"There is an uninterrupted sequence running from the pre-Raphaelites' enthusiasm for Botticelli's lines, via Walter Crane's linear aesthetics to Beardsley's elegant play with surfaces and curves and to the whiplash linear rhythm of the Glasgow artists".<sup>41</sup>

The 'Thoughts towards Nature in Poetry, Literature and Art' that were so important for the pre-Raphaelites, became, with the passage of time, less and less a reservoir of naturalism feeding artistic inspiration, and increasingly developed into a cult of linearism, aspects of which were a preoccupation with floral rhythm, unrelated images and elongated compositions. But the symbolistic tendencies of pre-Raphaelitism can be seen to be at least partly rooted in contemporary forms of mysticism and subjectivism.

The link between the symbolic and the organic elements of Art Nouveau structure is provided by the notably vitalistic conception of sources of life: a conception half-way between mysticism and metaphysics. In philosophy, this particular doctrine was to be very much in vogue by the end of the 19th. century; the seal of approval having been

set through high status exponents of quite sophisticated versions of it such as Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and Hans Driesch (1867-1941). Both of these philosophers rejected mechanistic or materialistic views of reality. Bergson's *élan vital*, portrayed by him as being a distinctly creative urge, was claimed, against Darwin's theory of natural selection, to be at the very heart of the evolutionary process - a process which was, for Bergson, non-deterministic. Reality thus comes to appear as some great work of art. As Adorno points out, Bergson's theory derives essentially from artistic experience: it is ideas and images of art that are being projected outwards onto reality. Commenting on the theory of Bergson and Proust that spontaneous recollection brings to life empirical existence when it is harnessed to the imagery of art, Adorno describes them as genuine idealists, in that

"they attributed to reality what they wanted to redeem, whereas actually it is part of art, not reality. Hoping to escape the curse of aesthetic illusion, they simply shifted the illusory quality on to reality".<sup>42</sup>

The depth of influence of the metaphysic of vitalism upon Art Nouveau is difficult to measure with any kind of real accuracy, but it was obviously significant. It is illustrated by Alejandro Sawa's contributions to the Spanish Art Nouveau journal *'L'Avenc'*, as it is in van de Velde's comment about line in which the artist is depicted as an abstract source of dynamism and energy. Bergson himself, in 1889, made reference to the aesthetic potential attaching to the impression of movement conveyed by curvilinear forms:

"If curves are more graceful than broken lines, the reason is that, while a curved line changes its direction at every moment, every new direction is indicated in the preceding one. Thus the perception of ease in motion passes over into the pleasure of mastering the flow of time and of holding the future in the present".<sup>43</sup>

The question of the influence of vitalist and idealist thinking upon Scottish Art Nouveau has never really been raised. In fact, in Edinburgh, Patrick Geddes, instigator of the journal *The Evergreen* and one of Mackintosh's acquaintances, combined a scientific analysis of the forms of biological organisms with a holistic, non-



mechanistic conception of nature that was highly consonant with Bergson's. This is illustrated by a comment of Amelia Defries:

"One of the messengers of light, with whom Geddesians are in sympathy, is M. Bergson, whose delightful style is widely popularizing some of the very conceptions of life they have been trying to express and put in place of the established mechanical ones. Of course, William James and Stanley Hall — both friends of Geddes for a good many years — were essentially pioneers of the same movement".<sup>44</sup>

Geddes's own contributions to The Evergreen (1895-6) illustrate a rejection of 'mechanical dualism', 'materialism and spiritualism' in favour of 'idealist monism'. The Evolution of Sex, published in 1889 (the same year as Bergson's 'Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience', his first major work), draws conclusions surprisingly close to those of Bergson in his L'Évolution Créatrice (1907), where it is argued that the creative drive, rather than natural selection, lies at the heart of evolution. In the romantic-sounding concluding section of The Evolution of Sex, the "highest expressions of the central evolutionary process of the natural world"<sup>45</sup> are claimed to be manifested through forms of creativity: love, sociality, cooperation. The attempt to reconcile aesthetic and ethical spheres of culture was highly characteristic of Geddes:

"the ideal of evolution is indeed an Eden; and although competition can never be wholly eliminated, and progress must thus approach without ever completely reaching its ideal, it is much for our pure natural history to recognise that 'creation's final law' is not struggle but love".<sup>46</sup>

Edward Caird, along with his brother John, one of the leading exponents of Hegelian Idealist philosophy in Scotland in the late 19th. century, explicitly addressed the issue of the original sources of life in his Hegel (1883). Like Bergson, Caird was looking towards the self-determining aspects of artistic experience for a solution to the problem of the disintegration of meaning posed by an objectifying positivistic and deterministic science:

"To find an object of reverence, we must be able in some way or other to rise to an original source of life, out of which this manifold existence flows, and which in all this variety and change never forgets or loses itself. A world of endless determination is a prosaic world, into which neither poetry nor religion can enter. To rise to either, we must find that which is self-determined, --- we must have shown to us a

fountain of fresh and original life. When we have found *that*, the multiplicity of forms, the endless series of appearances, will begin to take an ideal meaning, because we shall see in them the Protean masks of a Being which is never absolutely hidden, but in the perishing of one form and the coming of another is ever more fully revealing itself".<sup>47</sup>

To Caird, the only hope for the cultural life of human beings against a positivistic science of facts and the disintegration of meaning which had resulted from it, lay with the artist and the poet, who alone could keep alive the combination of the ideal with the real, the universal with the particular, and through their impressionistic creations snatched from 'fleeting time', reveal 'blest eternity'. Caird's traditional language conveyed a very modern message about the problems of modernity, the experiences engendered within an essentially fragmented culture. In 1906 in Vienna, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in defining the modern poet's role, echoed the pronouncements of Caird from over two decades before. The poet's work was to represent, for Hofmannsthal, the medium through which unity and cohesion were created. In confronting conflict, contradiction, multiplicity in reality, the poet, as "the passionate admirer of things of eternity and the things of the present",<sup>48</sup> was seeking hidden connections behind the incoherence of a centrifugal society.

The abstraction of (post-representational) High Art Nouveau, most notably exemplified by van de Velde and Horta, attempted to embody something of the dynamics of those elements of life which Bergson's eternal vital principle was claimed to encompass. Van de Velde, most consistently of all, aimed at abstract form where there is no trace of unassimilated historical examples of style. Dynamism is expressed symbolically, in the use of ornament, as with the linear structure of his straight chairs and easy chairs. The theme of the *Tropon* poster (1898), referred to by Schmutzler as Art Nouveau's best abstraction, is derived, in the latter's opinion, from, on the one hand, van de Velde's own non-naturalistic synthesis of elements from the work of Seurat, Millet, and the Post-Impressionists, and, on the other, technical aspects of the work of Beardsley, who



had, six years previously, innovatively synthesised abstract decoration with illustration (e.g. his illustrations for Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur*).

According to Pevsner, with the work of the Mackintosh group, the artistic synthesis achieved was of Beardsley with Voysey and Toorop: "this synthesis of their style was the legacy of Britain to the coming Modern Movement",<sup>49</sup> (Ludwig Hevesi, in describing one of the Scottish group's contributions to the 8th. Secession Exhibition in Vienna (1900), noted that "Whoever enters this room, certainly says at first: 'Toorop'. There is definitely a certain affinity present").<sup>50</sup> Howarth states that the Mackintosh group found no appeal in the products of Belgian, and, especially, French Art Nouveau. This claim is founded upon a comment of Mary Sturrock, daughter of Francis Newbery (who was responsible for bringing together Mackintosh, Herbert MacNair and the sisters Margaret and Frances Macdonald to create 'The Four'). The argument is that Mackintosh 'fought against' Continental Art Nouveau ('like melted margarine') with his 'straight lines'. Mary Sturrock herself acknowledged Beardsley, Toorop and Voysey (with Carlos Schwabe) as influences on Mackintosh. Nevertheless, notwithstanding Howarth's own concern to emphasise the contrast between the Scottish and Continental schools, and his assertion that "despite the evidence, many people still persist in classifying Mackintosh with the Guinards, Gallés and van de Veldes of *Art Nouveau* persuasion",<sup>51</sup> certain important similarities do appear real enough, and these have to be meaningfully explained and placed within an analytic framework. Nor are the similarities only those which attach to 'linear structure', the "lines of hesitant elegance" which Ahlers-Hestermann interpreted in Mackintosh's work as conveying "a faint distant echo of van de Velde".<sup>52</sup> There are, additionally, the elements of symbolism and abstraction in the Glasgow group's work to be explained. With van de Velde linear structure is employed often for symbolic purposes: significantly, Madsen found in the work of the Mackintosh group "a *linear and symbolic aspect*",<sup>53</sup> and in Belgian Art Nouveau "an *abstract and plastic conception*",<sup>54</sup> Abstraction is central to Mackintosh's work; he 'intellectualized' about

architectural effects by employing abstract concepts such as space ("His supreme skill as an architect was his masterly handling of space"),<sup>55</sup> volume and shape in his designs, in such a way as to reinforce *ideas* of place, of self, through confrontation with a non-historicist architecture. With Mackintosh, Talwin Morris pointed out in 1897,

"the controlling scheme is never lost sight of, or smothered in irrelevant detail. He realises to the full, the pleasantness and valuable repose of undecorated space. In conceiving a design, he has felt and realised its effect in the selected material; and not only acknowledging the conditions of the space treated, he has frankly met and greeted the difficulties it presented; so that we recognise them no longer as difficulties, but as elements of the composition".<sup>56</sup>

It is significant that, in differentiating Mackintosh's work from that of the other members of 'The Four' - subsequent, that is, to differentiating the group's ('homogeneous') work as a whole from the products of contemporary commercialism and eclecticism - Howarth should emphasise narrow angular upright forms as being absolutely central to Mackintosh's style. He subsequently asserts that Mackintosh

"appears to have been impelled by an urge to express growth - root, stem, branch and flower - *almost all his subsequent* (i.e. after about 1895) *work can be analysed in these terms*". Surging vertical lines invariably predominate, whether in the pattern of a Christmas card, or a poster, or in an exaggerated chair back, and they find ultimate expression in the dramatic west wing, (i.e. the library wing) of the new Glasgow School of Art".<sup>57</sup>

In referring to an evident 'urge to express growth' Howarth creates difficulties for his own argumentation about Mackintosh not having been an Art Nouveau practitioner, by relating the latter's style in this way to the style he was supposed to have been rejecting. In other words, to interpret the linear and symbolic element in the Scottish work as expressing 'growth' and 'force' is to directly link it with European Art Nouveau, including the work of the Belgian Victor Horta. In describing the metal mouldings for the facade of Hoffmann's *Palais Stoclet*, Eduard Sekler differentiates the linear elements in Hoffmann's design from the 'lines of force' characteristic of Horta's architecture; he refers to the former as being 'tectonically neutral', thus implying that Hoffmann in Vienna, with his geometric form language, was not employing



structure to the same expressive ends as the earlier Art Nouveau practitioners in Belgium and France. John Russell Taylor, in setting apart 'British' from Continental Art Nouveau, describes the "geometrical severity and simplicity" of the former, which, he argues, can be understood as a reformation of "the severe and rectilinear Perpendicular style" of British gothic at the end of the middle ages.<sup>58</sup> Taylor considers 'British Art Nouveau' to have developed on the fringes of the Arts and Crafts movement. He claims that the former 'followed' the latter but he is nonetheless concerned to elucidate essential differences:

"... such is the paradoxical nature of art nouveau, the final product is nearly always much simpler and less cluttered than Arts and Crafts, though direct, uncomplicated communication is a prime aim of Arts and Crafts designers, they are, just because of their high ideals and almost religious principles, to a considerable extent prisoners of their own style and their own time. Much Arts and Crafts design is infected by a mid-Victorian fussiness and ornateness".<sup>59</sup>

The simplicity and lack of clutter apparent with Art Nouveau (illustrated, for example, by Beardsley's decorative book illustrations which contrast with William Morris's constrained and conventional creations) Taylor attributes to a knowledge of architectural principles of construction; principles which could be productively applied in opposing the intricacy of previous styles:

"All through the history of British art nouveau, from the Century Guild to the end of the Glasgow school, architects play a prominent part, directly or indirectly . . . Hence architectural principles of construction, a certain tendency to build designs on a firm framework, however freely the details might be organized within it, are apparent in British art nouveau right from the start and remain constant".<sup>60</sup>

One of the manifestations of British 'art nouveau's' hostility towards the 'decadence' of the Aesthetic movement, Taylor claims, was the emphasis placed by the former upon geometrical severity and simplicity. But Taylor's rather obscure description of British Art Nouveau (was Beardsley, the friend of Whistler and Wilde and admirer of Burne-Jones, who acquired no architectural training whatever, really closer to the Arts and Crafts movement than to the Aesthetic movement?) casts little light on the means whereby Scottish Art Nouveau (which he does not distinguish analytically from the

alleged English variety) inherited much from the Aesthetic movement, as witness the romanticism and symbolism it employed in the early 1890's. Mackintosh was clearly not averse to the use of the type of high-flown idealist/aestheticist modes of expression which would have evinced queasiness in the most sanguine Arts and Crafts ideologue.<sup>61</sup> Early on in their collaboration in Glasgow, a connection was drawn between The Four and the Aesthetic movement; the Glasgow Evening Times referred to a local social event at which the Macdonald sisters were described as appearing 'most aesthetic' in 'sacque gowns and muslin fichus'.<sup>62</sup> The Newberys' home at Buckingham Street, Hillhead, Glasgow, was acknowledged to have been decorated in an Aesthetic movement manner.<sup>63</sup> Art et Decoration (1903), portrayed the Glasgow Style as a manifestation of the ultimate in aestheticism by relating it to the *outré* taste of the 'decadent' hero of Huysmans' novel A Rebours; only a "crazy *Des Esseintes* would be able to live with it".<sup>64</sup>

Gillian Naylor presents a similar appraisal to that of Taylor. She, for example, finds gothic and Art Nouveau elements being combined in Ashbee's silverware;

"he uses simple robust forms that are reminiscent of medieval silverwork often with the stylized naturalistic motifs that are characteristic of Art Nouveau".<sup>64a</sup>

She even claims that Crane, one of the staunchest critics of the Art Nouveau style, "produced work that can be defined as Art Nouveau".<sup>65</sup> This is made on the basis of perceived movement in his designs, where these incorporate naturalistic motifs such as leaves, flowers, and plant forms, as well as the asymmetry, complexity, suppleness and linearity apparent. According to Taylor, Crane was "not unsympathetic to the elements which were to contribute so importantly to the make-up of art nouveau".<sup>66</sup>

Leaving aside for the moment the question of the acceptability of these interpretations, if it be asserted that 'tectonic neutrality' was the aim behind Mackintosh's use of straight lines, and that this use was central to his rejection of Art Nouveau, it would still have to be explained why Howarth could find little difficulty in interpreting the employment of these vertical lines as signifying the



expression of growth and force. We therefore need to pose the question: what is the relationship between the utilisation of straight lines to convey "geometrical severity and simplicity" ('tectonic neutrality'), and straight lines to express growth and force (organic symbolism)? Such a question cannot be adequately addressed without an elucidation of the relationships that obtained between the Scottish school and the Continent, because the stylistic changes which affected Art Nouveau, including Scottish Art Nouveau, are not apparent in the English context. We need to begin, however, by examining explanations that have been put forward on the possible basis of the new style which appeared in Glasgow in the early 1890's.

According to Schmutzler, the importance of William Blake's work as an influence on the early ornamental drawings of Mackintosh and the Macdonald sisters (who were, incidentally, English, not Scottish) is apparent. For example, 'Ill Omen' (1893) and 'A Pond' (1894) by Frances Macdonald; 'November 5th' (date unknown) and 'Crucifixion' (1894) by Margaret Macdonald; Mackintosh's design for a Glasgow School of Art diploma (1893) all illustrate an affinity with Blake. This is evident in the use of geometric structures, rigid symmetry, arrangements in rows and parallels. Schmutzler goes so far as to assert that "The Glasgow artists indeed discovered late Art Nouveau through Blake's work".<sup>67</sup> Typically, what was involved was a synthesizing or blending of representational and abstract elements to the end of achieving decorative work with negligible meaning, but which remained vaguely symbolical. In other words, Blake's themes are emptied of their content, forms are simplified - for example, a patterned shape of circular and oval forms used to create structure (Mackintosh's diploma design derived, so Schmutzler claims, from a specific Blake watercolour) - in order to attain a decorative style, a kind of composite ornament. The emphasis placed on symmetry here, derived from Blake, is as much in contrast to the asymmetry of High Art Nouveau as it is to Japanese art, the latter one of the most significant influences upon Art Nouveau. What this analysis is taken to reveal is that, in the early 1890's, differences in

style between Mackintosh and the two women has much to do with degrees of abstraction in the handling of ornamentation:

"The tangle of powerfully curved bands, lines and stripes which (without their having any recognisable sense as objects or symbols) enclose the very stylized nude figures was later transformed by Mackintosh into entirely abstract ornamentation, while the Macdonalds were more inclined to remain faithful to figurative and representational ornament".<sup>68</sup>

These stylized female nude figures, employed as expressive ornaments, have, according to Schautzler, a concrete link illustrating the Pre-Raphaelite influence with Ford Madox Brown's unfinished painting entitled 'Take Your Son, Sir' (1856-57) which was greatly influenced by Rossetti (although, in this case, the figure is not nude). The unfinished condition of the painting is rendered significant in that abstract and concrete elements are blended, and two-dimensional qualities are consequently stressed. The woman's head in the picture is placed against a mirror "like a vaguely symbolical halo which corresponds to the most variegated abstract figures or circles and discs in works of Mackintosh and the Macdonald sisters".<sup>69</sup> Additionally, the image of the baby wrapped in a cloth draped in the form of a rose provides the Scottish artists with the motif of the abstract rose which often appears in their work "placed in the middle of an either circularly enlarged or vertically elongated figure".<sup>70</sup>

At the turn of the century, Hermann Muthesius, in tracing the recent history of 'decorative line' back to Blake, acknowledged that "Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites may be regarded as the direct forerunners of J. Toorop as well as of the Glasgow artists".<sup>71</sup> Certainly the Glasgow artists were highly aware of the Pre-Raphaelites. Mackintosh had reproductions of paintings by Burne-Jones in his Dennistoun studio. Margaret Macdonald's appearance (she had green eyes and red hair) was described by Desmond Chapman-Huston as recalling Rossetti and Burne-Jones, "except that she is altogether original; she has no poses, and does not seek to copy anyone".<sup>72</sup> Madsen considered that the earliest Art Nouveau style in Britain evolved with late Pre-Raphaelites; he named Crane, Sumner, H. P. Horne, Selwyn Image, Beardsley, Ricketts and



(more loosely) Mackmurdo. The influence of Beardsley's "linear contortion and convolution"<sup>73</sup> (illustrations for Wilde's *Salomé*) and Toorop's mystic abstraction (especially his painting *The Three Brides*) upon the group of four, has long since been precisely dated to 1893, when the first issue of The Studio appeared (September). Mary Sturrock Newbery reflected in the 1940's that this was the first truly significant event in Mackintosh's artistic development. An article by C.F.A. Voysey in this first issue had emphasised the view that authentic new work required a mastery of craft, a complete knowledge of material and a recourse to nature for inspiration and guidance. Mackintosh himself acknowledged his debt to Voysey, whose influence upon him is apparent after 1893. At this time, the Macdonald sisters were day-school students at the Glasgow School of Art; Mackintosh had enrolled there as an evening pupil in 1884; and MacNair had been a fellow student. Newbery, the then Director of the School, an Englishman, appointed, at the age of 31, in 1885, was responsible for bringing together the four young designers after having become aware of a striking similarity in their work. Newbery's ideas on education in the arts and crafts followed those of Thomas Armstrong, the Head of the National Art Training School at South Kensington, London, when Newbery was a student there. The establishment of 'The Four' "together with the confirmation and incitement of 'The Studio' provided the necessary impetus for the establishment of a fully-fledged style".<sup>74</sup> This style was, at the time, held in common by all the members of the group. In 1897, material produced by the group to accompany articles in The Studio by Gleeson White (the journal's editor) led to an invitation to 'hold a show'<sup>75</sup> in Vienna.

"The consequent exhibition there not only established (Mackintosh's) place as one of the first modern architects and decorators of the day, but gave new life to a group of brilliant young architects, decorators, sculptors and metal workers who at once acknowledged him as their leader".<sup>76</sup>



The truth behind this assertion by Mary Sturrock Newbery can be validated by referring to an article which appeared in the Glasgow press in 1908 where it was claimed by a Vienna correspondent that

"Both Mr. and Mrs. Mackintosh are held in high esteem in Vienna. It is, however, to him that the young architects and decorative artists turn. In him they see a tower of strength; they admire him, esteem him, and are thankful to him for the lessons he has taught. He is regarded by his contemporary architects and artists here as one of the chief founders of modern decorative art. The influence that he practices on them is subtle and indefinable".<sup>77</sup>

### 3. The Link Between Glasgow and Vienna

The participation of the Glasgow group in the eighth Viennese Secession exhibition of 1900 was to have crucial implications for the subsequent development of the Glasgow Style. Indeed the phenomenon of Art Nouveau in Glasgow cannot be adequately understood before some examination is made of the impact upon it of new Austro-German trends (filtered through, and focused on, Vienna). In the following section it will be examined to what extent Howarth's inability to periodize the stages through which Art Nouveau moved led him to deny that Mackintosh's work was capable of being considered Art Nouveau.

Mackintosh may well have viewed himself as fighting against the Art Nouveau which emanated from Belgium and France as Howarth claimed. There was certainly no shortage of prejudice against the latter ("Art Nouveau was apparently regarded in (English) artistic circles as another example of French folly and eccentricity, dangerous and probably immoral").<sup>78</sup> But if this was indeed the case, then the most relevant questions to be asked would be, when was this, for what reasons, and in what context? For example, Mackintosh may have been taking issue with the highly ornamental non-functional approach to furniture design apparent with French Art Nouveau. The initial point to be made in this context is that, with Mackintosh's own approach, form followed attention to functional requirements. As we shall see, this had crucial implications for the manner in which he 'handled' Art Nouveau style.

We have already noted that the use of surging vertical lines for symbolic purposes - in the case of Mackintosh, as Howarth presents it, to express (organic) growth and force/energy - is a central distinguishing feature of Art Nouveau style. *On what basis* then is Mackintosh to be set apart from the "Guimards, Gallés and van de Velde's of *Art Nouveau* persuasion" as Howarth insists he should be? The use of straight lines ('the sprightly linear style') has been commented upon, notably by Madsen in 1967,<sup>79</sup> as one of the foremost principles of the Glasgow school; he asserted that decoration is never

allowed to "overflow and take possession of the object, as it did in continental Art Nouveau".<sup>20</sup> This particular characteristic Madsen attributed to the Arts and Crafts Movement's struggle to achieve simple, austere decoration. But the Arts and Crafts Movement exerted a significant stylistic and ideological influence upon the Belgian Art Nouveau practitioners Serrurier-Bovy and van de Velde also. The latter became absorbed in the writings of Ruskin and Morris, along with those of Nietzsche, around 1889, and it is important to note the reasons behind van de Velde's tribute to Serrurier-Bovy, written in 1901; he states that the latter was

"unquestionably the first artist on the Continent who realised the importance of the English Arts and Crafts style and had the courage to introduce it to us and to defend it".<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps the significance of the link connecting, on the one hand, Mackintosh, and on the other, these particular Belgian designers, with the Arts and Crafts movement, is underplayed by Howarth because of his prejudice in favour of architecture; Serrurier-Bovy and van de Velde both excelled in furniture design. In the case of the former, Japanese influences figure strongly - as they would in Mackintosh's work after the early period - in his 'nicely balanced asymmetry'. Importantly for the clarification of stylistic influences, the simplified decorative style which appears in Serrurier-Bovy's work after the turn of the century (the stress now being placed on squares, rectangles, abstract geometric shapes) has been attributed to the influence of the Austrian school of Art Nouveau. If this is indeed the case, then the link with the Scottish style is legitimately made. However, what has to be recognised is that, by 1900, the Scottish influence was penetrating the Continent *by way of* Vienna. Howarth's description of Art Nouveau "radiating fanwise from Brussels"<sup>22</sup> has, consequently, to be corrected; describing an eastwards movement *towards* Vienna takes no account of the spread of influences in the *opposite direction* over a period of time.

Not only was an abstract geometric style very much the new vogue for Art Nouveau in Vienna by 1900 - it had replaced the fashion for a decorative *Jugendstil* - but this



style was to owe a great deal to the developments of the Glasgow designers over the next few years. Josef Hoffmann was to be active "in carefully selecting those elements from the Scottish architect's work compatible with an anti-naturalistic urge of 'Abstraktion'",<sup>93</sup> With the eighth Secession exhibition (1900) a formal abstract-geometric order was already being manifested and this would be the herald of the new direction:

"the contact with Mackintosh's work was undoubtedly one of the factors in renovating Hoffmann's style, at least as far as interior design was concerned . . . the favourable reception given to the Scottish architect in Austria and Germany might appear incomprehensible if one were to ignore the link between his design research and the movement towards a *rappel a l'ordre* then emerging in German speaking countries".<sup>94</sup>

Succinctly put, this 'call to order' was directed against naturalism and symbolism, particularly as demonstrated by *Jugendstil*, now considered excessively decorative. Mackintosh's 'design research' was obviously moving him away from the romantic and organic symbolism and the 'naturalism' of the 1890's. Wooden furniture was now (up to about 1902) being lacquered (in black, white, silver) - an active negation of the 'nature' of the material; 'straight lines' had now appeared to replace curved ones; interiors were designed in black and white. Such design concepts were consilient with those of Hoffmann who expressed his interest as being "in the square as such and in the use of black and white . . . because these clear elements never appeared in earlier styles".<sup>95</sup> Contrast between black and white became a trademark of the *Wiener Werkstätte*.

The actual perceived relevance of such developments on the Austro-German scene was conditioned by a new approach to aesthetic theory emanating from Theodor Lipps, who, in 1898, interpreted the meaning and significance of Art Nouveau's abstract symbolism of linear form as follows:

"We stand at the threshold of an altogether new art, an art with forms which mean or represent nothing, recall nothing, yet which can stimulate our souls as deeply as the tones of music have been able to do".<sup>96</sup>

If these forms meant, represented, recalled nothing, that is, did not depend upon the assumption of prior knowledge (in the strict sense of objective meaning, knowledge of real objects), and yet they could elicit this degree of stimulation, then this had to result from a pure, aesthetic response to form alone. The combination of a concept of the absolute necessity of art's autonomy from social meanings prevalent in the established order, with the recognition of the potency of non-realist expressionism; this underpinned the ideal which attached itself to the potential of pure abstraction. The Munich *Jugendstil* artist and theoretician August Endell attempted to 'operationalize' Lipps' concepts through his artistic work. Endell himself proposed to analyse 'scientifically' the means of symbolic communication with a view to rationally controlling the latter in practical terms. As Ezio Godoli describes, the premise of (conscious) rational control implies *overcoming*

"the need to surrender to the powers of the unconscious found in *Jugendstil naturalism* and *symbolism* in favour of a *Gestaltung* which, by adopting as its own postulates the aesthetic categories formulated by the Viennese school of art history, made geometric abstraction into its own basic morphological law and freed the expression of *necessity* and the response to precise rules of form from the emotive free-will of the poetic ideals of *Erlebnis*".<sup>97</sup>

To interpret the parts the whole must be known; the Lipps/Endell position began from Wilhelm Dilthey's 'hermeneutic circle'. But it subsequently stressed that if the form of the whole derives from geometry (intellectual abstraction) then we are freed from the obscurantism and mystification involved in lived experience (*Erlebnis*) which latter is greatly limited by prior experience, emotionality, and the operations of unknown and unconscious (repressed) forces. Artistic forms consequently become divested of cultural meanings and symbols bound by the past, they are thus free, as 'pure' geometric forms, and closer to true originality. (Walter Benjamin pointed out that the term *Erlebnis* had been misused within the German tradition of *Lebensphilosophie* from Dilthey to Bergson. More correctly, the 'lived experience' signified by *Erlebnis* was vivid, intense and momentary. It has indeed an essential relation to continuity with



the past; but if prior experience is taken to refer to everything experienced or learned through experience, then it is more accurately rendered, Benjamin insisted, by the German word *Erfahrung*.<sup>88</sup>

On the basis of distinguishing High Art Nouveau from late Art Nouveau, Schmutzler emphasises the point that (a) both spring from the same roots; and (b) late Art Nouveau (geometric, rectilinear, cubic) can, at first, appear to be diametrically opposed to High Art Nouveau (curved, organic).

"In late Art Nouveau, biological life and dynamism give way to rigid calm. The proportions are still directly related to those of High Art Nouveau and the rudimentary forms of the older curve are equally present everywhere".<sup>89</sup>

In the light of this description, it is instructive to compare Schmutzler's interpretation of a photograph, claimed by Herbert MacNair to be of the interior of Mackintosh's studio at No. 2 Firpark Terrace, Dennistoun, Glasgow, taken about 1890, with Howarth's and Mary Sturrock Newbery's attempts to typify Mackintosh's work quoted above. This photograph shows a decorative frieze placed below the ceiling of the room, painted on a long roll of wrapping paper. The frieze has figures "conceived as concisely limited, homogeneous, two-dimensional forms with broad spaces between them". Curvilinear, but lacking the type of elements which Schmutzler finds are typical of High Art Nouveau - heavily flowing or convulsive outlines; "In this instance it is rather a matter of wide and flat curves, like oval segments, almost in the style of late Art Nouveau".<sup>90</sup> Almost, but not quite, because, stylistically, this frieze appears quite unique to Schmutzler. Which is to say that, even at this allegedly early stage, there is a claimed autonomy from hitherto assumed influences such as Beardsley and Toorop.

"Years before Beardsley and Toorop, who are both generally quoted as the probable sources of the style of the Glasgow group, could have had any influence (Beardsley had not yet produced anything at that early date), Mackintosh had demonstrated the originality of his forms. Indeed, from the very start, he was much less dependent on outside influences than has been supposed".<sup>91</sup>

Not surprisingly, influences *can* be found, and Schmutzler is not long in



elucidating them; that of Japanese style upon, not only this frieze, but also the metal candelabra seen before the fireplace in the study and bedroom.

We might ask how Schmutzler can square his recognition of the Japanese influence upon Mackintosh in what he takes to be 1890, and the lack of any Japanese influence in 1893-1894 (the ornamental drawings), especially since he acknowledges it as being so important. The major problem with this interpretation is that it is based upon the acceptance of MacNair's testimony, reported by Howarth, that this is the interior of Firpark Terrace in 1890. Subsequent evidence pointed to the likelihood that the photograph was taken as late as 1896, and that the interior is of the Mackintosh family house in 27 Regent Square, Glasgow.<sup>92</sup> An identical 'cat' frieze appears in a photograph of the Davidson family's home 'Gladsmuir' in Kilmacolm, designed by Mackintosh in 1895. For Macleod, this evidence vindicates the view that Beardsley was indeed a significant influence, and that in Beardsley's work Mackintosh "saw the basis for decorative exploration which, though using traditional elements, could create a new symbolism".<sup>93</sup>

In the light of the latter, Schmutzler's description can be reappraised: the "wide and flat curves almost in the style of late Art Nouveau", now being placed chronologically, and, therefore, meaningfully, within the process of Mackintosh's stylistic development, we are provided with an illustration of him moving towards the late Art Nouveau style (again, geometric, rectilinear, cubic) which so impressed the Viennese Secessionists. The success of the Scottish group in Vienna led to influences from Viennese designers which would have an instrumental effect upon the subsequent work of the former. The process of change can be illustrated by reference to the four schemes carried out by Mackintosh for Cranston's tea-rooms in Glasgow. The first (designed, along with the second, in collaboration with George Walton) is in marked contrast to the last, where the influence of abstract geometric style is dramatically apparent. The 'Cloister Room' and 'Chinese Room' in the Ingram Street tea-rooms (1911), and the bedroom of Bassett-Lowke's Northampton house (1916) display a close resemblance

to Hoffmann-inspired interiors anticipating Art Deco style carried out earlier by the Wiener Werkstatte.<sup>94</sup> "The incidence of the square as the principal decorative motive in Hoffmann's work symbolizes his rejection of *Art Nouveau*",<sup>95</sup> says Howarth, emphasising the significance of the "emphatic unity and uncompromising form - the antithesis of the sensuous curve".<sup>96</sup> Yet Schmutzler consistently places the work of Hoffmann, especially after 1900, firmly in the category of *late Art Nouveau*, along with that of Mackintosh from the same period. For instance: Hoffmann's Brussels *Palais Stoclet* (1905-11); Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art west wing (1907-9). This is significant, because Howarth is skeptical of the argument that "Hoffmann modelled his work on that of Mackintosh". In focusing upon the period 1900-1901 he states that

"the furniture of the two men bears individual characteristics that make nonsense of the suggestion of plagiarism at this stage, despite a strong superficial resemblance".<sup>97</sup>

But since the Glasgow were only invited to participate for the first time at the Secession exhibition in the autumn of 1900, it might appear somewhat strange to be speaking of plagiarism at all. The most significant (well illustrated) articles on the Scottish group in a periodical by that time had appeared in The Studio (July and September 1897), and Dekorative Kunst (1898). Peter Vergo comments that the similarity between the work of the Glasgow school and that of Hoffmann (and Moser) is "hardly surprising when one remembers the vogue enjoyed by British designers on the Continent at this time (1900), especially in Vienna".<sup>98</sup> This is much too loose, however, to be helpful for the specification of what precisely the British influences on Continental designers were likely to be. (Sekler has argued that, in certain cases, Hoffmann is stylistically much closer to Ashbee than to Mackintosh). As noted earlier, the Dekorative Kunst article makes the claim that Mackintosh and MacNair designs had a 'remarkable similarity' to designs by Koepping, Obrist and van de Velde. Plagiarism on either side of the Channel was ruled out, the conclusion being that the Scottish and Continental movements started independently of each other. In this context similarities



were ultimately attributed to "certain things in the air" concerned with "purely objective logic and technical questions".

For Howarth,

"Illustrations of Hoffmann's work at the Vienna exhibition demonstrate that if anything, he had made greater strides than his Scottish friend. His furniture betrays fewer idiosyncracies, and is seldom eccentric".<sup>99</sup>

But as already noted above, the favourable reception in Austria and Germany, which was triggered off by that first Secession exhibition, was rooted in the acknowledgement that the aims, ideology and psychology of the Glasgow style were greatly in tune with the new movement which was embracing abstract geometry and anti-naturalism. It was surely *subsequently* that elements in the Glasgow style became increasingly significant for Hoffmann, just as elements in the Secession style subsequently became significant for Mackintosh. Speaking of the effects of the 1900 exhibition, Howarth asserts that

"Almost overnight it seemed that the entire Viennese movement, with Hoffmann at its head, blazed into new life, *and the next three or four years* saw the outpouring of a quantity of decorative work and furnishing of a very high order, all in its whiteness and plainness bearing a striking superficial resemblance to that of Mackintosh, but revealing a wealth of original detail and a conception of design which often far transcended that of the Scottish architect himself . . . And yet there was no suggestion of plagiarism. The linear patterns, the sensuous curves and the mysterious symbolism of the Scottish artists was discarded as surely and as firmly as the wilder affectations of continental *Art Nouveau*, and a distinctly independent Viennese style emerged".<sup>100</sup>

But were the "linear patterns, the sensuous curves and the mysterious symbolism" not being discarded by Mackintosh also in his movement towards increasing abstraction? And was this not a reflection of the movement from High to late Art Nouveau? Also, why has Howarth now dropped his attempt to differentiate Mackintosh's style from that of the other members of the group? We have already referred to Mackintosh's 'design research' and noted that the process of stylistic change was a gradual one: the 'old' elements were not divested overnight. This was undoubtedly why Hoffmann found himself practising selectivity: only certain, particular, elements in the Scottish work at that time being consonant with the new aesthetic and stylistic priorities as he himself understood



them. Godoli comments on Hoffmann's interiors 'redeploying' the elements of Mackintosh's language, but "purged of all symbolist residue",<sup>101</sup> and Sekler claims that "it is undeniable that the high artistic quality of the Scottish work and the intensity of stylistic expression that came across in it did not fail to make a strong impression on Hoffmann. Even if he did not change his own style fundamentally, some of his pieces bear a marked similarity to Mackintosh's work . . ." <sup>102</sup>

Within the context of Austrian Art Nouveau, which, as a component part of the European movement, developed later than it had in Belgium, France, or even Germany (with *Jugendstil*), new stylistic ideals were appearing for the regeneration of applied art and architecture. To a significant degree symbolical, organic, floral and stalk-abstracted forms had been bypassed because a decorative style based upon the form-language of geometrical figures had emerged out of a movement that emphasised *construction* and form-material harmonisation. Although the actual links with the designs of Horta, Hankar, Serrurier-Bovy and van de Velde are apparent with the pavilion designs by Hoffmann and Olbrich for the City of Vienna Jubilee Exhibition of 1898 (which employed stylized plant forms),<sup>103</sup> geometry signified the new direction. Indeed, the work of the Secessionists was acknowledged by certain contemporary commentators to represent *authentic* Art Nouveau when viewed alongside the output of the various European movements on show at the Paris Universal Exposition of 1900:

"The phrase *Art Nouveau* which is seen and heard throughout the Exhibition, has no greater justification than in the displays of Austrian furnishing, where the most recent decorative tendencies are applied without exaggeration and do not reach the point of absurdity. As much cannot be said for the other nations making efforts in the same direction",<sup>104</sup>

The room designed by Hoffmann at the Exposition for the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts was described by one contemporary critic as being "in the manner of the School of Glasgow",<sup>105</sup> and the symbolist Fernand Khnopff made reference to the good reviews Hoffmann had received for his contributions. (One example was that by Arsene Alexandre, who commented that the Secession "sought to give a lesson in elegance to the whole

world . . . and in this was completely successful").<sup>106</sup> Khnopff insisted that Hoffmann was

"essentially rational and reasonable in all he does, with compositions that are never extravagant, never intentionally loud as are those of some of his more western *confrères*".<sup>107</sup>

Given the common stylistic elements between the Glasgow and Viennese schools at this point in time, it is likely that Khnopff would have had similar comments to make about the former.

The late Art Nouveau of the Vienna Secession is, therefore, intimately connected to the the late Art Nouveau of the Glasgow movement, in the specific sense that both manifest the abstract geometric form-language as a recognisable style. Thus Mackintosh did not abandon Art Nouveau; he came into contact with a centre of the new movement which was already pushing towards a modernist fusing of decoration and function within the 'total' work of art. Also, and importantly, the geometric form-language of late Art Nouveau held significant potential for the possible future mass production of cultural artefacts. The process which followed the initial confrontation between the Scottish and Viennese movements was a highly interactive one. As Sekler summarises,

"The artistic impact seems to have been entirely mutual between Hoffmann and Mackintosh, since in the wake of Hoffmann's most severely geometric purism, around 1903, the furniture style of the Scottish artist also changed; square or rectangular forms often comprised of straight parallel elements took the place of the earlier characteristic long-drawn curves".<sup>108</sup>

#### 4. The Significance of Symbolism in Understanding Art Nouveau.

It was in Symbolism that early Art Nouveau confronted allegorical devices embodying images founded upon analogy. Lalique, the French Art Nouveau artist-designer, who worked in jewellery, gold and silver, was an exponent of a decorative symbolic style which exemplified very precise ideas about the relationship between representation and ornamentation. In what has been termed his 'fanciful naturalism', numerous shades of gold, enamels (opaque and translucent), irregularly shaped pearls, semi-precious



coloured stones, are combined in such a way as to create designs with a heightened emotional quality. As Greta Daniel described, in Lalique's work,

"unconventional freedom of expression is combined with formal arrangement of fantastic images and depends on complete mastery of a technique to make each piece an entity".

These 'fantastic images' were derived from natural forms - plants, insects, birds. This represented an aspect of the style of which Voysey would have approved, despite his expressed loathing of Art Nouveau, a loathing which took the form of a moral, and not an artistic, judgement ("I do not see why the forms of birds, for instance, may not be used, provided they are reduced to mere symbols").<sup>109</sup>

By contrast with Lalique, in Hoffmann's work at the turn of the century, there is apparent a concern with pure abstraction which can only be properly understood in relation to contemporary aesthetic theory, concerned, above all, to purge art of the limitations imposed by representation and its derivatives. Given this frame of reference, symbolism remains restricted by its reliance on quasi-representational forms. The movement towards abstraction was attempting to free art from these limitations but this involved a number of 'compromises'. Jean Delville's '*Portrait of Mrs. Stuart Merrill*' (1892) illustrates a symbolic use of geometry with its 'perfect triangle of human knowledge', and Klimt's portraits of women employed geometric and asymmetrical elements. Lalique used the device of having female forms merge into insect, plant, or animal forms, and similar images decorate the pages of *Jugend*, where human and non-human forms, though merged, are both treated naturalistically. Such obvious products of the imagination could hardly be accepted as representations of the 'real', but neither could they be termed abstract, because they combine contradictory fragments (with their own inherent validity) of a recognisable, objective reality for the purpose of positing images acknowledged as unreal, but also as having overcome the contradictions between the social and the natural.

In the case of the Mackintosh group, figures, especially female figures, were increasingly treated in a *stylized symbolic* manner which did not reflect contemporary female types, and which eschewed naturalistic representation in favour of decorative execution. The stylistic movement, thus apprehended, appears as being in the direction of increasing abstraction through a highly innovative approach to symbolism, which, although founded upon a synthesis of several contemporary influences, facilitates significant freedom from the kind of substantive meaning concretized through traditions of western realism. The images are moved closer to the sphere of linear, abstract patterns. The interest of The Four in historical examples of monumental metal work has not been much commented upon, and yet the low-relief, embossed, repousse (beaten metal panelling) works of the Macdonald sisters points to the significance of such an interest for the development of their style. Mackintosh, in his capacity as Architect Governor of the Glasgow School of Art, was to be instrumental in securing a collection of rubbings of medieval English monumental brasses which were subsequently arranged in the Museum in the School in 1911. His own description of these rubbings illustrates that their expressive value was perceived as inhering in the two-dimensional linearity which they presented: "Mr Mackintosh . . . referred to the value of the rubbings as showing how *simple drawing conveyed fine sentiment and beautiful emotion*".<sup>110</sup> If the concern with simple drawing recalls the Beardsley-inspired early period of the Four, the concept of the emotional potential of art harks back to the symbolists. It was 'beautiful emotion' which Art Nouveau wished to impose on reality, and it acknowledged the fact that such could only be achieved through practical means. Not surprisingly, therefore, Mackintosh was concerned with the means for actualizing the potential offered by a whole range of contemporary applied and industrial arts; hence his conviction was that "By means of these rubbings the student could learn design, composition, costume, lettering, and the technique of brass engraving".<sup>111</sup>



The writers and artists who had been influenced by the summarised concepts, distilled from the poetry of Verlaine and Mallarmé and the prose of Huysmans, that were presented by Jean Moréas in his Symbolist Manifesto of 1886, were concerned to reject narrative style and the depiction of everyday reality. Symbolism was preoccupied with conveying "the veiled essence of reality, with the *idea* behind the shape . . . The aim of art was not to describe observed reality, but rather to *suggest felt reality*".<sup>112</sup>

The aesthetic response to a work of art was to be elicited via a process of 'divining' or 'suggesting' (to use Mallarmé's terms) rather than describing or naming. Thus instead of addressing itself to the intellect, the symbol was to liberate emotion through its being experienced as beautiful. These symbolist notions had a profound effect on Bergson, who described how "every feeling experienced by us will assume an aesthetic character, provided that it has been *suggested*, and not *caused*".<sup>113</sup> Bergson employed 'dream', 'sleep' and 'hypnosis' metaphorically in his attempts to describe aesthetic experience as a state of perfect responsiveness to feeling, in which the 'personality' is lulled to sleep. The most potent of the arts was music, precisely because, unlike nature, which *expressed* feelings, music *suggested* them through its ability to employ rhythm and measure in suspending the normal flow of ideas and sensations.

In attempting to provide an analogue of the role of sound in symbolist poetry, or in music, the exponents of Art Nouveau saw themselves as helping to provide the means towards abstraction by emphasising the symbolic quality of line as an expressive force. Such an approach was anticipated by Crane in England, who, in 1889, insisted that

"line is all-important. Let the designer, therefore, in the adaptation of his art, lean upon the staff of line - line determinative, line emphatic, line delicate, line expressive, line controlling and uniting".<sup>114</sup>

Van de Velde's theory of the expressive forces and emotional values of line is illustrated by his description of line as "a force which is active like all elemental forces".<sup>114a</sup>

In a *Salon* review written in 1859, Baudelaire, in describing art's ability to be autonomous from the world, had insisted that

"art diminishes its self-respect, prostrates itself before exterior reality, and the artist becomes more inclined to paint not what he dreams but what he sees".<sup>115</sup>

For the symbolists, aesthetic experience resulted from the sense of reality being obscured, as in dreams. But having recognised the nature and significance of the dream, the problem for the symbolists was how to maximize art's potential for inducing it.

"Don't copy nature too much", warned Paul Gauguin in 1888,

"Art is an abstraction; derive this abstraction from nature while dreaming before it, but think more of creating than of actual result".<sup>116</sup>

At this time, that is, subsequent to the 'loss of faith' experienced by the 'Impressionists' in France and the "beginnings of the attempt to produce what Verhaeren called a 'new art'",<sup>117</sup> Gauguin was developing a style of bold, abstract outline, with non-naturalistic colour harmonies, no modelling, no foreshortening, and with depth of composition reduced to a flat plane, with a decorative pattern of rhythmic lines superimposed upon it. These aspects of what were ostensibly an avant-garde attempt to simplify form, relate Gauguin's works of this period to Art Nouveau in spirit. The principle of two-dimensionality was applied in his overtly symbolist works such as 'Vision after the Sermon' (1888), 'Yellow Christ' (1889) and 'Decorative Landscape', as well as in the non-symbolist 'still Life with Three Puppies' (1888) where space is flattened, depth suppressed, thus effectively rendering the wallpaper in the 'background' interchangeable with the tablecloth. This practice of suspending the definition of objects, so as to express the purely decorative value of two-dimensional shape, became one of the central factors in Art Nouveau decoration. But it is likely that the new decorative style of starkly simplified form was applied to Gauguin's designs for sculptures, decorative plates and vases *before* it was extended into his painting. Emile Bernard, on whose painting 'Breton Women in a Meadow' (1888) 'Vision after the Sermon' was directly based, had "borrowed devices from Gothic stained glass



windows, medieval textiles, enamel work and Japanese prints".<sup>118</sup> The relationship of involvement with craft material, demonstrated by these vanguard artists, alongside the formalized stylization of their work, illustrates the closeness to Art Nouveau concerns, as does the (anti-classical) aesthetic theory which underpins the work itself. The latter explained that the artist's thought had to be given a free reign in order that impressions and emotions could be translated into constructions of simplified forms: structures of colour, eloquent if emphatic outlines, slow movement: for each emotion, each thought, a plastic equivalent, a corresponding beauty, was supposed to exist. If these aesthetic rules (derived from rationalist principles) were followed, then quiet contemplation could be evoked in the perceiver, thus providing access to "the mysterious centres of thought".<sup>119</sup>

In his *Théories*, begun in 1890, when at work on the drawings for *Sagesse*, which have been considered to represent some of the earliest Art Nouveau book illustrations, the young French artist Maurice Denis set out the principles of vanguard aesthetic ideology as represented by Gauguin and Seurat. Denis insisted that meaning did not require to be imposed upon the work of art, through the inclusion of objectifications from other spheres of existence. Meaning, beauty, coherence, unity, were qualities intrinsic to the work of art whose ability to arouse feeling in the perceiver did not require, for example, literary allusion or representation (Khnopff occasionally employed direct literary references in his work, such as *La Sphynge* which had a subject derived from a novel by Peladan, or 'I Lock my Door upon Myself' from the Christina Rossetti poem).<sup>120</sup> Denis acknowledged the role of a linear language in the expression of a range of typified emotional experiences (upward-moving lines: joy; downward-curving lines: inhibition). It was in the process of elaborating on the ideas of Gauguin and the symbolist writers, and thus refining them - more specifically, in declaring the existence of a corresponding plastic equivalent, a line, colour or shape for each thought and each emotion - that Denis was able to stress the fundamental role of

visually meaningful forms in art production. In this respect, he claimed, there was no difference between the fine arts and the applied arts; power of form could just as easily be present in a vase, or a chair, as in a painting. Thus, a new conception of the decorative content and visual meaning of art works was to allow Art Nouveau practitioners a new range of expressiveness, and although the actual expressive content of works would manifest great variety, always the evocative power of the formal qualities would be acknowledged. While originating in graphic design and painting, the new style of embodying meaning in form, by influencing architecture and other spheres of design, had, by the middle of the 1890's, come near to realizing the ideal of a universal style for all things.

In 1897 The Studio published a second article by Gleeson White on the new group of Glasgow designers. White drew a comparison between McNair and the other members of The Four, specifically with regard to the symbolist content in their work. McNair was considered to be profoundly in sympathy with the other Glasgow designers, but he had, additionally, found his own individuality of expression:

"in his work there is more conscious symbolism, more of the mysticism which modern critics love to trace to Celtic blood, than is apparent in his neighbour".<sup>121</sup>

White highlighted the significance of this element, not as something peculiar to Scotland, but as part of the modern continental movement in culture:

"The fact remains that in Scotland as in England, in Germany no less than in Belgium, and in many other places, there is a return to mysticism, and to superstition and legendary fancies which at first sight seem out of touch with the 'actuality of modernity' as modern journalese phrases it".<sup>122</sup>

The frame of reference being invoked was the strain within symbolism that was inspired by overt mystico-religious preoccupations. The names of Khnopff, Moreau and Maeterlinck were cited in order to illustrate the view that the work of the Glasgow movement required complex interpretation because of the depth of idealist and symbolic meaning contained within it. The acknowledged delight in the imagination was explained as being probably inevitable as a reaction to "realism and naturalistic impressions". Such an



interpretation was validated by Talwin Morris, who, in the same year, was applauding the impressive treatment by the Macdonald sisters of "the most subtle allegories and mysteries of religion" with their illustrations for the 'Christmas Story':

"A picture that lays claim to consideration, as a work of art, must be in itself complete and satisfying - a poem not an anecdote in paint. If the artist may by no means restrain his argumentative tendencies, then let him also introduce a hieroglyphic significance; but let this be done entirely for his own immediate relief and satisfaction. A picture, using the word in the meaning of its derivation - that demands the exercise of emotions that are outside the control of the art of painting, ceases to be a picture. It has passed beyond the boundaries of pictorial art. It is a tract. As such, it would be manifestly unjust to assess its value in comparison with painting. So soon as the picture ceases to appeal to the eye, as music appeals to the ear, and in its demand upon our attention becomes dependent upon its narrative or legendary significance, it must be dissected as realism, not criticised as art".<sup>123</sup>

For Morris, the feeling elicited by genuine art was specifically aesthetic feeling, and the media through which art communicated involved symbols, allegories, hieroglyphics.

The (predominantly organic) symbolism specific to Art Nouveau was initially deeply conditioned by the decorative, linear approach to style in the struggle to achieve "a modernity defined as lean simplicity":<sup>124</sup> this symbolism was increasingly giving way to abstraction through the striving for a more intensive aesthetic distancing from realism and naturalism. After 1902, and the music salon designed for Fritz Warndorfer, Mackintosh rejected the literal use of organic decoration and moved increasingly towards geometric abstraction. This involved a less close collaboration with Margaret Macdonald, who has been consistently viewed (Morton Shand, Howarth, Billcliffe) as restricting Mackintosh's experimental abilities. For the Willow tea rooms, for example, the extent of Margaret's contribution was the provision of curtains and embroidered and gesso panels. According to Howarth, the reduced collaboration points up the contrast between Mackintosh and the other members of The Four with regard to abstract, romantic and symbolic elements. For him, Margaret's work

"shows little sign of development; she seems to have lived in a world of roses, love-in-a-mist, cherubs and falling petals - the quasi-dream world of Rossetti, Maeterlinck and the MacNairs - an amorphous paradise from which Mackintosh might well have escaped".<sup>125</sup>

And yet, Pevsner commented upon the "tendency towards abstraction and excessive tension"<sup>126</sup> characterising the interior designs of the Mackintosh-Macdonald *collaboration* subsequent to 1894. Pevsner was relating these interior designs to the design for the Glasgow Herald building done by Mackintosh in (probably) 1894; what is so striking about this latter work, is its originality (in particular, the tower), notwithstanding the fact that it belongs to Mackintosh's early period as an architect. Howarth concedes that originality was not limited to Mackintosh, that

"*The Four* were exploring many different avenues in an attempt to evolve an original style of drawing and decoration (and) that the girls were as deeply engrossed in experiment as the two young architects",<sup>127</sup>

By 1894 their 'peculiar' style was well developed. What then allows Howarth to make his stylistic distinction? First of all, he depicts Mackintosh's art forms as being more 'masculine' than the others (including MacNair), i.e. by definition characteristic of the male sex. It might well be asked, how applicable to artistic analysis is this sort of stereotyped thinking? The implication of Howarth's interpretation appears to be that Mackintosh's superior originality was rooted in the factor of his being male. Indeed it is the criterion of maleness which underpins Howarth's *combining* of Mackintosh and MacNair on the basis of their more apparent originality. Hence, despite the coherence and homogeneity of the group's style, 'individual' traits, Howarth claims, are easily recognisable, "more especially in the work of the two men",<sup>128</sup>

As a student of architecture, Howarth portrays his chosen discipline as the 'major' art form dwarfing all others. Hence, in his opinion, it was architecture which really allowed Mackintosh to excel; the decorative arts merely provided a 'testing ground' for the ideas which would crystallize as distinctive examples of modern architecture. MacNair, already restricted by the 'feminine' style as practiced by the two 'girls', and despite the 'easily recognisable' 'individual' traits in his work, "became more and more engrossed in the *minor* arts",<sup>129</sup> i.e. specifically design and craftwork. Thus lost to architecture, the ultimate test of artistic 'genius', the inferior MacNair left the



route clear for the better man, who "never lost sight of the fact that he was an architect first and foremost",<sup>130</sup> But *how* Mackintosh himself viewed architecture is extremely significant for the evaluation of Howarth's position, and this requires to be examined briefly.

Art Nouveau moved beyond symbolism and aestheticism through its becoming concerned with synthesizing and communalizing the arts, and thereby combining artistic with utilitarian concerns. In a lecture delivered in February 1893, the young Mackintosh demonstrated to what extent he had been impressed by the arguments presented in W. R. Lethaby's recent book Architecture, Mysticism and Myth (1892). Lethaby exemplified the link between Gothic revivalism and the Arts and Crafts movement which grew up in the heart of the former (Morris was a leader of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings). Giuliano Gresleri has recently referred to the influence exerted by this particular book on the Viennese Secessionists.<sup>131</sup> The conception which Mackintosh articulated was of all the arts, crafts and industries being combined in a new artistic form, the chief manifestations of which were to be found in architecture. Mackintosh would certainly not have agreed with Adolf Loos the Viennese architect that architecture was not art ("to whom should an architect look for help and encouragement in his war against ignorance and ugliness if not to his fellow artists"),<sup>132</sup> The concept he presented was of an essentially democratic and dialectical process: far from being 'hierarchized', the fine arts were to be synthesized, the crafts communalized, into a new form commensurate with modern requirements. Importantly, it is the inherently *practical* nature of architecture which renders it capable of achieving the necessary motivation in this direction:

"See how architecture has the biggest programme, the widest range of sympathy and action of all the arts - it is more practical - it demands more technical workshop knowledge, it deals with a greater number of materials - of subjects - of fellow workmen than any other art, except perhaps music . . ." <sup>133</sup>

But the architect, who possesses technical knowledge, and who works for practical ends alongside his fellow workers, must also be an artist who is not isolated from craft work, just as, conversely, the artist should not be estranged from architecture:

"To get true architecture the architect must be one of a body of artists possessing an intimate knowledge of the crafts and no less on the other hand the painter and sculptor and other craftsmen must be in direct touch and sympathy with architecture. There must be a real communion, a common understanding and a working together towards the highest and best aim".<sup>134</sup>

At the heart of this conception there is an essential aestheticism apparent, but it should be noted that a new role for aestheticism is to be established through the interpenetration of an afunctional fine art with the supremely functional 'art' of architecture; "And still you ask what is the connection between architecture and painting. Everything".<sup>135</sup>

Lethaby, a scholar and champion of the past, as well as a committed socialist and founder-member of the Arts and Crafts movement, had attempted, in the midst of his generalisations about the ancient origins of architectural forms, to establish a modern notion of functionalism. The magic and symbolism of ancient architecture were to find their contemporary analogue so that the modern architectural 'envelope' could be supplied with its necessary content. In extemporising upon Lethaby's themes, Mackintosh proclaimed that modern designs should express fresh realisation of 'sacred fact' and that the true principles of architecture were structure and form. The sacred fact was Nature ("where else indeed should we go for the highest imagination" asked Mackintosh); but the moral language betrayed the link with Pugin and his followers, for whom the social quality of architecture was concerned essentially with morality. Good architecture could only be produced within a good society, and it consequently expressed moral attributes ('honest structure'). The influence of such ideas upon Otto Wagner can be seen with his proposing, after 1894, when he became Professor at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, the necessity for a 'morally' based architecture.



Long after Mackintosh had transcended his flirtation with the early work of Lethaby, the aesthetic and ideological concerns with synthesis, with artistic-architectural unity, remained: a unity, not only of all the arts and industries, or between the arts and society, but a unity within each artistic conception. How this unity was realized changed with the movement away from organicism towards geometric abstraction. Mackintosh employed metaphysical rhetoric in attacking artistic propaganda which exclusively portrayed the abstract work of art as the supreme paradigm.

"It may be said that the yearning after abstract beauty unlinked with utility is the higher and most spiritual sentiment; but on the other hand, if we look around throughout the creations of nature we are prompted to reply that in linking beauty with utility, we are more directly imitating 'him' who made man in his own image and in whose works the union of the useful and beautiful is one of the most universal characteristics".<sup>136</sup>

The fetishization of the abstract work of art was seen as representing the withdrawal from reality into an almost sacred aesthetic sphere. But the proper aestheticization of life required a practical project for society which began by acknowledging the prior 'aestheticism' which existed within the reality of nature. In cultural terms, 'beauty', hitherto abstracted from the concrete by fine art, was to become intrinsic to it.

Are we now in a position to provisionally answer the question 'What is Art Nouveau'? In the first section of this chapter it became apparent that early Art Nouveau has long since been characterised as an essentially ornamental style. In respect of this, it demonstrates its indebtedness to aestheticism, from which it also learned the notion of synthesis, i.e. the desirability of form and content to be unified within works of art. In terms of Schmutzler's typology, the form-language of 'early' Art Nouveau, employing curvilinear shape with organic symbolism gave way at a certain point to a rectilinear abstract geometric style. We saw that the latter, in the form of Viennese *Sezessionstil*, exerted a considerable influence upon the work of Mackintosh, but that the latter also influenced the Viennese. If we consider the duality expressed in

Mackintosh's 1893 position, however, a number of analytic problems arise. Here is an argument for beauty *and* utility, that is to say, the *fusion* of the ornamental and the functional (where aestheticism was concerned art need have no use-value whatever). What are the implications of this view when it is considered that ornamental (aesthetic) and functional (practical) concerns are usually characterised as being ends in themselves? For example, the flower and plant abstracted forms (leaves, stalks, roots, blooms) of French and Belgian Art Nouveau were fundamentally the reason why the latter was, from the earliest years, defined as a specifically ornamental style; decorative form was seen to subvert functionality. The Viennese Secessionists rationalised and operationalised the concept of ornament as an element integral *with* structure, rather than as something applied to it; so far, our examination of what Schmutzler refers to as 'late Art Nouveau' has established this point clearly enough, and thus has begun to acknowledge the Art Nouveau desire for the unification of form and content within objects that clearly have a use-value.

But what was specific about Art Nouveau *vis-a-vis* the cultural movements which influenced it? We can see that Art Nouveau was a pragmatic movement; it attempted to resolve the dichotomy between afunctional art and the functionalism required of social artefacts (from buildings to utensils). But it did not adopt an Arts and Crafts approach. This latter claim is problematic, given that handicraft techniques were often utilised by exponents of Art Nouveau. At a certain point, the influences acting upon Art Nouveau gave rise to something specific and different. This can be seen most clearly by considering the 'aesthetics' of Arts and Crafts. The latter tried to establish function as that which was perceived as being beautiful in itself. In sharp contrast to this, Art Nouveau absorbed the aestheticism which was being opposed to the utilitarian attitudes and values that Arts and Crafts could not avoid. But if Arts and Crafts rejected the tenets of the Aesthetic Movement, it also represented a retreat from the utilitarianism of an industrial order. In seeking a critical paradigm to



juxtapose with industrial mass-production, it looked backwards in time to a pre-industrial period, and portrayed handicraft activities as involving production through creativity. By the time Art Nouveau was appearing, both the critique of mass-production (Arts and Crafts Movement) and the assertion of art's autonomy (Aesthetic Movement) were revealing their limitations. The Art Nouveau reaction to this apparent disintegration of cultural coherence took the form of an incitement to return to fundamentals of cultural production, in order that the problems of the present could confront their 'correct' solution. A metaphysical search for the origins of architecture (Wagner, Mackintosh, Hoffmann) underpinned the Art Nouveau opposition in Austria and Scotland to historicist eclecticism. A new form-language was believed to be capable of providing the vehicle for new artistic meaning. Quality was equated with authenticity and newness, hence a heightened significance was bestowed upon experimentation, inventiveness, and imagination. It was acknowledged that principles of form were capable of engendering a higher meaning than traditional substantive meanings. Abstraction was employed for the 'emptying out' of content in the conventional sense. With the movement from a curvilinear, asymmetric form-language to a geometric, rectilinear, approach, abstraction was retained. In transcending symbolism, Art Nouveau made synthesis, and an analytic concern with the relation of the part to the whole, the basis of a rationalist conception of the arts integrated with society.

In considering the Mackintosh movement in Scotland in the context of the above, and in preparing the ground for our subsequent analysis, the following are presented as being its distinctively Art Nouveau attributes:

1. Anti-historicism.
2. A linear form-language in the 1890s which incorporates organicism, asymmetry, and the combination of rectilinear and curved forms.
3. A preoccupation with synthesis: (a) synthesis within the work of art/architecture (form and content unified in the 'total' work of art); (b) the synthesis of arts,

crafts, industries, and architecture; and (c) the synthesis of intellect and emotionality.

4. The concept of balance between decoration and structure.
5. Rationality, logicality, coherence of form-language which unites particular with general concerns.
6. The use of abstraction.
7. Concern over the synthesis of functional and aesthetic concerns.
8. The recognition that purpose is not an aesthetic quality.
9. The concept of nature as art, that is, as an analogue of human creativity.
10. A geometric form-language of tectonic neutrality develops out of the earlier form-language which expressed dynamism/energy.

The early Art Nouveau preoccupation with the sources of life did not merely involve a form-language employing nature symbolism. It is crucial, therefore, to acknowledge the significance of abstract dynamism. Art Nouveau broke with earlier concepts of natural beauty and hence, with naturalist techniques for rendering natural beauty in art. Beauty was now being sought, not in nature, but through the kind of *abstractions* that were seen to be unique to the human mind and imagination. Artificiality was welcomed for the uniquely human qualities it could bring to cultural production. The totality of life as apprehended through abstract thought; the abstract principles underlying architecture; the abstract means whereby artistic creations could be imbued with new and enduring qualities - these represented central Art Nouveau preoccupations. 'Nature', as the external world mediated through the inner world of the mind of the subject, was, as a consequence, in the early Art Nouveau period represented in the most abstract symbolic terms. But this should not be construed as merely a continuance of *symbolism* in art. As we shall see when we examine the ideas of Mackintosh and Geddes in chapter four, Scottish Art Nouveau was deeply preoccupied with the communicative



potential of *symbol systems* in all spheres of culture. By beginning from an aestheticist theory of the primacy of art and the imaginative dynamism of the artist, rather than from a view which made human society an adjunct of nature, Art Nouveau was able to welcome modern technology as the ultimate manifestation of contemporary human creativity. Geddes argued that art, as such, was what guided modern mechanisation.

The mainstream literature on the subject of Art Nouveau, for the most part hardly strays beyond descriptions of it in terms of its stylistic elements. In laying the foundations for a sociological perspective, the following chapter examines aspects of the work of particular social theorists who have attempted to describe the phenomenon.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONSTRUCTING A SOCIOLOGY OF ART NOUVEAU.



This chapter attempts to construct the basis for a sociological perspective on Art Nouveau. Instead of focusing exclusively upon individual producers and their respective work, a sociological approach needs to locate Art Nouveau as a coherent *cultural phenomenon* which took shape at a precise point in historical time. In doing this it must demonstrate what actually was new and exceptional about Art Nouveau in its time. For historiographical purposes, the 'newness' of Art Nouveau requires to be distinguished from what was not new, that is, what was stable and inherited from the past. However, the 'newness' also has to be meaningful in terms of a present which embodied discontinuities with the past, but which itself imposed restrictions on 'newness'. If the socio-cultural context for Art Nouveau is to be elucidated as a complex structure which has attained significant stability through time, then the best means for analysing Art Nouveau as a phenomenon in tension with this stability, is through the use of a concept of Art Nouveau as involving the shared ideas and activities of specifiable homogeneous groups of exponents. In confronting archival material, the sociology of Art Nouveau requires the kind of clarifying concepts which deal with rifts in the cultural relations between groups. More specifically, with the relation of Art Nouveau as avant-garde to traditions and established institutions. We will begin by examining the criteria whereby avant-gardism as such can be adequately specified. Subsequently, with the help of certain social theorists, it will be shown in what ways Art Nouveau can be legitimately judged to have been avant-gardiste.

#### 1. Peter Bürger and the Importance of Aestheticism for Avant-Gardisme

According to Peter Bürger in his Theory of the Avant-Garde, the historical avant-garde artistic movements in the early 20th. century, such as Dadaism and Surrealism, represented a break in the development of art in bourgeois society. The avant-garde was opposing art as an institution; an institution embodying the ideological concept of an autonomous art, and which functions according to that concept or principle:

"Art as an institution prevents the contents of works that press for radical change in a society (i.e. the abolition of alienation) from having any practical effect. That is not to say, of course, that art as institutionalized in bourgeois society cannot assume tasks relating to the elaboration and stabilization of the subject, and have functions in that sense".<sup>1</sup>

Importantly, in this respect of opposition, the avant-garde was highlighting the actual existence and significance of art as a bourgeois institution in a new way. A precise social and historical definition of 'art' emerged with the avant-garde which allowed artists themselves to develop an emancipated critical awareness of their own position within the 'nexus of institutionalisation', i.e. within the sphere, or level, of mediation between (bourgeois) society and its art. "This level of mediation is not something external to the concept of the work of art", comments Jochen Schulte-Sasse in his foreword to Bürger's text, "it is essential, as it historicizes and makes relative the concept of the work of art itself".<sup>2</sup> The actual social function of art in the developed capitalistic society of the 19th. century engendered the concept of art as something autonomous. That particular social function involved sustaining what were the fundamental attributes of the then modern art as an institution; the balancing of (contradictory) negative and affirmative elements, including the beautiful appearance of a better world, hope for the realization of future social ideals. However, the *fictional* image of a better social order, as well as offering a form of protest against the undesirable prevailing order, "relieves the existing society of the pressure of those forces that make for change. They are assigned to confinement in an ideal sphere".<sup>3</sup> But this 'ideal sphere' remains conditioned by social developments. As Schulte-Sasse explains,

"Because the concept of the work of art was institutional and that institution stayed in place, the ideological function of art was also preserved. The concept of the work of art was, in fact, the necessary means for art's becoming institutionalized as a medium for ideological reproduction".<sup>4</sup>

Bürger argues that the avant-garde required a quite different concept of the work of art from that operative within the bourgeois institution where the apparent separation



of art from social life (a separation organised around the purpose of interpreting social life from a distance and thus from within a detached sphere where "sensuousness could evolve that was not part of any means-ends relationships")<sup>5</sup> was representative of an hermetically sealed (organic) unity. Intervention in, rather than separation from, practical social life, was the prime avant-garde motivation; thus an art reintegrated into social praxis was the fundamental avant-garde ideal. The basis for the critique was the recognition that the period of bourgeois art, wherein art is seen to lack societal impact and to maintain a tension between art's autonomous status and the content of individual art works, had drawn to its conclusion. The avant-garde, in revealing the nexus between bourgeois art's autonomous status and the absence of any social consequences, turns against "the distribution apparatus on which the work of art depends, and the status of art in bourgeois society as defined by the concept of autonomy".<sup>6</sup> Indeed it is the substantive and specific autonomy of art as an institution (the conditions under which art is produced, distributed and received) - its detachment from social praxis and its freedom from pressure to serve social purposes - which allows the distance required for the formulation of truly radical criticism. Criticism, that is, which is not merely a function of a social institution, wherein criticism of specific concepts is conditioned by other concepts hostile to the first. In short, it is criticism of an institution itself that is facilitated by distance; what Marx, in the Introduction to *Grundrisse*, terms 'self-criticism', as against 'system immanent criticism':

"It became apparent that the social effect of a work of art cannot simply be gauged by considering the work itself but that its effect is decisively determined by the institution within which the work 'functions'".<sup>7</sup>

On this basis also, art development can be periodized. The historical avant-garde movements were progressive, Bürger maintains, but with the subsequent experience of how the culture industry has effected the false elimination of the distance between art and life (i.e. with commodity aesthetics designed to prompt purchasers into buying what

they do not really need through the use of form as an enticement) art becomes practical. Hence the demands of the historical avant-garde appear to be realized. However, since this commodified art is an art that enthralls, the resultant *disvalue* has been "a false sublation of art as an institution".<sup>9</sup> In retrospect, therefore, avant-gardiste thinking appears profoundly contradictory:

"For the (relative) freedom of art vis-a-vis the praxis of life is at the same time the condition that must be fulfilled if there is to be a critical cognition of reality. An art no longer distinct from the praxis of life but wholly absorbed in it will lose the capacity to criticize it, along with its distance".<sup>9</sup>

But a further contradiction exists with the process of the historical emancipation of the aesthetic from religious ritual. Such emancipation facilitates "a new way of perceiving that is immune to the coercion of means-end rationality".<sup>10</sup> At the same time, however, the sphere thus opened up is 'ideologized', and this is most apparent from the notion of genius: the genius is viewed as the *individual* who can be free from the praxis of life, and who is alone capable of producing *on his/her own* the autonomous work of art. Under the auspices of aestheticism the institution of art, and the actual contents of art works, were made to coincide: art works themselves reflected distance from the praxis of social life, and signified the negation of bourgeois means-end rationality. Crucially, Bürger asserts that avant-gardistes

". . . assent to the aestheticists' rejection of the world and its means-ends rationality. What distinguishes them from the latter is the attempt to organize a new life praxis from a basis in art. In this respect also, Aestheticism turns out to have been the necessary precondition of the avant-gardiste intent. Only an art the contents of whose individual works is wholly distinct from the (bad) praxis of the existing society can be the centre that can be the starting point for the organization of a new life praxis".<sup>11</sup>

Analytically, therefore, a 'critical science', in attempting to illuminate the present, must examine "all those problems that idealist aesthetics define as the distinctiveness of the aesthetic". Bürger explicitly defines the intention of the avant-gardiste as

"the attempt to *direct toward the practical the aesthetic experience (which rebels against the praxis of life) that Aestheticism developed*. What most strongly conflicts with the means-end rationality of bourgeois society is to become life's organizing principle".<sup>12</sup>



Bürger's theory is valuable, not least for the way in which it establishes a theoretical frame of reference within which the avant-garde movements of the early 20th. century can be portrayed as involving, not only a new range of forms, but, in addition, a new way of thinking, the consequences of which have yet to be exhaustively examined. But what is the nature of the relevance of such a theory for an analysis of Art Nouveau, which, as a movement, had become virtually extinct by 1914? Bürger himself provides the answer to this question when discussing the issue of 'artistic means' or 'procedures'. There he stresses the point that

"certain general categories of the work of art were first made recognisable in their generality by the avant-garde . . . *it is consequently from the standpoint of the avant-garde that the preceding phases in the development of art as a phenomenon in bourgeois society can be understood* . . . it is an error to proceed inversely, by approaching the avant-garde via the earlier phases of art".<sup>12a</sup>

The possibility of making these general categories of art (artistic means) recognisable was facilitated, since the middle of the 19th. century (i.e. subsequent to the consolidation of bourgeois political rule on the continent), by the movement of the form-content dialectic of artistic structures increasingly in the direction of the domination of form over content. This historical process involved a down-grading of stylistic norms (through which social norms were expressed) in favour of the operation of rational choices by artists between various techniques for the specific purpose of achieving artistic effect via the overt demonstration of artistic means *as means*. Although, says Bürger, "Artistic means is undoubtedly the most general category by which works of art can be described", it is only since the historical avant-garde movements that "the various techniques and procedures can be *recognized* as artistic means".<sup>12b</sup> Prior to this, artistic means had been limited by the constraints placed upon them by period style, that is, an established canon of permissible procedures. Thus a clear conception of the literary and artistic avant-garde movements of the 1920s can aid significantly in the elucidation of those artistic movements which preceded them. Such an approach can help to avoid the problem of projecting hidden assumptions

of an historicist or determinist nature on to empirical data by working against the possibilities of linking historical periods through a teleological belief in directionality or unilinearity. Consequently, hypotheses about the avant-gardiste content of Art Nouveau can be generated so as to confront these hypotheses with historical data and hence investigate their plausability for the specific conjunctures under analysis.

By emphasising the ideological nature of the work of art in bourgeois society that the avant-garde were opposing, Bürger illustrates the recipient as a spectating subject within, and conditioned by, that society and its history. Only this recognition can begin to meaningfully elucidate what lies 'behind' the experience of shock involved in confrontation with the radically new. For this reason, Bürger's theory should not be classified as an 'institutional theory of art' pure and simple; Janet Wolff's assertion that "an institutional definition of art would, of course, have nothing to say about the nature of aesthetic experience",<sup>13</sup> can be seen to be inapplicable to Bürger, who is concerned to elucidate both the experience and the social role of the spectating subject.

In its attempts to negate the disjunction of art and the praxis of life, and individual production and individual reception, argues Bürger, the avant-garde creates a new type of art work in which a specific kind of unity is exploded. He makes a distinction between what he terms the 'organic' and the 'nonorganic' work of art; only the latter earns the epithet avant-gardiste. Artists who produce organic works are referred to as 'classicists', but Bürger is swift to point out that this is "without meaning to introduce a specific concept of what the classical work may be".<sup>14</sup> Such artists "treat their material as something living. They respect its significance as something that has grown from concrete life situations". As the carrier of meaning, the material is treated as a whole, a totality. In the work of classicists "the unity of the universal and the particular is posited without mediation".<sup>15</sup>



By contrast, for avant-gardistes, material is nothing more, or other, than material which, in *not* carrying meaning derived from contexts within the life totality, has significance imparted to it by the artist. Here the unity of universal and particular is a mediated one: "the element of unity is withdrawn to an infinite distance".<sup>16</sup> By tearing the material out of the life totality, the avant-gardiste isolates and fragments it;

"Just as the attitude toward the material differs, so does the constitution of the work. The classicist produces work with the intent of giving a living picture of the totality. And the classicist pursues this intention even while limiting the represented reality segment to the rendition of an ephemeral mood. The avant-gardiste, on the other hand, joins fragments with the intent of positing meaning (where the meaning may well be the message that meaning has ceased to exist). The work is no longer created as an organic whole but put together from fragments . . ." <sup>17</sup>

The (organic) work of art created by the classicist (or realist) , therefore, in intending the impression of wholeness, with the individual elements having significance only as they relate to the whole, appears as a work of nature, thus concealing (making unrecognisable) the fact that it has actually been made. The aesthetic limits of this unified totality are, at one and the same time, ideological limits; demarcations that shut off external considerations from the work of art. Conversely, the avant-gardiste work overtly presents itself as an artificial construct; it proclaims itself an artifact. Moreover,

"the individual elements have a much higher degree of autonomy and can therefore also be read and interpreted individually or in groups without it being necessary to grasp the work as a whole . . . it is possible only to a limited extent to speak of the work as a whole as the perfect embodiment of the totality of possible meaning".<sup>18</sup>

Where the organic work of art, in pretending to be like nature ("the organic work intends the impression of wholeness"),<sup>19</sup> projects an image of reconciliation between nature and human beings, the lack of such a semblance of reconciliation is what characterises the nonorganic avant-gardiste work. Where the effect of fragmentation and/or disintegration transforms the break with reality into aesthetic effect, the parts "'emancipate' themselves from a superordinate whole; they are no longer its

essential elements. This means that the parts lack necessity".<sup>20</sup> By this Bürger means expressive or communicative necessity: the addition or subtraction of elements (images, events), a change in their order - none of this affects the ability of the avant-gardiste work of art to convey its own kind of coherence because what is of decisive significance is the 'construction principle' which underlies the deployment of images and/or events. This has crucial implications for the reception of avant-gardiste works, since the mode of reception (appropriating intellectual objectifications) that has developed through attempting to grasp the total impression conveyed by organic works of art, is one of experiencing shock. Since meaning is not now constituted by the relationship of the parts to the whole (these parts, says Bürger, "are no longer subordinated to a pervasive intent",<sup>21</sup> though their enlarged autonomy will never be total), the recipient's attention is dislodged from attempting to grasp a work's meaning, towards greater awareness of the principle of construction employed. This break, or shock, which accompanies the recipient's reaction to avant-gardiste works, is a reflection of the formal (rather than the hermeneutic, i.e. the problematic of the understanding of meaning) methods directed at techniques and procedures that such works involve. In other words, the hiatus has resulted from the recognition that the parts have become *less* important as constituent elements within a meaningful totality, and *more* important as signs with relative autonomy. One result of the break is the disintegration of the mimetic function of art. However, the avant-gardiste work, in terms of the act of perception, ultimately *cannot* escape being understood hermeneutically, i.e. as a total meaning, because "even the withholding of meaning is a positing of it".<sup>22</sup> As Bürger emphasises,

"the unity has integrated the contradiction within itself. It is no longer the harmony of the individual parts that constitutes the whole; it is the contradictory relationship of the heterogeneous elements . . . A critical hermeneutics will replace the theorem of the necessary agreement of parts and whole by investigating the contradiction between the various layers and only then infer the meaning of the whole".<sup>23</sup>



In attempting to provide, to use Bürger's phrase, "an empiricism that is informed by theory",<sup>24</sup> for the analysis of the phenomenon of Glasgow Art Nouveau, it is necessary to examine to what degree Mackintosh's ideological position corresponds to that of the avant-garde as outlined above. This is only possible through an examination of his expressed ideas and his practical achievements in applied art and architecture. Although Bürger gives the impression that the historical avant-gardes discovered the essential relationship between art and praxis, it remains true to say that the applied arts and architecture already embodied this relationship, because practitioners in these fields viewed themselves as actively taking 'beauty' into society. The aestheticist distinction between art and the praxis of life - elucidated by Bürger as a pre-condition for the avant-gardisme which attempts to transcend this distinction - is, however, of crucial relevance for the analysis of the Glasgow movement, since the latter demonstrated a preoccupation with aestheticism which was in marked contrast to the Arts and Crafts movement's exclusive emphasis upon the technical and the functional. It has to be demonstrated that awareness of the cultural significance attaching to both of these spheres (the artistic *and* the technical) in themselves, *and* to their desired interpenetration, characterised the Glasgow movement. Bürger's abstract model of the classical and avant-gardiste works of art respectively, can provide a valuable frame of reference in considering the kind of elements which appear in the works of the Glasgow movement over the period of their most significant output (1893-1914). The criterion of organicism/non-organicism is particularly helpful here, because, beyond a certain historical point, Scottish Art Nouveau divested itself increasingly of organic symbolism, and what emerged involved a dislodging of attention towards a heightened awareness of the principle of construction. In the indigenous architecture of Scotland Mackintosh discovered elements such as structuration and asymmetry: Herbert Spencer, in the early 1890's, argued that asymmetry was a manifestation of *non-organicism*. The significance of such factors for the avant-

gardiste creations of the Glasgow movement require to be emphasised. A full discussion is provided in Chapter 4 where a comprehensive examination of Mackintosh's extant writings is undertaken.

## 2. Social Theorists on the Subject of Art Nouveau.

In his Paris: The Capital of the Nineteenth century (the draft outline, written in 1935, for his *Arcades* project), Walter Benjamin described iron as having been the first artificial material in the history of architecture. Acknowledging the accelerated development of iron throughout the 19th. century, Benjamin proceeded to discuss the role of iron in Art Nouveau. "The new elements of construction in iron - girder forms - obsessed *Art Nouveau*", Benjamin insisted, "Through ornament it strove to win back these forms for art".<sup>25</sup> The 'real significance' of Art Nouveau resided in the fact that it "represented the last attempt at a sortie on the part of Art imprisoned by technical advance within her ivory tower".<sup>25a</sup> Benjamin's description thus helps to focus attention upon the essential nature of the Art Nouveau endeavour, in that it elucidates the link between the capacities and products of capitalistic industrialization at a precise historical point, on the one hand, and, on the other, the specific concerns and methods employed by Art Nouveau *vis-a-vis* the former. In its aesthetic crusade to confront the realities of mechanization and mass-production - these specifically urban phenomena - and to apply artistic principles to modern practical inventions, Art Nouveau was penetrating the public sphere. In this latter respect it was a movement concerned with everything from artistic commercial posters and shop signs to dwelling houses and civic buildings. Was it then an avant-garde in Benjamin's opinion?

In commenting upon Art Nouveau posters used to advertise commodities, Benjamin noted that these posters manifested a highly ambiguous nature; although they represented "the ruse by which industry forces itself upon the dream",<sup>26</sup> he asked whether there existed



within them "a likeness for things which in this earthly life none had yet experienced. A likeness for the everyday world of Utopia?"<sup>27</sup> Benjamin thus described the kind of potency which art could bring into a public sphere of production and dissemination. The ambiguous nature of the commercial art poster reflected the dialectic of exteriority-interiority: the public-private social divide which had hitherto ensured that art reveal its autonomy through unique individual productions which eschewed publically determined considerations. Posters, as examples of an unashamedly commercial art, were positing themselves as commodities, and in artistic terms, this was a new development. In a real sense, artistic posters were, so to speak, the commodity of the commodity. The forces of that 'interiority' which was the direct result of art's being imprisoned in the private sphere by an advancing technology, were, argued Benjamin in *Paris*, mobilized and given expression by Art Nouveau "in the mediumistic language of line, in the flower as symbol of the naked, vegetable Nature that confronted the technologically armed environment".<sup>28</sup>

One important question arises with regard to Benjamin's comments on Art Nouveau's 'obsession' with iron, and that has to do with what he actually had in mind. In other words, what was distinctive about an Art Nouveau utilisation of iron? The 19th. century witnessed a significant increase in the use of iron construction for buildings long before Art Nouveau, but, as Madsen pointed out, by the 1880's and 1890's there was much debate among continental architects about the extent to which iron should be *apparent* in architectural constructions. "Everyone recognised the qualities and possibilities of iron, but should the construction stand naked and revealed, or should it be a skin of period style?"<sup>29</sup> It was in Belgium in particular that this issue was most debated, and where the manifest desire to create a new style produced, among other things, 'iron architecture' characterised by what Grasset, one of its most vitriolic critics, described as "the stupid pretence of wanting to show everything".<sup>30</sup> This overt

'showing' is of central importance in differentiating an Art Nouveau use of iron from what went before.

The manner in which Art Nouveau utilised iron from its early period onwards has important implications for the issue of the nature of the avant-gardiste work of art as described by Burger. What Benjamin describes as Art Nouveau's 'obsession' with iron can be seen to have been focused upon the principle of structure. Indeed avant-garde considerations of the aesthetic value of structure as an expressive mode grew out of the development of iron construction for the kind of social uses in the public sphere which Benjamin draws attention to (arcades, exhibition halls, railway stations etc.). "It may be said to be less certain, but more fascinating", commented Madsen, "to suggest that the influence of iron construction on Art Nouveau was less important than the *structural expression of Art Nouveau upon the development of modern architecture*".<sup>31</sup> Such an interpretation certainly orients Art Nouveau in the direction of Burger's criteria for the avant-gardiste work of art. Alongside the Art Nouveau drive towards integrating art with the social, Art Nouveau begins to look like a progressivist movement by dint of the nature of its productions. Further justification for this view appears at first to be being provided by Benjamin, who, in his Central Park, represents German Art Nouveau (*Jugendstil*) as "the second attempt of art to come to terms with technology".<sup>32</sup> In this respect it follows on historically, Benjamin claims, from Realism, which was a response on the part of artists to the crisis created for the arts by "the new processes of technological reproduction".<sup>33</sup>

"For *Jugendstil* the problem as such had already succumbed to repression. *Jugendstil* no longer grasped itself as threatened by the competing technology. But just so much more comprehensive and aggressive was the critique of technology it concealed".<sup>34</sup>

At this point, however, Benjamin asserts that "For *jugendstil* it was crucial to arrest technological development".<sup>35</sup> It thus contained a *regressive* interpretation of technology, and this interpretation is reflected in its 'basic motif', which is "that of the transfiguration of sterility. The body is depicted predominantly in those forms



which precede sexual maturity".<sup>36</sup> (In the *Arcades* project the relationship between *Jugendstil* and the German Youth Movement (*Jugendbewegung*) is suggested, and this makes apparent Benjamin's desire to pursue the essence of *Jugendstil* into the manifest details of its productions). Those technically determined forms which are, Benjamin emphasises, in actuality dependent variables, *Jugendstil* wanted to turn into constants: such a desire renders it reactionary.

It was precisely this evaluation of Art Nouveau on Benjamin's part, which Adorno took issue with when he read and criticised Benjamin's draft outline for the *Arcades* project in August 1935. Adorno wished, at that time, to defend Art Nouveau for what he considered to be its most characteristic aspect, namely, the motivation towards the emancipation of eroticism. This is particularly relevant to the consideration of the Glasgow movement because the erotic content of certain of their works was explicitly commented upon by contemporaries. The Russian art critic M. Mikhaylov, for example, referred to some drawn panels by Margaret Macdonald that were exhibited in Moscow at the end of 1902 as representing "a page from a sexual psycho-pathology narrated in the language of wood, metal, colours and line".<sup>36a</sup> Adorno was not wholly convinced by the argument that Art Nouveau "mobilizes all the reserve forces of interiority", being of the opinion that "it seems to save and actualize them through 'externalization'".<sup>37</sup>

"In place of interiority *Art Nouveau* put sex. It had recourse to sex precisely because only in sex could a private person encounter himself not as inward but as corporeal. This is true of all *Art Nouveau* from Ibsen to Maeterlinck and d'Annunzio. Its origin is Wagner and not the chamber music of Brahms".<sup>38</sup>

Adorno then proceeded to ask:

"is not the dream-interpreting, awakening psychoanalysis which expressly and polemically dissociates itself from hypnotism (documentation in Freud's lectures) itself part of *Art Nouveau*, with which it coincides in time? This is probably a question of the first order and one that may be very far-reaching".<sup>39</sup>

The question of the relevance of psychoanalysis was not developed on that occasion, but it is valuable, in seeking clarification, to turn to Adorno's Aesthetic Theory (the first version of which he began dictating on 4th. May, 1961). There he states the view

that, for psychoanalytic theory, works of art were essentially projections of the unconscious: such theory emphasised "the individual producer of art and the interpretation of aesthetic content as psychic content, to the detriment of the categories of form".<sup>40</sup> This is a highly relevant comment because, as was noted in Chapter 1, Art Nouveau (besides being 'obsessed' with iron), was 'obsessed' with *form*. For Adorno, it is via the law of form that unconscious drives become integrated with the work of art, and are, as a result, externalized. He commends the attempt to conceptualise art in terms of a theory of psychic life since the manner in which the domain of art is constituted "resembles the constitution of an inner space of ideas in the individual".<sup>41</sup> But one problem with psychoanalysis was that, although it could illuminate elements in art which were not art-like, it was more in tune with the explanation of purely psychic, as against aesthetic, phenomena. Hence, art was reduced to an "absolutely subjective system of signs denoting drive states of the subject".<sup>42</sup> Despite their stress on sex, psychoanalytic studies of artists were "hopelessly philistine in conception, dismissing as neurotics men of art who in fact merely objectified in their work the negativity of life".<sup>43</sup> That which is 'objectified' represents the concrete result of the process of 'externalization': what Art Nouveau does with the forces of interiority. Now if Art Nouveau externalizes interiority through the process of aestheticizing the corporeality of sex and the psycho-physical experience of sensuality, what does it do *vis-a-vis* the 'negativity of life'?

Adorno's earlier enthusiasm for Art Nouveau appears to have become dissipated by the time he was working on Aesthetic Theory, because in that work he refers to the failure and decomposition of *Jugendstil*, which turned out "retrospectively to have been no more than a lighthearted journey without substance, as Kafka remarked".<sup>44</sup> For substance, Adorno implies, *Jugendstil* substituted mere decorative arrangements. Ultimately it betrayed the potential inherent in interiority, itself "at least in part a forum for protest against a heteronomous order imposed on people". The dialectic of interiority,



however, is to be found in the relationship of this protesting part to " a tendency to conceive of interiority exclusively in terms of a realm that is indifferent to order and to leave this order as it is, obeying its laws";<sup>45</sup>

"This accorded well with the emergence of interiority out of the process of labour: inwardness was to help rear a type of person who would do wage-labour on the basis of duty - voluntarily, as it were - just as the new capitalist society wanted and demanded it. As the helplessness of the independent subject grew more pronounced, inwardness became a blatant ideology, a mock image of an inner realm in which the silent majority tries to get compensation for what it misses out on in society".<sup>46</sup>

The consequence of all of this, according to Adorno, is that interiority becomes "increasingly shadowlike and insubstantial". Although art is not in complicity with the trends which produce this outcome, it can never be wholly divorced from interiority. But the practice of aesthetic externalization into works of art presupposes a strong and autonomous ego (that is to say, an ego which is not 'outer-directed') "which alone can see itself in its true light, breaking through its limitations in illusion".<sup>47</sup>

It is in *expression*, says Adorno, that illusion is most apparent, "simply because expression pretends to be illusion-free while succumbing to illusion all the same".<sup>48</sup> Even anti-expressive and mathematized art, which eschews the language of immediacy, does not destroy the legitimacy of expression; immediacy is still articulated through the elements of an alienated and disfigured form; "This at least is the idea behind a modernism which stops short of absolute construction".<sup>49</sup> Now where does this locate expression as an Art Nouveau principle? If the avant-gardiste work presents an authentic mode of expression capable of articulating contemporary social conditions, and it does this because it 'stops short of absolute construction', what can be said about expression through 'absolute construction' in late Art Nouveau? That is to say, Art Nouveau *after* the decorative phase which Adorno and Benjamin focus upon. (It has to be stressed also, that even van de Velde had strong misgivings about the nature of German *Jugendstil*, more specifically, the Romantic nature of its ornamentation). In terms of Adorno's critique, the use of construction by late Art Nouveau practitioners

would have to be understood as being representative of an element of decoration, i.e. structure being employed as a purely decorative and figurative element. But this raises the question of the relationship of a principle of construction in late Art Nouveau works to the principle of synthesis (in the sense of an organic unity of meaning) in such works. In turn, this has implications for the question of whether the undermining of organic unity was a specifically modernist process.

Although a principle of construction and the principle of synthesis are manifested with both early and High Art Nouveau productions in ways which sustain overall organic form, this is not the case with the late Art Nouveau of the Scottish School, where the principle of construction (rooted in a cubic, geometric and rectilinear language of forms) is elevated to such a degree as to act against the notion of organic totality. This reinstates the significance of *form*, and, more particularly, structural form as expression. In Glasgow school work, a juxtaposing of symmetric with assymmetric structural elements (which are, in avant-gardiste fashion, drawn attention to), because of the *inner tensions* created through a disruption of form, detracts from a sense of organic totality. Should the Glasgow School of Art design, for example, be understood as avant-gardiste in Bürger's terms because of the employment of structure, where constituent parts, which display an enhanced autonomy, are elements within a homogeneous synthesis which can not be considered organic as such? Or does this design merely demonstrate a stage in Art Nouveau by which time structure as a decorative principle was being employed in novel ways (apropos Adorno)? The latter proposition is exploded by Mackintosh's dictum that structure (placed in the primary position) should be decorated (in a manner appropriate to it) and not decoration structured. In short, for Mackintosh, the central motivating principle for execution is construction, not decoration. Also, it should be emphasised at this point, that Mackintosh was keenly aware that, as Bürger emphasises, even the avant-gardiste work cannot escape being *understood* as a totality.



Adorno made it clear to Benjamin that he considered aestheticism and *l'art pour l'art* not to be identical with the total work of art. "The total work of art and aestheticism in the precise sense of the word are not identical, but diametrically opposed attempts to escape the commodity character".<sup>50</sup> In Aesthetic Theory, Adorno insisted that the commodity form affects the work of art because the latter cannot escape participation in productive relations. Moreover, material forces of production condition the concept of the new, and consequently works of art become 'absolute commodities'. This means that, although they retain commercial value, works of art "are social products which have discarded the illusion of being-for-society, an illusion tenaciously retained by all other commodities".<sup>51</sup> The role of art in a totally functional/instrumental society is afunctionality and lack of instrumentality. The aesthetic substance of works of art facilitates a shift from the ideology inherent in the commodity form towards the potential for truth content. However, art does not automatically become non-ideological through being antithetical to empirical reality, a position well illustrated by aestheticism: "The ideological essence of *l'art pour l'art* lies not in the emphatic antithesis it posits between art and empirical life, but in the abstract and facile character of this antithesis".<sup>52</sup> The aestheticist idea of beauty led to a filtering out from art works of contents which were not commensurate with what Adorno calls its own dogmatic canon:

"The concept of beauty in *l'art pour l'art* is at once strangely empty and content-laden. It is an artificial *Jugendstil* happening of the sort that inspired Ibsen's formulations about vines that entwine somebody's hair or about 'dying in beauty'. Unable to determine itself, beauty is like an aerial root, becoming entangled in the fate of artificial ornamentation. What makes this idea of beauty so narrow in conception is its direct antithesis to the ugliness of society . . .

The reason why neo-romantic and symbolistic beauty have become a consumer good so quickly lies in the self-sufficiency of this ideal, i.e. its prudish reserve before those social aspects that alone make form possible. Art of this kind brackets the world of commodities, denying its existence. In so doing its products become commodities themselves. They are condemned to being kitsch because latent in them there is the commodity form . . .

What ultimately won the day was the affirmative side of *l'art pour l'art*, a triumph that spelled the end of this aesthetic ideal".<sup>53</sup>

The affirmative side of aestheticism consisted in its stubborn refusal to submit art to external objectives; the negative side was the clinging to an "illusion of a purified realm of beauty where the danger of sliding into kitsch is ever-present",<sup>54</sup>

For Adorno the emancipation of art from means-end rationality necessitated its appropriating the commodity character; but what was adapted to, was also revealed in a new way, in the kind of critical and oppositional manner made possible by artistic form. But later this commodity character was forced out again, not least by *Jugendstil* ("with its ideology of bringing art back to life")<sup>55</sup> which, Adorno argues, prefigured the culture industry and market-oriented cultural production within monopoly capitalism. Growing subjective differentiation, intensified and expanded aesthetic stimuli, the attuning of art to ephemeral individual responses; all of this moved art increasingly away from objectivity and, through ingratiating itself with the public, allied it with the forces of reification. *Jugendstil*, as "the first collective attempt to inject, by means of art, a new meaning into a world that had lost all meaning",<sup>56</sup> found its abstract negation in functionalism and its counterparts in the afunctional arts, and was only genuinely exploded by expressionism. But with *Jugendstil*, Adorno concedes, the apparent duality embodied in art - its claim to truth and its affinity to untruth - emerged clearly for the first time.

If this 'claim to truth' inhered to a significant degree in Art Nouveau's utilisation of erotic symbols (albeit treated decoratively) - Adorno's earlier reason for supporting it - then it is important to examine, in connection with Adorno, the critique of ornament put forward by Adolf Loos, since Loos was a staunch advocate of the functionalism which Adorno considered was the abstract negation of decorative Art Nouveau. Adorno acknowledged how Loos traced ornament back to erotic symbols, but that Loos' "rigid rejection of ornamentation" was "coupled with his disgust with erotic symbolism", and he found "uncurbed nature both regressive and embarrassing".<sup>57</sup> Loos appeared to relate ornament to the pleasure principle, and his denunciation of the



former as erotic perversion and degeneracy represented puritanical repression on behalf of bourgeois rationality.

Loos equated cultural evolution with the removal of ornament from articles in everyday use. Continual revivals of historicist ornament throughout the 19th. century had, he insisted, fostered a wide-scale craving for nostalgia which took the form of fetishism for kitsch commodities; a fetishism at once regressive (anti-rational, sadomasochistic, necrophilous and primitive were the main terms he employed in this connection) and involving distorted perception of both cultural and natural artefacts. The potential greatness of the modern period lay in its "inability to produce a new form of decoration" and to acknowledge that "the fusion of art with functional ends is a profanation of the highest degree".<sup>58</sup> Modernization had destroyed the conditions under which decoration was made possible (traditional craft production); with ornament now having no organic connection to modern life it was rendered superfluous. But if ornament could no longer legitimately be considered 'beautiful' (in Loos' opinion people mistook ornament for 'style'), how was beauty to be perceived within a modern rationalised means-end society? At this point, Loos reverted to what were actually eighteenth century views of beauty as residing in utility. "The beauty of an object only exists in relation to its purpose", he thus proclaimed, "the highest degree of functionality in harmony with all other parts is what we call pure beauty".<sup>59</sup> The prime determinant of an object's 'beauty', therefore, is its use value, which, for Loos, predominated over exchange value (involving production and commercial distribution), the latter being responsible for creating the basis for the fetishization of objects through fashion permutations (which necessarily embodied symbolic erotic content). Practical objects were distinguished from artistic objects; artefacts (purposeful) were not art (which was free of purpose). Hence Loos insisted on the separation of art from (practical/rational) life in a modern society where praxis and functionality alone condition the form taken by utensils. This too involved an 18th. century (Kantian)

conception of art as the object of disinterested perception. As we shall see, Loos could not have accepted the dictum of Wagner and Mackintosh that the architect of the future needed to become an artist, because, for Loos, architecture is essentially a product of practical/utilitarian, as against, artistic activity. For Wagner and Mackintosh the aesthetic function of the architect resided in the need to *unify* artistic and technical abilities for the transcendence of the historical separation of art from purpose. Loos' description of how purpose is manifested through architecture is, from Mackintosh's point of view, a description of ideological, and not architectural, purpose:

"The court-house must make a threatening impression on the furtive criminal. The bank building must say 'Here your money is securely safeguarded by honest people . . .'. The architect can only achieve this if he makes use of the same type of buildings, which have always produced these feelings in people, in the past".<sup>60</sup>

Not only does this kind of perception involve historically specific social meanings, but it also requires that discursive knowledge be apprehended in architectural forms. Knowledge, that is, which Mackintosh (who wanted to absorb art into architecture specifically for the creation of new architectural forms) portrays as being inappropriate to architecture. The relationship between the perceived purpose of an object, and the complex of inter-subjective social meanings which facilitate the 'placing' of that object within a social context of acknowledged functionality, is not sufficient to elicit the kind of genuinely aesthetic responses which Loos assumed it could. This much is demonstrated by Adorno's critique of functionalism. The objective is, by definition, matter-of-fact, Adorno points out, and matter-of-factness is not in possession of beauty. The law of form embodied in purely functional creations is that of purposefulness, and here the ideal of beauty is abandoned. Anything that is included for the reason of appearing beautiful, in being extraneous to purpose, has the effect of detracting from functionality. But the ultimate in functionality - understood as



*being for other* - is absolute objectification (with commensurate meaning) and thus non-artistic factuality.

In the context of Scottish Art Nouveau, the point at which 'pure' functionalism revealed its inadequacies was the point at which an advocacy of the use of decorative elements became crucially significant. Hence Mackintosh recommended "that construction should be decorated", and that "the salient and most requisite features should be selected for ornamentation".<sup>61</sup> The ideal, however, was to be a seamless interweaving of structuration with decoration; as Talwin Morris indicated, Mackintosh "frequently emphasised the fact that there should be no apparent break between the construction and the decoration of a house".<sup>62</sup> Mackintosh effectively combined a 'perfect regard' for essentials of structure with a vital sense of the need for "sparse and reticent enrichment" (Morris). Conversely, the functionalist in Mackintosh considered it anathema to consciously construct ornamental forms; "In his designs for furniture he displays a thorough grasp of the principles of fit and honest construction; *giving us sound, practicable furniture, not patterns in wood*".<sup>63</sup>

### 3. From Art Nouveau Expression to Post-Art Nouveau Expressionism and the Reinstatement of Autonomy.

Adorno argues that Art Nouveau was finally 'exploded' by expressionism. However, in the context of his own theoretical position, expressionism has very precise connotations. Adorno applauds artistic expression of the negation of social reality which clearly takes place within the sphere of autonomous art. Hence, the role of art, as Adorno conceives it, is *not* to abandon afunctionality, because, in doing this, art jettisons its critical ability, since this latter inheres in its autonomous status. The concern with expression, however, was crucial to Art Nouveau (which did set out to abandon afunctionality) but clearly Adorno views Art Nouveau expression as a purely

decorative phenomenon. Loos, of course, opposed the use of ornament in the 'applied arts' (for him a contradiction in terms); but he supported expressionism with its 'fervent instinctualism' in painting. As Carl Schorske points out, the Viennese expressionists Schiele and Kokoschka looked to Loos as "their ally, their patron, and their partner, along with Arnold Schoenberg in music and Karl Kraus in cultural criticism".<sup>64</sup> How then does (non-historicist) ornament, employed as a mode of expression, articulate with Art Nouveau expression of repressed instinctual (especially sexual) drives? And what is the significance of this for the institution of autonomous art?

As Schorske argues, the Secession movement in modern art in Vienna, with Gustav Klimt as the acknowledged leader, was Austria's equivalent to Art Nouveau, and, as such, it "manifested the confused quest for a new life-orientation in visual form".<sup>65</sup> Inspiration for young Viennese artists was found within a European avant-gardiste rejection of classical realism. This had already taken different forms: Impressionism in France, Naturalism in Belgium, Pre-Raphaelitism in England, and *Jugendstil* in Germany. According to Wagner in his *Moderne Architektur* (1895), 19th. century eclectic historicist style architecture betrayed the fact that the historical process, according to which style with its accompanying new ideal of beauty emerged gradually from the one preceding it, had broken down. Social change had been so accelerated that art development was unable to keep abreast. The most fundamental need was for architects to provide lines of development and movement.

"In the quest for a visual language suited to his age, Wagner found allies in a younger generation of Viennese artists and intellectuals who were pioneers in forming twentieth-century higher culture. In 1897 a group of them banded together to form the Secession, an association that would break the manacles of tradition and open Austria to European innovations in the plastic arts and especially to *Art Nouveau*".<sup>66</sup>

The Secession in its early stage certainly provided a new ornamental vocabulary, but the actual Art Nouveau style, Schorske asserts, "served as much to inhibit as to advance Wagner's principles of utility and structural function in urban



architecture".<sup>67</sup> With the utilisation of contemporary Secession style for two apartment houses erected on the Wienzeile (1898-99), Wagner united three constituent principles for the first time; 1. The primacy of function as determinant of form; 2. The candid use of modern materials in terms of their inherent properties; and 3. A Secession-derived general commitment to an ahistorical and quasi-symbolic language of modernity.

Schorske focuses attention upon the significance of the duality of idiom employed by Wagner for these Wienzeile buildings. The ground storey had a commercial business function which Wagner emphasised through his employment of a continuous angular band of glass and iron for the office space. Only with the residential upper storey was Art Nouveau ornamentation used, to symbolise, Schorske claims, "the urbane life of luxury that could have its economic basis in the prosaic, rational offices below".<sup>68</sup> Thus the functional and the ornamental were used to express the two-sided nature of modern urban bourgeois existence which could embrace both business interest and personal taste. Subsequently, however, this duality of idiom was left behind by Wagner, as an expanded centralised bureaucratic administration conditioned the predominance of a wholly rationalised functional style of architecture for the satisfaction of the new requirements for expanded official and commercial space. Hence, bureaucratic and commercial expansion welcomed the kind of functionalism shorn of embellishment which Loos believed would purify the visual environment. This was, of course, the Loos who, in the pages of *Der Sacrum* in 1898, condemned Ringstrasse Vienna for "screening its modern commercial truth behind historical facades".<sup>69</sup> The cosmopolitan spirit of the Secession artists was as consonant with that of the Viennese upper middle class as it was with the bureaucracy. If Wagner's motto to accompany the architectural expansion of Vienna was 'Necessity is art's only mistress', this "'necessity' meant simply the demands of efficiency, economy, and the facilitation of the pursuit of business".<sup>70</sup>

Schorske, in heavily Freudian fashion, defines the original roster of aims of the Secessionists as being those of oedipal revolt (i.e. a revolt of the young against the

paternalist/conservative/traditionalist culture which they identified with their elders), an identity quest involving artistic experimentation, and, finally, that "art should provide for modern man asylum from the pressure of modern life".<sup>71</sup> The question of the function and meaning of art in a modern society motivated the Secessionist drive towards unifying the arts with architecture and thus of regenerating culture in the widest sense. The artists' ideology had been significantly influenced by the radical thought of avant-garde literary and political groups. But around 1906 the same Secession artists who had been dynamically searching for 'new instinctual truth', the freeing of repressed forces, and a truthful practical modern culture opposed to disfiguring historicism "turned away from their unsettling findings to the more modest and profitable task of beautifying daily life and the domestic environment of the elite".<sup>72</sup> Schorske acknowledges a shift in Secession style away from the organic and fluid forms of Art Nouveau to art deco "crystalline and geometric ones".<sup>73</sup> The greatest triumph of the art deco phase was the *Kunstschau* exhibition of 1908 which continued to manifest the principle of the unification of fine and applied arts and the cultural ideal of *homo aestheticus*: "Functional objects became museum pieces, while even the most serious painting and sculpture was reduced to decorative functions".<sup>74</sup> For Schorske, the function of the Secessionist art of the 1890's had been to speak psychological truth; this function, however, had been drained in the subsequent process of its adapting its visual language to purely decorative ends within a context of movement from the fine arts to the arts and crafts. But the *Kunstschau*, under the auspices of Klimt, contained within it the means whereby an inversion of this particular prior movement was to be effected, with this time, a new expressionist development showing the way for a separation of the applied arts and painting:

"A new countertendency also surfaced within the *Kunstschau* as young artists schooled in decoration showed the first signs of turning the lessons of their masters in simplified design into a new language for expressing psychological states. It was here that Oskar Kokoschka made his debut".<sup>75</sup>



It was with this 'countertendency', which, importantly, re-emphasised the institutionalised gulf between fine and applied art, that an expressionism involving 'desublimated psychological realism' was to be located exclusively in the former sphere.

The turn which these events took in Vienna had important implications for the continued reception of the Scottish movement there. On the occasion of the *Kunstschau* exhibition (1908) a commentator (possibly A. S. Levetus, the Viennese correspondent for The Studio) was writing from Vienna to the Glasgow Herald pointing out that the absence of the Mackintoshes from the exhibition was attributable to "'those little rifts within the lute' which finally led to the split in the 'Secession' and the formation of the 'Klimt Group'".<sup>76</sup> In effect, this was to claim that the events which had led to the Glasgow group being conspicuous by their absence in Vienna in 1908 were intimately connected with the events surrounding the rift within the Secession. The primary cause of the rift illustrates a contemporary perception of the significance attaching to the autonomy status of a functional art. According to the *Nur-Maler* ('pure painters') group, led by Josef Engelhart, the Klimt group (which included Wagner, Hoffmann, Moser and Carl Moll) were decorative artists who had compromised 'pure' (easel) painting in order to further the cause of design and architecture.

#### Summary and Conclusion.

An Art Nouveau form-language was adopted in Vienna by the Secessionists in their search for the means to express 'truth' about human beings (from their sexual impulses and emotional dimensions to their sexual and aesthetic needs); a truth which was seen to have been repressed by the agents of a traditionally ordered Austrian society. But a further dimension was represented by Wagner's 'truthful' architecture; this time the truth at issue was that of the commercial and bureaucratic nature of life in modern urban Vienna, where aristocratic hierarchy was apparently being replaced by bourgeois

liberalism. A 'truthful' functionalist mode of architecture, however, motivated by new social requirements, and encouraged by the local state administration, parted company with an architecture displaying the organic decorative motifs of High Art Nouveau. The symbolic and allegorical means employed in the expression of instinctual and primeval forces were, according to Schorske's view, overturned by the new visual language (encountered in the work of artists such as Schiele and Kokoschka) devised for the overt expression of 'irrational' private experience. Thus the irrational was placed squarely in juxtaposition to the rational (Wagner's functionalist architecture), but in such a manner as to allow both to be welcomed by such puritan rationalists as Loos and Kraus, because both the rationality *and* the irrationality represented truthfulness to (the inner and outer dimensions of) reality.

Not only was the opposing position to this one which employed aestheticism *vis-à-vis* the social reality which it desired to see beautified. It was, in addition, a position which had come to jettison its own original aim of (large-scale) cultural regeneration in favour of (small-scale) cultural cosmetics. With its initial critical thrust gone, the Secession became the Kunstschau, and hence "the ruling conventional culture of the *haute bourgeoisie*".<sup>77</sup> As the expression of the 'irrational' became dramatically 'truthful' (i.e. explicit), the artistic position which this 'return of the repressed' occupied was squarely in the sphere of 'pure' painting. The symbolic representation and ornamentation employed by Art Nouveau undoubtedly gave way to functionalism and expressionism, as Adorno claimed, and Schorske's description of Kokoschka's "unification of psyche and corporal reality in portraiture",<sup>78</sup> in reading strikingly like Adorno on Art Nouveau (except, of course, for the reference to the 'realism' of portraiture), clearly demonstrates the Art Nouveau process as giving rise to this form of expressionism. Before Kokoschka, Klimt had combined the corporeal with the decorative: desubstantialized naturalistic elements were combined with mosaic, geometry, gold and silver layers etc. However, crucially, works such as Klimt's



contained, not only their own artistic ('objective') content, they also made reference to elements external to the 'fine art' of painting. Thus a solution was posited to the problematical autonomy status of the latter. The Viennese movements of functionalism and expressionism, appearing to occupy mutually exclusive positions within the social/practical and artistic/afunctional spheres respectively, both emerged from the Art Nouveau endeavour which set out to transcend this institutional differentiation by attacking its cultural foundation. In this respect, the Secession demonstrated the ultimate failure of this European movement to integrate the arts in an avant-gardiste manner; through expressionism the social vision of the avant-garde witnessed its demise in images of solitude, anxiety and isolation.

With Schorske's elucidation of the Secession in Vienna, light is shed upon Adorno's reasons for viewing psychoanalysis as a part of Art Nouveau: many of the classical Freudian preoccupations (neurosis, hysteria, sexual-cultural repression) undoubtedly motivated the *Jugendstil*-influenced Vienna movement in significant ways (Munch already prefigured the 'mixture' of such preoccupations as they would characterise the German and Austrian avant-gardes, e.g. with his *Puberty* [1894] and *Anxiety* [1894]). Both the expressionists' excavation of psychological states (with its dimension of freeing the 'primitive'), and the early Art Nouveau idealist escape to "the regions of biological prehistory"<sup>79</sup> (with a nostalgia attaching to nature as that which produces the human *species* in pre-social form) were symptomatic of the deepest discontent being felt with Western 'civilisation' and its cultural values around the turn of the century. If it remains the case that, as Burger asserts, Adorno "insisted exclusively on the new type of work, not on the *intent of the avant-garde movements to reintegrate art into the praxis of life*",<sup>80</sup> and that what ultimately distinguishes Adorno from the most radical aims of the European avant-garde movements is his clinging to the autonomy of art, it is true that the phenomenon of expressionism in Vienna marks the end point of Art Nouveau as a genuinely integrationist avant-garde endeavour. Expressionism, springing

as it did from the Secession, represented, within that context, the ultimate afunctional, and thus 'autonomous', art, encapsulating a movement away from the representation of objects to that of feelings. To contemporary critics of the Secession, such as Loos, it appeared that what had been jettisoned was the attempt to transcend the boundaries between subjective art and its environmental context. Where the Art Nouveau concern with the nature and potential of material of the work had gone alongside a (symbolistic and abstract) conception of expression as that which inhered in the formal arrangement of visual elements (including the deployment of space around them), expressionism was essentially characterised by its commitment to the pictorial substance of the image as rendered by the painter for gestural purposes. It is perhaps not surprising that expressionism should have emerged from the Austrian permutation of German *Jugendstil* since, as Dolf Sternberger acknowledged in the 1930's on the issue of *Jugendstil's* stressing of emotional meaning, "soulfulness oozes out of every corner".<sup>81</sup>

In briefly examining the above social theories, we can begin to see what a sociological theory of Art Nouveau might look like. Bürger's strengths for our purposes consist in his aiding the elucidation of the socio-cultural factors which engender an avant-garde movement, and focusing attention upon the fact that avant-gardes have challenged institutionalised notions of what actually constitutes a work of art in the first instance. On the basis of such a model, important hypothetical questions can be formulated, such as 'was Art Nouveau progressive or reactionary'? This helps to give direction to the examination of Art Nouveau as a movement attempting to penetrate society *with* art; the preoccupation with merely ornamenting the environment would be reactionary, whereas the desire to transform the environment along aesthetic lines would be progressive. Bürger also helps to focus the significance of aestheticism for the avant-garde vision, and aestheticism was undoubtedly a crucial motivator for Art Nouveau.



Benjamin describes Art Nouveau's opposition to industrial development within the social sphere. But was Art Nouveau only an extension of the crafts, or was it something radically different? Did it leave technical procedures and traditional organisational relationships unchanged? Both Benjamin and Adorno intend in their critiques toward the decorative phase of Art Nouveau (i.e. early and High Art Nouveau), and hence do not acknowledge the abstract, geometric (cubic, rectilinear) form-language of late Art Nouveau. The significance attaching to the latter is to be found with its facilitating the mass-produced art object. When viewed thus, late Art Nouveau looks forward in time to the activities of the *Bauhaus* and the *Deutsche Werkbund*; it indicates the direction towards Art Deco (as Schorske acknowledges) *but also* towards the industrially produced mass commodity. Expressionism, however, should not be understood purely as representing a reinstatement of 'autonomous' art; a preoccupation with new modes of expression fundamentally conditioned Art Nouveau as an avant-garde endeavour, and this preoccupation permeated a range of cultural forms. The *Bauhaus Manifesto* ('vague, ecstatic and utopian') of 1919 revivifies pre-war Expressionism, and not merely through its presentation of a woodcut in "splintered and dynamic style".<sup>82</sup>

As Frank Whitford points out,

"Expressionism urged social change and even revolution; these were to flow naturally out of a profound change in human consciousness. Art, the Expressionists fervently believed, could change the world".<sup>83</sup>

Schorske describes the *compromising* of *Sezessionstil* in Vienna that led to the avant-garde, which initially set out to regenerate culture and transform life and the social environment, becoming a group of producers of luxury goods (marketed through the Wiener Werkstätte) for the bourgeois domestic environment. This interpretation, however, ignores the implications of the Wiener Werkstätte being capable of becoming involved at a later date (1920) with certain large industrial companies for the mass production of its designs.<sup>84</sup> However, on the eve of its demise, in 1931, the WW still appeared incapable of reconciling commercial with artistic concerns, and it perpetuated the

anagonisms created by the juxtaposing of a craft-based aesthetic with an aesthetic centred on machine manufacture.

The questions to be addressed in subsequent chapters will be: 'How does Art Nouveau in Glasgow appear when Art Nouveau is acknowledged as being an avant-garde movement which develops a form-language capable of facing industrial mass-production?' 'What is the nature of the relationship of Art Nouveau to Arts and Crafts in Glasgow?' 'Where does the avant-garde in Glasgow emerge?' 'Does it have a coherent ideology?' The next chapter examines the Glasgow cultural context in the period under analysis, and relates this to European avant-garde activities.



## CHAPTER THREE

### GLASGOW IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT.

In the previous chapter we considered the kind of criteria by which Art Nouveau could be legitimately considered an avant-garde movement. The first section of this chapter attempts to illustrate, through the example of van de Velde, how the avant-gardiste position within Art Nouveau demanded far more than the 'flowering of the decorative arts' which so many commentators take it to have been. Van de Velde helps to clarify the question of the significance attaching to the inclusion of architecture within the programme of the movement. This section sets the key for the chapter, in that it provides a frame of reference for the elucidation of Glasgow Art Nouveau as a movement reflecting Continental avant-gardiste trends.

No discussion of Art Nouveau in Glasgow would be wholly adequate without some explanation of the artistic movement that preceded it historically, not least because this particular school of painting, in establishing itself, utilised Continental models. The Glasgow painters are examined in some detail because, quite apart from the form and content of the work that they actually produced, the impact they made upon the wider perception of cultural 'development' within the population of a commercially expanding Glasgow was considerable. It will be emphasised that this latter phenomenon poses an analytic problem: an avant-gardiste view of the thoroughgoing penetration of the social sphere by art has to be carefully distinguished from contemporary populist recommendations that art be used to beautify existing society; the latter (which permeate the Glasgow press in the period under analysis), besides lacking a critique of the institutional role of art within bourgeois society, often betray a reactionary position on the issue of large-scale social transformation. Muir's Glasgow in 1901 is cited as a relevant example of just such a reifying conception which employs the language of populism while demanding the type of aestheticisation of working class experience which effectively obscures existing relationships of class inequality. In the final section, some recent attempts to specify the nature of 'Glasgow Style' are



examined in order to demonstrate the kind of difficulties which have been encountered (and sometimes created) by commentators in this area.

### 1. Glasgow in Relation to Belgian Avant-Gardisme.

The significance of avant-gardiste principles in the attempt to transcend commercial hegemony and historicist/eclectic stylism, is illustrated by van de Velde's presentation of what he considered to be the fundamental tenets of Art Nouveau. Aware that commodity aesthetics could operate in such a way as to convey an image of art having a directly practical role, van de Velde recognised that the commercial agencies fostering this for their own profit-seeking ends, could effectively negate meaningful evaluation of works of artistic production. In retrospect, he described his growing awareness of how such agencies could distort the wider perception of art works:

"It seemed clear . . . that the old, relatively frank and straightforward transactions for the sale and purchase of an artist's work might soon give place to the odious modern machinery by which commercial publicity hoodwinks the public over the quality or value or whatever it is paid to advertise. Thus in the not far distant future we could expect to find genuine works of art insidiously branded with the same sort of mendacious descriptions and fictitious valuations as ordinary mass-produced merchandise for household use".<sup>1</sup>

For art to impose a regulating and controlling function within the processes of production and distribution it had to become an instrument of overall planning. Newly invented forms of art could be employed in confronting the problem of historicist stylism, but there was the danger that these forms, in being abstracted from the concrete social needs which gave rise to them, would be manipulated for purposes of profit and commercial prestige. By becoming an instrument of overall planning the social arts (art industries and architecture) could potentially subvert the (often latent) commercial interests whose motivations were towards organising the activities of artists to the ends of merely modifying the designs of objects already proven to be successfully marketable.

Though greatly inspired by the teachings of Ruskin and Morris, which allowed him to acknowledge, not merely the need for a complete renewal of the decorative arts, but also that architecture was an integral part of the much larger task of modifying the entire complex of contemporary social forms, van de Velde considered the English movement to exemplify an aristocratic stance, and to be detached from the real problems of a modern industrialised society. It was inadequate to unite art with handicrafts; machinery and mass-production techniques had to be accepted trustingly for a rebirth of the arts to be possible. Hence the expressed ideal was to witness "the thousandfold multiplication of my creations".<sup>2</sup> More than Horta, Hankar or Serrurier-Bovy, his fellow members of the Belgian Art Nouveau movement, van de Velde was able to penetrate beyond the pursuit of a developing new style towards a deep realisation of the enduring potency of the debilitating historicist/eclectic stylism that they, as a group, attacked:

"My hopes of what liberation from tutelage to the past and the dawning of a new era in design might bring about were just as high as theirs (Horta et al.), but such an illusory prospect failed to satisfy me. I knew we had to delve far deeper, that the goal to be striven for was a much more vital one than mere newness, which by its very nature can be only ephemeral. If we were to attain it we must begin by clearing away those obstructions which the centuries had accumulated in our path, stemming the inroads of ugliness and challenging every agency that corrupts natural taste . . . I firmly believed that I could achieve my ends . . . by virtue of an aesthetic founded on reason and therefore immune to caprice".<sup>3</sup>

In espousing his 'aesthetic founded on reason' within the context of a rather negativising appraisal of the other members of the group whose one common quality of artistic newness had already led to the coining of the term Art Nouveau, van de Velde was undoubtedly trying to compensate for a lack of concern with theory on the part of the others. His own observation was that technical development was a product of overall socio-cultural development, and hence purely commercial interests were viewed by him as obstructing the latter.

Horta had attended the Academy at Ghent, his birth-place, but prior to his completing his studies at the Brussels Academy (1881), he had travelled to Paris after 1878. At



this time, Viollet-le-Duc and Vaudremer, along with other members of the *Union Syndicale des Architectes Français*, were experimenting with architectural features. As well as fostering expectations of an imminent change of direction in the arts, the kind of stylistic and technical innovations attempted were to provide seminal elements for Art Nouveau; Vaudremer employed *abstract* chromaticism (e.g. his *Lycée Buffon*) and Viollet-le-Duc tried to popularise *linear decoration* with his iron ornaments (*Compositions et Dessins* 1884; *Entretiens Sur L'Architecture* 1872). This particular French movement reached its climax with the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1889, where French artists' attempts to invent a new type of decoration suited to iron buildings (proving popular for industrial and commercial projects) was in evidence, ones which combined ornamental (cast iron/sheet iron decorations) with utilitarian (riveted surfaces) elements. In important respects it prefigured the role of the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* which influenced organised attempts to unify art and industry in France (e.g. the *Ecole de Nancy*, *Alliance Provinciale des Industries d'Art* in February 1901). Horta's experience of the works of the 'Union's' members was important to a degree for his own subsequent development (not particularly notable until the *Hotel Tassel* in the *rue de Turin* [now the *rue Paul-Emile Janson*] in Brussels was built in 1892-3) and was apparent with his juxtaposing of contrasted materials (stones-bricks, iron-glass) in the *Maison du Peuple*. However, the intellectual content of rationalist theory probably had more of a subliminal than an overt effect upon Horta. In the case of van de Velde, the need to liberate and develop the rationalist potentialities for a more rigorous aesthetics is clearly apparent. Such could only be achieved through a process of absorbing the numerous anti-traditionalist stimuli which were motivating the various contemporary avant-garde movements.

In the early 1890's, the actual social context within which Belgian Art Nouveau was emerging saw the founding of the 'National Belgian Society for the Encouragement of Art in its Application to Street Decorations and to All Objects of Public Usefulness'.

Established in 1894 on broad populist lines, the Society (which, by the turn of the century had upwards of 3,000 members) had two main objectives: firstly, to ornament the facades of dwelling houses and public buildings in accordance with artistic principles (apparently the model was derived from Flanders and Italy during the Renaissance); and secondly, to encourage the application of art to modern practical appliances and inventions. This "liberal and democratic artistic campaign",<sup>4</sup> promoted by artists, architects and leading public officials, was claimed to have enjoyed general approval, no doubt because the emphasis was consistently placed upon the proposition that art had to appeal to the mass of the people if it was to recover its lost educational force. The initial medium for the diffusion of a wide knowledge of art among the masses was to be the application of artistic designs to everything which the members of the population were brought in contact with in their daily lives. In Britain, The Art Journal reported on the movement:

"Nothing is considered too unimportant to come within the scope of the new movement, from a door-knob to the facade of a cathedral. In this manner, the artistic education of the people will be brought about by permanent examples which meet the eye everywhere, and gradually make a lasting impression. Thus, it is argued, artistic traits in the people will become hereditary".<sup>5</sup>

From his vantage point of the Art School in Glasgow, Francis Newbery clearly followed with intense interest developments such as these. The role that artistic education could allegedly have upon heredity was being debated within the Glasgow School of Art also at this time.<sup>6</sup> But there were more concrete reasons for an interest in Belgium: Glasgow's art school had been deemed more 'advanced' than art schools in Belgium after its contributions to the Liège Exhibition of 1895 were seen. For his part Newbery considered the School of Art, not merely as a symbol of Glasgow's cultural development in the fostering of an art-educational establishment for the talented sons and daughters of the local middle class, but as a unique organ for the active integration of art with modern urban living. As he expressed it,



"he did not know any school in London which was better than the Glasgow School of Art. He thought the school would get by-and-by to the position that, instead of instructing the students, it would be in the position of educating the community".<sup>7</sup>

In other words, art education would transcend its traditional institutional context and effectively penetrate society for the betterment of all of its citizens. In 'art education' Newbery included the kind of practical training which, he hoped, would involve the wider elevation of the status of the crafts to that traditionally enjoyed by the fine arts. His declaration that "The artist was nothing if he was not a workman"<sup>8</sup> illustrated his commitment to what Walter Gropius, in 1924, referred to as "the reunification of the world of work with the creative artists".<sup>9</sup>

It is significant that Jean Delville, the Belgian symbolist artist and disseminator of Péladan's teachings, should be invited to Glasgow by Newbery; he took up the position of Professor of Drawing and Painting in the Life Classes at the Glasgow School of Art in 1901 (he left in 1906 to settle in Brussels).<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding his hostility towards materialism and his 'mystical Decadence' (Philippe Jullian), Delville's expressed view was that aesthetic ideas were always capable of being applied to social ideas: writers on socialism, he insisted, "ought at the same time to be cognisant of art if they wish to become perfect organisers of human life".<sup>11</sup> The beautiful was inseparable from social life; art was virtually the only *social* force with the power to assist in uplifting the population. Delville juxtaposed the avant-garde ideal of art's integration with social life to the 'theory' of 'art for art's sake', in such a way as to emphasise the criticism that an exclusive devotion to painting as a profession could only precipitate artistic backwardness. At the time of Delville's departure for Glasgow, the young intellectuals in the Belgian Workers' Party had been anxiously debating the relation of art to socialism, and the party had supported Art Nouveau as the most desirable style for modern architecture. Van de Velde was placed in charge of the party's graphics.

Newbery's personal scrap-book contains a press cutting reporting a lecture given by Morris in Glasgow (circa 1889) where the educative purpose of the city's Art School is specified as being for the "public at large, and not for the special advantage of the manufacturer or of special localities". Morris proceeded to say on this occasion that

"the very existence of a school of art in a great commercial city like Glasgow hinted, and not obscurely, that it was the business of artists to do their very best to bring it about that artists should no longer be a small class, but that either in the work they carried on, or in complete sympathy with it, the whole population should be in one form or another artists. (Applause)".<sup>12</sup>

This was placing a heavy burden of social responsibility on artists, and as a moral imperative it was completely characteristic of Morris the ideologue. Shortly after this, Continental Art Nouveau, itself taking theoretical inspiration from Morris's movement, would become a favourite target for attack by his followers. But in real terms, in what sense could Glasgow's own most significant artist's match up to Morris's requirements of them? In examining this question the first thing to be noted for our purposes is the importance of the relationship between Glasgow's artists and cultural developments in England (the Aesthetic movement), and on the Continent (Symbolism) which were to facilitate Art Nouveau. The most illuminating way of beginning to examine the European context for the Glasgow School of Painting is from the vantage point of Newbery's ideologically-informed perspective, and this we shall be doing in the next section.

## 2. The Importation of a Continental School of Painting

The group of painters who called themselves the 'Glasgow Boys' (led by James Guthrie, John Lavery, Arthur Melville, George Henry, E. A. Walton, E. A. Hornel) established in Glasgow the first significant link with developments in art on the Continent. At about the time when Morris was delivering his polemic in Glasgow, their works were being exhibited at both the Grosvenor Gallery in London and the *Glaspalaste*



Munich in (1890). The 23 principal Boys were not all born in Glasgow; Lavery was born in Ireland; Crawhall in Northumberland. One of the main factors uniting the painters initially, was a loathing of the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh. Sir William Fettes Douglas, President of the R.S.A., was reported in 1889 as finding the 'Glasgow fellows' 'very troublesome', and asking "What do they want *here* at all? If they are badly hung in Edinburgh I am sorry for it but *we* must look after ourselves".<sup>13</sup> By this stage, ironically, Guthrie (who expressed his admiration for the "vitality and activity of the Glasgow School of Art")<sup>14</sup> had been elected an Associate of the R.S.A. (14th. November 1888) rising to full academician in 1890. Walton became an Associate in 1889, and in 1890 Henry, Lavery and MacGillivray were elected Associates. Clearly, their success was too profound to go unacknowledged by the art establishment indefinitely.

Works by Scottish artists in the last 20 years of the 19th. century were purchased by galleries in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Munich as well as by the municipal collections in Ghent, Barcelona, Venice, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe and Weimar. The Boys formed themselves into a society with a form of constitution in 1887, with Glasgow-born William Kennedy (1859-1918) elected President. The more adventurous members of the Glasgow school had adopted the style of Bastien-Lepage from the 1880's. As Roger Billcliffe has pointed out, this style was actually closer to that of the Academicians than the Impressionists (led by Monet, Renoir and Pissarro); it was novel and yet traditional. "Bastien-Lepage's painting", says Billcliffe, "challenged current academic thinking in both Scotland and England but it was not such an affront to it that it might forever bar his followers from public acceptance".<sup>15</sup> However, connections with France had been significant for Glasgow painters even prior to the earliest period of the Boys. The European centre of culture in the late 19th. century was Paris. McTaggart visited there in 1859, 1876 and 1882; Melville travelled to France in 1878 and painted in Paris and Gres near Barbizon (David Gauld, a close friend of Mackintosh, visited Gres in 1896).

Thirteen of the Boys were made corresponding members of the Munich Secession in 1893 when its first exhibition took place. Guthrie (whose style changed dramatically after he visited Paris in 1882) became an Honorary member in 1896.

The achievements of the Glasgow painters were placed squarely within an 'Art for Art's sake' category by Newbery in 1897 when he wrote the introduction to the first book to be published on the artists' work. The author was David Martin. Here Newbery establishes a contemporary context from which to understand the relevance of the Glasgow school; this context being the European avant-garde movements. The Glasgow Boys have, he asserts,

"a firm belief in *one* thing - which is, that it is quite sufficient for *Art to be Art*, and to be the most beautiful thing that the hand of man is capable of making her . . . None the less are they the force behind a movement whose influence is both evident and extending".<sup>16</sup>

Newbery referred to this movement as a 'renaissance' whose birth was in many places, although he was swift to point out that the Glasgow school did not have to suffer academicism, a Royal Academy, or "a power that held possession and which either ruled the market or dictated the taste".<sup>17</sup> Instances of opposition could be found in London (the New English Art Club assaulting the 'citadel of academicism'), Paris (the fight against the State School tradition and the atelier) and Munich. He then drew attention to the significance of specifically urban forces for the creation of an art movement:

"It is curious to note how most of the great triumphs of Art have been won in cities, and in cities too, whose life was oftentimes of the busiest and most complex description . . . And at this end of the nineteenth century, in the midst of one of the busiest, noisiest, smokiest cities, that, with its like fellows, make up the sum total of the greatness of Britain's commercial position, there is a movement existing, and a compelling force behind it, whose value we cannot yet rightly appraise or whose influence is not yet bounded, but which, both movement and movers, may yet, perhaps, put Glasgow on the Clyde into the hands of the future historians of Art, on much the same grounds as those on which Bruges, Venice, and Amsterdam find themselves in the book of the life of the world".<sup>18</sup>

There was nothing accidental about Newbery referring to this modern artistic movement - of which the Scottish phenomenon was seen to be a manifestation - as a 'renaissance': van de Velde employed the same term and Otto Wagner talked of 'Naissance'. In Newbery's



case a strong influence clearly emanated from Patrick Geddes in Edinburgh. Geddes was greatly preoccupied with what Peter Bürger terms "The nexus between art and the sciences that the Renaissance created",<sup>19</sup> and he saw as the most pressing need the *re-creation* in a higher cultural form of "Leonardo's, Dürer's dream of uniting Art and Science".<sup>20</sup> Geddes was sufficient of an optimist to claim, as early as 1884, that "the long-delayed renaissance of art has begun, and the prolonged discord . . . is changing into harmony".<sup>21</sup> Taking his cue from this prognostication, Newbery articulated the conviction that the essence of the Renaissance, far from having diminished with history, was existent as an immanent potentiality embodying an unlimited field for knowledge. It was while discussing the Renaissance that he pointed to pre-Raphaelitism as carrying the power to activate new artistic movements on the Continent:

". . . to deal with movements, What was the Renaissance, and what was the difference between that mighty upheaval and the local pre-Raphaelite movement? What had Art to do either with the one or the other?

The Renaissance came and stayed. We live in its influence yet, and it will be some centuries before its waves cease to break; whereas the historian, seeing the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in the light of time and history, docket it as one of the phases of a religious movement, that originated presumably in Oxford, and which logically drove Newman into the Church of Rome, and Rossetti to a revival of Paganism; made Millais turn to the painting of expensive portraits; gave Ruskin his opportunity; and while as an incentive to picture making, it is dying with Mr. Holman Hunt, it may take a new lease of life, as the motive spirit in a phase of Art, now spreading from Great Britain over the Continent".<sup>22</sup>

This was Newbery's not very clear way of acknowledging the influence which pre-Raphaelitism was having on European Symbolism (it was also to be significant for modernists such as Picasso and Kandinsky), and via symbolism, on Art Nouveau (expression, synthesis, decoration, were all central Symbolist preoccupations). Objective cultural conditions were seen by him as working themselves out, often independently of the conscious intentions of artists themselves. For this reason, he insisted that any orientation which understood art as consisting of the lives, works and influences of particular artists, or with selected schools, was engaging in 'archaeology'. What was traditionally termed 'art', Newbery portrayed as an emergent

phenomenon which transcends the activities of those referred to as 'artists': "the Art that artists do, lives after them; the rest may be interred with their bones".<sup>23</sup> He thus hypostatized art as an independent, suprahistorical structure of spiritual values; at the same time, he was acknowledging the apparent autonomy of art, its ability to emancipate itself from its material origins and develop in accordance with specifically artistic inner laws of form. The European movement of artistic radicalism which he polemicised about provided the ground for innovations whose very autonomy were a vital condition of their intrinsic value. Hence, the Glasgow Boys were depicted as representing a cohesive group of artists working within this contemporary European movement, which was comprised of interacting combinations of avant-garde agents, all of whom were asserting their originality, independence and freedom in opposition to established traditions. Within the artistic group itself, the adoption of a particular style was certainly viewed as being the object of a voluntary choice, the latter being validated by the artist's individual talent. The latter was fundamental as the medium through which real art expressed itself. In 1909, Newbery, by then associated with the Glasgow School of Art for 25 years, continued to demonstrate his conviction that art was inseparable from individuality, by announcing that

"full scope was allowed the individuality of the students. In that school, so long as he was connected with it, individuality would be regarded as a precious thing".<sup>24</sup>

As Giuliano Gresleri has emphasised, the "concept of individual action became, in the programme of the avant-garde, a formative, polemical, and social obligation". In the context of Newbery's portrayal of the Glasgow painters, style could be developed innovatively by an individual or by a small group; what was most significant was that it presented an alternative to what the concerted contributions of recent past generations had bequeathed through tradition.

The nature of the dialectical relationship between the individual and tradition takes on a different form, however, in the sphere of architecture and the applied arts, as



can be seen from the manner in which external elements (i.e. to originality, independence, free creativity), in the form of practical requirements, affected avant-garde projects within the public sphere. In adapting the new Glasgow Style form-language to the requirements of particular construction requirements, difficulties arose. Out of this tension-filled relationship between the architect and a given project, there emerges a rift in the balance between particular (individual) and general aims, not least because avant-garde architects were attempting to eliminate the hegemonic influence exerted by 'external' eclectic references and were attempting to transform conventions inherited from the past; conventions become concretions of power and influence through institutional agencies. The problem is highlighted by Mackintosh's Gothic design for the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral Competition of 1903 which was undoubtedly determined by the knowledge that the assessors would inevitably choose a design conforming to the traditional mode/form of English ecclesiastical architecture. Such instances betray the intractably institutionalised imperatives underlying eclecticism; they also help to focus the attention on the practical experiential difficulties confronted by proponents of avant-garde ideas in architecture. Unlike artists such as the Glasgow Boys with their easel paintings, avant-garde architects and designers were not 'alone' before their work, and faithfulness to a new form-language ultimately had to confront the requirements of specific objective circumstances. In other words, the actual function of a project, and/or the nature of a commissioning client or body, were to prove crucially important in relation to final design outcomes. We shall return to this issue later in the chapter, and examine it through certain concrete examples in Glasgow. In the meantime, however, it must be said that the view just expressed about the Glasgow Boys is not an adequate one, because, under the respective influences of Aestheticism and Symbolism, the traditional concept of 'the painting' with its allegedly 'realist' content was itself undergoing considerable change in the hands of certain Glasgow artists. The

immediate environment, hitherto considered extrinsic to the artist's content-laden creation, was to influence the very process of formal execution itself.

### 3. The Myth of Realism : Glasgow Art as Decorative 'Naturalism' and Decorative Symbolism.

In 1901, James Hamilton Muir (actually a composite pseudonym of James Bone, the Glasgow artist Muirhead Bone and Archibald Hamilton) was bewailing the fact that, in Glasgow, no artist had as yet arisen who could deal with the life of this modern manufacturing city in such a manner as to reflect the austerity and seriousness of the 'great art' that already existed in the city's 'marrow'. Artists in the past had long since despaired of rendering the true life of the city, including the life of its streets. But Muir reserved some optimism for what the modern movement could potentially achieve:

"we feel that in this vineyard there lies hid the treasure that shall make our modern art richer than all the old. It is in the search for it that the strength of the next generation will be expended",<sup>25</sup>

The images that Muir had in mind were neither picturesque nor pretty, but represented rather a Zolaesque romanticisation, a true aestheticisation of the lives of the workers, the horrors of their experience plainly acknowledged.

"Another vignette is the bands of workers coming home for the night across the plains; a mild sun sinking calm and refulgent, and shining on their smeared faces . . . workmen bivouacking round their fires or at work in trenches, with the smoke of torches on their faces, street cleaners rumbling by on their chartiots, the naked lights in kitchens and workshops, the strange horror of men turning in the white heat of their furnaces like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednigo, hordes of workmen nameless and inarticulate, yet each man at his work, a superb gesture that means we know not what".<sup>26</sup>

The latter phrase here betrays the mystification being purveyed. However, it is significant to what extent these images of urban production were being equated with



modernity: a really new art could not be considered truly modern unless it addressed itself to the depiction of Glasgow as "the field of employment and energy".

T. J. Clark, in writing about the environs of Paris after the 1860's, describes how "areas in which the opposite of the urban was being constructed, a way of living and working which in time would come to dominate the late capitalist world, providing as it did the appropriate forms of sociability for the new age".<sup>27</sup>

He argues that it is incorrect to refer to such areas as 'suburban' in the sense of 'subordinates' of some city. Rather, the urban (work, production, industry) and its opposite (leisure, recreation) were being juxtaposed in a new social form within which an extensive lower middle class was emerging.

In the case of Glasgow, the expressed recognition of the need to construct a 'special territory' on the very periphery of the "blankness, uniformity and greyness" - that is, the city's working class districts - with Muir takes the form of a eulogising about the promise represented by the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901. The problem being addressed is how to make the lives of Glasgow's workers "a little more gracious and tolerable and sweet",<sup>28</sup> while at the same time it is considered inevitable that these working people "willy-nilly, must make their dwelling-place and spend their lives, their leisure as well as their working hours"<sup>29</sup> in its murky, grimy midst. At this point in time the Exhibition is to offer respite and escape to Glasgow's citizens. But if far more than this is required for a qualitative transformation of urban social life, then, ironically, the same event is looked to to provide the means towards it:

"That the Exhibition will leave behind it a humanising influence we know. It will hasten the coming of our clean rivers, our flowers and trees, and help to rend that intolerable blanket of smoke which, while it keeps out the sun, is not even proof against the rain. We want some 'niceness' in the conditions of our citizens' lives, and justice done to our city's looks that we may love her in the sight of men as we have loved her shamefacedly and in secret".<sup>30</sup>

The belief in the powers of commercialism to effect a transformation of recreation and the environment is overt here, but in the light of Clark's exposition this has to be viewed as the complement to the acknowledgement that "the glory of Glasgow is in what

the unknown 'working-class districts' contain";<sup>31</sup> the workshops and industries (smelting, forging, casting etc.). These represented the existing 'greatness' of Glasgow (apparent production), but at the same time the assumed benefits of the sphere of commercialism appear as the fruits of some teleological process leading to recreation within a beautified environment. Glasgow could only be a truly modern city with its appropriate forms of sociability (its Victorian architectural achievements had successfully reduced the participation of the working class in downtown street life) when the correlate of production had been attained. In Clark's words, when "industry and recreation were casually established next to each other, in a landscape which assumed only as much form as the juxtaposition of production and distraction . . . allowed",<sup>32</sup>

In Muir's opinion, Glasgow's artists had failed to depict the city's true reality: they had turned away from the phenomenon of industrialism to find their subject-matter primarily in the rural, the pastoral, in landscape. Yet when Glasgow school painters moved beyond the rural naturalism, or realism, of Millet and the Barbizon painters and of Bastien-Lépage, it was intended to be in the direction of realizing an overt commitment to the depiction of modern urban life as a suitable artistic subject. Underpinning this 'commitment' was the expectation that such practice would 'modernise' their art. In this context, Clark's outline of what he argues is one of the main circumstances of modern art, namely, the emergence of the lower middle class, is especially relevant:

Modernist art is characterised, indeed, by its desire to take its distance from the *petite bourgeoisie* and the world of entertainments it ushered in, but artists were paradoxically fascinated by those entertainments and made them the new art's central subject for a considerable time".<sup>33</sup>

The crucial term here is 'distance', because what Félix Fénéon said of Gauguin in 1889 could be taken as a characterisation of the Glasgow Boys' work in the same period: that



is to say, "reality is but a pretext for distanced creations",<sup>34</sup> Let us look at an instance of this.

In 1887 Lavery had become acquainted with Whistler, who, by this time, was President of the Royal Society of British Artists. The two men remained friends throughout the 1890's. The proof that Lavery was heavily influenced by Whistler's aestheticist teachings - set out most cogently in his famous 'Ten o'clock Lecture' - with regard to the right of the artist to "choose his own subjects and to find beauty where an untrained eye might ignore it", is to be found with the series of pictures (sketches and finished paintings, about 50 in number) that he executed during the summer of 1888 in the grounds of the International Exhibition of that year: paintings of bands, stalls, crowds, pavilions etc. in the park, e.g. 'The Dutch Coffee House', 'The Cigar Seller'. One work was commissioned to commemorate the official visit of Queen Victoria in August of that year, and for this Lavery received £600. If Lavery's work in this period was to be understood as a depiction of modern urban life, it could not avoid being a highly contrived one; this was, in actuality, 'modern urban play'. Significant is the highly decorative and aesthetic effect, which disturbs the relationship between the artist and the 'reality' being represented, and links these compositions to the contemporary works of Hornel and Henry which strongly influenced the two-dimensionality of Glasgow Style Art Nouveau.<sup>35</sup> The real, as a fragment of optical factuality, is but the starting-point for an artefact of the artist's apartness from social reality: in this case, a construction purveying the 'reality' of harmony, order, enjoyment, contentment, perfectly in concord with the priorities of the commercial interests which have conveniently supplied the subject-matter, the venue and the events. Social conflict, urban hardship, are expediently excluded and what remains are visual evocations of an ideal urban existence of pleasure, recreation, calm and liberty.

Lavery pursued the professional success that was triggered-off for him by the events in 1888. As Billcliffe notes,

"after having the good fortune to be granted a sitting from Queen Victoria, Lavery was given an entree to the homes and social circles of all the other 'sitters' which was doubtless of the greatest use to him in later years".<sup>36</sup>

Even before this, however, Lavery, together with Walton, was successfully rendering the local middle class at play, e.g. 'A Concert at the Glen' (the latter the house of the wealthy Fulton family in Paisley); 'The Tennis Party' (1885) which caused Lavery to be criticised for having painted such a 'vulgar' subject; 'A Rally' (1885) showing a middle class lady playing tennis. Where Bastien-Lépage had introduced images of city life and the working classes into his repertoire, Walton 'discovered' that the day-to-day activities of Helensburgh ladies could provide the kind of 'realism' capable of carrying a significant price tag within the burgeoning middle-class leisure market. Lavery, with a similar subject-matter, realised that

"middle-class life was just as valid a realist subject as that of his French peasants, but with the added advantage that the subjects of these paintings were far more likely to buy them than were the village girls of Grez".<sup>37</sup>

Certainly, patrons were not in every instance, invariably, private interests. When Glasgow Town Council, in 1899, offered a commission for the decoration of the public spaces in the City Chambers, Lavery, who worked alongside Alexander Roche, Walton and Henry, produced an artistic account of Glasgow's major industry, shipbuilding. But this was a typical instance of the civic art required by an overwhelmingly middle class civic government, a component in the mythologisation of Glasgow's history. Ironically perhaps, Lavery's contribution came closest to contemporary industrial reality, but only for its hypostatizing imagery (Walton depicted Glasgow citizens at play in the imagined halcyon days of the 17th. century at Fair Holiday on Glasgow Green; Henry showed the royal charter being granted in the 12th. century). Alongside Lavery's Exhibition series and a group of paintings by James Nairn recording urban surroundings ('West Regent Street Glasgow' 1884; 'Notes in the Tunnel: Glasgow and District Railway' untraced) the only Glasgow school painting to concern itself with the life of the industrial city is W. Y. MacGregor's 'A Joiner's Shop' from 1881 (a commission; the



shop was in Argyle Street, Glasgow). On the subject of the French realist paintings exhibited in Glasgow in 1888, Billcliffe makes the point that

"most, if not all . . . , were concerned with rural life. There was a dignity attached to these representations of rustic labour which no doubt made them acceptable to the Scottish collector, but few artists seem to have tried to attract his attention by recording the conditions in which many of his own workforce would have spent their daily lives".<sup>38</sup>

The most obvious question that this raises is, given the predominantly decorative and harmonious nature of the styles of painting employed by the Glasgow artists, would such 'depictions', even if attempted, have amounted to anything more than idealised representations of workers at one with their virtuous, if back-breaking, labour? Or as manifestations of the daunting 'natural' force of socially necessary labour which had constituted them as a mass; a force with which they would appear in mystical harmony? If the squalid living and working conditions were apprehended as real by such as Muir, commercialism, grinding work, discipline and social order were romantically portrayed as the totalizing means towards an improved future. Thus the destructive real effects of commercialism and the coercive order underpinning the production relations to which commercialism was inextricably linked, were conveniently rendered obscure. French rural life and peasant labour had been reified through the sentimental and nostalgic misrepresentations forming the content of the paintings produced by Millet and the Barbizon school to grace French petty-bourgeois households. In importing this cultural form, the Glasgow Boys imported the basis for an appealing aestheticisation of social reality. The change which took place subsequently within Glasgow painting was essentially stylistic. The works of Lavery, with their representations of recreation within segments of urban landscape, executed under the influence of Whistler's teachings, illustrate the consistent removal from view of social conflicts and deprivations through the medium of an artistic style which was made as important as 'realist' content.

The same economic prosperity which produced commercial and residential Glasgow in the years of expansion in the 19th. century also engendered poverty, appalling working conditions, and inadequate and overcrowded housing within insanitary environments. But for the middle classes, trapped within Glasgow's commercial sector, if not its impoverished areas of poor housing, the new forms of cultural production were increasingly being focused upon as having an autonomy and a quality which were they were reluctant to reduce, invariably, to commercial processes as such. Rather, the arts which had emerged, and which were now flourishing, were portrayed as holding the promise of a new quality of living, a quality that could be considered the more desirable result industrial activities so negatively appraised in the past.

"Glasgow finds it hard to face the critics of its acrid atmosphere. Recent experience has sorely tried the patience of the most loyal citizen, who feels acutely that the adage 'where there is smoke there is money' is a poor shield against condemnation of the poisonous gloom whose horrors are in recent memory. But the city may well be proud of having created an atmosphere of its own, one in which the arts flourish with amazing vigour".<sup>39</sup>

The success of these 'flourishing arts' in the public imagination, could be easily attributed to the influence of the Glasgow Boys. This was not to say, however, that their influence was perceived as having affected fine art alone. In fact, Glasgow's 'arts' were to a considerable degree apprehended in terms of a pragmatic attitude which was being disseminated through the language of the press. A journalist who visited the 1901 Exhibition, for example, presented (in characteristically 'humorous' fashion) the following account:

"One of the very artistic exhibits was a large show-case, filled in a promiscuous manner with knives, forks, and spoons. It was certainly a grand conception, and reflected greatly on the mind which originated it. Then I was greatly moved by the ease and grace with which an overtaxed City Father pocketed the humble threepenny-bit for brushing boots - no, no, hats; the dress and deportment of the nymphs of the confectionery corner; the smiles and rouge of the ditto in the - section; and the abundant bar accomodation with the handsome and costly fitting.

There was also the Press Club!

All testified to the influence of the Glasgow School of painters on our public life of every day".<sup>40</sup>



Even in 1888, it was being acknowledged that the work of the Glasgow painters held the promise of a beautified social environment. For the Exhibition of that year, held at West End Park, ten central galleries devoted to the visual arts (including architecture and photography) were incorporated by the architect James Sellars. In describing the Sculpture Gallery, the Glasgow Herald had this to say about Roche and Hornel's quality contributions to the decorative scheme:

"The decorative treatment to which the walls are being subjected was noticed in last Friday's *Herald*, but a decoration of a higher order remains to be mentioned — viz., the beautifying (of) the two end walls above the frieze with figure subjects. These are in process of execution, the one by Mr. Roche and the other by Mr. Hornell, two Glasgow artists. The presence of these works in the Sculpture Gallery, and others of a similar nature which have been embraced by the architect in his designs, will do much to open up a field of art of the highest order at present closed against artists in this country, and may suggest the decorative scheme which should be applied to the rooms and salons of our public buildings".<sup>41</sup>

The decorative, ornamental qualities and bold use of colour in the Glasgow painters' work undoubtedly exerted a considerable influence upon the course taken by the decorative arts in Glasgow. Henry and Hornel (1880's), and Gauld and Park (1890's), in particular, produced original work in the 'new' decorative manner. At the end of the 19th. century there was a flourishing stained glass industry in the city (e.g. D. and W. Guthrie who executed windows for the Church of Saint Andrew, Buenos Ayres, from cartoons by Gauld). Hornel and Henry's 'The Druids; Bringing in the Mistletoe' (1890) was adapted for a stained glass window by Gauld. The critic of the Saturday Review considered this work the most important Glasgow entry in the Grosvenor Exhibition, and described it as being "in the spirit of decoration; it is really, perhaps, a fragment of a frieze".<sup>42</sup> The decorative elements apparent may have been at least partly influenced by Japanese art. The Glasgow picture dealer and gallery owner Alexander Reid, in the late 1880's, brought a number of Japanese prints back with him from Paris where he had been working with Theo Van Gogh. Reid met Vincent Van Gogh, had his portrait painted by him twice, and the two obviously shared an intense interest in Japanese prints. Reid presented twelve prints to the Glasgow Art Club in 1894. Japanese

art objects had been available in Glasgow (along with other principal towns in Britain) for a number of years by this time. In 1888 the City Oriental Warehouse advertised their selection of goods (including Japanese screens with gold and silk embroidery, china, Imari, Kaga, Satsuma, Cloisonne and Kyoto wares) as "the largest and most varied ever shown in Scotland".<sup>43</sup>

Writing in 1897 of Hornel's style, David Martin attempted to pinpoint the artist's distinctive characteristics of decoration and colour:

"His pictures are panels, wherein the artist seeks to give expression to a motif which is entirely concerned with the beauty of colour in conjunction with a decorative quality of line or of spacing . . . He is concerned more with the building up of spaces of colour, rich and full in quality, which, with a fine sense of composition, results in a scheme that is highly decorative".<sup>44</sup>

This is a strikingly 'Art Nouveau' interpretation; beauty of colour and a decorative linearism/spatialism are acknowledged as being employed for purposes of *expression*. A telling illustration of the thoroughgoing attempt to exploit fully the decorative potential of the whole, is the gold leaf Hornel and Henry used on parts of the canvas in 'The Druids' (1890) and in 'The Star in the East' from the following year (1891). By deliberately associating painting and the applied arts, symbolic image with ornamentation, works such as this challenged the traditional academic categories of art forms. This was acknowledged by the critic of the American journal Harper's Weekly, who invoked analogies with other media - stained glass, tapestry - in describing Hornel's 'May Day'. It may be likened, he reflected, "to a gorgeous tapestry in which joyous children disport themselves in brilliant sunlight"; while Hornel's "wonderful Japanese studies in their colouring suggest the brilliancy and translucence of stained glass. Actually light seems to shine through this colouring".<sup>45</sup>

There can be little doubt that Newbery's and Martin's interpretations of the Glasgow painters' work was influenced by press coverage in Glasgow of critics' appraisals of their work shown at the St. Louis Exposition of 1895. Commentators writing for American journals and newspapers were unanimous in hailing the Scottish work as 'advanced' and



thus representative of a strong and original influence upon modern European art. The apparent incongruity of using oil paints to create the effects of stained glass or embroidery, and the new emphasis being placed upon imaginative/inspirational content were acknowledged as being a central characteristic of avant-garde art. The art critic of the Evening Times in Glasgow, subsequent to having received a number of press cuttings from the United States, commented that

"It is one of the most gratifying features of the American appreciation that it is based on sound judgement and a clearer understanding of what the artists are driving at than seems to be possessed by the average British critic".<sup>46</sup>

This 'clearer understanding' can be seen to have extended to an acknowledgement of several features apparent with the work on show that relate directly to early Art Nouveau by way of Symbolism. The use of *Expression* to emphasise the sensual and intensify emotion, was much commented upon, as was *Inspiration*. The significance of 'Nature Rapport' (French Art Nouveau artists were, at this time, committing themselves to Nature as the primary source of *inspiration*) was seen as having nothing whatever to do with *imitation* of nature by the art critic of the St. Louis Post-Democrat, who, in analysing the works, and differentiating them from the products of realism, pointed in the direction of distinctive elements of symbolism and Celtic mysticism:

"They are great masters of technique, putting paint on canvas in the most effective way; at the same time - far from being photographic realists - their work is marked by that weird and mystical poetry which has always characterised the Scottish people".<sup>47</sup>

An equally relevant example of recognition of what was to be a central Art Nouveau concern is to be found with the references demonstrating that the Scottish work resulted from the kind of psychology capable of suffusing thoughts with emotions. (Five years later Hermann Obrist, in Dekorative Kunst, would insist that "If we trustingly followed our feelings and thoughts . . . we would see that we can find everywhere this essence of all that is art")<sup>48</sup> "The men of the Glasgow School think and feel, and thought and feeling are involved in all their work",<sup>49</sup>

pointed out the critic of Harper's Weekly. The Chicago journal The Arts, in its response, illustrates the conviction that inspiration required the merging of thought and feeling before genuine creative originality, and individuality, were possible:

"(the Glasgow men) are not at all mere copyists of nature, nor do they belong to the growing school of affectationists who substantially claim that art which is based upon nature is no longer worthy of attention. They are the most sincere students of nature, but that which they derive from her in impression and suggestion they make their own by putting it into their own words - recording what *they* know and believe and feel. Indeed, it is not so much what these men have painted as what they have involved of themselves in their work that gives their work its greatest charm. They do not think or feel exactly alike, nor do they paint alike; each of them is intensely individual, though all are related in serious endeavour, in feeling, and, to some extent, in expression. Yet one would never mistake one of the Glasgow pictures for the work of any other painter than him whose signature it bears".<sup>50</sup>

Beyond the Barbizon and Whistlerian 'realist' modes, and beyond the established norm for easel painting, the most significant Glasgow school appropriation was that of symbolism; it was in respect of this that the 'cross-over' point between the Glasgow painters and the exponents of applied art was most noticeable. The adaptation of works such as those of Hornel and Gauld (which anyway already employed a formal repertory appropriated from design as against representation) to other media, illustrated the interrelationship between a style of painting utilising forms defined by colour and flattened perspective, and the decorative arts (an applied art like glass-staining provided a link with architecture). However, in concrete terms the new 'Glasgow Style' of the Mackintosh group in applied art manifested greater stylistic unity than had been the case with the Glasgow school of painters. This made the former comparable with the newest developments in Europe. But the aesthetic tastes which the Glasgow painters had appealed to in their most 'modernist' works, were 'universalized, so to speak, through the integrationist tendencies of the decorative arts (including interior design and architecture). The intimate relationship between a decorative style of painting which involved the use of symbolism and abstraction, and interior decoration, and the implications of this for the English realist tradition, were referred to by Audley Mackworth in The Art Journal. A 'decorative picture', Mackworth explained, was



"arranged not so much for its own sake as to fill a space, and to produce a harmony of colour with its surroundings",<sup>51</sup> In stark contrast with this, only an easel picture, whose 'vocation' was to depict "men and women as they lived" and thus be 'truthfully historic', could be "a precious thing in itself". Mackworth insisted on the 'complete divergence' of realist easel pictures from decorative ones in order that the 'essential nature' of each was not destroyed. Any assumption of equal value was dispelled by the attribution of a moral role which, for Mackworth, following Ruskin's line, was the proof of the superior artistic status of the realist easel painting. This carefully understated attack upon the Symbolist/Aestheticist approach to art made its point very lucidly; decoration meant Decadence, and it simulated disturbing Continental tastes at odds with English moral gentility.

#### 4. The Decorative Arts, Architecture and 'Glasgow Style'

As the 19th. century drew to a close, the shops in central Glasgow's bustling Buchanan Street testified to the spending power existing in the city. There was a considerable demand for modern furnishings, as a glance at Wylie and Lohead's turn-of-the-century catalogues reveals. Appointed cabinet makers to Queen Victoria, the firm had furnished the royal suite of reception rooms for the 1888 Exhibition; as well as repeating this for the 1901 Exhibition (at which displays imported from the Paris Exposition of the previous summer appeared), they built a pavilion with separate rooms designed in 'Glasgow Style' Art Nouveau by the team of E. A. Taylor (a drawing room, referred to by Lewis Day as "designed and furnished on lines so rigorously vertical as to be in a sense almost elementary"),<sup>52</sup> John Ednie (dining room as well as a tea room interior) and George Logan (bedroom and library). All three had attended the Glasgow School of Art before being recruited to the firm's furniture department. At this time, both Taylor (who joined Wylie and Lohead in 1893) and Logan (who joined in 1882) were instructors in furniture design at the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College. These room settings were shown the following year in Hungary when the whole pavilion was transported to Budapest for the British Arts and Crafts Exhibition. Furniture designed by the trio appeared at the Turin Decorative Art Exhibition, also in 1902. At the Glasgow Exhibition of 1901 Fedor Shekhtel (the architect whose 'Russian Street' was on show) saw work by Mackintosh for the first time,<sup>53</sup> Shekhtel was subsequently to be one of the organisers of an exhibition entitled 'Architecture and Design of the New Style' held in Moscow the following year at which a small 'white room' by Mackintosh with chairs, a table and drawn panels in wood and metal (by Margaret MacDonald) was displayed. In an article published in The Studio in 1933, E. A. Taylor (who married Glasgow Stylist Jessie M. King) referred to a volume ('Our Homes and How to Beautify Them') which appeared in England shortly after 1902. He provided some quotations from this publication (taken from a chapter with the title 'Hooliganism in Art') which



illustrated clearly that the acknowledged interactions taking place between the Scottish movement and the Continent were being viewed in the most negative terms in England at the time; the 'dreadful designs' of 'The Scotto-Continental New Art' (a pejorative designation), with their "washed out contrasts (which) 'clang' on the optic nerve", were "like sweet bells, jangled, harsh, and out of tune . . ." <sup>54</sup>

In *Dekorative Kunst*, Hermann Muthesius (whom Taylor called "Germany's keen-sighted admirer of everything that was original and progressive in architecture"), in observing that a 'whole school' had emerged that was moving in the paths trodden by the Mackintosh group, referred to the 1901 Glasgow Exhibition as the first British exhibition at which completely furnished rooms were presented as examples of the designer's art. It was Muthesius' contention that, although England had been at the centre of art development, since 1896 and the death of Morris, nothing in that country had changed artistically; a total standstill was now visible there, with the same artists producing exactly the same things. What was conspicuous by its absence "in any kind of London exhibition of applied art", <sup>55</sup> was the final logical consequence of the tectonic developments engendered by the new movement which began where Morris had left off; namely, a complete room, designed as a totality. <sup>56</sup> With regard to this particular achievement, Muthesius placed the new Scottish movement unambiguously alongside the Continental avant-garde:

"It is quite remarkable how almost exactly with the year of Morris's death the new movement commenced around England; in Belgium, France, Germany and Scotland. And everywhere there was immediately present the dear goal; to view the room as a whole, to develop it as an artistic unity.

In this context, the Scottish movement must be viewed as being totally distinct from the English one, running parallel with the continental movements". <sup>57</sup>

Within Great Britain itself, claimed Muthesius, the 'gravitating point' of the whole country's artistic movement had now shifted from London to Glasgow, even though, artistically, the latter was a totally new city. It was, however, unburdened by artistic tradition.

Muthesius viewed both the Glasgow school of painters and the Mackintosh movement as having benefited from the lack of "any established academy and its unavoidable artistic following".<sup>58</sup> Where Edinburgh had been the centre of Scottish artistic developments in painting and architecture throughout the 19th. century, the new Scottish school of painting brought Glasgow to the fore; the Glasgow school was distinct from both the contemporary English and Edinburgh schools. Within the Glasgow context, however, the movement of painters and the movement of decorative artists represented, Muthesius insisted, two generations of artists who confronted one another "as estranged if not as enemies".<sup>59</sup> It appeared that what distinguished the Glasgow Style of the Mackintosh group was its manifest character of a specifically local idiom; a certain relationship was present between the art of this new movement and the "local spirit of Scotland". Here Muthesius stressed the form which the tectonic attributes of the Glasgow Style manifested as reflecting indigenous cultural traits (such as were apparent with, for example, Scottish castles no doubt; the south facade and east end of the Glasgow School of Art have been likened to certain medieval and later examples) in which puritanism and romanticism, abstinence and mysticism were combined. Moreover, the Glasgow Style apparent in 1902, with its strictness of line and its 'broad undecorated surfaces', emphasised tectonic rather than ornamental qualities: "The Glasgow group first became known through the latter and found, at that time, the most opposition".<sup>60</sup> Muthesius thus felt that he was drawing attention to a transformation that had been effected within the Glasgow Style, the latter having been an essentially decorative style when it originally appeared in the early 1890's.

Just prior to this particular article, however, Muthesius was writing, also in *Dekorative Kunst*, about the distinctive "ornamental playing with line"<sup>61</sup> apparent with the Mackintosh group. On this occasion, the attributes of the group's work, as he emphasised them, opposed both traditional concepts of realism in representational art, and traditional ideas of ornament in the applied arts. In posing the question of



whether it was appropriate to stylize the human figure "in order to force it into an ornamental linear scheme as we do with plants", Muthesius reflected that

"We find no parallels for this in the history of ornament; hitherto all ornamental applications have remained true to the basic proportions of the human body . . . But in art there are no laws, here, what is decisive is the artistic deed . . ." <sup>62</sup>

Despite his claim then about a change of emphasis from the ornamental to the tectonic having taken place within the Glasgow movement, Muthesius was still finding a concern with ornamental attributes to be significant. What are the implications of this? Just how did the tectonic articulate with the ornamental if it be safely assumed that a concern with functional objectivity did not eschew completely what had been learned within the movement about an experimental (and clearly, from Muthesius' description, highly Art Nouveau) procedure with regard to the whole issue of ornament? This question will be examined in the section that follows.

It is clear that turn of the century Glasgow, with its affluent, fashion-conscious middle class, was capable of engendering an artistic market oriented towards European models. By 1909 it had been noted in the Glasgow press that 'The Mackintoshes' had exhibited their work in Vienna, Munich, Turin, Venice, Moscow 'Buda Pesth', Dresden and Berlin.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, the new concepts of interior design and architecture (which included a concept of the designer as a professional who had transcended craft-based activities) which Muthesius commended in the Scottish movement, can only be fully understood in direct connection with European activities. If a medium is sought for the dissemination of Continental ideas in the decorative arts in Scotland, then the most obvious must be The Studio. The initial issue (1893) introduced Beardsley to Europe. But the journal's awareness of Continental developments ran high. As Philippe Jullian points out,

". . . the magazine was much more conversant than the French reviews with what was happening abroad, so that it obtained considerable international success, and its influence on the decorative arts was enormous. The magazine even gave its name to a new rectilinear style reminiscent of Mackintosh's buildings".<sup>64</sup>

In other words, it revealed the significance of architectural influences in the decorative arts emanating from Scotland.

Within the architectural sphere in Glasgow the contemporary of Mackintosh closest to him in every respect (personally, ideologically, stylistically) was his friend James Salmon (son of the architect William Forrest Salmon who was on the Board of Governors of the Glasgow School of Architecture). The Continental connection is illustrated in Salmon's best works, and not always in predictable ways, in particular the design for the St. Vincent Chambers in 142 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow's tallest building at the time (commonly nicknamed 'The Hatrack' because of its unorthodox shape). With the variety of form apparent, and the undulating facade, this building (constructed from 1899 to 1902) comes as close as any in Britain to French Art Nouveau, partly because of Salmon's ornamental details and partly because the device of providing the maximum area of glazing becomes a pretext for decorative interpretation. According to Andor Gomme and David Walker in their idiosyncratic book on Glasgow architecture, contact with the Continent was closer for Salmon than for Mackintosh, and the 'Hatrack' "gives Salmon if anyone the best right to be called Glasgow's architect of the *Art Nouveau*". He appears to have set out as a 'self-conscious stylist', conceiving of architecture in highly decorative terms. Yet the exterior of the 'Hatrack' eschews sinuous curves and imitations of natural forms. In asymmetric fashion, no two storeys are quite identical, variety being created by sharply demarcating separate storeys, which, in turn, gives an oscillating, or rippling, effect. Inside, the lift hall has ironwork demonstrating the direct influence of Mackintosh's iron and paint designs: bulb and leaf motifs here, the curved, abstract design of the semi-cylindrical lantern over the front door, and the bulging, almost Horta-like, balconies towards the top, are all classic High Art Nouveau features which derive more from France and Belgium than anywhere else on the Continent (Galle, for example, in Nancy, employed plant themes for décor - including carvings, iron work, brackets, cornices - which was intended to cohere with the facade of a



building in terms of an overall decorative unity. Because the local council in Nancy demonstrated considerable ineptitude in town planning, for the most part leaving the provision of buildings and roads to private agents, Art Nouveau architecture began to attract attention in the form of *individual* apartment blocks, villas and houses. In Glasgow, despite municipal policy claimed by the Corporation to benefit "the whole body of the citizens"<sup>65</sup> rather than individuals, the lack of availability of sizeable portions of land at reasonable prices for re-development created the imperative for the highest buildings possible to be accommodated on available individual plots of ground).

Salmon's design (with John Gaff Gillespie) for the Anderston Savings Bank of 1899-1900 exhibits considerable Art Nouveau decoration and detailing, especially surrounding the doorway, which has sculpture by Albert Hodge (1875-1918), and the whole design is to a considerable extent asymmetrical. Gomme and Walker give the following description:

"It is balanced about one corner which has an irregular octagonal tower, whose 'cornice' is on alternate sides lifted into a sharp little gablet; above this a dome, like an upturned fritillary with a stalk on top, holds its own surprisingly well among a crowd of tall chimneys mostly plain and rising straight out of the wall, one issuing into a trio of columns carrying a cornice like a tray with three diminutive pots on top".<sup>66</sup>

Interior alterations carried out in 1900 by Salmon and Gillespie to Nos. 14 and 15 Woodlands Terrace (wooden doors, entrance porches, internal woodwork with inlaid glass), and to Nos. 12-14 University Gardens, provide a telling illustration of work of a highly restricted nature being made available to Art Nouveau architects in Glasgow (Salmon and Gillespie received a commission for the church hall, but not the church, of St. Andrews in 681 Alexandra Parade; the latter being given to the conservative James Miller). Often the actual Art Nouveau elements themselves were greatly curtailed: the 23 year old Salmon's Mercantile Chambers, 39-69 Bothwell Street (1897-98), one of the largest commercial office blocks in Glasgow at the time (seven storeys), combined sinuous, curvilinear Art Nouveau elements with Victorian pseudo-Renaissance styling.<sup>67</sup> The Salmon and Gillespie British Linen Bank, 816-818 Govan Road (1899), is a rather

conventional design (though described at the time as being in 'Modern Movement' manner),<sup>69</sup> but for some Art Nouveau sculpture around the main doorway and an openwork crown on the top of the corner of the roof. Gomme and Walker appear to view such instances as less than wholly successful preludes to the adoption, around 1900, of a fully integrated style, as manifested in Salmon's 'Hatrack'. Certainly, the fact that Salmon and Gillespie were allowed to be responsible for Glasgow's first tall building to utilise a reinforced concrete frame (Lion Chambers, 170-172 Hope Street; designed circa 1905) is significant; but it has to be noted that such instances of complete buildings using modern materials and manifesting a non-historicist style were rare in Glasgow. The turn of the century may well have brought a dramatic change in Salmon's 'attitude' to architecture, as Gomme and Walker claim, but notable opportunities for full-scale creative projects were not always forthcoming. Work carried out by Salmon and Gillespie, such as the remodelling of a Renaissance-style facade at 79 West Regent Street (1903-4), involving little more than the installation of metal-faced bay windows with Art Nouveau motifs in repousse,<sup>69</sup> illustrates all too well the factor of avant-garde architects requiring significantly more than an 'attitude' for to have their most ambitious ideas actualized.

As an avant-gardiste, Mackintosh was concerned, above all, to transcend the fickleness of mere fashion and establish a new Scottish movement. On the architecture front, as Howarth pointed out, the Board of Governors of the Glasgow School of Architecture (housed in the School of Art) were conservative almost to a man; the one exception, William Forrest Salmon, the father of James, being influenced to an extent by Mackintosh's style. The office of Honeyman and Keppie, where Mackintosh was employed (he became a partner in 1901), and where he worked alongside MacNair during the latter's period there (1889 until 1905), had, according to Howarth, its work divided into two quite independent parts: a concrete reflection of the differences of opinion and approach between Mackintosh and his fellow worker Keppie ("in no sense an original



mind"). Howarth informs us that, though admired, usually by younger men, as "a brilliant draughtsman, a prodigious worker, a prolific and talented designer",<sup>70</sup> the deeper implications of Mackintosh's work were not recognised. Indeed, he was considered a bit of a crank, a dreamer, far removed from the world of everyday practice:

"In this manner, whatever influence Mackintosh was able to exert was quickly dissipated. Under such unstable conditions the formation of a nucleus of enthusiastic, progressive designers similar to, say, the Wagner school in Vienna, was out of the question. From 1906 onwards, Mackintosh himself began to lose faith and to realize that it was impossible, alone, to bring about any fundamental change in the attitude of mind of his contemporaries".<sup>71</sup>

In contrast with this portrayal of the central significance of Mackintosh as a prime motivator, Gerald and Celia Lerner, having described Glasgow at the turn of the century as "ripe for a flowering of the decorative arts",<sup>72</sup> proceed to declare that, even without Mackintosh, Glasgow would have developed into a centre for the decorative arts. This was because "the talent, the commercial motivation, the visual awareness, the teachers, and the craftsmen were all there".<sup>73</sup> The Larners say nothing whatever about contemporary architecture in their (albeit short) book on The Glasgow Style (the first to be devoted exclusively to the subject), and this creates problems for a proper understanding of the relationship obtaining between the spheres of architecture and the applied arts (and Mackintosh did profess their crucial inter-relationship). More seriously perhaps, this kind of approach, as articulated by the Larners, can say little of relevance in explaining the emergence of an avant-garde in Glasgow which took a particular form; the cultural context is so hypostatized as to dissolve into obscurity any specificity attaching to the avant-garde, and hence to the form-language and ideology which it alone presented.

The Larners write of Scotland at the end of the 19th. century as having created, through artists and designers who would have produced nothing worth preserving had they lived in another place or another period, "a decorative style distinguished by an emotional fervour associated normally only with painting and sculpture".<sup>74</sup> Those who

were actively involved in this burgeoning of decorative creativity were sustained, not only by Mackintosh's influence, which they undoubtedly absorbed, but additionally, by the actual experience of having been produced by the Glasgow milieu. What analytic meaning can be attached to the term 'Glasgow Style', given this kind of contextual 'stretching', it may well be asked? By 1909 a change of taste had occurred in the city, the Larners claim, and even Mackintosh was rendered powerless in the face of a cultural environment now grown inimical to his work. The proposition of Howarth, namely, that Mackintosh was, by this stage, 'in decline', is rejected. The Larners portray Mackintosh as apparently suddenly adopting the Viennese Secession Style, because he was unable to find a new style of his own with which to satisfy the jaded, fashion-obsessed local middle class. Given that the really significant contact with Vienna took place in 1900, the statement that "even at this stage (1908) he seemed to be moving towards the continental secessionist style"<sup>75</sup> cannot avoid seeming ludicrously anachronistic. The whole phenomenon of reciprocal interaction between the Glasgow and Viennese schools (with the results of this interaction correctly periodized) is rendered obscure. When this book first appeared (in 1979) an anonymous reviewer in The Scotsman took issue with its depiction of the Glasgow Style as something "confined to the Kelvinside boudoir". It was stressed that Glasgow Style was essentially a public art, that "It literally blossomed at street corners, as Salmon's sinuous interpretation of the city arms still heralds in the otherwise dour reaches of West Regent Street".<sup>75</sup>

Another short publication on The Glasgow Style, this time emanating from the Department of Decorative Art in the Glasgow Art Galleries and Museum, focuses almost exclusively upon craftwork and design. Here the Glasgow Style ("that idiosyncratic variation of Art Nouveau peculiar to Glasgow designers and craft-workers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century")<sup>76</sup> is defined extremely narrowly and in such a static manner as to eliminate any explanation of modification of the style. The latter issue has crucial implications for the recognition of Glasgow Style as the potential



source of a mass-producible style. To elaborate: what this publication correctly acknowledges to be the style as established in the "formative years of the early 1890s", is subsequently presented as covering the whole period up to the 1920's. In describing the designs produced by Mackintosh, MacNair, the Macdonald sisters, Salmon, Talwin Morris, Jessie Newbery and George Walton, the writers assert that

"the results were invariably striking, if sometimes rather bizarre and clumsy. They shared a vocabulary of stylized, organically inspired motifs - particularly roses, foliage, butterflies and willowy human forms - and employed sinuous curves played off against taut lines".<sup>77</sup>

While adequate as a generalised description of the kind of work produced in the 1890's by an apparently cohesive group of practitioners, this attempt at a definition (which, it should be noted, includes Walton, whose work Gleeson White, in 1897, insisted was devoid of the new and individual qualities which made that of the Mackintosh group so striking) proves embarrassingly deficient where Mackintosh's mature work has to be explained:

"The mature style he developed was quite distinct from that of his contemporaries, but in many ways the Chinese and Cloister Rooms designed in 1911 for Miss Cranston's Tea Rooms can be regarded as a refined and final statement of the Glasgow Style".<sup>78</sup>

Here stylistic continuity is apprehended, but stylistic 'development', though also acknowledged, is in no sense explained. Consequently, what is concealed is that the later projects actually manifest an enhanced rationalism and stylistic simplification, with unornamented geometric shapes coming to characterise a 'developed' Glasgow Style which points towards the feasibility of its reproduction and standardisation via modern manufacturing techniques.

We noted above that Muthesius considered tectonic to have subsumed ornamental attributes within post-1900 Glasgow Style: that is to say that, formally, functional/rational components had become more significant than decorative/expressive ones (an anonymous contributor, possibly Muthesius, commented in *Dekorative Kunst* in 1899 that with the Scottish movement the "lines do not originate in playful whims but

rather in the *purpose of things*"),<sup>78</sup> But how does Glasgow Style architecture articulate with Glasgow Style decorative art in respect of such descriptions? Gomme and Walker attempt to contrast Mackintosh's stylistic approach to architecture, with that to the decorative arts respectively:

"The sinuous curves, the tendrils and cabbagey things that, in Horta's buildings and in some of the interiors of Sullivan's, make decoration seem more important than their basic form - these are virtually unknown in Mackintosh's architecture, though familiar in his interior decoration of existing buildings not his own",<sup>79</sup>

Where Muthesius' ornamental-functional distinction is applied to Glasgow Style in such a way as to permit a periodization grounded in the claim that a preoccupation with the functional followed sequentially from a preoccupation with the ornamental, Gomme and Walker's distinction tries to neatly place functional concerns exclusively within Mackintosh's architectural sphere of activity.

It seems relevant at this point to consider the kind of distinction presented by Kathryn Bloom Hiesinger in her discussion of the *Jugendstil* movement in Munich. Hiesinger argues that this movement was, in actuality, not one, but at least two movements, which were simultaneous, and not, as has often been suggested, sequential. "One movement was concerned largely with decoration and individual expression, the other with functionalism and rational standards",<sup>80</sup> The latter was certainly not an exclusively architectural movement; it was led by Richard Riemerschmid, who, according to Joseph Lux, was the first within the movement to "show a concern for simplicity and constructional logic",<sup>81</sup> Constructional logic, it will be remembered, was what Muthesius commended in the later work of the Scottish movement. Significantly, the same Muthesius, shortly afterwards, expressed his admiration for the simplicity and clarity of Riemerschmid;<sup>82</sup> and if Muthesius found local/national Scottish character/spirit to be significant in the context of explaining the Mackintosh work, he found it to be equally as important for the German Riemerschmid ("... here is folk art. It is worthy of this name because it is modest and German").<sup>83</sup> (Ibid. 1904, p.283) In point of fact,



the epithet 'local' was also used by the critic Ludwig Hevesi in 1905 when describing the geometric purism of the Viennese idiom as practiced by Hoffmann and Moser. Hevesi remarked that "Great autonomous artists like the Mackintosh group in Glasgow . . . already occasionally work in this local (i.e. Viennese) manner".<sup>94</sup> Whether the location was Austria, Germany or Scotland, therefore, a simplified, rectilinear, tectonic approach appeared to signify, to commentators such as Muthesius and Hevesi, evidence of a return to indigenous cultural qualities. Muthesius' reference to 'folk art' immediately invokes the image of collective, as against individual, cultural activities. But more than this, the kind of *fin-de-siecle* anxieties in the face of cultural fragmentation which fuelled the Symbolist movement (influenced in this respect by pre-Raphaelitism and the Morris movement), gave rise to a preoccupation with ancient legends and folkloristic traditions as providing access to deeper cultural truths. Nor was this preoccupation, even within Symbolism itself, invariably incompatible with a scientific outlook involving a seeking of logical principles for execution: "Truth is to be found in a purely cerebral art, in primitive art", asserted Gauguin; "Our only salvation lies in a return to principle".<sup>95</sup> The combining of symbolism and scientificity, mysticism and rationality, instinct and logicity, is precisely what Muthesius found distinctive about the Scottish work. In Das Englische Haus he demonstrated that "a strictly tectonic underlying factor"<sup>96</sup> was common to both the work of the Scottish architects round Mackintosh and the London architects round Voysey (acknowledged by Mackintosh as an influence on his own work), but that

". . . the essence of the art of the Glasgow group in fact rests in an underlying emotional and poetical quality. It seeks a highly charged artistic atmosphere or more specifically an atmosphere of a mystical, symbolic kind".<sup>97</sup>

On one level this was Muthesius reaching backwards in time beyond the Symbolist movement, and appropriating Ruskin's conception of Scotland's authentic cultural creations as having been, historically, symbolically representative of the collective experience of the country's people.

As we saw in chapter one, there seems little doubt that the contact which the Glasgow avant-garde had with Vienna in 1900 had a fundamental impact upon the subsequent nature of Glasgow Style. In respect of this particular contact, there appears a sequential change which affected the form-language: a change that, in turn, enhanced functionality, and not only the functionality of avant-garde architecture. In the period when Hill House was built (1902) for the publisher Walter Blackie at Helensburgh, Mackintosh was employing a simplified rectilinear, geometric/cubic approach to furniture design which facilitated increased sturdiness and utility. Aside from Mackintosh's own work, a reflection of his desired communalizing of the arts with architecture (expressed in 1893) can be found with James Salmon's 'Hatrack' design, where decorative/expressive and rational/functional elements interweave. After a certain point, however, functional lines clearly predominate with Salmon also, as is apparent with Lion Chambers, which, stylistically, is not so far removed from Mackintosh's Art School project.

Even before a recognisably Art Nouveau form-language had been fully adopted in Glasgow, a central concern with tectonic elements is implicit in Mackintosh's recommendation that architecture be the paradigm for all of the arts, expressly because the latter needed to embrace greater practicality (functionality). The extent to which this was achieved in reality was greatly conditioned by the actual nature of the work in question, that is, the extent to which work was oriented towards decorative, or technical, requirements. Certainly, as the 'core' style became increasingly geometric and cubic it moved closer towards the technical sphere and thus enhanced its potential for mass-productibility. The issue of an approach to style which eschews obvious ornamentation is crucially significant in this respect. Muthesius' admiration for the 'ornamental playing with line' apparent with the Glasgow group can be understood as being grounded in the recognition that shape and the 'spaces' which it creates (without *added* ornament (what he termed 'superficial elements'))<sup>96</sup> can itself embody ornamental



qualities. In other words, the ornament is never merely ornament; rather, the "ornament is always symbolic".<sup>89</sup> Such a positive commendation for the Mackintosh group *for these particular reasons* can best be understood in direct relation to Muthesius' own energetic views, expressed in this same period, on the need for modern mass-produced art of quality.

Juliet Kinchin, in underlining what she takes to be the contrast between the "folksy quality of much English Arts and Crafts and the urban flashiness of the Glasgow Style",<sup>90</sup> comments upon the designers Logan, Ednie and Taylor's "healthy respect for the mechanical and engineering skills which were inescapable in their city".<sup>91</sup> Kinchin detects something of this respect in the actual work produced by the Wylie and Lohead team. That is to say, awareness of mechanical techniques can be seen to permeate what is ostensibly decorative art. But this is really to beg the question of what the connection actually is, in more explicit terms, between the elements apparent with Glasgow Style and the potential for a productive application by the latter of 'mechanical and engineering skills'. It is in respect of this that the situation of *Jugendstil* in Munich is relevant to a clearer understanding of the Glasgow movement. In the hands of Richard Riemerschmid and Peter Behrens, a plainer, simplified style emerged which contrasted with the richly decorative approach adopted by such designers as Bernhard Pankok, Hermann Obrist, August Endell and Otto Eckmann. The former style was equally as central to the *Jugendstil* phenomenon as was the latter (Howarth writes of Riemerschmid and others as having "formulated their own interpretations" of *Jugendstil*).<sup>92</sup> The same could be said of Glasgow Style, where the simplified shapes and tectonically-conceived functionalism apparent after around 1900, developed out of the ornamental/symbolic linear form-language of the early 1890's. Bruno Rauecker, writing in 1911 of the spare functionalism of the Munich movement, noted that "without doubt, this newly developing style, which has its origins in *Jugendstil* forms, will be of great influence in the creation of an artistic machine production".<sup>93</sup>

Rauecker's optimism was raised by the apparent movement away from ornamentation towards a genuine recognition by the designer of the need to produce practical artistic goods. (At this particular time, the Wiener Werkstatte, under the influence of the designer Dagobert Peche, was actually decisively shifting its emphasis *from* functionalism to a renewed preoccupation with ornamentalism), Muthesius had argued that mechanization had to be brought into some kind of relationship with art, insisting that

"... in the realm of modern art, the correct inclusion of machine work is the most difficult but at the same time the most far-reaching and most significant".<sup>94</sup>

The spirit of the times, according to Muthesius, was scientificity, and this expressed itself in the "general development towards the lack of ornamentation, the objective, the simple".<sup>95</sup>

The drift of Muthesius' argumentation leads to the portrayal of Glasgow Style, understood as modern representational practice, as having come to symbolise the ethos of scientific rationality. It had achieved this through a unique combination of indigenous and Continental elements. The themes highlighted by Muthesius in his descriptions of the Scottish work set the agenda for the following chapter; more specifically, his emphasising of the tectonic basis for the form-language apparent with this work focuses attention upon the question of the relationship of (a) a theory regarding the application of architectural principles to *all* objects of design for the scientific addressing of contemporary functional requirements, to (b) an innovative approach to the realisation of artistic values. This whole issue will now be addressed within the context of an examination of the ideological orientation of the Mackintosh movement. The matter of the potential for the large-scale production of objects manifesting Glasgow Style will be examined empirically in a later chapter.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE SCOTTISH IDEOLOGY.

This chapter takes as its starting point an acknowledgement of the need to address the issue of the relationship of what has been inadequately termed 'Glasgow Style' to contemporary eclectic/historicist stylism. It will be demonstrated, in particular with the aid of Mackintosh's extant writings, that the new form-language of Scottish Art Nouveau, as manifested in individual works, was representative of a collective visual ideology. Also, that this visual ideology was *critically opposed* to the conformist eclectic/historicist stylism which already existed. In the earlier section of the chapter we will see that, for Scottish Art Nouveau, the concept of visual ideology was, in the first instance, fundamentally rooted in an all-embracing theory of architecture and its history. This leads to a discussion of how the attempt was being made to elucidate the nature of the relationship between visual ideology and critical knowledge. It is argued that the new form language, *as visual ideology*, was perceived by its exponents as providing access to knowledge which was of a scientific nature, but which was yet capable of being experienced through emotionality.

### 1. A Scottish Ideology?

In retrospect, Mackintosh must appear as the leading ideologue of the Scottish Art Nouveau movement. What remains of his arguments in written form is incomplete and sometimes less than ideally coherent, but his presentations were considered sufficiently strong for to interest a German institution (whether a university is not known) in inviting him to teach in that country.' Although there are a number of manifesto-like passages scattered here and there throughout the extant set of notes originally written to be delivered as lectures (six from 1891 to 1905), a proper appraisal of the thought contained therein is only possible on the basis of a careful process of 'deconstruction' which can aid in the elucidation of specific themes which



are not always exhaustively dealt with within the confines of a given lecture. Secondly, there is the factor of different theoretical influences being productively applied at different times; social evolutionism in 1893; the avant-gardiste conception of the integration of artistic production with social living in 1902; a modernist (as distinct from a Gothic revivalist) functionalism in 1905. The significance of these influences needs to be brought out through their being carefully differentiated and examined. Hence where earlier thought - such as 18th. century rationalist theories of perception - forms the background to a particular argument, I attempt to illustrate its relevance to the specific contemporary issue which Mackintosh is addressing. This procedure not only aids clarification of what are old, and what new, ideas, but it also illuminates the purposes for which Mackintosh appropriates earlier thought. In other words it aids understanding of the ways in which Mackintosh employed earlier thought for his own attempts at problem-solving. I am also concerned to elucidate the similarities between the Scottish and continental Art Nouveau movements by highlighting specific instances of comparable arguments.

Although Howarth found Mackintosh's lecture notes "rambling, inconclusive and full of familiar clichés"<sup>2</sup> - with the exception of the untitled paper read to a literary society - specific elements of a coherent ideological position can be distinguished through a more analytical examination. In fact, the criticisms which Howarth made do not constitute a problem for a 'deconstructive' method which acknowledges that no one individual is ever capable of dominating the language which s/he employs, or, conversely, the meanings which that language elicits in the minds of others. The actual depth of influence which Mackintosh's ideology exerted upon the other members of the Glasgow movement cannot be gauged with real accuracy due to the paucity of written material by the others. However, it is worth bearing in mind Hoffmann's remark about a "beginning movement *around* Mackintosh",<sup>3</sup> which would indicate the strong likelihood that the others would not have escaped his ideological influence to any significant

degree. A Glasgow newspaper from circa 1893 refers to the Macdonald sisters as "art apart . . . remarkably clever girls, who not only hold, but can explain their *theories* . . ."<sup>4</sup> James Salmon Jnr., "Mackintosh's closest friend professionally",<sup>5</sup> was described as having strong views which he expressed fearlessly: "In fact, he might be ready to call himself a social and municipal Bolshevik and smile all the more if some chuckle-headed people were shocked at the announcement".<sup>6</sup> And E. A. Taylor, in a lecture delivered around 1904, complained that "Nothing apparently is further from the thought of modern decorators than that their efforts should, however indirectly, *lead anyone to think*".<sup>7</sup> Such comments lead directly to a consideration of the meaning of 'ideology' as employed in the following chapter. This is derived from Burger and can be stated succinctly: ideology here refers to a coherent body of ideas which are a critical expression of the perceived division between an institutionalised art and architecture and the remainder of society.

An article by Baillie Scott on Voysey's architecture in The Studio illustrates to what extent the most 'progressive' elements of English architectural thinking were in accord with the continental critique of eclecticism by 1907. (Significantly, with regard to an article written for The Studio by Scott in 1895, Billcliffe comments that "if Mackintosh had enjoyed the same access to the press as Baillie Scott, he would doubtless have published similar statements".<sup>8</sup>) Scott considered the modern house (i.e. the average villa) to be both practically and rationally 'a tissue of absurdities'. The attempted 'ideal mansion' on a contracted scale, adorned with pseudo-artistic furnishings, was insanitary and comfortless:

"To those who have become inured to such houses it is not strange that a rationally designed dwelling should appear bizarre, affected and eccentric; and though in other arts ---- in that of literature for example - the merits of direct and simple statement are understood, in architecture we do not recognise the existence of art at all, unless all the obsolete and meaningless features of the past are added, as an outward screen, to a building in which they bear no structural significance . . .  
The architects of the Renaissance initiated this bad method of consciously putting forms round the substance of their buildings; and this 'shirt front architecture' - as Mr. Voysey has called it - being originally practised by men of great genius, has proved a fatal precedent of our times. And so our Palaces of Peace and other public



buildings are duly encased with all the superficial features which are held to constitute the Fine Art of Architecture, as opposed to mere vulgar building. To the rational mind all these fine buildings are mere confectionery, for every architectural form owes whatever grace or beauty it may possess to practical functions performed. In this respect the building is a creation, which may be justly compared to those of nature. The forms of the eye or the hand, the flower or the leaf, all are the outcome of certain definite function. And so it must be with true architecture; and the inevitable and logical course for the modern architect is to get back to essential facts of structure, and leave the forms to develop naturally from that".<sup>9</sup>

A call to return to 'essential facts of structure'; the importance of functional as well as aesthetic criteria; the appeal to nature; the subordination of ornament and decoration; these priorities spelled out by Baillie Scott were equally important for Mackintosh.

In the untitled and undated paper on architecture which Mackintosh delivered to a literary society (circa 1905-6 according to Howarth's surmise), structure is dealt with under the heading of 'strength of stability'; this is one of the three attributes or 'principles' of architecture that he outlines as being fundamental. The other two are Usefulness (or Utility), and Beauty. Mackintosh's initial starting point in this paper is a definition, derived from Sir George Gilbert Scott, of architecture as uniting abstract beauty with utility. Unlike painting and sculpture, the 'sister arts', which arise directly from purely artistic inspirations alone, architecture arises, first and foremost, from practical necessity and utility, and only secondarily "from the desire to clothe the result with beauty".<sup>10</sup> When Goethe called architecture a 'petrified religion', and Madame de Staële 'frozen music', says Mackintosh, they were merely "in common with poets and orators of all times", considering it to be a Fine Art. However, in architecture art and science are brought together, and this is nowhere more apparent than with the application of sheer physical power:

"Yes architecture is a Fine, but also a universal art, and it surely needs no profound argument, or array of facts, to prove that it is equally a science, that in great buildings, besides the artistic skill, there has been sometimes more than brute force employed, if not in the rearing of Egyptian temples, surely in the soaring arch of Saint Paul's Cathedral, London . . ."<sup>11</sup>

But architecture, Mackintosh is swift to add, is not building, and building, which is a highly diverse practice (churchbuilding, housebuilding, shipbuilding and coachbuilding are given as examples) "does not become architecture merely by the stability of what it erects"; it is immaterial whether an edifice stands, floats, or is suspended on iron springs. Ruskin's definition of architecture is cited; not only must the body be served but the mind must be pleased. This does not mean, however, that Mackintosh was an uncritical follower of Ruskin. In reviewing the latter's Stones of Venice, he had made the point that Ruskin's plea for Gothic, as against Classic style, was founded upon selected materials that were not truly Gothic, and which did not express the real greatness and strength of Gothic architecture, qualities which were not, anyway, represented by examples in Venice. Ruskin's style of writing was also not to Mackintosh's taste:

"it is a vice of Mr. Ruskin's that, in his desire to write plain thoughts on Architecture for general readers, he is constantly lapsing from simplicity into childishness, and an affectation as if he were addressing children who could only understand words of one syllable. It is a foolish (and to people who are not children) a rather offensive weakness".<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, there can be little doubt that Mackintosh was deeply influenced by the arguments about the relation between vernacular architectural creations and the corresponding qualities of 'national character' which Ruskin outlined in his The Poetry of Architecture, originally published as a series of articles in 1837 and 1838. However, the expressed sentiments cited above should lead to statements such as the one by Barbara Bernard, to the effect that Ruskin was Mackintosh's 'favourite author', being treated with some caution.<sup>13</sup> But there was a more profound reason for his critical response to Ruskin in this instance: The Stones of Venice begins by eulogising feeling and perception in opposition to knowledge and intellectuality. For Mackintosh the latter was at least as significant as the former in the formation of aesthetic responses. This issue will be examined in some detail later.



In illustrating the argument against pure utilitarianism, namely that in all ages, with every race and nation, the need for men to create beauty has been fundamental, and, moreover, that this need has, on occasion, preceded even that for the satisfaction of bodily needs, Mackintosh demonstrates the closeness of his theorising to that of Otto Wagner whom he met on his trip to Vienna in 1900.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it is as if he has just come from a reading of Wagner's *Moderne Architektur*<sup>15</sup> where the attempt to return architecture to its primary sources is highly apparent. Gottfried Semper, in his *Kleine Schriften*<sup>16</sup> had employed the theme of architecture as having originated in the simple hut; by 1895 Wagner was claiming that

"man's first motivation and his original purpose for building was certainly the need to protect himself from the weather, from his fellow men, and from wild animals. The seeds of architecture lie in construction . . . as well as in simple utility. But this was not enough, for man's sense of beauty called for art and required that it be made part of the building. Thus architecture was born".<sup>17</sup>

The first motivation towards construction, according to Wagner, is rooted in utilitarian needs (usefulness), but what is apparent historically, he asserts, is that the drive towards beautifying buildings is a constant dimension of human experience.

Mackintosh thinks this also:

"no race or nation has ever accepted these (exclusive) utilitarian maxims, and hence we may assume, none ever will; the rudest savage ornaments his war club and decorates himself and his hut . . . history as we have seen, proves man to be possessed of this sense of beauty".<sup>18</sup>

Mackintosh is a critic of exclusive utilitarianism, since, in his opinion, this orientation has emphasised usefulness to the detriment of attractiveness.<sup>19</sup> Mackintosh provides a concrete, contemporary example - Glasgow's railway companies - and in so doing, emphasises the role of economic power in effecting large-scale environmental ugliness. It is precisely because these economically-motivated agencies possess such power and influence that they are allowed to perpetrate constructions guided by 'principles' which are determined by strict utility alone. The bridges spanning the river Clyde manifest the strident ugliness that is a consequence of this overriding

economic utility, an ugliness "which a poorer shopkeeper would not be allowed to practice",<sup>20</sup> This, however, should not be understood as a straightforward argument in favour of the ornamentation of such structures, which, Mackintosh stresses, would be better left unadorned. He is aware that 'beauty' in the form of ornamentation can also be "urged by those who are financially concerned in its production".<sup>21</sup> Stark ugliness *and* ornamental 'beautification' are thus acknowledged as having common roots in the profit motive.

Mackintosh's critique is aimed directly at the absence of what he calls 'politeness', together with the overt expression of 'selfishness', both of which are integral to the financial priorities of those wealthy individuals and corporate bodies involved in fostering the worst kinds of modern civil engineering. The outcomes of these financial priorities, since the latter eschew considerations of beauty and appearance, go uncorrected by modern architecture. Hence, the problem is not with the manner in which practical requirements of building involve a jettisoning of aesthetic considerations; rather, the problem emanates from those financially-motivated agencies who, for economic reasons alone, are sacrificing architecture. In terms of Mackintosh's Ruskin-derived criteria, these are agencies which are directed at making profit through addressing practical requirements alone, whilst ignoring psychological, emotional, and aesthetic needs. At the close of this particular paper Mackintosh emphasises the point that the very principles which govern architecture are themselves influenced by 'public' forces that are, to all intents and purposes, external to architecture as such. The mention of literary and art critics, poets and novelists, illustrates Mackintosh's awareness of the influence such agents can exert in the conditioning and moulding of cultural meanings and responses. The most significant influence over design, however, is exerted by the 'all potent employer', before whom the architect with his architectural principles is rendered powerless: "for living to please", says Mackintosh, speaking for all architects, "we must also please to live". This



illustrates his awareness of the structural position of architects as cultural workmen within what Burger terms the 'nexus of institutionalisation', or the sphere of mediation between capitalist society and its art production. For Mackintosh, recognition of the detachment of *authentic architecture* from contemporary social praxis facilitates the distance necessary for radical criticism to be formulated.

In this 1905 paper, then, Mackintosh argues that there are fundamental principles which underlie architecture in all historical periods and that these principles are strength, utility and beauty; but the actual *practicing* of these principles "must vary with circumstances". Instrumental in the modern period are institutionally-located 'public' forces, the most powerful of which is the financially/economically motivated employer who demands utility alone. When utility is made the exclusive criterion of building, the standard of architecture necessarily suffers as a consequence. By emphasising the role of active agencies in determining the form that their particular building requirements should take, Mackintosh avoids an hypostatization of architecture. This is apparent with his description of how practicality, growing opulence, and the desire for convenience were the significant factors conditioning the forms of medieval architecture, a description which allows him to develop the argument that conformity to practical requirements need not lead necessarily to ugliness and a compromised architecture. He subsequently turns his attention to the theme of inspiration from nature which he had already addressed in the 1893 paper on architecture. There he had emphasised that "the servile imitation of nature is the work of small minded men". Nature could provide inspiration, but the acknowledgement that all architecture was "the direct expression of the needs and beliefs of man at the time of its creation" was fundamental. Beauty was nothing if not the actualization in marble, colour, or sound, of the *idea* of beauty in the artist's own mind; this idea, though innate, "has to be developed by intense study". Not the study of nature which involves attempts at emulation by imitation - "nature is not to be copied" - but rather

study of "the *ideal* that can be raised from the positive and the actual into grandeur and beauty".<sup>22</sup>

By 1905 Mackintosh was claiming that the 'general purpose' required of a building is, effectively, the prime determinant of the form that building will take, i.e. function *precedes* form. The imperatives underlying architecture are thus seen to be human-centred in the specific sense of springing from social praxis combining with human ingenuity, and involving (to borrow Simmel's terms) calculation and spatial structuration.<sup>23</sup>

"from the Basilica all our cathedrals sprung and the form of the cross was always kept for the plan, but beyond that arbitrary rule it was growing opulence alone which influenced the medieval architecture, not nature, as has been absurdly believed. The pointed arch grew out of the semi-circular, nearly invariably to suit convenience, rarely aesthetic wants, and *never* to imitate a forest avenue; nor was the idea of painted windows ever taken from the sun gleams among the branches. Yet this, with a vast amount of other absurd rigmarole, is believed by many indiscriminating admirers of nature, who, unable to deduce a principle, would attempt a childish mimicry".<sup>24</sup>

Nature then, like Beauty, is, first and foremost, rooted in ideas which people have inside their heads. Given that Mackintosh acknowledged this, there appears little reason to emphasise, as does Frank Walker, a "fundamental semantic conflict in Mackintosh's art and design (that) is vested in the counter claims of Nature and Geometry",<sup>25</sup> since this is to make the mistake which Mackintosh lampoons; to view nature as a purely external influence, and, further, to juxtapose this to geometry as a fundamentally and exclusively human creation in the sense of being 'inner'. Actually, both nature *and* geometry are 'inner' for Mackintosh (hence the central significance for him of the idealist notion of *inspiration* within an aestheticist ambience) ; nature has to be given articulation via the *ideal* realm of human imagination, which latter emerges out of socio-cultural experience, including the experience of specifically human needs.

Mackintosh's use of the expression 'to deduce a principle' illustrates clearly that his real concern is with grounding theoretically the logical and cognitive basis of architecture; and with the premise that this basis can only be apprehended



intellectually, imaginatively and actively (hence the emphasis upon practical purpose). What distinguishes 'good architecture' from 'mere building' is the ability of the former to facilitate decoration; but decoration which grows *out of* a rational understanding of a building's practical necessity. As he asserted in his Ruskin paper, "the (chief) virtues of Architecture (according to Ruskin) are defined to be strength or good construction and beauty or good decoration. That is not altogether the way to put it for *there may be architectural beauty with little or nothing of what is usually called decoration*",<sup>26</sup> That Mackintosh could practice what he preached was made clear by Sir John Stirling Maxwell, who, at the opening of the completed Glasgow School of Art - - the best example of Mackintosh's attempts to actualise his ideological principles - in December 1909, emphasised that Mackintosh

"had shown that it was possible to have a good building without plastering it over with the traditional, expensive and often ugly ornament . . . Mr. Mackintosh had the real faculty of being able to adapt a building for the purpose for which it was really intended. The Glasgow School of Art was a conspicuous success of that kind."<sup>27</sup>

It is not surprising that elements of Scottish vernacular architecture (albeit heavily modernised and thoroughly integrated) should be apparent in the Art School design. Even in 1891 Mackintosh had acknowledged the "extraordinary facility of our style in decorating, constructing and in converting structural and useful features into elements of beauty",<sup>28</sup> The indigenous architecture of Scotland, because of the manner in which it overtly manifested purpose, appeared to be pointing the way to a functionalism capable of avoiding ugliness. But although structure and utility are taken to represent the fundamentals of this paradigm of good architecture, it should be noted that Mackintosh did not jettison the role of decoration. In 1905 he was still arguing that, historically, buildings which derived from recognisable practical purposes gave rise to the best architecture:

"These cathedrals again were coincident with powerful fortresses and castles with whose appearance everyone is familiar, and also with commercial warehouses, colleges and many other forms of buildings such as the manors and barns of the low counties of England, among the most picturesque buildings extant; all these buildings were erected for particular purposes, and which particular purpose was in every case served, and yet

redeemed from the selfishness of mere building by good architecture . . . in all these different cases the architecture, while always preserving a certain continuity and similarity, was the decoration of the different practical requirements - that is to say, no beholder would mistake the general purpose of a building".<sup>29</sup>

This emphasis upon general purpose was a trait which Berta Zuckerkandl found was essential to Hoffmann's architectural principles in the same period. In a substantial article in *Dekorative Kunst* published in 1904, she wrote:

"His artistry grows from his ethical and social views . . . after a struggle he has reached the conviction that a style can be shaped only by the recognition of the psychic and physical needs of a time, by translating this recognition into forms that are logically shaped and that *stress the purpose as clearly and strongly as possible*".<sup>30</sup>

A letter written by Olbrich to Hoffmann in 1894, from Benevento in Italy, further illustrates the affinities between the concerns of Mackintosh and the Viennese architects, more particularly as regards seeking the essential role of the functional in vernacular architecture. "The old ruins teach us mainly three things", wrote Olbrich, "that the architects built them out of a sense of beauty, fantasy, and taste; and to this they added a decisive sense of the practical and functional".<sup>31</sup>

Mackintosh is critical of attempts to 'beautify' buildings: if truthfulness to the necessities of a building is what conditions the form taken by ornamentation, which is to say in effect that a symbiotic relationship should exist between practical purpose and architectural decoration, then any attempt to 'shuffle around' decorative styles which have become abstracted from the architecture which originally gave rise to them, and to apply these in an arbitrary manner, is to be deplored:

"I do not say that these (historical architectural) varieties could be equally beautiful, by no means, but the incumbent duty of making the best of each case and still preserving truthfulness to the necessities of the building was admitted and surely with happier results, than that of these modern antiquarian sentimentalists, who, getting the half truth firmly embedded in their unpractical minds, that the Greek Temple and Medieval Cathedral are worthy of all admiration and imitation, further it by erecting marvellous villas which only by an unfortunate chimney can be decided not to be a place of pagan worship, or, as in some cases I know of, monastic cloisters".<sup>32</sup>

Mackintosh's intense interest in medieval architecture is apparent with the large number of drawings in his 1891 sketchbook from the 'grand tour' of Italy and northern



Europe, where several renderings of Italian medieval architecture are presented. This may well contrast with Hoffmann's lack of interest in such architecture, a factor which, as Eduard Sekler has commented, illustrates Hoffmann's characteristically Central European training. However, it is significant that for Hoffmann, as with Mackintosh, his trip to Italy in 1896 "provided him with the possibility for a general rethinking of the very significance of 'architecture'",<sup>33</sup> Hoffmann became interested between 1890 and 1900 in Oriental and late-Roman models, but as Sekler points out, "for Hoffmann the monumental architecture of the Renaissance and the Baroque played a very small role as a potential model for eclectic reuse, and . . . the Middle Ages were strongly neglected".<sup>34</sup> However, Mackintosh's interest in historical architecture had little to do with its potential for 'eclectic reuse'. Rather the concern was with elucidating the principle that design should be *appropriate* to construction. Historical examples could be used to substantiate this. In his lecture on Elizabethan Architecture he claimed to discover such appropriateness in buildings of that period: "there was in Elizabethan buildings a care for architectural effect, the construction was generally sound and truthful, and there was an appropriateness in design which rarely fails to please".<sup>35</sup> The concept of 'truth' in architecture, in being applied to the evaluation of Siena Cathedral, allowed Mackintosh to speak of the lack of coherence between exterior and interior as a 'fraud':

"To begin with the front is a fraud as it gives no indication of the interior. Then when you examine the design you find that it is almost *not there*. Then you begin to see that were it not for the fine material the whole thing would be very poor as a composition".<sup>36</sup>

Succinctly put, the reason why the exterior represents a fraud is because the actual purpose of the building is not being made plain; this in turn undermines the design, which, as a result, lacks recognisable coherence. Architectural adornment was always out of place "where its application prevented the reasonable purpose of the building being manifested".<sup>37</sup> To a significant degree 'purpose' is conceptualised by Mackintosh

in terms of space and how it is organised. How space is actually deployed conditions the relationship between interior and exterior of a structure, and the harmony or discord in this relationship significantly engenders evaluation of 'truth'; but 'truth' as a criterion of whether the qualities inherent in specific materials are correctly utilised is a central element here also.

The issue of materials occupies an important position in the literary society paper, where Mackintosh reveals that his interest in historical varieties of architecture is indeed deeply connected to his conviction about the central role of utility in conditioning the nature of construction and adornment comprising compositional form. The materials of construction, the nationality of the builders, different climates, the nature of the buildings produced, all of these, Mackintosh acknowledges, manifest great diversity. Even where the practice of Roman Catholic Christianity required similarity of ritual in different countries, such as Italy, France, and England, it was the factors of climate and available building materials in these countries which determined how the standardised requirements would be worked out. This provides illustration, not only of the primary role of utility in architecture, but also of the dignity, beauty, and variety which result from the application of correct utilitarian principles:

"you will see that utility which must in common sense be studied (and will be no matter what the artistic fraternity says) is not inimical to architecture but on the contrary gives variety and character . . . We have thus examples to show how dignified and beautiful a building may be when exactly fulfilling a utilitarian purpose as the ancient temples of the Greeks did, with side walls unbroken by a single window . . . surely no one will say that the cathedrals of Northern Europe are anything less than perfection in their own degree. Yet the principles which governed both were identical - the practising of which principles must vary with circumstances - but may always be resolved into the three we are considering namely: strength - utility - beauty . . ." <sup>38</sup>

The fact that these principles, notwithstanding the diversity of forms that they give rise to within various sets of (geographical, national, social, climatic etc.) circumstances, always remain the same, is something, claims Mackintosh, that is demonstrated by human history. The history of architecture is almost as old as mankind itself, and, consequently, "there is hardly any form that is applicable for



construction that has not been tried". A house, basically, is composed of walls and a roof; the latter necessitates either the dome, the pitched roof, or the flat roof. Walls necessitate windows and doors, openings that can only be spanned by the lintel or the arch; if the latter, "there is no form which has not been used - semi-circular, pointed, horseshoe and ogee". Given the universal limitations, physical and psychological, of human beings, only a finite number of characteristics of architecture are possible. But at the same time, architecture, as one of the oldest cultural forms, is actively modified through various transformations that are always rooted in specific social configurations. Thus Mackintosh addresses the dialectical relationship between the universal and the singular, the general and the particular, by way of a theory which attempts to unite the abstract with the empirical.

## 2. The Significance of Eighteenth Century Rationalist Principles

In 1905 John Belcher A.R.A., President of the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects, proclaimed that

"Architecture had been termed 'frozen music'. Like both music and poetry, it was subjective in its appeal; for the same arrangement of lines and colours would suggest 50 different things to 50 different persons".<sup>39</sup>

This view represented a problem for Scottish Art Nouveau. A new architecture, emerging within a conservative, traditionalist, and often hostile socio-cultural environment, could not but suffer as a consequence of such subjectivist evaluative diversity. A new architecture needed support if it was not to be destroyed by such a context, and, for Mackintosh, such support required appraisals that were rooted in an intelligent understanding of what was being proffered. Since architecture was as much science as art, a scientific knowledge of its underlying principles offered the potential for enhanced objectivity. Thus architecture needed to be differentiated from its 'sister arts' and its own unique characteristics specified. Analogies such as that employed by Belcher had to be shown to be spurious. But the relationship between new work and the

spectator raised the very issue of questioning what was involved in such a relationship in the first instance. This led Mackintosh to consider debates in the 18th. century surrounding the attempt to develop a theory of aesthetic experience which had centred on the nature of the cultural and psychological processes involved in perceiving and understanding external objects.

When Mackintosh addresses himself to the question of beauty it is significant that he should juxtapose 'beauty' with the term 'taste' because this is precisely what Kant did in his Critique of Judgement:

"*Taste* is the faculty of estimating an object or a mode of representation by means of a delight or aversion *apart from any interest*. The object of such a delight is called *beautiful*".<sup>40</sup>

As Janet Wolff has pointed out,<sup>41</sup> Kant's axiom does not address itself to (a) the nature of the 'delight' that the object elicits; (b) the question of 'what is art'; or (c) the issue of what essential features can be said to inhere in works of art. Nor does this description of the disinterested attitude relate that attitude in any way to other experiential factors. This is significant because Mackintosh's preferred definition of 'taste' (or rather 'Taste'; the importance of the capital will become apparent), far from portraying the judgement of taste in terms of such polarities as disinterested delight or aversion, delivers a description which attributes taste to cognitive factors and to the perceiver's active recognition of essential features in the object, which latter, moreover, is to be *evaluated* on the basis of knowledge. In Kant, the aesthetic is independent of the *sensuous*, the *moral*, and the *theoretical*. Again, Mackintosh's concern with underlying principles allows him, within the confines of his theory, to have a clear notion of what architecture, the 'commune of the arts', is actually doing, so that this, in turn, facilitates the addressing of the question of whether it is doing it well or badly. Hence architecture is assessed by Mackintosh in terms of its portrayal or actualization of correct concepts designated as principles. But if criteria of validity are being established for the evaluation of architecture,



Mackintosh is also aware of the relative nature of evaluations of beauty, and 'beauty' is one of the three fundamental principles of architecture.

For Kant an object becomes art to the extent that it is considered as art. A distinction between architecture and other art forms is made by Mackintosh on the basis of specific criteria:

"(Beauty is) by far the most difficult (architectural principle) to deal with as there are erroneous ideas regarding it to be removed and true and reasonable ones to be substituted. Yet there is no final standard of taste to which all may appeal, no code of laws to which every little detail may be submitted - no authoritative committee of taste to decide on the disputed points, for even the most learned in these matters diverge widely in their ideas of the beautiful. Many, because of the disagreement among professors - *which, however, is more upon matters of practice rather than principle*".<sup>42</sup>

Thus the strong implication is made that focusing on 'principle' can provide the way out of the *impasse* resulting from a conglomeration of divergent opinions. Mackintosh then introduces a distinction between 'taste' which involves relative and arbitrary subjective evaluations that eschew consideration of objectively established criteria, and 'Taste' that evaluates through the application of criteria of validity which, through cognition, assess the successful/unsuccessful application of correct principles:

"Many foolish persons discredit the existence of any other way of deciding than their own personal taste; you say a design is bad, they say it is good; well, there is no more to be said, simply, they like it. They mischievously take the proverb 'There is no disputing about taste', which only applies to the palate or other senses, quite different from Taste which is another word for *sound and cultivated sense, judgement and perception of fitness*. . ."<sup>43</sup>

The latter definition here is related to, and dependent upon, a theory of the nature of art and the aesthetic which acknowledges that art objects embody some kind of truth-content. Or, stated differently, they contain, or should contain, actualizations of correct cognitive ideas (visual knowledge in the form of symbols and insignia) that can be perceived and judged. On one level, this theory, as Mackintosh employs it, and, in particular, applies it to architecture, is attempting to establish the precise functions of architecture in order to facilitate the assessment of whether different

architectural constructions actually reproduce the requirements so conceptualised. It is important to emphasise this at this point because Mackintosh will later introduce the term 'expression', and what he means by that term cannot be adequately understood without a consideration of the manner in which he stresses the act of perception, and how, in that act, prior knowledge is brought to bear on the object.

In making the distinction between 'taste' and 'Taste', Mackintosh is clearly invoking Humean categories, i.e. there is a differentiating between the senses ('the palate and other senses') and ideas (the notion of 'association of ideas' as Hume presented it is employed). Alexander Gerard's Essay on Taste of 1759, which was influenced by Hume, states that once the qualities in objects have been revealed "it is *sense*, which is pleased or displeased . . . but *judgement* alone can determine them, and present to the sense the object of its perception".<sup>44</sup> If Mackintosh echoes this in his appeal to judgement, his phrase 'perception of fitness' could easily have been lifted from Sir William Chambers's Treatise on Civil Architecture (first edition 1759; third edition 1791) which had established itself as a standard authority on the use of classical orders and decoration. But what can be shown to be derived from Hume and his followers also, in the Enlightenment heyday of discourses and dissertations on architecture, is the endeavour to relate beauty/taste to some objective standard of evaluation.

In An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals (1751) Hume made the claim that

". . . in many orders of beauty, particularly those of the finer arts, it is requisite to employ much reasoning, in order to feel the proper sentiment, and a false relish may frequently be corrected by argument and reflection".<sup>45</sup>

Thus reason both *informs* sentiment and provides a necessary check on possible *excessive* sentiment. Moreover, by discovering all the component parts of an object, by relating and comparing those parts, and by drawing appropriate conclusions, reason enables us to perceive the 'beauties and blemishes' of 'nobler productions of genius' and paves the way for agreeable sentiment. In his An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (1748)



Hume had already had this to say about the application of reason to an 'understanding' of beauty:

"Morals and criticism are not so properly objects of the understanding as of taste and sentiment. Beauty, whether moral or natural, is felt more properly than perceived. Or if we reason concerning it and endeavour to fix the standard, we regard a new fact, to wit, the general taste of mankind, or some such fact which may be the object of reasoning and enquiry".<sup>46</sup>

As with the enquiry into morals and their 'principles', Hume refers to the central content of this passage as constituting 'principles': Mackintosh's much-used term in the elucidation of architecture. It is also significant that Hume's attempt to employ reason in the endeavour to go beyond beauty as something 'felt' (emotion) and to fix an objective standard, is mirrored in Mackintosh's movement from emotion to reason, whereby the two become synthesised. Thus the ideal that should guide all artists is "Reason *informed by* emotion, expressed in beauty, elevated by earnestness, lightened by humour".<sup>47</sup> By uniting reason with emotion he can address the phenomenon of modern architecture - an authentic modern architecture where art and science in combination engender a new style - and at the same time outline an aesthetics commensurate with it.

The endeavour to analyse why certain antique forms of architecture can be 'universally approved', as Chambers had argued, led Mackintosh to attempt an elucidation of the 'principles' held to underlie these forms. But the import of the recognition of the relative nature of individuals' aesthetic responses, and the attempt to transcend this situation, lie at the heart of Mackintosh's pursuit of a subject-object epistemology to administer to a conception of architecture as art as well as science, and, for this reason, capable of embracing both the creative imagination *and* the understanding. What motivates this strategy is the concern, not only that architecture be correctly understood, but that the employment of reason should not lead to the destruction of spontaneity and experimentation. Conversely, knowledge can inhibit an excess of imagination, the latter manifested, for example, with the desire for novelty: "variety and novelty if not carried too far, are qualities both allowable

and desirable, but by ignorance often clamoured for most unreasonably".<sup>48</sup> Ignorance, that is, lack of knowledge, therefore, presents a real problem:

"I can but bring you, as wise men, some FACTS regarding the PRINCIPLES which are considered essential to architecture, and submit them for your criticism, in all modesty admitting that in matters of taste when I say a thing is so and so, I only mean that I THINK it is so and so".<sup>49</sup>

Bearing in mind that these are lecture notes, taste here should really be emphasised in order that the import of the statement is not lost; knowledge of facts and principles would facilitate 'judgement and perception of fitness'. It is noteworthy that what is *not* being said is 'I *believe* it is so and so', or 'I *feel* it is so and so'. The index of FACTS-PRINCIPLES-THOUGHT is *knowledge*, and, for Mackintosh, only knowledge of architecture and its inherent principles can provide liberation from arbitrary subjective taste.



### 3. Formulating a New Aesthetic Mentality: Mackintosh and Geddes

As Helen Meller has argued, the 'miniature Scottish Celtic renaissance' represented by the publication of Geddes' Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal had a wide contemporary relevance.<sup>50</sup> Geddes was attracted to the nationalist fervour of the 1880s and 1890s as an emotional force which could, he believed, be utilised in the cause of city development. By the 1890s, when Scottish Art Nouveau was beginning to establish itself, Geddes was deeply involved in fostering his historical overview of social evolutionism, more particularly the evolution of cities. Mackintosh's 1893 lecture on architecture presents a theorized evolutionary history of architecture, and there he cites Herbert Spencer, an undoubted formative influence on Geddes. But other Glasgow architects and theorists of architecture, such as Alexander McGibbon (1861-1938), one of Mackintosh's teachers at the Art School, and Alexander N. Paterson (1862-1947), also polemicised about evolution, even if their formulations took a different form from Mackintosh's. There are, however, other crucial elements in Scottish Art Nouveau ideology as articulated in Glasgow which can be shown to relate very closely to what Geddes was presenting. These are: (a) the concept of the synthesis of art and science; (b) the fusing of emotion and intellectuality (ideation) within the creative imagination for the defining of 'a new field of AEsthetic'; (c) a materialist argument in favour of the mass production of goods manifesting artistic qualities; (d) the striving for cognitive coherence in the face of cultural complexity; and (e) the significance of the dialectical tension between utilitarian and aesthetic concerns. The implications of the connection between Geddes and Glasgow Art Nouveau have not been explored to any significant degree by any Mackintosh scholar of note. Howarth was somewhat dismissive of Geddes as a theorist, referring to his 'strange philosophical meanderings'. According to Philip Mairet (who shared a room with Mackintosh in the summer of 1915 when both men were working for Geddes, Mairet executing wall lecture diagrams, Mackintosh providing plans and elevations at King's College, London) this evaluation is

'wide of the mark', and he emphasised that Geddes "was a trained biologist who became a sociologist and town-planner - he was always a scientist and rationalist"<sup>51</sup> (Geddes, asserts Meller, "had a very literal mind").<sup>52</sup>

From 1887 to 1899 Geddes, along with a number of his academic contacts from numerous fields and from countries as diverse as France, Switzerland, Germany, America, Ireland and England as well as Scotland, was lecturing (to teachers, artists, academics etc.) at residential 'Summer Schools of Art and Science' in the Lawnmarket quarter of Edinburgh. Included were lectures on the social sciences, at that time not yet fully established within the curricula of all British universities. Apart from the summer vacation courses, Geddes' Edinburgh School of Art, as well as his (Celtic Renaissance) publishing activities, were based in 'Outlook Tower', a transformed building at the top of the Royal Mile. It is highly unlikely that the Glasgow Art Nouveau movement were unaware of these activities; Mackintosh and Geddes were obviously acquainted with each other; both of them were on the platform for the Annual Public Meeting of the Glasgow School of Art in January 1901, not long after the opening of the first section of the new Mackintosh building.<sup>53</sup> At this time, Geddes, in Glasgow to organise lecture schemes at the Exhibition, was spending much of his time in and around the Art School. His unusual and innovative attempt to outline the basis for a new aesthetics is, in its essentials, too close to what was propounded by Mackintosh for the similarities to be merely accidental. Hence the themes elucidated by Geddes which were of most relevance to the Glasgow avant-garde require to be carefully described. These may be succinctly stated under four headings:

1. *The maximization of modern material production for aesthetic ends*, In An Analysis of the Principles of Economics (1884) Geddes, in presenting his version of an intellectual approach to the problems of production, argued that the aesthetic element in production was significantly more important than the fundamental necessity of sustaining life.



This was claimed to be apparent from the "vast quantity of purely aesthetic products"<sup>54</sup> (termed 'super-necessaries' because their value lay beyond necessity as defined in utilitarian terms and consisted in their ability to stimulate the sense organs) as well as the "aesthetic subfunctions of all 'necessary' products"<sup>55</sup> which demonstrated that the fundamental element in production was subordinate to the 'superior' aesthetic element. The conclusion had to be that, although fundamentally geared towards maintenance, essentially, production was chiefly for art. For to increase the wealth of nations, the desired goal was the maximization of production. However, industry needed to be organised in terms of a new ideal in order to avoid continued production of the ephemeral and transitory: "that of producing not more so called necessities of life, but more goods in which the aesthetic element is supreme",<sup>56</sup> (Elsewhere in the same year Geddes wrote that the production of wealth was only of value insofar as it shaped the 'artificial' factors and improved domestic and civil life).<sup>57</sup> Geddes' orientation signified an entirely transformed conception of utilitarianism and its meaning: "If we have a dogma it is to teach a utilitarianism which treats life and culture as a whole and which may sometimes find the Beautiful more useful than the Useful",<sup>58</sup>

2. *The synthesis of art and science.* With the Edinburgh Summer School Geddes saw himself as being involved in the active process of reuniting the hitherto segregated studies of art (and literature) and science by organising them into an integrated cultural whole. The separation of these studies had been engineered by institutions such as the schools and universities which had fragmented knowledge by breaking it up "into particles unconnected with each other or with life",<sup>59</sup> Geddes thus acknowledged a nexus of institutionalised agencies fostering their own ideological view of knowledge construction. These radical ideas were popularised via the Evergreen (1895-6), the closest Scotland came to an Art Nouveau journal.

3. *Evolutionism and Organicism*. At the height of the organic phase of Art Nouveau (mid 1890s) Geddes the sociologist was theorising on the basis of an organic model of contemporary society and its inner structuration which derived from Durkheim's *De la Division du Travail Social: Etude sur L'Organisation des Societes Superieures* which had recently been published in Paris by Felix Alcan in 1893. In 1889 Geddes the biologist/botanist had passionately argued that progress measured in terms of 'aggregate organic life', where the life of the individual or the species was recognised as being "essentially a unity, of which the specific characters are but the symptoms",<sup>60</sup> was superior to the interpretation of human progress which employed "an analogy derived from an age of mechanical progress which gives us the watch, or sewing-machine, or tricycle, - by the cumulative patenting, as it were, of useful improvements in detail".<sup>61</sup> The Geddesian response to the recognition that economic 'progress' had not engendered social progress took the form of the teaching that city development and the aestheticisation of human life signified true progress if the link could be made with nature and thus the totality of evolutionary life. Organicism had a thoroughgoing significance for early and High Art Nouveau, and this underpinned the attempts to develop a form-language capable of conveying abstract dynamism; of crucial significance here was the conception of beauty of form as an outcome of organic processes, a conception which permeates Mackintosh's theory of architecture as (organic) construction.

4. *A new aesthetic founded upon the fusion of emotionality and intellectuality within the creative imagination*. Geddes argued that the artist, like the scientist, had to alternate thought and experimentation. The form which this should take for artists involved the alternation of "creation or study with participation in the life around them".<sup>62</sup> In every science, from geometry onwards, the intellect (Ideation) calls for imagery, and as each progresses, this becomes increasingly necessary. This formulation



involved Geddes in a discussion of the role played by the imagination in the processes surrounding the creation of new imagery. Historically, "the Imagination has ever subserved religion, and even more than science".<sup>63</sup> The problem was thus to liberate the aesthetic potential of imagination from the forces fostering mysticism and theology which have exploited an *uncritical* imagination for their own ends. Geddes first of all made explicit the effect upon the imagination of a (constraining) rational critical intellect: "Apply Ideation to Imagination; it is no longer free phantasmagoria, but it is criticized; selectively in appreciation, actively in design; *and thus a new field of AEsthetic is defined*".<sup>64</sup> But this would engender an over-rationalised, over-inhibited, aesthetic; there would have to be ample resource also for the feeling mode, the dimension of emotionality: ". . . imagination is apt to be chilled by AEsthetic; it needs more than mere design; to be fully vital, this must be fused with the kindred glow of emotion. Thus we have Poesy; not merely the music and poetry of words, but that which is in all forms of imagination, visual and mobile".<sup>65</sup>

Geddes posed the question of whether the modern antipathy of science to 'emotionalism', and the persistent divorce of science from art, represented an historical 'incompletion'. Conversely, was not the life of the imagination and of art, "with all its varied modern endeavours", not bewildered and astray among subjective dreams and thus "too ignorant to grasp and express the vast conceptions of science or to renew and re-embody the renewing idealism of humanity, which is again searching towards religion?"<sup>66</sup> Emotion, Ideation, Imagination, were not merely three great notes of the inner life, Geddes insisted, they were "normally its single chord"

In his lecture on Seeliness (1902) Mackintosh strongly emphasised the need for future architects and craftsmen to adopt an intellectual approach to their *specifically artistically conditioned* work: "the craftsman of the future must be an artist, not what they too often are just now, artistic failures, men and women not *intellectually*

fit to be architects, painters or sculptors",<sup>67</sup> In 1893 he had stressed the point that "architecture . . . interpenetrates building not for the satisfaction of the simpler needs of the body but the *complex ones of the intellect*",<sup>68</sup> By 1905, his position is that knowledge of architecture is not to be limited to specialists; knowledge of the 'elementary rules' governing 'true' architecture is deemed necessary in order that people can become critical in relation to the architecture constituting the social environment which surrounds them:

"Architecture, the Mother, because the first of the Fine Arts whatever be her relative position in honour, is the one which everyone should possess a knowledge of, as being by far the most prominently before us in daily life, unlike painting or sculpture which must generally be sought for, Architecture, good or bad, exists so extensively with civilized man",<sup>69</sup>

Architecture and the applied arts in modern society then are to be understood as involving a fundamentally intellectual endeavour; but, to repeat, this is an intellectuality which has, 'ideally', to unite reason with emotion, so as to equip itself for the transformation of a realm split between forces engendered by a ruthless utilitarianism on the one hand, and a complacent and defensive aestheticism on the other. A meaningful utilitarianism must be united with a concern for beauty in order that the foundations of a new approach to aesthetics can be laid. Rigorous science and free creative imagination have to be brought together in confronting modern problems and needs. Thus "the Architect must become an art worker" who has to *synthesize* and *integrate* with his conscious knowledge "myriads of details and circumstances of which he cannot be directly conscious",<sup>70</sup> With this invoking of what are ostensibly contents of the unconscious, Mackintosh attempts to provide an offensive to the position that would emphasise exclusively knowledge as that which is derived from social learning and social institutions, and which would have no way of addressing products of insight and imagination that it could not reduce to this formulation. As he had underlined in Seenliness, the appreciation of what is required of a modern art-worker has to be personal and individual "and expressed without resorting to the remote accessories



which mark the feeble mind that thinks it follows, but as a fact only abuses, all precedent, all tradition, all custom". The critical motivations of the architect-art worker are ideologically grounded and they generate the kind of convictions and ideals which lead him/her to forego the 'questionable distinction' of being respected as the founder, or head, of a large and successful business (these remarks would appear to substantiate Muthesius' claim that Mackintosh wanted nothing to do with a 'school' of followers). A kind of imposed asceticism is demanded along with a workmanlike assiduity; but the comments about eschewing the questionable distinction of being successful in business give the impression of an attempt to preempt criticism of the artistic way of life viewed as part-and-parcel of the new architect's role. An aspect of that role which many contemporaries would have viewed as undermining the discipline and strictness deemed necessary for a career in a 'respectable' profession.

The necessity of an intellectual approach to art is consistently stressed by Mackintosh: "It is by advocating this and insisting upon it that all the applied arts will once again take their proper and dignified place in the world of artistic production".<sup>71</sup> Above all, an intellectual approach is required for the realization of the potentialities offered by adherence to the principles uniting utility with beauty. The views on the issue of beautiful utensils for everyday use, expressed in the letter to Hoffmann, are echoed in Seemliness which dates from the same year:

"it is only then (i.e. when future craftsmen are intellectually fit and have become artists) that the possible utility and beauty of every article of everyday use and personal adornment will be realised, will be designed thoughtfully to suit its every purpose, will be designed beautifully to please artist and owner alike".<sup>72</sup>

But the pleasure being derived by both artist and owner is grounded in an enlightened acknowledgement of the degrees of success attained in uniting utility with beauty. Mackintosh wants to extend such enlightenment to all:

"I only want each individual to know or seek to know when the requirements of a thing are fulfilled, and when presented in beautiful form, without violating the elements of usefulness on the one hand and appropriate beauty on the other".<sup>73</sup>

Mackintosh calls into question the 'cliches' about the 'bad taste' of the public, their lack of appreciation and want of thought, and focuses his criticism upon "the majority of presumably highly educated artists and designers". These latter are considered the main offenders, whose products are lacking in style, character and substance, and whose artistic work is thin, light, artificial and revealing of no *personality*. As we shall see, the significance of this for Mackintosh lies with such work lacking *expressive* qualities.

It is the *individuality* of the modern art worker that is to be the emancipatory medium whereby the stultifying accretions of the past are thrown off. But, additionally, it is individuality that is to lead to *true art* and *true architecture*. This staunch individualism is easily apparent as an outcome of the non-conformist stance adopted in relation to orthodox social-institutional and academic attitudes. Significantly, what is being acknowledged also, is that the emancipation of the individual art worker signifies, at one and the same time, the emancipation of all art workers:

"The focus of the true art of our country of the world is being gradually but surely accepted, and that focus will eventually prove to be the work of the individual worker, will prove to be the emancipation of all artists from the stupid forms of education which stifles the *intellect*, paralyzes the *ambition*, and kills *emotion*".<sup>74</sup>

These three categories: intellect, emotion, ambition (or conviction), have a seminal significance for the new aesthetics, and their effective *synthesis* is fundamental to that end. The use of the phrase 'our country of the world' immediately places Scotland within an international context; the relationship between the 'individual worker' and this context is all-important. It is the creative originality of the individual worker which legitimises the employment of sources of inspiration from further afield. Only creative originality can synthesise these sources into something embodying 'individuality and revolutionary motive'; and such a synthesis does not represent mere imitation. This is the essence of the consistent emphasis upon individuality.



Individuality and free creative imagination do not require to imitate; invention, not imitation, is the spring of true art. As Georges Baltus, who joined the staff of the Glasgow School of Art from the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels expressed this notion in a lecture on 'Art and Social Aesthetics' in the Glasgow School in February 1906, "if imitation were the highest summit of art, then the arts might be called sciences".<sup>75</sup> It is precisely because Mackintosh acknowledges the dialectical interplay between the science *and* the art of architecture that imitation is rejected.

The ambitious, intellectual modern art worker, illuminated by principles, whose intellect is informed by emotion, and whose actions are commensurate with the social developments surrounding him, is a recurrent image with Mackintosh. Emotion and 'intelligent understanding' are brought together by way of "scientific knowledge of the possibilities and beauties of material".<sup>76</sup> Not only does this formulation encapsulate the essential modern movement credo of truth to materials, it is, in addition, pointing firmly in the direction of the modernist position which recognises that work springs from the intellect rather than from the emotions. As Henry Lenning pointed out, "the intellectual as opposed to the emotional approach to the problems of production" is what distinguishes the early Art Nouveau of practitioners such as van de Velde from the preceding Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>77</sup> Mackintosh returns to the issue of materials when insisting that it is only when attitudes are changed

". . . that artists will thoroughly understand and appreciate the possible application and beauty of each material he is called upon to handle; that all the varied problems and materials the world has to offer will be understood and thoroughly valued because of the artistic possibilities that is in them".<sup>78</sup>

It is knowledge of modern requirements (buildings, objects, within "new forms and conditions of life") which operates to unite emotion with intellect and both with ambition/aspiration/conviction. Time and again Mackintosh invokes this most fundamental synthesis:

"The only modern individual art . . . is produced by an *emotion*, produced by a frank and *intelligent understanding*. . . "

"It is delightful to see *thought and feeling and aspiration* dressed in the bright raiment of present day art . . ."

"I am sure that no one of any gifts of *reasoning* will question the value of a high ideal - a strong *ambitious conviction*"

"All good work is thoughtful and suggestive - carefully *reasoned* - and characterised no less by wide *knowledge* than by closeness of observation and *instinctive* appropriateness".

"A fearless application of *emotion* and *knowledge*, a cultured *intelligence* and a mind artistic yet not too indolent to attempt the solution of these problems that have not before arisen",<sup>79</sup>

Clearly, the desire is to transcend accumulated knowledge that is the result of (institutionalised) forms of education and which is always limited by its relationship to the past and thus not adequate to the issues of modern requirements and the analysis of contemporary complexity (of which the plethora of eclectic architectural 'styles' is a manifestation). Moreover, this accumulated knowledge, by its very nature, engenders conventional modes of expression (the latter a key concept for Mackintosh). Mackintosh can just as easily refer to the 'indefinable side of art' and the intangible qualities that are 'excited by ambition and instinct' as to the 'wide knowledge' so necessary for good and 'true' work. His concern is equally as much with what he called the 'etherial' (sic) as with the technical. Regardless of whether the emphasis at any given time is upon the intellect, or upon metaphysical insights, the underlying thrust is the preoccupation with escaping (a) sensual aestheticism (the aesthetic movement contained a violently anti-utilitarian strain with the ideal of works of art totally without purpose), and (b) moribund academicism. Hence the debunking asides about the 'artistic fraternity' who are portrayed as opposing the necessary study of utility. The motivation behind such study was quite clearly the need to better understand how perception of purpose could, in itself, elicit aesthetic responses. The significance of the appeal to 'instinctual' and 'inborn' propensities lies with the conviction that these cannot be reduced to the outcomes of institutionalised social learning. If, therefore, "Mackintosh's work is 'intended to embody *aesthetic* values'",<sup>80</sup> then our understanding of his intentions must acknowledge that these values are decidedly not



those of the aesthetic movement which bespoke luxurious sophistication. It is a new kind of aesthetic response that Mackintosh wants to engender. Nor does the rationalism, functionalism and utilitarianism of his arguments relate unproblematically to neo-Gothicism and Arts and Crafts ideologies respectively. Because architecture is an *art* the scientific knowledge necessary for its actualization must embrace also the faculty of a free creative imagination. Only this synthesis is capable of creating new technically realizable forms free from tradition and intractable authority. To "look upon all the arts going hand in hand as one"<sup>21</sup> is to envisage architecture as art in that functional and practical requirements need not necessitate the eschewal of inventive imagination and a sense of beauty. Nor need the latter attributes be either anti-modern or anti-democratic. There is more to Mackintosh's ideology than a Gothic revivalist functionalism (*apropos* Macleod), but the picture of Mackintosh as a modernist (*apropos* Howarth) has to be made conditional on the basis of recognising that the concerns with (a) beauty, imagination and inventiveness; and (b) the creation of new *forms*, are turn of the century Art Nouveau preoccupations. The decline of three-dimensional realism fostered the search for new forms such as two-dimensional decorativism with pattern predominating over perspective and the exploration of the potentialities of a 'linear language'. Vanguard art practice after the 1880's demonstrated a scientifically-informed awareness of the potential in experimental techniques for new forms of representation. In Art Nouveau architecture there is apparent the decoration of prior fundamental structures (explicitly recommended by Mackintosh), detail merging into mass (the 'hot breath of Art Nouveau' effect described by Gomme and Walker when examining Mackintosh's Glasgow Herald building tower of 1893), the manipulation of structure to create tension, e.g. with asymmetry. In the Glasgow School of Art design the main entrance is asymmetrically positioned; also, the south elevation has seven 'sections' within each of which symmetry is imposed; however, when viewed as a whole, these sections can be seen to comprise a totality manifesting the

asymmetry of an Art Nouveau conception. As an instance of Burger's description of the avant-gardiste work presenting its constituent elements as having relative autonomy within a whole which is effectively constituted through the contradictory relationship of heterogeneous elements, the Art School design is especially noteworthy. But Mackintosh employed an asymmetrical manner of composition for Windyhill (1899) and Hill House (1902) also.<sup>82</sup>

It is apparent that Scottish Art Nouveau was exploring the 'new kind of mentality' (Schorske) - with thought and feeling permeating each other - which was the preoccupation of the Viennese Secessionists also. "The questions of an artist's knowledge, his learning", Mackintosh declares, "must inevitably *merge into* that of his perceptions, his visions, his divinations".<sup>83</sup> But it is clear from this particular assertion that emotion is not to impair the sharpness of vision required by the modern architect. Carl Schorske's description of the driving force behind this new psychological and philosophical outlook as being the avant-garde ideal of an integrated life of art and living, could scarcely apply more to Mackintosh. It is a vision underpinned by a new philosophy of design and its social-psychological role, of an integrated life that is most concretely detailed with the description of beautiful design for every object of everyday use:

"I want to speak on the possible improvement in the design of *everything*, on the possible improvement in the education and work of architects and craftsmen as artists. To insist on some artistic intention being evident in the making or adornment of each article for everyday use or requirement, an appeal for a discriminating thoughtfulness in the selection of appropriate shape - *design for everything no matter how trivial*".<sup>84</sup>

Here is the conviction that even apparently trivial everyday objects, if produced in a beautiful *form*, can attain the significance they deserve as elements within a coherent twentieth century environment. Such thinking is extremely consonant with the *Deutsche Werkbund* and its 'cult of the everyday object', particularly as it was analysed in journals such as *L'Ésprit Nouveau* and the annual yearbooks of the *Werkbund* published between 1912 and 1915. Significantly, Hermann Muthesius was a regular contributor to



these, along with Gropius, Behrens and Riemerschmid. As Gillian Naylor has pointed out, the "recognition of a need to establish a rational order and clearly defined standards in architecture and design was . . . inherent in *Werkbund* thinking prior to World War I".<sup>25</sup> The more radical members of the *Werkbund*, with their admiration for Greek architecture and its stressed values of clarity, order, logic and discipline, operated with a theory of architecture commensurate in its essentials with that outlined by Mackintosh. Concepts of structure, space, harmony, were portrayed as being eternal and capable of being expressed through the application of predetermined orders. In the employment of these orders ornament *emerged*, and this ornament was, in itself, logical, and, consequently, justifiable. The fact that such a theory of architecture joins hands with a view of design being applied to the objects produced by, and for, modern living, may well owe a great deal to Muthesius' intense admiration for Mackintosh as an exponent of what Muthesius took to be modern movement principles. At any rate, what is distinctive about Mackintosh's ideology is the way in which it fuses a new philosophy of design with an analysis of the actual social and psychological purposes of design and architecture; this particular fusion preparing the way for the ideals and doctrines of the modern movement. It is likely that Muthesius would himself have influenced Mackintosh, in particular, in the respect of thinking through the implications of standardisation for design. Muthesius was in no doubt about standardisation of goods being necessary, and, moreover, that this would in no way endanger the quality of potential design. The notion of a beautified living environment, with beauty signifying meaning, clearly went beyond an individual such as Mackintosh in Glasgow at the end of the nineteenth century. An item in a Glasgow newspaper of 1897 illustrates that such thinking was unambiguously attributed to the Art School and its sphere of influence:

"If a thing of beauty be a joy for ever, why not make our houses, our furniture, and everything about us as beautiful as considerations of propriety and utility will admit? There is no valid reason why we should not, and that to an extent that a people ignorant of the grandly simple elements of art have no idea of. Beauty of form in an article of daily use is surely preferable to unmeaning ugliness, and it need not cost a bit more. . . the education afforded at the School of Art is largely calculated to





"... this conservatism is often made a cloak and excuse for mediocrity in design and the senseless and unceasing repetition of features which have only their age to recommend them . . . "88

Historicism *as adornment* is therefore now being opposed on the grounds that it can conveniently serve to conceal poor design, i.e. it perpetrates a fraud. However, this is merely one aspect of Mackintosh's critique of historicism. More specifically, the arbitrary use of historical styles in a modern period is itself taken as an illustration of the moribund nature of most modern architecture: work which demonstrably lacks "the sustained note of informing purpose",<sup>89</sup>

Hoffmann also demanded a consideration of 'purpose' in conjunction with material and 'absolutely honest thinking' in his 'manifestolike, programmatic' (Sekler) text which he wrote to accompany the publication of a number of 'ideal' furniture designs in Das Interieur in 1901. In that text the prevailing tendency of reverting to historicizing, eclectic imitation of form is denounced in the context of an argumentation which deploys similar elements to those of Mackintosh in the lectures. Hoffmann declares that "Purpose alone is the source of the motifs, Main support (is) absolute honesty and simplicity in conception and execution",<sup>90</sup> To some extent these similarities between the ideas of the two men can be attributed to the mutual influence upon them of Ruskin. The Seven Lamps of Architecture appeared in a German edition (translated by W. Schoelermann) in 1900. Says Sekler, "Volumes of the German edition of Ruskin's works still remain in Josef Hoffmann's library and many of his programmatic pronouncements have a strongly Ruskinian flavour".<sup>91</sup>

To Mackintosh, historicised architecture, an architecture that is not authentic to its own period, is at the same time a debased architecture which is attempting to conceal the fact that the real problem of a lack of a modern style is being created by agencies external to architecture which are actively involved in promulgating what is in effect a travesty of architecture. This travesty, hopelessly lacking in the essential faculty of invention, is capable, given the absence of historical awareness

of the authentic architecture of past epochs, of being accepted as 'contemporary architecture'. The authors of this work without distinctive style, from the years recently passed, are thoroughly implicated in this deplorable situation; they neither recognised the limitations of art, nor apprehended its distinctions; lacking in inventiveness and unable to compose new images, they have produced work of a wearisome artificiality.

In the literary society lecture, Mackintosh renders more explicit some of the most fundamental of these distinctions and limitations of art; more specifically those of painting and sculpture. This is mainly in order to demonstrate clearly what are the problems peculiar to the architect. A young, struggling painter, he states, can embody his conception if he is but capable of acquiring paint and canvas, "and when the work is finished he submits it to the public patronage and if looked at impartially it stands or falls on its own self-evident merits". Basically, the situation for a sculptor is much the same. For the architect, however, the position is a radically different one. The drawings which the architect submits necessarily convey an extremely poor idea of what the finished reality will actually be. Indeed they provide "far less shadow of resemblance to the reality, than that possessed by the scribbles in an academy catalogue". That finished reality will involve, for the perceiver, experience of a physical and spatial entity that alters with every step taken. Thus what the architect is required to provide initially, is "a prophetic view of a non-existing structure", and, for this, practical artistic skill as such is required to a very limited degree. The precise nature of the concept of space being utilised in this context of avant-gardiste utopianism is noteworthy; it is of space as something fluid which fuses in ever changing ways. This is in marked contrast to the kind of thinking which joins, in a static manner, finite, simply defined spatial units. Mackintosh's admiration for the Gothic revival and for Gothic architecture of the High Middle Ages again reveals its significance for his avant-garde theory of architecture. Gothic had



achieved a great deal in terms of the utilisation of space and light within its unique structuring, i.e. buttresses, pillars, arches and suchlike, which facilitated an 'opening out' of spatial areas. Students connected with the architectural classes of the Glasgow School of Art regularly visited Melrose abbey during the 1890's,<sup>92</sup> where elements that were significant for Scottish Art Nouveau could be analysed, such as ornament based upon natural forms, geometric tracery, perpendicular lines, an enhanced sense of space (facilitated by the amount of wall area given over to windows: possible only because of the style of 'flying-buttress' construction). Melrose also provided the opportunity to wallow in the sense of romance which Scott's historical fiction had cast around this abbey which he himself cherished.

Towards the close of his literary society lecture, Mackintosh returns to the themes which had occupied him in 1891 (Scottish Baronial Architecture), and 1893 (Untitled paper on Architecture), respectively; namely the concept of a 'national' architecture, and the theme of the historical evolution of architecture. It is important to recognise at the outset that Mackintosh is looking to a 'national' architecture for a solution to the problem of eclectic historicism. In essence the view is that this latter phenomenon has succeeded in falsifying Scotland's cultural heritage insofar as this heritage is capable potentially of being conveyed by architecture: "The history of nations is written in stone, but it certainly would be a difficult task to read a history from the architecture of this nation at the present time".<sup>93</sup> The progressive evolution of architecture has been severely curtailed due to the obsession with historical styles and this has been a function of modern cosmopolitanism. The breaking down of national barriers has engendered greater awareness of the architecture of other nations, but this fragmentary awareness has impeded the necessary understanding of the historical development of our own architecture:

"We do not build as the ancients did who in each succeeding building tried to carry to further perfection the national type. No, we are a world-acquainted people who cast aside all prejudices and build now in Greek if we love the classic, now in Norman if we dote on the romantic, or if we have travelled show them (our) ill-reputed admiration

for foreign beauties by reproducing Swiss chateaux etc., etc., in the most inappropriate positions".<sup>94</sup>

Architecture, reasons Mackintosh, is like language, where new words and phrases are gradually introduced over a period of time. Eclecticism as cosmopolitanism will therefore involve the introduction of elements that are culturally inauthentic in the specific sense that they cannot initially be meaningfully accommodated to the manifestations of the indigenous culture, since the latter have only attained the form they have over a greatly extended period of time. Hence the conviction that "we should be a little less cosmopolitan and rather more national in our architecture".<sup>95</sup> It is not too difficult to perceive in this Mackintosh's experience of the significance for the arts and architecture of Glasgow's dependence upon world markets; a dependence facilitating world culture in its widest sense as a resource for growing eclecticism. Additionally, there would be the factor of the apparent 'throw away' character of capitalism's products, including its architecture, nowhere more apparent than with the buildings erected for the International Exhibitions of 1888 and 1901 (Geddes made an unsuccessful plea for the retention of James Miller's buildings subsequent to the closing of the 1901 event). The lack of permanence engendered by buildings intended to last for a limited period, and with limited function. The functional imperatives of Scottish capitalism were acknowledged by Mackintosh as being threatening to real architecture, and Newbery bitterly referred to the "chimney stalks, hideous structures, and railway girder bridges (which) were all concomitants of our choked civilisation" and which "had as much to do with art as they had to do with the Stock Exchange".<sup>96</sup>



### 5. An Art Nouveau Semiotics

Although Mackintosh draws the analogy with language on a number of occasions this does not mean that architecture is understood as conveying knowledge that is in some sense linguistic. He appears to be acknowledging the uniqueness of visual thinking which conceptual thought rooted in language and discourse would be inadequate to address or elucidate. Moreover, he seems to be implying that modern architecture should break with the ideological forms which architecture has, in the past, been implicated in. To argue that "a temple should aim at sublimity, a villa at domesticity, a Palace of Justice at dignity and so forth" (what he terms the 'phonetic' argument) is, he insists, not to recognise that "it is generally only association of ideas which has given these attributes any standing".<sup>97</sup> Chambers had used 'dignity' as one of his examples of the type of concept which results from reasoning and hence the association of ideas. But if such ideas do not emanate from the architecture itself, which is to say that they are effectively being imposed on it, what is the nature of the knowledge which architecture should, ideally, convey? For Mackintosh architecture can only really be signative and symbolic; as such it 'expresses' certain principles, and, of these, the most important, arguably, will be that of structure: "the want of appearance of stability is fatal";<sup>98</sup> "Perceiving differences of style in buildings both in their ornament and general construction they acknowledge the existence of some ruling principles although ignorant of their nature".<sup>99</sup> Ignorant of their nature because, although the principles are being expressed, the full apprehension of their real nature requires the spectator to bring the relevant knowledge to bear. Here Mackintosh appropriates Reynolds' argument that it is signs incorporated into works of art which, in being understood, elicit responses towards the objects, which are subsequently apprehended as 'beautiful' on the basis of the social meanings encapsulated within the insignia. As with paintings of Apollo with his lyre, Bacchus with his Thyrus and vine leaves, or Meleager with the Boar's Head (so runs Reynolds' argument) we need to have

an *idea* of who Bacchus, Apollo and Meleager are before we can properly understand the content of the pictures. No response is possible without this prior understanding. Thus the lyre, thirsus, vine leaves and boar's head act as signs which, to use modern language, combine cognitive with expressive ideas. Interpreting these ideas requires prior knowledge, but in Reynolds' example this knowledge is commensurate with the actual cognitive/expressive content of the pictorial images. Here Mackintosh attempts to go beyond Reynolds' position. By contrast with the situation where knowledge in the spectator's mind is in accord with the knowledge embodied as form-content, sublimity, domesticity, or dignity, being ideological constructs applied in an ahistorical manner, are extra-artistic. In this sense, Mackintosh views them as being superfluous to true architecture, alien to both the scientific and artistic aspects of it. The understanding and evaluation of architecture requires knowledge that markedly contrasts with this; knowledge of what is contained within, or which underpins, the architecture *as architecture* in question. Thus Mackintosh opposes 'purpose' as a revolutionary approach to architecture, illuminated by the logical principles of the latter, to 'purpose' as the expression of inherently non-artistic/architectural ideology:

"The expression which is plainly observable in the different styles has led to the establishment by some critics of a distinct element in Beauty, namely that a building should be *phonetic*, that is, explain its *purpose* or illustrate history . . . I think that a building can not really be phonetic, merely expressive".<sup>100</sup>

In the context of this particular argument, 'purpose' is specifically not meant as 'useful function'. It is 'Purpose' defined in terms of language, discourse and social ideology that is being rejected as superfluous to architecture. For the latter to 'express' it must be understood as having a form and content; and for that form-content to be apprehended knowledge is required. But it is a very specific knowledge that is needed; it is, to put it succinctly, knowledge of the principles that are being given direct expression through architectural creation.



It is instructive to consider on this point, some illuminating comments made by Hoffmann in a lecture from 1911 on the subject of expression in architecture as Art Nouveau practitioners had attempted to realize it. Speaking of the period in which the Vienna Secession was launched, Hoffmann reflected that

"It is characteristic of this era that almost all artists from Wagner to Van de Velde saw the exact fulfilment of construction as the only right thing but that the *expression*, i.e. *the formal fulfilment of this idea* was tried in incredibly varied ways".<sup>101</sup>

In this context, we may be justified in interpreting Mackintosh's invoking of 'expression' as an example of his concern with the 'formal fulfilment' of the concept of construction. In point of fact, P. Morton Shand pointed out in 1933 that, in terms of post-war architectural criticism, it was Mackintosh's 'architectural-constructional work' that was considered most significant. Furthermore, if there appears to be a significant affinity between Mackintosh and the continental avant-garde with respect to 'expression' at the turn-of-the-century, then the same can be claimed also for the significance of the *sign*, which, as we have seen, led Mackintosh backwards in time to the 18th. century when there emerged "a systematic aesthetics as a philosophical discipline and a new concept of autonomous art".<sup>102</sup> Giuliano Gresleri describes Hoffmann's contribution to the development of modern architecture as

". . . a body of work that belongs to a climate of general precariousness, one in which the values of the *sign*, of materials, and of surfaces are investigated with a scientific and irreverent curiosity altogether unknown to the Modern Movement".<sup>103</sup>

This climate of general precariousness was, as we shall see, a potent motivating force behind the attempts to elucidate the significance of 'national' architecture, and here too Mackintosh was in line with continental events. More specifically, both he and Hoffmann manifested a similar type of preoccupation with this particular issue.

Mackintosh, with the aid of the same Reynolds argument, had already investigated the values of the sign and the significance of expression in his 1893 lecture. There he had attempted to make a distinction between the contrasted modes of thought that were

involved historically in the creation of architectural forms. Some of these modes, he had claimed, were unconscious and instinctive - 'desires' oriented towards the realization of aesthetic qualities such as symmetry, smoothness, sublimity and suchlike. Symetry (sic) was explicitly referred to by Chambers as owing its power to the ideas that are connected with it. For Mackintosh, symmetry and sublimity are specifically aesthetic qualities, hence his rejection of a religious-based meaning for the latter (temple: sublimity). But what is most noteworthy is the attempt to transcend Chambers' position by introducing a quasi-Freudian formulation (actually purloined from Lethaby) which posits symmetry, sublimity, etc. as realizations of unconscious desire. Importantly, this view allows for forms of thought which are in some sense autonomous, in that they are not unproblematically the result of social traditions

Other modes of thought, Mackintosh explains, were "direct and didactic, speaking by a more or less perfect realisation, or through a code of symbols accompanied by traditions which explained them".<sup>104</sup> In terms of these conscious modes, Mackintosh wishes to establish a distinction at this point between linguistic and non-linguistic thought. However, the 'perfect realisation' of which the former is potentially capable, is not to be equated with superior powers of intelligibility in all spheres of cultural meaning. This is illustrated by Mackintosh's assertion that it is symbols (in the sense of non-linguistic ideas) which need to be understood and appreciated before the true meaning of art and architecture in a given period can be interpreted and evaluated:

"Again to quote Ruskin 'A building which recorded the Bible history by means of a series of sculptural pictures would be perfectly useless to a person unacquainted with the bible beforehand ('') - on the other hand the text of the old and new testament might be written on its walls and yet the building would be a very inconvenient kind of book, not so useful as if it had been adorned with intelligible and vivid sculpture and painting. So again the power of exciting emotion must vary or vanish as the spectator becomes thoughtless or cold, and a building may be often blamed for what is the fault of the critic, or endowed with a charm which is of the spectator's own creation. It is not therefore possible to make expression any fair criterion of excellence in a building until we can fully place ourselves in the position of those to whom the expression was originally addressed and until we are certain that we understand every symbol and are capable of being touched by every association which its builders employed as letters of their language".<sup>105</sup>



This passage, which synthesises the arguments of Reynolds and Ruskin, demonstrates that Mackintosh was deeply concerned with the issue of cultural production as a purveyor of meanings, and with the nature of the involvement between the spectator's subjectivity and the cognitive content of the architecture which s/he confronts. Significantly, it is being argued that art forms such as sculpture and painting can potentially convey greater intelligibility with regard to cultural meanings than can written or spoken language. A building may be denounced or eulogised on the basis of the spectator's own prejudiced loves or hates. The *space* between buildings and spectators can therefore comprise endlessly proliferating meanings; meanings without any final closure and which are not grounded in a stable point of origin. Mackintosh's conviction that this state-of-affairs can be transcended lies with a subject-object epistemology; only by seeking out and reconstructing meanings that are/were contemporaneous with specific cultural productions can we place ourselves in a suitable position from which we can apply the knowledge that will move us beyond emotionality and arbitrary proliferating meanings. The attempt is to be as rigorous and as comprehensive as possible in taking into account the sites of meaning production most significant for architects at a given moment in history. Thus "until we are certain that we understand *every symbol* and are capable of being touched by *every association*" we cannot legitimately, or productively, employ the criterion of expression in evaluating architecture. It becomes apparent therefore, that, for Mackintosh, the evaluation of expression is understood as involving a highly cognitive and culturally informed relationship between architecture (as object) and spectator/subject; but this must encompass feeling in order for the necessary aesthetic responses to be possible; expression, after all, involves far more than indication. Where the architectural object is concerned the relationship *between* the general and the particular is of cardinal importance. The concern to maximize the correct apprehension of symbols and associations is undoubtedly rooted in the acknowledgement that the more properties which are presented by objects, the more those

objects transcend the limitations imposed upon them by the values and distinctions conveyed through the symbol systems themselves. That is to say, objects take on more 'real' properties through the process of their becoming apprehended as empirical instances of the general cultural type described by the symbol system.<sup>106</sup>

With both Ruskin and Muthesius we find meaning being inextricably linked to 'objective reality', more specifically, the objective reality of social living which is believed to find meaningful expression through authentic forms of vernacular architecture. The problem arising out of the misunderstanding of meanings apprehended as embodied in architecture was referred to by Muthesius in a brief discussion of house-building in Scotland. The 'outer dress' of buildings in outlying areas from Edinburgh, Muthesius asserted, remained "strongly reminiscent of the superficiality of the stylistic historicism" of the 19th. century.

"Men saw the 'picturesque' but did not grasp the *meaning* of the features which they felt to be picturesque. They mistook them for *objective reality* and the result was the characteristic quality of all stylistic imitation: meaninglessness, superfluity and falsity".<sup>107</sup>

Ruskin, when eulogising "those misty and massive piles which rise above the domestic roofs of our ancient cities", proclaimed that "there was - there may be again - a meaning more profound and true than any that fancy so commonly has attached to them".<sup>108</sup>

In an article in the Magazine of Art in 1885, G. F. Watts the symbolist painter described how "Perceptions and emotions are shut up within the human soul, sleeping and unconscious, till the poet or the artist awakens them".<sup>109</sup> Mackintosh appropriates the symbolists' notion of the unconscious as the domain of emotionality; Scottish Art Nouveau, as with the Continental Secessionists, was indeed searching for what Schorske calls 'new instinctual truth'.<sup>110</sup> However, an important distinction needs to be made with regard to this point. When Hoffmann wrote to Kokoscha "you know that intelligence and excessive knowledge kill the cultural impulse . . . only the right sensitivity and



the inborn feeling count",<sup>111</sup> he presented as exclusive polarities the very phenomena which Mackintosh, following Geddes, wanted to reconcile. For Scottish Art Nouveau, the subject-object epistemology is trying to *encompass* 'sensitivity and inborn feeling'. Fundamentally, Mackintosh's architectural theory shows him following the Scottish Hegelian line that "in the intelligence, as the subject-object, there lies an adequate principle for the interpretation of nature and history".<sup>112</sup> The theoretical model of the spectator/subject is extended by Mackintosh to encompass intelligence, emotionality, desire and imagination. The scientific aim of knowledge is to be combined with the aesthetic aim of pleasure or satisfaction. The traditional, entrenched, dichotomy between knowing and feeling, the cognitive and the emotive, gives way to the acknowledgement that scientific and aesthetic experience alike are fundamentally cognitive.

If this is an accurate description of the relationship between object and spectator which Mackintosh requires with regard to his own architecture, then how are we to regard Frank Walker's assertion that

"Tension, conflict, the ever-present possibility of alternative interpretation; these are the hallmarks of Mackintosh's architecture, and it may be that his frustrated and broken creative life testifies to this same achievement in a sadly parallel disintegrative way".<sup>113</sup>

The grammar and the meaning, the syntax and the semantics, for Walker afford their alternative interpretations. Now it is true to say that in the act of perceiving an object, the 'boundaries' of meaning enclosing the object can be dissolved; the object can then elicit other meanings which often interact with those within the boundaries in quite tenuous ways. Which is to say that 'the ever-present possibility of alternative interpretation' is, in effect, a function of the 'space' between object and spectator. But as we have seen, this arbitrary 'association of ideas' is precisely what Mackintosh was addressing himself to so as to ground a more 'objective' alternative. The capacity of a work of art or architecture to express meaning was, for Mackintosh the

theoretician at any rate, dependent upon underlying principles and logical formal structures that were common to all such works. Thus the syntax and the semantics were to be mutually complementary.

Walker also argues that the Scottish movement manifests a dialectical tension between the practical and the mystical, the functional and the symbolic. The mystical and symbolic are here related to characteristics of the symbolist and aesthetic movements, such as were manifested, for example, in Wilde's fairy tales or Rossetti's mystical romances:

"While the English had become increasingly rational and utilitarian, arguing the case for a kind of crafted Functionalism, the Scots - every bit as receptive to the writings of Ruskin, Morris and Lethaby - were, nonetheless, still in thrall to the 'fairy-tale world' of Romanticism",<sup>14</sup>

It is necessary, however, to make a distinction between (expressive) symbols and 'symbolism': we have seen that Mackintosh meant something quite specific by his employment of the former category: symbol, or sign, systems, and the characters within those systems, were the means whereby works were interpreted. Such interpretation required that subtle relationships be discerned within and between works and their environmental context. 'Symbolism' does not necessarily follow from this usage, and not only because 'symbolism' was often used in Mackintosh's period to refer, explicitly or not, to the ideas propounded by the symbolist movement in literature and art. A further complication arises with Mackintosh's appropriation of sections from Lethaby's Architecture, Mysticism and Myth for his 1893 lecture, because Lethaby propounded in that work a theory of symbolism in which ancient architecture was described as embodying and expressing ideas about the magical properties believed to be inherent in the world structure. In 1902, when Mackintosh refers to 'symbolism' it is to argue that the will towards symbolism must give way to the superiority of the 'creative imagination'. He insists that, despite possessing an extremely rich psychic organisation, an easy grasp and a clear eye for essentials, an extensive variety of



aptitudes, an artist's 'vocation' is determined most of all by "the exceptional development of the imaginative faculties". A development, it should be stressed, which embodies all of these prior attributes and abilities:

"The power which the artist possesses of representing objects to himself explains the hallucinating character of his work - the poetry which pervades them - and their tendency towards symbolism - But the creative imagination is far more important".<sup>15</sup>

This distinction between symbolism and creative imagination is crucial; the new aesthetics is grounded in the transcendence of the former by the latter for the purpose of a higher synthesis; but such an interpretation is only explicable where the imagination is acknowledged as taking the form which Geddes outlined. Moreover, because the aesthetic attitude and the aesthetic experience which surrounds it are dynamic, restless and searching ("shake off the props . . . , tradition and authority offer you - go alone - crawl - stumble - stagger - but go alone")<sup>16</sup> they involve not so much attitude as action; the motto of Geddes' Summer School, *Vivendo Discimus*, 'By Living We Learn', and Geddes' recommendation that the artist alternate creation/study with participation in life, here reveal their relevance for Mackintosh. For him this is action directed beyond symbolism, and thus beyond emotionality and a concern with reality as something always *beyond* the actual, towards the creation of the new: ". . . must you not after long study of the beautiful that is and has been, seize upon new and airy combinations of a beauty that is to be".<sup>17</sup> Hence 'study', which necessarily involves cognition, given the correct attitudes and activities, can engender art forms capable of eliciting aesthetic experience in which the emotions function cognitively. But for this to be at all possible, expressive symbols still have to be properly 'understood': beyond symbolism can never mean beyond symbols. Symbol systems are essential to the creative imagination and to the understanding of its new productions. But these latter are to be judged by how well they serve the cognitive purpose: functionality, utility, pleasure are all dependent upon this. The aim of architecture is enlightenment. The employment of the creative imagination beyond immediate need is

for the sake of understanding; the formulation and apprehension of what is to be communicated. Judgement of the products of creative imagination rests upon how well these serve the cognitive purpose (e.g. through the consideration of stability, simplicity, coherence, subtlety, precision; the aptness of allusions), how they participate in the constitution, manipulation and transformation of knowledge. Here lies the real significance of newness; to impart true knowledge in creations which reveal that their moribund forerunners purveyed falsehood. To link modern architecture with the true architecture of the past by reaching beyond the pseudo-architectural travesties of the present and recent past.

#### 6. Architecture, Social Evolutionism and the Renovation of 'Scottish Peculiarities'.<sup>118</sup>

Macleod has argued that Mackintosh appears to appropriate Lethaby's notion of 'purpose' in ancient (sacred) architecture (i.e. that belief in magical properties deeply influenced the development of ancient building customs); but that because, in contrast to Lethaby, he "did not accept that the gulf between ancient arts and the present was impassable", the modern "*purpose* to which he referred was still one of symbolism and magic - albeit a magic of light rather than darkness".<sup>119</sup> Now because Mackintosh did not accept the gulf between the ancient and modern as Lethaby described that gulf, why should it be assumed that Mackintosh believed the *modern* 'purpose' of architecture to be essentially the same as the ancient one? Lethaby acknowledged that "At the inner heart of ancient building were wonder, worship, magic and symbolism; the motive of ours must be human service, intelligible structure, and verifiable science".<sup>120</sup> The modern motive, as described here in notably rationalist terms, well summarises Mackintosh's own position! In point of fact, it is the concept of social evolution, nowhere referred to by Macleod in his analysis of the 1893 lecture, which leads Mackintosh to argue that 'purpose', as something expressed through the architecture of



ancient societies, was equally as necessary for modern societies, but that 'purpose' had to be now quite different because social needs and beliefs have of necessity changed. If recognition of the central importance of *meaning* in architecture leads Mackintosh to bestow upon the importance of meaning for human beings an historical continuity, it *cannot follow* that meaning itself remains the same through evolutionary history. Mackintosh accepted Lethaby's view of modern motives in architecture, but he employed Geddesian social evolutionism in his attempt to breach Lethaby's gap between ancient and modern.

In 1905, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in attempting to characterise his epoch in its entirety, averred that

"the essence of our epoch is ambiguity and uncertainty. It can only rest on that which is gliding and it is aware of the fact that gliding is what other generations believed firm".<sup>121</sup>

In citing this statement in the context of a discussion of Hoffmann and the *Palais Stoclet*, Sekler makes the following point:

"In the face of such uncertainty one of the few points of departure that supposedly remained firm beyond dispute was a return to the roots of a nationally oriented tradition".<sup>122</sup>

Given that aspects of this are apparent in Mackintosh's arguments in favour of a more 'national' cast to Scotland's architecture, we need to ask how this related in his ideology to the acknowledged needs and problems of a modern massified, industrialised society.

Running through the 1893 Glasgow Institute lecture on architecture is the theme of the evolution of architecture, and this is clearly illuminated by a reading of Herbert Spencer, a central theorist for Geddes. In 1891 Mackintosh's discussion of Scotland's 'national' architectural heritage had been limited to an analysis, with concrete exemplification, of the elements comprising what he argued was a coherent style indigenous to Scotland. There was no explicit view of evolution as such. By 1893 the argument is considerably more abstract and theoretical. He now acknowledges that the

subject of architecture can only be 'rightly handled' by one having the "equipment of a wide scholarship". But having stated this, he subsequently makes it clear that his own credentials should not be in doubt; regular apprenticeship and long practice in any art or craft being capable of engendering "a certain instinct of insight not possessed by mere outsiders though never so learned". It is not too difficult to see that the desire is to *combine* 'scholarship' with 'insight'. Mackintosh cites Spencer in order to establish the premise that languages and usages are not devised, but that they evolve. This provides the basis for an evolutionary theory of architecture:

"Behind every style of architecture there is an earlier style in which the germ of every form is to be found, except such alterations as may be traced to new conditions or directly innovatory thought in religion, all is slow change of growth and it is almost impossible to point to the time of the invention of any custom or feature".<sup>123</sup>

Almost, but not quite impossible, apparently; by recognising and distinguishing what is contemporaneous, and what points to a precedent in an architectural form, the evolutionary process can, it appears, be pinned down. Early examples of stone construction, so it has been pointed out, continue to repeat the forms of the manner of buildings constructed in wood which preceded them, "and so it is always". Thus a picture of a chain of precedents which can be constructed with the aid of abstraction is invoked so that the primary precedent can be elucidated. In doing this in the way that he does, Mackintosh employs a distinction which was fundamental to Art Nouveau in the 1890's: "If we trace the artistic forms of things made by man to their origin we find a direct inspiration from (if not a direct imitation of) nature". The juxtaposing of 'imitation' with 'inspiration', extolling the latter and negativizing the former, was a central tenet of avant-gardiste ideology. As Sekler makes clear,

it obviously is important to understand the vast difference in meaning that for architects of this period (the 1890's) separated 'imitating' from 'being inspired by' something. While with the avant-garde imitation was entirely despised because of the lack of creative originality it implied, seeking inspiration from various sources seemed permissible".<sup>124</sup>



Here Mackintosh presents the phenomenon of taking inspiration from nature as a vital element in the human make-up which has been seen to exist since the origins of the artistic forms which objectified it. Since social evolutionism is being applied to the elucidation of the history of architecture, it follows that architecture is a function of social evolution, i.e. social and ideological developments condition architectural change:

"architecture changed or rather evolved because the religious and social needs and beliefs changed . . . the changes of architecture were only the expression and embodiment of the natural unconscious evolution of man's thoughts caused by the changes of civilization and things around him . . . All great and living architecture has been the direct expression of the needs and beliefs of man at the time of its creation, and how if we would have great architecture created this should still be so".<sup>125</sup>

The message is clear: a modern architecture of quality must be the expression of modern needs and beliefs.

Greek temples, says Mackintosh, had dignity *as temples* when they were built, but they must surely lose all of their dignity when they are imported into Britain thousands of years later and set up for a variety of contemporary purposes. Some people, however, dispute the loss of dignity even in modern applications. So what does dignity consist in?

"Dignity in architecture is the same as natural dignity - the very frankness of some natures is the essence of all that's dignified - which frankness if copied by one not naturally frank immediately becomes impudence not dignity".<sup>126</sup>

Dignity in architecture then, is essentially a quality of frankness, i.e. of *honesty*. But one historical period's honesty is another's dishonesty because "all great and living architecture has been the direct expression of the needs and beliefs of man *at the time of its creation*".<sup>127</sup> So if architecture ideally is fundamentally expressing contemporary needs and beliefs before it is doing anything else, then what we call architectural 'style' must be a result of this. That is to say the architecture is made purposely, the style is not. To focus exclusively on contrasting styles *qua* styles is

to misunderstand the substantive processes of socio-historical evolution which give rise to them;

"What are called architectural styles were not made purposely as many people imagine - some say I like gothic - some I like classic - but you cannot surely believe that architecture changed from classic to gothic because the old architects were sick of classic",<sup>128</sup>

The eclecticism of style which Mackintosh deplores in the architecture he sees around him, signifies for him the lack of a *genuine* architectural style that is recognisably of its time. The apparent variety - the result of the absurd idea that it is the duty of the modern architect to make believe he is living hundreds, or even thousands, of years ago - is viewed as existing without a single original architectural idea. The closeness of the thinking within this element of the Scottish ideology to that of Gropius when he founded the *Bauhaus*) and Richard Riemerschmid who "made an important contribution to *Werkbund* theory" is noteworthy.<sup>129</sup> Riemerschmid asserted that "Life, not art, creates style", that "it is not made, it grows", and that "every epoch creates its own style";<sup>130</sup> an argument, in short, which duplicates that which Mackintosh was presenting in 1893. Such assertions as are made within this particular theme have to be founded upon historical assumptions which, in turn, invoke a primary theoretical overview of architectural history.

In his lecture on Elizabethan Architecture from the early 1890's, Mackintosh attempted to illustrate how a too sudden development from one architectural form to another - an apparent development, that is, which signified the negation of the processes of social evolution which are themselves instrumental in the conditioning of form - could result in the production of a defective architecture. "The Elizabethan was a fusion between the new and the old in architecture", Mackintosh argued, referring to the admixture which distinguishes it, of classical details with general forms of a gothic character,

"and in this (fused) character has not been sufficiently considered, a neglect due to a great extent to the rude execution of much of the detail, and more particularly to the badness of the representations of the human figure. These defects were the effect of a



development too sudden for the available number of competent workmen to execute. Hence the grand ideas and the bad workmanship".<sup>131</sup>

What this brief exposition illustrates, is that, within the evolution of societies, the actual division and deployment of labour forces represents a crucial element in generating qualitative cultural changes. Indeed it is the efforts made by the work forces - and here Mackintosh refers to masons, plasterers, and carpenters working together in comradeship "with much striving in the dark and half realization of good intentions" - which generate development at the concrete level of socially organised activity. This can be seen with the apparently contradictory instances of diverse quality, even within a recognisable, given, style. Consequently it is problematic to attempt to deal with form in an analytically static manner:

". . . it is not easy to define with precision, the forms of so-called Elizabethan Architecture. For we may find in one example, a roughness and vulgarity of execution, almost deserving the title of barbarous, while in other buildings of the same style, we can detect evidences of a purity of taste together with a beauty of detail, almost equal to many examples of good Italian work".<sup>132</sup>

Here was not only evidence of skill and aptitude, but also of the desire for creative experimentation.

Two basic orientations become apparent within Mackintosh's ideological schema: as regards the first of these, the central concern appears to be with quality in architecture. To this end, architectural creations are identified as truly such, as the embodiments or depositaries of a quality believed to be objectively discernable. Authenticity follows from this, in the sense that authenticity is a matter of quality being traceable to its source in particular architectural examples in history:

"We mean to stand to architecture in its widest sense - we plant our feet in traditional tracts, we will not relinquish one item of the time honoured programme of our art as practised in days of old".<sup>133</sup>

This demonstrates that the priority placed upon authentication is methodologically inseparable from the value accorded to creativity. Hence the need to transmit a set of 'principles' of authentication alongside a corpus of authenticated work, which latter

is, moreover, intended to illustrate those principles. The analysis and celebration of authentic architecture is viewed as being potentially civilising in itself, and as a means to safeguard and to perpetuate those value systems which are the yardsticks of civilisation:

"When a traveller beholds in Persia or India the ruins of temples or palaces the ignorant inhabitants inform him they were the work of magicians. What is beyond their own power the ignorant and vulgar cannot comprehend to be lawfully in the power of others. But if you mean by magic that quality which alone can raise the work of man to something beyond mechanism that quality which ever could or ever can give a human soul one ray of pleasure, that perpetual research amongst all that is most latent and obscure in nature - I answer we must all profess that magic and that he who does so comes nearer to the fountain from which all true art springs".<sup>134</sup>

Alongside this view of transcendental 'quality' Mackintosh presents a second orientation: the significance of historical changes which affect the values and meanings of architecture relative to other social practices. It is here that the acknowledgement of architectural *function* is productively applied to social evolutionism in such a way as to provide a theory of how architecture functions within specific socio-historical formations - formations which are constantly in a state of flux, of continuous change. Given this analytic context of socio-historical formations, it becomes apparent that 'authentic' architecture is only so, relative to a given period, since it cannot be extruded without loss of real identity and significance. Social needs within historical epoch and individual country condition actual architectural 'styles', i.e. recognisable distinctive forms of execution and expression. Thus, notwithstanding the claim that the actual principles always remain the same with architecture of quality, "each style has an expression peculiar to itself - an expression which would only be weakened by the introduction of any other".<sup>135</sup> This meant that a modern style could not attempt to unite elements of other styles within itself: if each style has an 'expression peculiar to itself' then a modern style must have this also. If, for example, with the Glasgow School of Art, Mackintosh did not view himself as uniting other styles in an example of modern style, then the expression



involved here would have to be considered by him to be an expression of architectural principles addressing modern social requirements and manifesting the technical knowledge and creative flair of a contemporary architect in tune with modern artistic developments *and for this reason* producing a modern style with an expression peculiar to itself. Thus, contemporary work, when honestly addressing the realities of its time, is capable of subsuming the values of the past; what Newbery called 'the good traditions', which, he insisted, could not be revived either by an individual or a generation once they were lost.

For the Scottish Art Nouveau movement the enlightenment purveyed by a genuinely modern architecture is enlightenment through coherence; the lack of coherence perpetrated by eclecticism/historicism can only be transcended by the union of the new with the enduring principles which such debased work has compromised. As Owen Jones had stated, "The principles discoverable in the works of the past belong to us; not so the results".<sup>136</sup> When Mackintosh posed the question of what the art and architecture of the future would be like, his answer demonstrated that the central preoccupation of the Scottish movement was with meaning and the quality of living which a revolutionised art and architecture could potentially engender within an ordered, industrially developed society. On the question of the future, his language could be that of the visionary, and in this respect it reflected nothing so much as the optimistic idealism of Geddes and the 'Scots Renaissance':

"The message will still be of nature and man, of order and beauty, but all will be sweetness, simplicity, freedom, confidence, and light; the other is past and well is it, for its aim was to crush life; the new, the future, is to aid life and train it, 'so that beauty may flow into the soul like a breeze'".<sup>137</sup>

Summary and Conclusion.

In Mackintosh's ideological schema architecture is initially apprehended as being an international phenomenon capable of being specified and defined in its totality. Architecture, it is claimed, is fundamentally an expression of human needs and ideas. Because it is international it has created, historically, a variety of (national) 'styles' (or elements of styles) which have often been used interchangeably by different nations. In an individual country an 'imported' style might be modified to suit specific national requirements. Over time this modified style, often with the incorporation of further 'imported' elements, can become accepted as the 'national' style. The national style really results from evolutionary adaptation to the socio-cultural environment and its available materials. It can coexist with more obviously 'imported' (historical and other) styles, but the latter have not resulted from evolutionary adaptation over time to the country's socio-cultural requirements. The 'national' style has become indigenous with historical developments, the imported styles, by contrast, have merely artificial applications.

Modern cosmopolitanism allows a plethora of styles to coexist, but this makes it difficult to apply awareness of what constitutes 'true' architecture. In the midst of this complexity and confusion it becomes necessary to search via abstraction for the actual principles underlying architecture, so as to distinguish 'true' from fraudulent forms within the diversity of contemporary situations. The absence of a truly modern style faithful to both the principles, and contemporary needs, becomes apparent. Because of the theory of evolutionary architectural development, and the accompanying attempt to elucidate the principles underlying the architecture of the past, existing elements of a 'national' style are discovered to represent examples of 'true' architecture. For this reason these examples are considered to offer the potential for further development in strict accordance with modern requirements. In addressing these requirements, the 'national' style of the past can be transformed into the



international style of the future because of the national-barrier-breaking nature of modern international commercialism which facilitates new modes of inspiration and production for architects and art workers.

The correct addressing of modern requirements and needs, illuminated by knowledge of both architectural principles and modern materials and techniques, can produce an authentically modern architecture with international applicability. But this is only possible when the fetishization of inappropriate abstracted 'styles' is transcended. The new visual ideology would be manifested through creations which took architecture beyond the limits of a national territory. Each individual creation would be a unique concretization of this ideology, apprehended as modern style. Thus in the Scottish ideology evolution ultimately gives way to revolution as direct intervention to effect radical change is recommended. The attention is focused upon "living strenuous work" as promising "the beginning, the morning of our lives - not the grave of our aspirations".<sup>120</sup> The architectural theory of the 1890's is subsequently merged with an avant-gardiste concern to unite art with modern social living via the beautification of everyday objects and with living environments conceived as composite wholes which consequently facilitate an emergent aesthetic coherence.

The endeavour to epistemologically ground architecture leads Mackintosh to attempt to bridge the gap between eighteenth century rationalism with its paradigm of a reasoning spectator susceptible to aesthetic responses which are the result of cognitive understanding of the meaningful content of objects, and a late 19th. century avant-gardiste conception of the individual embodying consciousness and unconscious as psychological polarities, seeking social meaning through, and within, a coherent architectural environment. In this model, perception, conception, intellect and emotion interact and intermingle. The importance of intellectuality is made explicit, but in counteracting a detached over-intellectualization and a cognitive aesthetic experience deprived of emotions, Mackintosh, following Geddes, endows the understanding with

emotions, i.e. emotions are held to participate in cognition. The cognitive use of emotions involves discriminating and relating them in such a way as to grasp and rationally evaluate architectural works, and thereby integrate them with the remainder of experience and with the social world. Hence emotions are modified through aesthetic experience.

What constitutes good, correct, truthful or satisfactory architecture is, in general, held by Mackintosh to be relative to function and practical purpose; this leads him to stress the affinities between art and science, both of which are seen to come together in architecture. The terms 'true' and 'false', commonly applied to hypotheses in science, are thus applied to architecture where truth and its aesthetic counterpart become 'appropriateness' under different terms. This is only possible on the basis of the realisation that the difference between art and science, is not between synthesis and analysis, beauty and truth, feeling and fact, or passion and action, but rather rests upon specific characteristics of symbols and signs and their relative dominance. Undoubtedly, Mackintosh would agree with the view that the fitness required in matching hypothesis and theory to data and facts in science, is a fitness equally relevant for aesthetic symbol systems. All of this underpins and gives substance to the argument about architectural principles; and consequently to the assertion about architecture being fundamentally addressed to human needs, including the need for beauty. The best architecture was to be revealed as being not merely what the 'best traditions' had ordained it should be, but everything that experiment demonstrated it could become.



**CHAPTER FIVE**

**THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT.**

This chapter illuminates the institutional context within which Glasgow Art Nouveau emerged, and examines the extent to which the Scottish Ideology was realised within the Glasgow School of Art. In considering the basis for the peculiar combination of rational and Romantic elements, which, as we saw in the previous chapter, was highly characteristic of the Scottish Art Nouveau mentality, some analysis of the Art School is made necessary. The following discussion provides an account of the Glasgow School of Art's position within the national system of such schools. This was originally established from London for the reform of public art education towards utilitarian ends in Britain as a whole. We will see that the quasi-scientific notions of art as involving disciplined technical training, which were disseminated by the Central School at South Kensington, were, within the Glasgow School, linked in a very specific way to Romantic ideals about artistic self-expression and inspiration. It is argued that, for a time, a project to integrate charisma with technical knowledge was under way in the Glasgow School, and that this undoubtedly determined the form taken by the avant-garde. We will also see how the conviction that art could not be taught led to an enhancement of the means toward creative experimentation within the School.

By employing a range of empirical material, from contemporary newspapers to Art School Reports, an accurate representation is possible of what was happening in the School both before, and during, the Art Nouveau period. Our discussion will address the effects of changes that were brought about under Newbery's Headmastership. These include (a) modifications to the curriculum; (b) control over the School as a local Scottish institution; (c) the intake of students; and (d) teaching methods.



Introduction - Instituting Design for Industry.

At the Liverpool Art Congress of 1888, John D. Sedding made explicit his conception of the historical movement spanning almost five decades which led from Pugin to the beginnings of what commentators such as Gillian Naylor and John Russell Taylor consider English 'Art Nouveau'. "We should have had no Morris, no Street, no Webb, no Bodley, no Rossetti, no Burne-Jones, no Crane, but for Pugin" Sedding insisted. Sedding was one of a group of architects/ideologues singled out for commendation by Mackintosh in 1893 as men whose work demonstrated 'revolutionary motive'. As Macleod has noted, for Mackintosh, the efforts of these men (Norman Shaw, John Bentley, John Belcher, Bodley, Stokes and Sedding) manifested "the desire to create new symbols out of the manipulation and reordering of old forms".<sup>2</sup> The manner in which Sedding connects Pugin with Crane is interesting not least because it illustrates how one of the most significant late nineteenth century proponents of what Pevsner considered to be the prerogative of the modern movement, in short, a welcoming of mechanization techniques, viewed what he took to be an uninterrupted developmental process in Britain. A panel of lettering by Mackintosh, executed in 1901, took Sedding's axiom ". . .there is hope in honest error; none in the icy perfections of the stylist" as its inspiration, as had a previous invitation card design done in 1892 for a meeting of the Glasgow School of Art Club. Sedding's demand that 'we must clothe modern ideas in modern dress' was echoed by Mackintosh in his 1893 lecture on architecture. The schemes for Queens Cross Church and Liverpool Cathedral illustrate that Mackintosh was borrowing liberally from designs by Sedding, in this case "an unorthodox design for a New Cathedral, Victoria, British Columbia"<sup>3</sup> submitted for a competition. Mackintosh appears to have been influenced by Sedding's arguments in favour of a design aesthetic commensurate with contemporary technological developments. But what was the precise relationship between Sedding's orientation and the Arts and Crafts Movement which he admired? As it stands this

question cannot be properly addressed without some examination of the movement in Britain throughout the nineteenth century towards an integration of art with industry.

Many of the direct concerns of the Scottish Art Nouveau movement from the 1890's connect with Pugin, even if this was not always recognised at the time. In his book True Principles of Christian Architecture (1841), Pugin had outlined his views on the necessity of 'structural fitness'; on ornamentation as the 'enrichment of the essential construction of the building'; on 'taste' and non-authentic styles; on the desirability of two-dimensional patterns for wallpapers; on ornamentation based upon natural forms; on ornament as necessarily 'appropriate and significant'; even on the superiority of a geometrical approach to the drawing of leaves and flowers. But some connection with Pugin's advocacy of machine techniques, technical improvements and 'increased facilities' would allow Glasgow Art Nouveau exponents to bypass the Ruskinian hatred of technological processes which had so pervaded the collective attitudes of the Arts and Crafts ideologues who had themselves claimed Pugin as a kindred pioneer spirit. In this context, the significance of Gothic revivalism (which had acknowledged the geometric basis of Gothic architecture) for Scottish Art Nouveau can not be overstressed (apparent in elements such as the simplified perpendicular constructivism, the cool rationalism, the emphasis on functionalism). The same is true of the Russian situation (Mackintosh achieved great popularity in that country) where the architect Fedor Osipovich Shekhtel, for example, who was "propagandizing the urbane lines and white modernity of Olbrich and Mackintosh" <sup>4</sup> subsequent to his involvement in the Glasgow Exhibition of 1901, employed Gothic revivalism in his opposition to classicism.

The attitudes towards design reform and mechanization which Pugin expressed in the 1830's and 1840's were those also of a whole generation of industrialists concerned with design standards in Britain's manufacturing industries. By the 1830's the major problem had become crystallized as the inability of British manufacturers to produce commercial designs on a par with those from the Continent. Britain may have been



technologically superior, but the Continent (France, Belgium and Prussia in particular) was able to produce commodities which displayed qualities of design expertise and 'taste' on a level that seemed to virtually guarantee a continuing superior competitive status. The institutional recognition of Britain's inferiority in this respect led, in 1835, to the appointment of a select committee to investigate "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".<sup>5</sup> This event signalled the beginning of a process generated by the desire to improve design standards in industry by way of the education of a new kind of specialist. The minutes of evidence were presented, not only by manufacturers and importers, but also by educationists, artists and members of Parliament. Mr. Howell, partner in the well-known Regent Street, London, firm of Howell and James, complained that, in his experience, there were no good designers in England; where French manufacturers were prepared to travel to Britain to display samples of the work they produced, he said, their British counterparts merely presented badly drawn paper patterns, from which little or nothing could be deduced of the final design. This was characteristic of the evidence forthcoming. The lesson had been learned that, due to the paucity of original design talent in the country, two major trends had become established: firstly, successful designs (both British and foreign) were continually being reproduced; and secondly, patterns from the Continent were having to be imported at considerable expense.

The Mechanics' Institutes, founded in 1823, which had been set up in several urban centres, including Glasgow, by 1835 represented the only establishments in Britain to incorporate a curriculum for the teaching of 'applied' art to prospective industrial workers. The curriculum reflected the attempt to merge elements of fine art education with training in industrial skills: hence geometry and mechanical drawing were combined with figure and landscape drawing and painting, alongside the drawing of ornament. In its bare essentials, this was the kind of approach to an art schooling strategy, aimed

ultimately at unifying art and industry, which was to be taken up by the Schools of Design. These were established in 1837 for the practical application of the arts to manufacture as a direct result of the select committee's investigations and subsequent tentative formulations. As part of those investigations, the Director of the Berlin and Royal Galleries, Gustave Waagen, had been asked to describe the system of design education then in operation in Prussia. As Gillian Naylor describes,

"At that time Prussia had five schools serving manufacturing communities in Berlin, Breslau, Konigsberg, Danzig and Cologne; the pupils, whose fees were paid by the state, were initially 'instructed in drawing, modelling and perspective', and they then spent two years specializing in a chosen branch of design. None of the students, reported Waagen, had any difficulty in finding employment, and design standards, especially in cotton manufacture, had improved. The whole exercise, implied Waagen, went beyond mere commercial gain: 'the object of the institution is to unite beauty and taste with practicability and durability' and to 'restore the happy connection' that existed in the time of Raphael when 'the artists were more workmen and the workmen were more artists'".<sup>6</sup>

In 1896, when Glasgow's Art Nouveau movement was establishing its presence, the issues of art-technical education and the German phenomenon were still being hotly debated. "No nation of the intellectual calibre of Germany could either be despised or disparaged", proclaimed Francis Newbery from the platform of the Glasgow Corporation Galleries:

"Germany would have to be faced and possibly fought. Britain had no systematised technical education; indifferent means; Government's hesitating between the publican and the schoolmaster; and every person competent and incompetent giving advice".

However, Newbery reserved optimism for the cultural changes afoot in the city; changes that appeared to be engendering a new autonomy from both the Continent and the contemporary British situation which was eliciting such negative criticism:

"About the middle of the century the citizens of Glasgow reglazed the windows of their Cathedral with Munich glass. For the past ten years at least every Art-loving man had wished it away, and were it removed tomorrow he would be a blind man who would suggest that we should go to Germany again or that any other than Glasgow glass-stainers should replace it".<sup>7</sup>

The manifest organisational intentions behind the Schools of Design were deeply rooted in the perceived need in Britain to establish nationwide an institutional



complex linking art education with manufacturing, similar to that described by Waagen on the continent. In this respect, the event initiated by the Parliamentary select committee was able to contribute to the construction of a paradigm which could subsequently be concretely administered to the problematic situation in Britain. The beginning of this concretization took the form, in 1837, of a funding operation by Parliament for the establishment of a Normal School of Design in London, with a Museum to be controlled by a Council, and involving the Vice-President of the Board of Trade as President. Four years later, in 1841, a decision was made to provide assistance, via the grant, for the formation of other Schools of Design in various manufacturing areas of the country. Initially, these were in Manchester, York, Sheffield, Birmingham, Newcastle upon Tyne, Coventry, Nottingham and Norwich. At this stage, it was the opinion of the council that, because of their geographic situation, industrial centres such as Glasgow and Dublin, were too far removed from London for satisfactory supervision of units established there to be possible. However, local pressure exerted upon the Council, from Glasgow, brought about a change of its policy in 1843.<sup>9</sup>

A Glasgow School of Design was officially recognised for an initial Government grant of £500 in June 1844 with the promise of an annual grant of £250 thereafter. The first Headmaster to be appointed, Henry McManus, was paid £150 per annum, and the School, with 250 students, was duly opened on 6th. January 1845, in a tenement in Ingram Street. Annual subscriptions (from unknown contributors) for 1845 were reported as being £738 with students fees at £220. By 1847 the number of admissions had risen to 808, this including a high proportion of mature students for the period (238 males over the age of 20). However, at this initial stage in its history, the Glasgow School of Design did not appear to be particularly design-oriented. Rather, the emphasis was placed upon the fine arts. The Art Union commented that "a great many (of the students) are engaged in flower painting, in colouring, in arabesque, and in chiar'-oscuro painting".<sup>9</sup> This was to pose something of a problem for the Council. A high proportion

of students were clearly interested in courses in the fine arts because they found these enjoyable. Such, however, was not in accord with the Central School's strategy of engendering as far as possible the kind of skills that it considered would be necessary for employment within industry; but the basis of such skills was believed to require training in geometry and mechanical drawing, and from the early years of the Schools these were the very subjects found least attractive by students. This problem for the Schools was symptomatic of the wider conflict in Britain between the respective aims of the fine arts and those of the rapidly growing industrial sector.

In the summer of 1848, Charles Heath Wilson ("a man of refinement, taste and ability")<sup>10</sup>, the then Inspector of Provincial Schools (a position based at the Central School in London), visited the School in Glasgow. Whatever he may have confronted on his inspection remains a mystery (an ex-janitor was later to reflect upon a 'dust up' between the Head and the Second Master), but the actual report which he framed and returned to the Central Board, led to the dismissal of McManus and his immediate subordinate Alexander D. Robertson in October, and subsequently to Wilson's own appointment to the just-vacated post of Head.<sup>11</sup> One of the consequences of Wilson's appointment was a harsh regime of Elementary Drawing which enforced "a rigorous standard of imitation".<sup>12</sup> Under Wilson, the number of students in the School plummeted to 197 in 1849. Furthermore, the constitution became more solidly middle-class, with several 'high born' lady students. Says Stuart Macdonald, under McManus and his two assistants,

"the Glasgow School was producing more ambitious work than Somerset House (i.e. the Normal School of Design), even in the matter of copying casts of ornament. If the idea was to teach more industrial design, Wilson was hardly a suitable choice. An injustice was done, and the students registered their indignation in writing".

When the 'Glasgow Evening News' interviewed Newbery in 1895, it was stated that Wilson had been "the first head-master" of the School. McManus seemed thus to have been



successfully eliminated from his unique position in the history of art education in Britain as it affected the city of Glasgow.

## 2. Consolidation and Criticism: The Cole System and its Opponents.

In 1847, subsequent to having had success with a childrens' book venture, Henry Cole founded the firm of 'Summerly's Art Manufactures'. The former had also involved the artists John Callcott Horsley (1817-1903), Richard Redgrave (responsible for drawing up the National Course of Instruction for the Schools of Design in 1852), Henry Townsend, Cope, Mulready and the Linnells. To this team were added Daniel Maclise and John Bell, and a number of contemporary manufacturers (Hollands, cabinet-makers; Joseph Rodgers, cutlers; the Coalbrookdale Company; Wedgewoods; Mintons) were involved in producing Summerly's relevant designs. The purpose behind Summerly's collection was described by Cole, as being the revival of the practice of connecting "the best art with familiar objects in daily use".

"In doing this, Art manufactures will aim to produce in each article superior utility, which is not to be sacrificed to ornament; to select pure forms; to decorate each article with appropriate details relating to its use, and to obtain these details as directly as possible from nature. These principles are by no means put forward as forming a universal rule; but it is thought they may be adhered to advantageously in most articles of use, and may possibly contain the germs of a style which England in the nineteenth century may call its own".<sup>13</sup>

When Cole began publication of the Journal of Design and Manufacture in 1849, the year of Wilson's appointment in Glasgow, with contributions by Owen Jones, Matthew Digby Wyatt and Gottfried Semper, he explicitly outlined the 'politics' of the magazine: to engender as much as possible, the ability on the part of manufacturers to distinguish good from bad design; and to promote the cause of good design through pressure for a number of reforms. One such reform was to be aimed at the Schools of Design in order to overcome the internal problems associated with them since their foundation in 1837 (meaning resignations, insurrections, uncertainty of purpose etc.). Training was to be

strictly vocational and geared to satisfying the requirements of industry in the first instance. Geometry (considered an 'evil' by Ruskin) was deemed fundamental to both drawing and design.

In 1852, the Department of Practical Art was set up at the London centre with a new policy authored by Cole for the execution and supervision of Art Education. In terms of this policy, professors and masters in the provisional Schools were to be remunerated partly by fixed salaries, and partly by fees; this move was sanctioned by the Treasury, and the obvious aim was the cutting of expenditure; "It may be expected", said the new Department's First Report, "that the fixed salaries of the professors and masters, paid out of the public taxation, will be reduced gradually by this system to a moderate amount, while their total emoluments will be increased".<sup>14</sup> This plan was commensurate with Cole's principles. "The instant you begin to distribute public money",<sup>15</sup> he bemoaned, "any amount you give never affords any satisfaction". An art education system motivated by the state was intended to stimulate private sector effort. As it happened, however, by 1854 official policy was changed when the Government made the decision to financially support the Schools. Summarising Cole's contribution to the re-shaping of Art Education in Britain via the activities of the Board of Trade, from the inception of the Department of Practical Art onwards, Stuart Macdonald has this to say:

"The period from 1852-73, during which Henry Cole directed public art education, saw the most rapid increase of art institutions in British history and included the establishment of the first training school for art masters, the first Government art examinations and teaching certificates, the first state art education in the public day schools and the training colleges, the first art masters' association, and the first great museum of applied art, later to become the Victoria and Albert Museum. A national system of art education was set up of such thoroughness and rigidity that it truly merited the name 'cast iron'".<sup>16</sup>

One of the consequences of this national system took the form of a new emphasis upon trade and industry. This is apparent from the choices that were made in Glasgow for positions within the Governing Committee of the School, and which were ratified by the central establishment of the Department of Science and Art. Professional artists were



excluded from the Board of 1852-3, the constitution of which comprised 5 Calico Printers, 2 Manufacturers (Sir James Anderson M.P., and Andrew Wingate), 2 Merchants, an Engineer, a Goldsmith, a Cabinet Maker/Upholsterer, and Sir Archibald Allison F.R.S. Sheriff of Lanarkshire. This kind of constitution was considered commensurate with the formal aims of the Central School. As regards the actual practical nature of the activities which were to occupy students within the Glasgow School, this was made explicit by one of the Governors in 1857, when he emphasised that "in the School of Design (students) were not there to learn to be artists but to improve themselves as practical Designers".<sup>17</sup> It is important to be clear as to the precise nature of the concept of design being brought to bear in this context. If students at the School were not there to learn fine art, neither were they there to learn design. To assert this is not merely to project a notion of 'artistic' design backwards in time to the middle of the nineteenth century; the issue of design as mechanical drawing and copying - a central tenet of national policy within the Schools of Design - was deplored by Pugin among others. "It is misnamed a *School of Design*", he declared in 1845, "it is a mere drawing school, and a drawing school for bad models; that is to say, models which must fail in generating original artists, and which can only form bad copyists and adapters".<sup>18</sup> According to Ruskin, Cole's main achievement was to corrupt "the system of art teaching all over England into a state of abortion and falsehood from which it will take 20 years to recover".<sup>19</sup> The attempt to integrate art with industry was utterly misguided; the corruption of art by way of the vilest materialism. Ruskin was convinced that it was a fallacy to believe that design could be taught within schools; "Drawing may be taught by tutors, but Design only by Heaven; and to every scholar who thinks to sell his inspiration, Heaven refuses his help".<sup>20</sup> This bestowed a truly mystical significance on 'inspiration' and the full implications for the art educational complex of such thinking within Britain's industrialised and commercialised society would only become apparent with attempts to integrate this 'aestheticist'

thinking, considered by the advocates of fine art to articulate the true essence of artistic creativity, within an ostensibly utilitarian paradigm.

Pugin had been considerably more practical than Ruskin in his critique of the Design Schools. These were failing to unite the best principles from the past with the cream of what modern industrial society had to offer. The School of Design was

"in fact a hindrance to the revival of true taste and feeling, for the minds of the students are perverted by copying the same stale models that have been used for years without producing a single artist capable of designing anything original or appropriate".<sup>20</sup>

According to Pugin, the system continued to adapt 'obsolete symbols and designs' that were appropriate only to the periods and peoples which had originated them. It is on the basis of his pragmatic acceptance of industrialisation, however, that Pugin can be placed alongside those he was denouncing, that is, the Cole group, rather than with Ruskin and his followers. In being dedicated to the reform and improvement of industrial standards, Cole and his faction were hardly in a position to undermine the economic basis of their contemporary social order; to repeat, it is this practicality (and optimism) which focuses the contrast with Ruskin's moral critique of that social order.

The 1850's and 1860's witnessed in England a plethora of manuals and source books of Design together with a whole series of journals, articles, magazines and pamphlets, which, taken collectively, were to profoundly influence the aesthetic assumptions of the Arts and Crafts movement. The Great Exhibition of 1851 (the Golden Jubilee of which was marked in Glasgow with the Exhibition of 1901), of which Cole was an initiator and organiser, had made apparent in the most dramatic way, that, not only did the British exhibits manifest a lack of design principles, a lowering of aesthetic standards and a "poverty of artistic invention", but that "the art manufacturers of the whole of Europe (were) thoroughly demoralised".<sup>21</sup> The significance of the link between the Exhibition



and the Report of the Select Committee of 1835-6 is succinctly outlined by Bell as follows:

"(The Exhibition) was, in a large measure, a tangible illustration of those facts which had been presented to the public in verbal form at the time of the Select Committee of 1835-6. But it is one thing to read disquieting evidence in a Blue Book, quite another to see the actual products of foreign workshops and of native manufacturers set side by side under one great roof. The Report of 1836 had produced a very considerable movement throughout the nation; and this found expression in the establishment of the Schools of Design. The visible evidence of 1851 produced a similar result, setting on foot a movement which soon attained vast proportions".<sup>22</sup>

The Exhibition itself produced Matthew Digby Wyatt's Industrial Arts of the Nineteenth Century and Richard Redgrave's Supplementary Report on Design. In the following year Gottfried Semper's Wissenschaft, Industrie und Kunst, founded upon his impressions of the Exhibition, was published in German. In 1856, Redgrave's Manual of Design, Ralph Wornum's Analysis of Ornament, and Owen Jones's Grammar of Ornament appeared. The lavish journal The Universal Decorator, which began in 1858 (to succeed The Decorator's Assistant, established in 1847) followed in the footsteps of predecessors such as The Art Journal (1839), and The Journal of Design and Manufacture (1849). All of these helped to form an essential conception of the role and values of the contemporary designer. The Great Exhibition initiated also a movement towards design reform on the Continent. In France, for example, the *Union Centrale Des Beaux-Arts Appliques A L'Industrie* was established in 1863 (its motto was *Le Beau dans l'Utile*). The *Union Centrale* was subsequently to influence the course of developments in England, because alongside the Art Workers Guild (1884), the Arts and Crafts societies, Mackmurdo's Century Guild (1882), and Ashbee's Guild and School of Handicraft (1888; the model for the Wiener Werkstatte), the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry was set up in 1887. Its first Congress took place in 1888 in Liverpool, to be followed by two others, in Edinburgh (at which Newbery spoke) and Birmingham respectively. Mackmurdo was Honorary Secretary. Architects, industrialists and

educationists spoke at the three sessions, and these included Sedding, Whistler, Voysey and Patrick Geddes. The lack of firm foundations in Britain for the application of art to industry, and the failure of the country's Art Schools, in the continuing endeavour to spread the influence of art education to manufacturers, emerged as central themes. If the German paradigm had been significant in 1835 and throughout the 1850's (Jones, Wornum and Semper all preferred German to French methods of art education), it remained so in the 1880's. One speaker, A. Harris, described his recent experience of a trip to Germany to examine the design schools. He had found that relations between designer, manufacturer and consumer in Germany were greatly encouraged through the practical approach of the schools which facilitated a general improvement in standards, the like of which was not to be found in Britain. In Munich, an exhibition of industrial art highlighted the nature of the contrast:

"whereas in England the productions are those of an aesthetic community of very limited extent and influence, Munich affords a complete compendium of modern German art, and whilst in Munich the traders, designers and handicraftsmen of every class are abundantly represented, in England the general trader and the working craftsmen are conspicuous chiefly by their absence".<sup>23</sup>

Speeches that were made at the Liverpool Congress in 1888 (by Sedding) and at the Edinburgh Congress (Architectural Section) in 1889 (by R. Rowan Anderson) illustrate a move backwards in time, within an Arts and Crafts context, to the utilitarian and functionalist preoccupations of the design theorists of the 1850's. Anderson posited a theory of art as construction, within which modern mechanization followed, in teleological fashion, the architecture of the middle ages;

"The designing of machinery, whether for peace or war, has now reached such a high standard of excellence in function, form and expression that one is justified in saying that these things are entitled to rank as works of art as much as a painting, a piece of sculpture, or a building, and also that machinery is the only true constructive art that has been produced since the decline of medieval architecture".<sup>24</sup>

Sedding laid stress upon the necessity of machinery for the organisation of modern manufacture. His view was that any future programme of reform had, of necessity, to be directed towards factory production. Designs had to be of good quality and not employ



indifferent materials; they had to be suited to 'the necessities of modern methods of production'. But it was not sufficient merely to acquire good designs, the designer had to supplement their actual manufacture at the factory:

"The designer should be part of the working staff of the factory, see his design take shape, and be consulted as required. We have had enough of mere studio designs. And as to technical schools, however admirable in their way, the instruction they can give is not perfect. The best school for art-industry is a wholesome factory. And the ideal factory is a place where the artist-designer is a handicraftsman and the handicraftsman is an artist in his way".<sup>25</sup>

It is apparent from these comments that Sedding wished to see Arts and Crafts absorbed into modern industry in such a way as to effect a qualitative transformation of the latter. The concern with a new approach to training in design for artisans, which would adequately prepare them for industry, was shared by Newbery, whose presence at the National Association's Edinburgh Congress (along with Geddes) would virtually guarantee Mackintosh's following of the proceedings even if he himself did not attend. Speaking of 'The Place of Art Schools in the Economy of Applied Art', Newbery referred to the proportion of students in the Glasgow School of Art at that time as constituting seventy-five per cent (with the remainder studying picture painting). South Kensington, he asserted, wanted to check the production of picture producers:

"Picture painting is for the few, but beauty in the common surroundings of our daily lives is, or should be, an absolute necessity to the many, and to educate alike the producer to send out . . . articles which shall possess an intrinsic value in the art they contain, and for the consumer to appreciate such beauty as lies therein, is to teach a gospel which shall have for all men a like salvation".<sup>26</sup>

A relevant question to raise at this point would be, to what extent was Newbery in tune with the views of Sedding? As will emerge below, the influence on Newbery of the views expressed by Ruskin, Morris and Crane in their respective critiques of commercialism created in him a hostility towards the latter which strongly conditioned his appraisal of the notion of Arts and Crafts being absorbed into industry.

The significance of events such as those outlined above lies with the fact that South Kensington tenets were here being reformulated, transformed, and 'humanised' because,

despite the common expressions of contempt for South Kensington rigidity, "on paper the rules seemed sound".<sup>27</sup> Redgrave, in the Manual of Design, compiled by his son Gilbert and published as an official handbook for the Committee of Council on Education in 1876, had analysed the elements of style, claiming that the latter 'originates in construction, to which decoration is only subsidiary'. The need for 'unity of character throughout' was emphasised, with Redgrave insisting 'that the design for a work must have regard to construction, and consequently to proper use of materials'. Utility must precede decoration since 'design must be bad which applies indiscriminately the same constructive forms or ornamental treatment to materials differing in their nature and application'. 'As the greater regulates the lesser', Redgrave concluded, 'the building should determine the style, and all which it contains of furniture or decoration should conform to its characteristics'.

It is surely not overstating the case to assert that all of this found its way into Mackintosh's thinking. However, as Stuart Macdonald has correctly pointed out, the principles of ornament stressed by Redgrave - utility, fitness and unity of style - actually derive from Pugin's writings (more specifically, his Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament). Redgrave was appointed as lecturer on Botany and Flower Painting in the Class of Colour at the Central School of Design in 1847. More than anyone else, he was the instigator of the actual artwork characteristic of the Schools of Art from 1852 to 1875, a period, says Macdonald, "during which the most exact and mechanical imitations of copies and casts of flowers, foliage, and ornament were carried out. Even casts of bunches of blackberries were supplied. It was not until the end of the Drawing Course and of the Modelling Course that a pupil was permitted to draw or model plants from nature".<sup>28</sup> But in drawing or modelling plants from nature, students were instructed to apply measured geometry in developing ornamental schemes. This meant that originality and inventiveness were virtually annihilated, with students



receiving mounted prints of 'Ornamental Analysis of Nature', a method claimed by Redgrave to be 'wholly new', and which consisted

"in the ornamental analysis of plants and flowers, displaying each part separately according to its normal law of growth, not as viewed perspective, but diagrammatically flat to the eye; so treated it was found that almost all plants contain many distinct ornamental elements, and that the motives to be derived from the vegetable kingdom were inexhaustible. Moreover this flat display of the plant was specially suitable to the requirement of the manufacturer, to reproduction by painting, weaving, stamping, etc. to which naturalistic renderings do not readily lend themselves . . . ."

Redgrave's simplistic notion of the operations of nineteenth century machines underlies his whole conception of design and its reproducible qualities. That is to say, he considered that what was possible in terms of design was ultimately determined by technological capacities. However, the formalized, linear plant designs within polygons, the geometrical planning and flattening of natural forms which Redgrave insisted upon, do appear to have significantly influenced, not only much of the work of Arts and Crafts practitioners, but 'the linear vignettes of the Art Nouveau style' also. But how can we determine to what degree Redgrave's conception of design was significant in the genesis of the so-called Glasgow Style?

In his Note on the Artistic Life and Work of J. D. Sedding, Lethaby referred to Sedding's expressed view that the best training in design was to be had from making drawings from an old herbal; "for in all old drawing of nature there is a large element of design".<sup>30</sup> Isobel Spencer, in her article on Newbery (1973) made the point that too little emphasis had been placed in the past on "the singularly beautiful flat design of plant studies in herbals" as a source for Art Nouveau. She stressed the significance of the Glasgow School of Art owning a sixteenth century (1597) first English edition copy of Gerard's *Herball* which, she claimed, "was probably known to Newbery, his wife and The Four".<sup>31</sup> The style of 'design' apparent with such a herbal certainly raises interesting questions: was this a main source for the free curves and two-dimensionality apparent with the Glasgow Style in the 1890's (so contrasted with

Mackintosh's austere geometry subsequent to the turn of the century)? But often both curvilinear and geometric elements were juxtaposed. "I like the opposition of straight lines to curved", Jessie Newbery was reported as saying in Gleeson White's article in The Studio <sup>32</sup> in 1897, thus describing one of the central tension-creating characteristics of the style in this period. So what is really required is an explanation of how these contrasted elements came to be synthesised.

In the Manual of Design Redgrave criticised the French method of freehand drawing, claiming that

"this tends to great freedom and ease of execution, if at some loss of correctness and truth; too often, also, the study from flowers and foliage is confined to copying the designer's rendering of Nature rather than any recurrence to Nature herself. By this the freedom and ease of the decorator is arrived at, though at the loss of novelty and of imitative truth. Our English course of teaching seeks freedom through knowledge attained by careful and precise imitation, the French system rather seeks facility and fluency without such foundation . . . Yet there is no doubt that the more precise instruction required by us would act as a corrective . . . in French decorative art, without depriving it of the rare manipulative skill in which we are deficient". <sup>33</sup>

This hints at what a synthesis of the English and French approaches to design might begin to look like. If we conceptualise for the moment the stylistic result of such a synthesis - a symbolic (as against precise) rendering of natural forms utilising a flattened geometric method, united with a fluent, manipulative skill of execution - we seem to be already describing the essentials of Glasgow Style Art Nouveau in the 'nineties. Early 'Glasgow Style' combined abstract and super-organic forms within a 'framework' of geometric orderliness.

On the subject of the South Kensington schools' characteristic use of line, Muthesius, writing in 1904, argued that the latter had developed "quite distinctly under the spell of aestheticism, more precisely, under the influence of Rossetti's art"<sup>34</sup>. He proceeded to describe the 'linear construction' to be discerned in Rossetti's paintings:

"The rigidity of the straight lines in his figures combines with the flow of the curves to create a line that is full of emotive atmosphere and distinctive elegance . . ." <sup>35</sup>



For Muthesius, this technique of combining straight with curved lines was transposed, via the study of plants, into the 'plant ornament' characterising English flat pattern. The apparently opposed concerns of aestheticism and disciplined accuracy were thus acknowledged as having, in important respects, come together in the work fostered under the South Kensington system. But this pre-Raphaelite concern with aesthetic values needs to be carefully distinguished from *fin-de-siecle* aestheticism with its Continental affiliations, its stylistic liberty, and its (in terms of the South Kensington view) suspect morality. With pre-Raphaelitism there was certainly no contradiction between purely aesthetic values and values which attached to fine workmanship, flawless technique, and precise execution. It seems hardly surprising, therefore, that something of this particular 'aestheticism' should have been absorbed into the British national system of art/design education. But to recognise this, is to prepare the ground for the beginning, and not the ending, of an analysis of the Glasgow School of Art as the institutional locus for the emergence of 'Glasgow Style'. The latter, at its inception, was hardly an instance of 'English flat pattern': it was nothing if not experimental, and hence, necessarily overtly, rather than latently, aestheticist; but aestheticist in a way which was pointing towards the Continent and symbolism. We need to know how this kind of experimentation was made possible within an institution sponsored by the British state. Glasgow Art Nouveau brought into focus the inherent contradiction between aestheticism and moralism, and it did so within a social context, and in a period, where aestheticism became a code-word for moral disintegration.

### 3. The Dialectics of Art Educational Ideology in Glasgow in the Eighteen-Eighties

Newbery took up his position as Headmaster of the Glasgow School of Art in 1885. He was accompanied in his move from South Kensington by Aston Nicholas, who was to be Jessie Rowat's (Newbery's future wife's) tutor for her course in textiles and stained glass design. In the year before Newbery's arrival in the city, his predecessor, Thomas C. Simmonds, was commenting upon the decrease in numbers of students in some of the School's classes, in particular, the Mechanical and Building Classes. The reason for the decrease, was, according to Simmonds, to be found in the contemporary 'great depression in trade', and he drew attention to the fact that "the majority of the students left in consequence of want of employment in the shipbuilding yards of the Clyde".<sup>34</sup> Twenty years later, Professor Baldwin Brown would refer to Glasgow's architectural sphere facing a time of depression and a period of 'lean kine'.<sup>35</sup> Despite the circumstances being described by Simmonds, the work of the students was held to illustrate a material advance on the results of the previous year, "and this, too, in the highest branches of Art study". 4136 works had been forwarded to London, 51 of which were publicly exhibited during July and August 1884 in the South Kensington Museum. Speaking of these (temporarily discontinued) exhibitions, Simmonds emphasised the point that a number of the highest awards in Britain had been obtained each year by the Glasgow School and that, in the 1884 exhibition, nothing to compare with the Glasgow contribution was apparent from the other students provided with access to the Museum at South Kensington. The explanation for the apparent superiority of the Glasgow students' work was to be found, in Simmonds' opinion, in the role of Glasgow Corporation in actively fostering art education in the city.

Simmonds subsequently drew attention to the fact that some of the results of the architectural class within the School had been acknowledged by certain national journals:

"In evidence of the success of the past year, I may mention the fact that 'The British Architect', London, has twice considered the designs of this (Architectural) Class



worthy of illustration in its pages. In July last year it gave a page of small picturesque designs by T. Smith, and in December a double page illustration of a design for a City Club by the same architect. The editor also writes in a very flattering manner of the various designs exhibited by this school" <sup>36</sup>

After mentioning that the Life Classes had been increased in number and were now 'the most complete out of London', Simmonds expressed his regret that this 'great advance' in the School's work had met with little recognition on the part of Glasgow's citizens. Because of the latter's indifference, it appeared likely that the students would "have to continue their studies under unfavourable conditions, as regards premises, that one Government Inspector after another has condemned in no measured terms".<sup>37</sup>

In their Annual Report of the following year (1885) the Committee expressed their acknowledgement to Simmonds

"for his past services in bringing up the School to the requirements of the present day and for being the means of raising it to a position of eminence, especially in 'Design', which has been fully attested by the high and numerous Awards gained in this subject . . ." <sup>38</sup>

Such had indeed been the case. Before Simmonds' appointment in June 1881, enrolments, along with income, had been continually declining, and the number of prizes awarded to Glasgow students in the National Competition was greatly reduced over previous years. Under Simmonds, the School once again attained a high status through prize-winning, and there was an increase in student enrolment; although, with the exception of the Life Classes, this had dropped in numbers once again by 1884, the year in which Mackintosh enrolled for evening classes.

Many of the comments made by Sir James Watson, the Chairman of the School at this time, are especially interesting for the way in which they demonstrate that, prior to Newbery's arrival in Glasgow, two fundamentally antagonistic ideological orientations were being juxtaposed within the School. Watson began his Annual Speech in 1884 by commending the British legislature for having acknowledged the vast advantages arising to the country through the establishment of Schools of Art offering admission to 'all classes of the community' in a variety of towns. He then put forward a succinct version

of the central South Kensington dogma about the need for rigorous training in drawing techniques before any kind of designing was possible:

"All our great industries - whether of ship-building or house-building, whether of engineering or machine making, whether of pattern-drawing or the higher art of painting - must first have their origin in drawing, and without this basis none of them can be established. The ship-builder must first design his model; the architect, his structure; the engineer, his railway, his docks, or his bridges; the painter, his sketch; and the designer, his ideals, before he can begin his operations. Of the importance of these (speaking commercially), perhaps the greatest are those which concern ship-building and design, or pattern-drawing - the one contributing to the splendid results shown on the Clyde - the other to the progress of our cotton, woollen and silk manufacturers. The other departments, however, are alike indispensable for the comfort and well being of the community. Both speak to men of all nations in a language intelligible to all".<sup>39</sup>

It should be noted that this does not exclude 'the higher art of painting' from its catalogue of artistic and technical activities considered capable of being adequately embraced within an avowedly utilitarian schema, the index for which is to be 'drawing'.

It was indispensable, Watson insisted, that within such a schema, 'Art' be taught on the most scientific of principles, and that this should involve linear geometric drawing, beginning with the most simple examples, and leading, ultimately, to the more complex, 'as is done in this Academy'. Now this exposition of the activities and objectives of an Art Educational institution would have been perfectly adequate for the greater majority of practitioners of the South Kensington system at that time. Importantly, however, Watson clearly wanted to argue the case for acknowledging the relevance of what the aesthetically aware fine art oriented opponents of South Kensington had been stressing:

"But even after mastering what may be called the mechanical part, something more is required to make an accomplished Designer. There must be a portion of the inventive faculty, and a power to embody the ideal, and if the Student is wholly devoid of this, he would be better to turn his attention to some other profession. No doubt it is of value to be able to copy a machine or a pattern, but it requires genius to embody a new conception or to form a new construction. To some this faculty is given in a high and to others in a lower degree, but to all who in any measure possess it, the more it is used the greater it becomes. *A few specimens will show the progress, in this respect, made by the Students of this Institution*".<sup>40</sup>



This talk of the 'inventive faculty', which Mackintosh later replicated, on one level could be ascertained as deriving from Ruskin. But it would be quite inadequate to claim that these two antagonistic orientations which Watson juxtaposes represent South Kensington and Ruskin respectively; for one thing, as will be argued, Ruskin can actually be accommodated to the first orientation. Certainly, the problem from the vantage point of South Kensington, which Ruskin had denounced, resided in the fact that Ruskin had bestowed a special status upon art production; a status which was rooted in a fundamental mystification of the process of art making. The problem here had to do with Ruskin's invoking of the role of the imagination (and 'inspiration') as being of central significance. The rigorous 'scientific' approach of the School of Design to teaching allowed no place to something as intangible as imagination. At the same time, the ideological potency of an apparently autonomous 'Art' (as distinct from 'Design') to a significant degree emanated from this very mystification. The problem was not merely abstract. One of the major difficulties encountered within the Schools, had been the numbers of individuals wishing to learn fine art rather than 'Design' for industry. However, Ruskin's pronouncements on art education were sufficiently ambiguous as to enable many of them to be utilised by the advocates of regressive art courses in justifying their ideological views and institutional activities. For example, Ruskin made the assertion that "To give him (the student) habits of mathematical accuracy in transference of the outline of complex form, is therefore among the first, and even the most important, means of educating his taste".<sup>41</sup> At prizegiving in Mansfield evening art class in 1873, he insisted that "superior diligence and more obedient attention" were the qualities which merited prizes, and not "indications of superior genius".<sup>42</sup> Such statements give the impression of him flagrantly contradicting his affirmations about good design being impossible without inspiration and heaven-sent genius. Moreover, his description of the fragility of the faculty of imagination hardly makes

the latter appear commensurate with the rigorous requirements of 'superior diligence and more obedient attention'. The imagination, he was wont to plead,

"is eminently a *wearable* faculty, eminently delicate, and incapable of bearing fatigue; so that if we give it too many objects at a time to employ itself upon, or very grand ones for a long time together, it fails under the effort, becomes jaded, exactly as the limbs do by bodily fatigue, and incapable of answering any farther appeal till it has had rest . . ." <sup>43</sup>

If teaching 'habits of mathematical accuracy' constitutes the 'most important means' of educating students towards that most rarefied quality 'taste' (although 'sensibility' would be more apt, since Ruskin was somewhat ambivalent to the notion of taste; for example, he considered taste worthless as a criterion for judging beauty), what has happened to those God-given (i.e. innate) abilities which *cannot*, so Ruskin also claimed, be taught?

At this point, it becomes relevant to consider arguments being propounded by Herbert Spencer (whom Mackintosh would cite to substantiate his claims on the evolution of architecture in 1893). In Spencer's view, anything that operated to repress inherited characteristics - and here he was overtly expressing opinions on the issue of art education - was actively hindering human evolution.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, he explicitly condemned the geometrical method of outline drawing fostered by the Science and Art Department (and to a lesser degree by the Society of Arts founded in 1754 to further public art education) on the grounds that it inverted the normal order of human psychology, which, he insisted, demonstrated that abstract modes of learning were preliminary to 'the concrete'. Described thus, Spencer's notion of preliminary abstract modes appears related to Walter Benjamin's conception of the *mimetic faculty*, that is the imitative, representational abilities, which involve the employment of fantasy, to establish 'correspondences' with the social world. Benjamin viewed the individual child's gesture as a creative impulse which corresponded exactly to the receptive impulse; the outward expression of childrens' fantasy could be viewed in their gestures while they were absorbed in such activities as painting, dancing, acting etc. Benjamin



considered this language of gestures to be more fundamental, in terms of cognition, than linguistic and conceptual abilities, since childrens' cognition was rooted in their actions and tactile experiences. When children play or perform, he asserted, 'new forces and new impulses appear'; children *act upon* the world around them, and it is this very activity which socialization under capitalism suppresses.<sup>45</sup>

Spencer condemned elementary, disciplined, drawing from copies, involving straight, curved and compound lines, as being akin to "prefacing the art of walking by a course of lessons on the bones, muscles and nerves of the legs".<sup>46</sup> But if the starting point for good art education was to be a necessary acknowledgement of innate predispositions, Spencer still believed that the evolutionary process was geared for the development of human faculties towards increasing *accuracy*: "This effort to depict the striking things (children) see is a further instinctive exercise of the perceptions - a means whereby still greater accuracy and completeness of observation are induced".<sup>47</sup> It is illuminating to note how Mackintosh appropriated and developed this kind of thinking wherein *instinct* and *accuracy* are brought together. The artist of the future, Mackintosh stressed, "must possess *technical invention* in order to create for himself suitable processes of expression - and above all he requires the aid of invention in order to *transform the elements with which nature supplies him* - and compose new images from them".<sup>48</sup> What is innate, is therefore viewed as constituting the primary potentiality, which, in order to achieve fruition, that is, to be *expressed*, requires refined technical invention. The close affinity between this latter facility as described by Mackintosh, and what Spencer refers to as 'accuracy and completeness of observation' is clear, particularly since, in both instances, it is the instincts that are given the fundamental role. However, Mackintosh has integrated the component of 'invention' in such a way as to bestow upon the role of imaginative creativity a central significance, and one which takes technical invention far beyond what a traditional art-technical education had hitherto been considered capable of providing.

Paradoxically, perhaps, Ruskin bestowed a similar status upon the instincts as Spencer, and he too acknowledged the significance of evolutionary processes. For Ruskin, elementary manual discipline oriented towards the development of precision and dexterity (what Spencer called 'accuracy') was absolutely necessary for the production of quality ornamental work. Moreover, it was this same precision and dexterity which, he believed, far from inhibiting or repressing the imagination (or 'fancy'), effectively acted as a *stimulus* to the latter. Ruskin's habit of self-contradiction can appear to be operating where he is in agreement with Spencer over the claimed existence of innate abilities; abilities which are, moreover, deemed to be grounded in human activities aimed at the intensification of precision/accuracy. It is these activities which engender innate/instinctive abilities through the evolutionary process, and which, according to Ruskin (who, incidentally, described the science of the nineteenth century as being "either of mere mechanism or evolutionary nonsense"),<sup>48</sup> give rise to 'a new species of animal':

"... powers of doing fine ornamental work are only to be reached by a perpetual discipline of the hand as well as of the fancy; discipline as attentive and painful as that which a juggler has to put himself through, to overcome the more palpable difficulties of his profession . . . . Now, when powers of fancy, stimulated by this triumphant precision of manual dexterity, descend uninterruptedly from generation to generation, you have at last, what is not so much a trained artist, as a new species of animal, with whose instinctive gifts you have no chance of contending".<sup>49</sup>

When Ruskin asserted that 'drawing may be taught by tutors, but Design only by Heaven', he was attempting to demarcate the sphere of influence of taught techniques from the inner realm of 'instinctive gifts'. He was emphasising the point that too much was beyond the control of the agents of the Schools, and that good designers could not be 'manufactured'. But here the central paradox in Ruskin's theory of art education emerges. He could hardly continue to oppose a system which attempted to practice what he himself was advocating, namely, to impose 'a perpetual discipline of the hand as well as of the fancy'. But this was to reduce body, intellect *and imagination* to 'discipline'. The contradictions, however, remained unresolved, which meant that the



polarities of discipline and imagination became 'institutionalised' as they were absorbed into Art School ideology. Whatever the abstract dialectics were in the eighteen-eighties, in practical terms, it was 'discipline' which predominated. It was this same discipline which Simmonds, on his departure from the Glasgow School of Art, was commending as the central benefit which the School had bestowed on all of its students:

"I cannot refrain from recording my sense of the excellent qualities possessed by the majority of the students who passed under my direction - steady, persevering, and earnest to the last degree; it was always a pleasure to be associated with them. My regret has always been that the accomodation and encouragement were not worthy of them, but I am assured that no difficulties will prevent many attaining a very successful position in Art, *while all must be benefitted by the discipline through which they so conscientiously passed*"<sup>60</sup>

But for Art Nouveau the stress was to be placed squarely on the role of 'fancy', originality and individual expression. P. Leslie Waterhouse, in retrospectively scanning, in 1902, the work of contemporary Austrian and German architects, pointed out that these architects, being wearied with the resuscitation of classical forms "which, they felt, left them no scope for individuality, became suddenly attracted to the new style of architecture known as l'Art Nouveau". Waterhouse went on to say that this strategy had "allowed them to give free play to their fancy, and it was seized upon and travestied by architects of Dusseldorf, Cologne, etc., with enthusiasm"<sup>61</sup> The affinities with Scottish Art Nouveau in respect of the centrality of 'fancy' or imagination should, by now, be clearly apparent. In the next section the significant art-institutional factors surrounding and facilitating the emergence and development of the Glasgow Art Nouveau movement will be examined.

#### 4. From Imagination to Experimentation: The Struggle For Aesthetic Significance

In an unpublished paper on the Glasgow School of Art (1973), Alan F. Wells referred to Newbery's public lecturing and journalism on artistic questions as presenting ideas that were novel in Glasgow at the time; but in addition Wells argued that these ideas followed the stream associated with Ruskin, Morris, Crane and the Arts and Crafts Movement. Having asserted this, however, he went on to argue that Newbery's importance appears to rest with the 'aesthetic significance' which his objectives for the Glasgow School possessed, "in the sense that they were, when he began his work, *in line with the newest thinking in the field of Design*". But if Newbery's ideas were considered 'novel' then this implies a contrast between those ideas and the ideas already current in the city at the time of his arrival. What then is the significance of this contrast for the emergence and decline of Glasgow's Art Nouveau movement? We have seen that, before Newbery's arrival, the Glasgow School of Art's ideology juxtaposed what had become two recognisable orientations; on the one hand, the rigorous teachings of the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, aimed, above all, at developing accuracy of observation and skill of technical execution; and on the other, that frankly 'artistic' orientation which had asserted the crucial need for a true art education to facilitate and enhance aesthetic feeling and to stimulate the creative imagination. This latter orientation, whilst clearly reflecting certain Ruskinian notions, moves beyond these by way of an Idealism towards which Ruskin was decidedly ambivalent, in the distinct direction of the aesthetic movement.<sup>51</sup> We saw also that both Ruskin and Spencer, ostensibly critics of the South Kensington system, put forward theories that were in essential respects in concord with that system's fundamental tenets. It will be argued below that the Glasgow School of Art, because of the dialectical nature of its ideology, helped foster Art Nouveau and the 'Scottish Ideology'; and that, within a time span during which the Art Nouveau movement came to fruition, the School was providing the locus within which the search for new aesthetic



significance took the form of the *experience of experimentation*. However, what will be consistently emphasised is that the phenomenon of Glasgow Art Nouveau can not be reduced to Newbery's influence and activities (an interpretation either predicated or implied by much of the literature on this subject), although these were undoubtedly of great significance for it; the role of cultural dimensions specific to the Glasgow context (acknowledged as significant by Newbery himself) require to be elucidated.

In his first public speech in the Glasgow School of Art, which he gave on the occasion of his appointment as Head Master, Newbery addressed himself, in conclusion, and to the students in particular, on the issue of 'method' in the production of art work:

"I have used the term 'method' several times, but to you it perhaps conveys a meaning which may be misunderstood. I hasten to explain that that method is the best, that style of work is the best, which best renders a drawing or painting a copy of the original, and which accomplishes this result in the shortest possible time. Your method should be labour-saving, as well as a labour-doing process. Remember *ars longa vita brevis* is no idle saying, but a hard stern fact, for art does not become easier with the possession of a rapid mechanical dexterity. Mr. Burne Jones, whose words command every respect, once made a statement which I will ask you to ponder over. It was 'That the difficulties of drawing increase as work progresses, hence it is that so many of us fail'. Spare therefore no pains to get every atom of good from every study. Start with the assumption, that every study, whether it be a freehand outline or a painting from the life, is your master, but end with the satisfaction that you have made it your servant. By these means, and these only, will you lay up that store of knowledge which will last you through all needs".<sup>52</sup>

There was nothing dialectical about this exposition; here was pure, unadulterated, South Kensington dogma. Moreover, there was a real irony in the fact that, since Newbery was at this stage advocating a method of study and practice aimed ultimately at nothing so much as 'rapid mechanical dexterity', that he should also be admitting virtually that none of this guarantees the actual production of 'art'. What then was the point in striving to obtain 'every atom of good from every study'? And how could the 'store of knowledge' accumulated through the process of such study 'last you through all needs' if one of those needs is the need to produce 'art'? On this showing, the rigorous study of a variety of art works and engagement in a range of 'artistic'

activities with the ultimate aim of attaining precise mechanical/manual dexterity is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for the practical production of 'art' as such. But this much was already being acknowledged by such as Watson within the Glasgow School. However, what is clearly apparent from Newbery's initial address in Glasgow, is that, in 1885, he was unashamedly utilitarian in his views. The most obvious evidence of this is to be found in his typically South Kensington emphasis on copying and disciplined drawing. Significantly, twenty years later, 'An Old Student' wrote to the Glasgow Herald to complain about these being continued at the Glasgow School as integral elements within the curriculum:

"Students of 20 years ago remember the painfully careful drawings of classic and renaissance ornament which used to occupy or waste their time, but it was thought that a new regime had altered all that. Today, however, we find that the school has to all intents and purposes reverted to a style of work which was found to be antiquated a generation back. What possible purpose can be served by the laborious slaving which passes for high-class work today? No student can possibly do more than two or three such 'studies' in a session, and when he has done them he will be as much at a loss what to do with them as he would be with a white elephant"<sup>53</sup>

The use of the word 'reverted' here indicates that, for a time at least, and the time in question coincides with Glasgow Art Nouveau, the situation within the Art School had radically changed.

It is clear that Ruskin and Spencer viewed the individual as inheriting instinctual abilities through processes of evolution. It appears that Newbery accepted this view, and, moreover, that he believed himself to have developed an effective method for testing the quality of innate propensities within an individual. He considered that this method now put him at odds with South Kensington, and the reason for this would appear to reside with the factor of the latter consistently refusing to acknowledge the significance of imagination in the production of art. In following Ruskin, Newbery would have viewed imagination as springing from the instincts. In an interview given to the Glasgow Evening News in 1895, he was claiming that, in the Glasgow School of Art, 'until the student can draw well and paint well no copying from pictures is done':



"A young man or young woman comes to me and says he or she wants to be an artist. Well, I don't listen to that. I put them on to make an outline drawing of a cast selected by themselves in The Antique Room, and from that drawing I see what the student can do, and apportion for him work in accordance. He then goes through the course, learns to draw, and after that it lies with himself what special branch he will devote himself to".<sup>54</sup>

It could be hypothesised that the outline drawing signifies for Newbery the means whereby innate or instinctual abilities can be gauged; with the inner world of the individual being penetrated and abilities made concrete through a mode of externalization. This has little to do with acquired skills (although, realistically, these could hardly be discounted), since Newbery is quite explicit on the point that it is the course itself which teaches the rudiments of drawing. The precise nature of the work to be apportioned to the student is presumed to be commensurate with the actual quality of the innate abilities themselves. However, there is a point to be stressed here; if Newbery was attempting to evaluate a kind of 'primitive' art making with his strategy, then his interest would have been focused upon the results of what could be termed an expressive symbolism (such being associated with, for example, children's artistic productions). However, he employs one of the least innovative techniques for the period - line drawing from a cast; a technique which had been for long associated with some of the worst aspects of the South Kensington system, and a technique apparently ill-suited to the attempt to penetrate an unconscious repository of involuntary spontaneous responses. However, Newbery's initial starting point in his evaluative procedure was *the real*. Hence his utilisation of existing objects. The artistic production of the non-existent would come later, subsequent to the medium of the existent having been traversed. Attempting to imagine, with the aid of fantasy and invention, a strictly non-existent object, he would have considered gratuitous.

Significantly, for Newbery's anonymous interviewer in 1895, his evaluative strategy was acknowledged as being "scarcely according to Kensington"; meaning that it was in marked contradiction to the requirements of the Central School. "'Kensington! I

recognise no such thing as Kensington", blustered Newbery. "Yes, but Kensington exists and Kensington has methods", pointed out his interviewer, somewhat disingenuously. This seemed to bring Newbery down to the level of acknowledging concrete institutional realities, and of reminding him of his organisational role within the national art educational nexus, since his subsequent description of the South Kensington system was notably moderated. Having asserted that Kensington had no methods, he continued in a rather idiosyncratic manner to present this alleged lack of methods in a positive, rather than a negative, light:

"To the schools under it - or, rather, the schools examined by it - Kensington issues no set of rules and regulations, saying, 'You'll copy casts in this or that particular way', or, 'You'll do your landscapes in the style of this man and not the style of that'. The Schools where South Kensington is regarded as a bugbear are the schools where weakness at the top has necessitated refuge being taken behind what some people are pleased to call the South Kensington system".<sup>55</sup>

This was tantamount to claiming that, where a given school demonstrates a strong organisational capacity in the managerial running of its affairs, that school is likely to have rejected in some measure 'The South Kensington system'. But Newbery clearly needs to believe that, although 'the system' was inherently bureaucratic, this bureaucratic nature was sufficiently flexible so as not to impede innovation, and, indeed, deviation: "we find that Kensington is very reasonable. It may be slightly red tapeish, of course, now and then, but it is ever ready to recognise conscientious, if unconventional, effort".<sup>56</sup> Two years previously, in 1893, Newbery gave voice to his recognition that Glasgow and London had contrasted views on what constituted 'good art':

"Glasgow was handicapped by the fact that what was called art in London did not pass muster as good art in Glasgow, and *vice versa*. He desired a distinctive school of art for Glasgow . . . if in order to gain gold medals they required to please the London school (i.e. South Kensington), he did not care if he did not win gold medals; he would rather win the golden opinions of Glasgow".<sup>56</sup>

This had the virtue of pointing up Glasgow's own cultural specificity. But in 1896 he would be insisting that "Had it not been for the much despised and often maligned and



entirely misunderstood South Kensington, the Glasgow School of Art would have had to close its doors before now".<sup>57</sup> If South Kensington had been 'entirely misunderstood', then Newbery himself could have claimed to be making his own contribution to the misunderstanding.

Perhaps, however, Newbery's was not a wholly unrealistic appraisal of South Kensington volatility in this period. The Technical Instruction Act of 1889 had provided local councils with the authority to form a Technical Instruction Committee which facilitated the provision of classes for artisans *vis-a-vis* local industries. Two important consequences of this act were the abandoning of the National Course of Instruction for Government Art Schools (which had enforced working from the flat); and the enhanced position it gave to the Arts and Crafts Movement. Thomas Armstrong (appointed Director of the National Art Training Schools in 1881, and Director of the Art Division and South Kensington Museum from 1881 until 1897) on a visit to the Glasgow School of Art in 1899 was emphasising the system's ability to absorb criticism and to change:

"what is called the South Kensington system has been gradually built up and modified in accordance with the advice of a great number of the best and most eminent of practising artists this country has produced, advice given, too, immediately after much careful and painstaking observation of what has been done and can be done under a vast centralised organisation".<sup>58</sup>

If anyone was in a position to value South Kensington volatility, it was Armstrong. As a staunch advocate of Arts and Crafts and decorative design, he had invited Walter Crane to lecture in the National Art Training Schools in the late 1880's, with an ultimate view towards integrating the Arts and Crafts Movement within public art institutions. Armstrong was also responsible for initiating the first classes in enamelling at the Central School (under Dalperrat); the enamels being fired in the Science Division's metallurgical laboratory. It is noteworthy that Armstrong should have expressed the wish that Crane succeed him as Director of Art at the Science and Art Department.

'Weakness at the top' was hardly an issue for Newbery where the Glasgow School was concerned. From the secure vantage point of Glasgow, South Kensington was a long way off in a number of respects. The sense of autonomy he was expressing was no doubt derived from the radical transformation which had taken place in the School's system of government in 1892. According to the new constitution set out in that year, various 'principal public bodies' within the city of Glasgow were to triennially nominate a board of Governors to represent them. These bodies included the University, the Town Council, the Merchants' and Trades' Houses, The Chamber of Commerce, the Institution of Engineers and Shipbuilders, the Institute of Architects, the Faculty of Physicians, the Faculty of Procurators, the Fine Art Institute, and a number of local Educational Foundations. Previously known as 'The Glasgow School of Art and Haldane Academy', the institution was now incorporated under the Companies' Act as 'The Glasgow School of Art'. The motivations behind this reorganisation were directed towards the strengthening of links between the School of Art and other local agencies. As the School's Annual Report for 1892 put it, "This change of government has not only widened the interest of the citizens in the School's welfare, but has given an assurance of responsible management to civic and other established authorities".<sup>59</sup> The nature of the context within which the School existed as an institution is made explicit here: a local context that encompasses considerable public and business interest; and, since this is a specifically Scottish interest, the sphere of influence of the Scotch Education Department *vis-a-vis* South Kensington has an enhanced significance.

1892 was a notable year in the history of the Art School for other reasons. 1,736 works were sent for examination at South Kensington (192 up on the previous year). Mackintosh was awarded a gold medal for a design of a chapter house, "a design showing considerable artistic power with details well drawn"<sup>60</sup> (although the Governors added that "it is a pity the author should have *copied* his candelabra directly from an ancient example").<sup>61</sup> In that year too a deputation from the School's governing body had



visited the Art Schools in Birmingham and Manchester, and after consultation with the South Kensington authorities, the decision was made to provide instruction in a number of applied arts, which, without exception, reflect the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement - glass staining, pottery, repousse and metal work, wood carving and bookbinding. "It is intended", said the Annual Report,

"that the instruction in these subjects be undertaken by artist craftsmen, and this development taken in conjunction with the work in textile fabrics, at present successfully carried on, will, it is hoped, give a complete cycle of technical artistic education applicable to the Industrial Arts of the City of Glasgow".<sup>62</sup>

To what extent this development would actually prove to be applicable to Glasgow's industrial arts, however, remained to be seen. Stuart Macdonald makes the point that "it is a fact that those art institutions which have achieved the highest reputation at various times . . . have done so at that time when they deviated from national art education policies".<sup>63</sup> This was certainly true of the Glasgow School throughout the 1890's, and there is not a little irony in the fact that it was the consistent success upon which this reputation was being built, that helped to assuage the wrath of many a South Kensington official. This much was revealed by Armstrong in 1899, when he addressed the prickly topic of the 'Glasgow Secession' and the immediate patronage of the Scotch Education Department:

"Perhaps it was on account of this success that I was somewhat grieved at your secession - the separation of the Scotch schools from the central department in London. I saw, or thought I saw, many disadvantages in your separate existence. On these it is useless now to dwell, but I may say that a certain amount of continuity, which is to be preserved, reduces or does away with the dangers I feared. You are still to take part in the annual competition of School works held at South Kensington; and this is of the highest importance, as I will try to explain by and by; and you will still have a share in the Scholarships and Exhibitions to be held in London as well as in the holiday courses of instruction which have been doing such good work for the last 7 or 8 years. You are in fact to eat your cake and have it. I most heartily hope that the cake may prove appetising and wholesome . . ." <sup>64</sup>

This passage raises a number of key questions relating to the causes for South Kensington concern associated with the Glasgow Secession. What developments were afoot within the Art School in the early 'nineties, and how were these developments

facilitated by the greater autonomy bestowed on the School by the changes in institutional arrangement? To adequately address this question we must first of all return to the issue of innate abilities and Newbery's evaluative procedure since we noted that he himself perceived this procedure as putting him at odds with South Kensington.

If Newbery was following Ruskin, then the central relevance of his intense concern with instinctual artistic abilities would have found its focus in the role of the imagination in the production of art. On the surface, it may well appear an inordinate leap from instinct to imagination, but it seems clear that Newbery and others were collapsing the one into the other, and, in the light of Spencer's (and Ruskin's) evolutionist thinking, we can understand why they should have been doing this. It was noted above that, for Ruskin, 'precision of manual dexterity', acquired through strict learning, could act as a stimulus to the imagination. But unless the imagination is understood as existing *prior* to learning, it makes no sense to unite the two in this way. Thus, both 'the hand' and 'the fancy' require to be disciplined in order that what is acquired through discipline geared towards manual precision can subsequently act upon the imagination in such a way as to appropriate the creative potential of the latter, but in a form commensurate with the requirement of manifest technical accuracy. Powers of imagination are therefore rooted in powerful instinctual attributes that are, in effect, the result of skills which have, in the past, been acquired by individuals, and that are bestowed on subsequent generations as species-like attributes, i.e. attributes which do not reduce to processes of learning, but which appear to characterise groups of people in terms of their shared innate capacities. This is the thinking behind Ruskin's notion of a 'new species of animal', and it is taken one step further with Newbery's desire to engender 'a new race of designers'.<sup>64</sup> Substantiation for this interpretation of Newbery's thinking can be provided by a specific illustration which should demonstrate that, within an apparently commonplace situation,



certain underlying assumptions which connect different terminologies in crucial ways can be elucidated. First of all, some contextual clarification is required.

At the Glasgow School of Art Club's Presentation of Prizes in 1908, Professor Maurice Greiffenhagen, Jean Delville's successor in the Life Classes, expressed the hope that greater evidence of the 'creative imagination' would become apparent with the Art Club's offerings in the future. Greiffenhagen considered the 1908 exhibition "an extremely satisfactory result on the whole".<sup>65</sup> He had taken up his Glasgow appointment in 1906, and it is notable that, subsequent to this event, the Governors were not only considering a scheme for practical work in Figure Composition and Decoration to be integrated into the work of the Life Classes, but that they also had organised three lectures on 'Art and Social Aesthetics' in direct connection with Greiffenhagen's department (the first of these was 'The History of Art and its Utility for Artists'). It is noteworthy that Greiffenhagen should have been one of the most progressive English poster artists in the 1890's; his poster for the Pall Mall Budget (1893) having been one of the earliest in England to introduce the new French style of the period. In France (and in Germany) the poster was a popular vehicle for Art Nouveau. Speaking of poster design at the Glasgow School of Art in 1895, Newbery expressed satisfaction about the results 'progressing famously'. He was, however, under no illusions as to the attitudes at the Central School:

South Kensington, of course, has nothing to do with them. The possibilities of the poster are great. Our early efforts (with which the public must be fairly familiar by this time) met with a shower of adverse criticism. We expected that, and were not cast down".<sup>66</sup>

Greiffenhagen's predominantly black and white work in poster design and book illustration in the 1890's displayed a free and economical linear style very close to Phil May, the black and white illustrator, who also was instrumental in spreading interest in England in the French posterists. Greiffenhagen's work in this period demonstrated a closeness to Beardsley's (and Lautrec's) decorative approach. Brigid

Peppin and Lucy Micklethwait have drawn attention to Greiffenhagen having "enjoyed and exploited the new opportunities offered by the development of line block reproduction" and having fostered "a dashing pen and ink style".<sup>67</sup> Joseph Pennell (who was invited by Crane to teach at the Royal College of Art), in his article on Beardsley in the first issue of The Studio.<sup>68</sup> claimed that it was the distinct quality of Beardsley's pen-linearism which initiated a change in taste in black and white work in the early 1890's away from styles dependent on wood engraving to one capable of acknowledging the potential of the photographic line block for reproducing pen strokes of great delicacy. The significance of black and white work for Art Nouveau is demonstrated also by the fact that, before taking up the post of artistic director with Walter Blackie and Son in Glasgow, in 1893, Talwin Morris had been art editor for a journal called Black and White in London.<sup>69</sup> The significance of artistic instincts for both the practice and the perception of Art Nouveau is well illustrated by J. Stanley Little's Studio article on Greiffenhagen from 1897. Here are three extracts:

"It is as a decorative artist with a fine sense of colour, a keen eye for happy juxtapositions and pleasing equipoises in arrangement, balancing of masses and lines, an *instinctive aptitude* in the blending and harmonising of colours, that Mr. Greiffenhagen is pre-eminent"

"Of Mr. Greiffenhagen's art it may be said that he flies to landscape *instinctively* to supply the setting of his classic decorations".

"How splendidly graphic, how *instinctively truthful* he can be in pen and ink or in wash drawing all the world knows".

Little also emphasised the point that few contemporary artists had such a full sense of the requirements of *decorative art* as did Greiffenhagen, and that this had resulted from the artist's experience of "Naturalism, carried to a point which endangered the sanity of its devotees, while it killed in them the real art faculty".<sup>70</sup>

Now, to return to the occasion of the School of Art Club's Presentation of Prizes in Glasgow in 1908: Greiffenhagen asserted that

"what he wanted to see, and what he believed was coming along, was that here and there there was a glimmering in the background of their (the students) *trying to invent*



things. It would be a promising sign if they saw a great deal more of that sometimes".<sup>71</sup>

Newbery's response on this occasion illustrates clearly his equating of this inventive faculty with that of artistic instincts; he replied,

"when Professor Greiffenhagen assured them that there was a faint glimmering of what was unteachable in any school - namely the *art instinct*, in the work exhibited there he thought they had reached a very good plane indeed".<sup>72</sup>

Significantly, this formulation explicitly points to the limits inherent in any system of art education that it cares to name: art education, by its criteria, cannot teach creative imagination since this is predicated as being grounded in instinctual abilities. In terms of the Ruskinian argument, a disciplined art education could facilitate or enhance the workings of the imagination, but this was only acceptable when imagination was oriented towards utilitarian ends. There is a central ambivalence towards the imagination with Ruskin which relates to a mode of thinking within which imagination, specifically because it is instinctual, is apprehended as encapsulating selfish, amoral and socially disruptive elements. The affinity between such an evaluation and the consistently emphasised need for (manual, intellectual, moral etc.) 'discipline' need not be laboured. However, where Ruskin had wished to inhibit and subsequently 'mould' the instinctual artistic propensities through discipline focused, from the initial stages of art-technical instruction, upon the body (manual functions), Newbery emphasised the crucial significance of primary potentiality as something that had to be freed rather than inhibited. Thus, the recognition of the innate potential for artistic creativity in all children had to be given first place by any system of art education; but this meant placing (the potential for) 'art' before the art education itself;

"the most colossal discovery of modern education was that every boy was a potential artist. But art came first and hand work afterwards. The difficulty was to bring the two terms down to a stage at which they would be understood by the ordinary commonplace comprehension".<sup>73</sup>

In Newbery's view, therefore, everyone inherits artistic instincts, but since art production manifests a great diversity of media ("Pictures were simply one revelation of art and nothing more")<sup>74</sup> different individuals will demonstrate specific abilities, which can, however, be considered to be artistic in generic terms. As The Studio commented on the procedure employed within the Glasgow School of Art, ". . . if the artist be discovered in the student, the deductive process must vary with every individuality presenting itself".<sup>75</sup> Herein lay the significance of Newbery's (albeit crude) testing procedures for *individual* potential students. James Fleming, The School's Chairman, stated in 1894 that "From his private knowledge of Mr. Newbery, he knew that he was eminently fitted to draw out the *individual* capabilities of students".<sup>76</sup> The Studio referred to the significance of the studies of the whole School being directed by "one who is himself an artist":<sup>77</sup>

"The originality and strength of his personality, and the freshness and vigour in his manner of regarding artistic questions, become strongly conducive to originality in the students who pass through the school. His unwillingness to tolerate anything merely conventional or common-place, and his encouragement of original effort are most important factors in forming the taste and setting the convictions of the pupils".<sup>78</sup>



The essence of Newbery's teaching in the period when The Four were establishing their own strikingly original style was expressed by a student in 1894 who claimed that the Glasgow School had "thrown overboard the old convention and is bravely struggling to uphold a new standard in Art - originality even at the expense of excellence . . . It is in pursuit of *ideals*, however mystic or erratic they may seem, that the future of Art is assured".<sup>79</sup> "So far as the work of the student is *experimental*", exclaimed another student in a letter to the Glasgow Herald in the same year, "it matters little what style is followed, provided it be subservient to the end in view".<sup>80</sup> The real significance of this emphasis upon idealism, originality and experimentation being realized through the medium of an emphatically artistic inventiveness, is to be found with the conviction that what is being liberated in this way, is the *personality*, or psyche, of the individual artist. When Mackintosh was bewailing the absence of the 'essential faculty' of inventiveness in contemporary artistic/architectural work, it was on the grounds that such work was "revealing no *personality*".<sup>81</sup> "This expression of a *personality*, psychological as it may appear in its language, is a candid record of the effect of a real education, and it is a matter of little moment by what exact efforts this feeling has made itself manifest":<sup>82</sup> so ran The Studio's analysis (1900) of an account given by a Glasgow School of Art student of his, or her, experience under Newbery's teaching.

In a lecture delivered to the Govan Art Club in 1896, Newbery noted that many in the Govan area of Glasgow were "working at art connected with commercial pursuits, and they were desiring a freer field and a greater expression of personality than the workshop or their office work would allow".<sup>82a</sup> He proceeded to argue for the significance of evidence of overt manifestations of personality in the fields of craft and industrial art:

"That expression of personality really made the artist. Art might be, and probably was, a quality possessed by every human being, but it was only he who expressed that

personality, whether he worked in clay, wood, iron, or anything he liked, that became the artist".<sup>82b</sup>

Personality was therefore the medium through which the individual freed his or her innate artistic propensities.

In terms of South Kensington rationality, such ideals as were being striven for in Glasgow, were indeed mystic or erratic, but, more dangerously, they were ultimately destructive if founded upon the belief that originality could be achieved through the diminishing of excellence or accuracy; at South Kensington the latter were invariably associated with hard, rigorous, work and strict discipline. "There is now a great deal of talk of originality being stifled by over much drudgery", complained Armstrong in his visit to Glasgow in 1899; "I have never known originality which was good for much stifled by hard work . . . without accuracy, boldness and freedom are no better than rashness and licence . . ." <sup>83</sup> But for the new movement afoot in 'nineties Glasgow, this was to miss the point; accuracy did not produce art. Pugin had acknowledged this in the 1840's when he criticised the teaching models being applied in the Design Schools: "models which must fail in generating *original artists*, and which can only form bad copyists and adapters" <sup>84</sup> Despite the continued adherence by such as Armstrong to the original principles, the actual historical experience of the South Kensington system had fostered a hostility within which the very concept of 'art education' was now being called into question; such was the significance now bestowed upon *innate* artistic abilities that the Glasgow School of Art's Chairman, James Fleming, stated, quite unambiguously, in 1894, that "wholesale teaching of art, except in the most elementary form, was an absolute impossibility" <sup>85</sup> Significantly, this was to bestow a quite extraordinary status on the Glasgow School, since no less was being claimed than that, in Glasgow, as nowhere else in Britain, the instinctive 'artistic impulse' towards originality was being allowed to manifest itself. Thus, Fleming drew attention to the



fact that "There was an amount of artistic impulse in the school, which he was bound to say he was not familiar with in any other school of art in the country".<sup>86</sup>

The views of Greiffenhagen were very much in concord with this radical questioning of the value of art education. An ex-student of the Royal Academy School, Greiffenhagen expressed intense contempt for the Burlington House system of art education, which he himself had experienced for seven years, from the age of sixteen. J. Stanley Little remarked that "With all strong men (Greiffenhagen) feels that he could have done just as well, or better, without it. A student learns a few things which are either of no use to him, or which it is best to forget".<sup>87</sup>

If, however, Newbery's stress upon creative, experimental, originality in the 'nineties was producing results in the Glasgow School that were quite unique in Britain, his cry of *ars longa vita brevitatis*, delivered when he was demonstrating his commitment to South Kensington principles on the occasion of his Glasgow appointment in 1885, was to have a rebounding effect in the form of a letter to a Glasgow newspaper in 1892, where that same Latin axiom was borne as an appellation:

"As a student of contemporary art, who for some years past has attended your local exhibitions, I have been able to watch the gradual development of *some* of your very clever young artists, and to deplore that their 'pretty conceit' of *originality* has blossomed into gross eccentricity. The besetting fault of the *fin-de-siecle* author, musician, and painter is *vagueness*. The *impressionist* of the past has become the '*notorietist*' of the present. If the ambitious young men who constitute the Glasgow School of Painting wish to avoid the suspicion that whisky might have been used for the mixing of their colours, let them in the future remember that true 'art', like 'charity', 'vaunteth itself not'.<sup>88</sup>

But Glasgow School 'originality' was not always so negatively received. Indeed, it was not overlooked that products for the market manifesting evidence of free imaginative creativity could have strong commercial potential alongside the power to educate public taste. "The students should have the most free scope for the exercise of their artistic instincts", proclaimed a newspaper article in 1891 on the 'Glasgow East-End Industrial Exhibition',

"In order that these may be, in the first place, developed to their fullest extent, the limitations of the possible or the payable in workmanship coming as a restriction in

connection only with the actual production of designs for the market. Under such a method of working only can an art school be expected to lead, as it ought to do, and not to follow public taste".<sup>44</sup>

What was being acknowledged here, was that new designs for consumer goods (which are always the same) were essential, since these goods had continually to appear to be new and original in order to stimulate interest.

With the emergence of Art Nouveau style, the linking of instinct with imagination took on a new significance. The apparently free and spontaneous fluency manifested by the style in the eighteen-nineties was associated with a liberated imagination; and since the Ruskinian paradigm maintained its apparent relevance for the elucidation of artistic expression, these liberated powers of imagination were, as a consequence, viewed in terms of potent instinctual discharges. Ruskin's notion of 'Vital Beauty' of form (that is, a form which is revealed in organisms that have developed in accordance with their laws of evolutionary growth), together with the corresponding conviction that organic form was virtuous (with geometric form considered as evil), had considerable relevance for a contemporary 'theory' of (to employ Schmutzler's categories) early and High Art Nouveau. Moreover, the relationship of Ruskin's 'Vital Beauty' to the central tenets of Vitalism (which were in vogue during the early 'organic' period of Art Nouveau and which helped provide a stimulus to the latter, as witness Alejandro Sawa's contributions to the Spanish Art Nouveau journal *L'Avenc*) is clearly apparent. However, for the ideology of Scottish Art Nouveau, with its inherent rationalism, its subject-object epistemology, and its all-important synthesis of knowledge and intellect with aesthetic sensibility, Ruskin's claim that 'art is always instinctive' represented an illicit half-truth. This signifies a crucial distinction which needs to be borne in mind when examining in what ways, and to what extent, Ruskinian ideas were significant in Glasgow over the span of the city's Art Nouveau period. In acknowledging that the aesthetic elements in the Scottish ideology (which emphasise *cognition*) have more in common with both Scottish Enlightenment rationalism and philosophical idealism than with Ruskinian instinctualism,



the need is to examine further the significance of ideas other than those of Ruskin which could have exerted a formative influence on the new artistic movement within the Glasgow context towards the close of the nineteenth century.

The ideas of Walter Crane were undoubtedly of significance for Glasgow, not least because, where his views on art education were concerned, he consistently expressed his lack of sympathy with the South Kensington system with its requirement of 'flatness of treatment' for utilitarian purposes.. His own ideas on art education emphasised the central importance of free-drawn designs and he loathed the practice of copying which the National Course of Instruction insisted upon. A new course of teaching under Crane's guidance was introduced into the Manchester School of Art in 1894. This was probably the most notable instance in this period of the penetration into public art education by the Art Workers' Guild (which had been founded in 1884). Crane's new course was initially run concurrently with the National Course of Instruction, for which latter, the school received finance from the Government department. However, subsequent to the number of successful student passes being seen to have declined, it was decided that, by running both courses separately, students' chances of gaining their South Kensington certificates would not be hampered by their need to cope with two contrasted teaching programmes. This signified failure for Crane, in that the state system's official course had demonstrated its resistance to the incorporation of his ideas. He resigned from his Manchester post in 1897.

Crane was invited to Glasgow in 1891 by the Glasgow Socialists' Society. William Morris presided at Crane's lecture on 'The Educational Value of Art' in the Waterloo Rooms, and in a brief introductory polemical statement he stressed the point that Socialists "wished to see Glasgow and other great centres of population becoming not mere adjuncts of the counting-house, but leaders of the country, both in thought and in adventure of all manly kind".<sup>90</sup> Crane's lecture on this occasion helps to elucidate to what extent his philosophy of art and art education was shared by Newbery in the earl.

'nineties. The mistake that had been made in modern times, Crane asserted, was that art had come to be regarded as something outside of both life and education,

"a luxury and an idle accomplishment, all very well for people of leisure, fit to kill time with, and perhaps enable the traveller in search of the picturesque to record his impressions in a kind of water-colour shorthand more or less - generally less - in the style of the first masters. It had been too much our habit to regard art as chiefly a matter of picture-making, or even picture-selling, and to draw a sharp distinction between what was called fine-art and other art - presumably coarse art".

Many causes had worked together to engender this habit of thought, and one of the central causes was the entire transformation of the system of industrial production which had resulted in the situation whereby "it was about as difficult for a workman to be an artist as for an artist to be a workman". Crane made it clear that he was far less concerned with the process of conveying ideas to the student about the meaning or value of art, or about the 'power of accomplishment' made possible by a system of teaching, than he was with the actual influence of art as 'the most expressive of languages', with a power to carry in the most definite form, all kinds of ideas in all departments of knowledge. He then went on to talk about "inventive delight in combination of life and form, and the refining influence of its beauty". He argued for a conception of the object and scope of education that was grounded in a view of life itself which had acknowledged both the aims and objects of life, and the claims and relations of humanity. The question of what constituted an ideal education was secondary to that of what was our ideal in life: "He thought we might very plainly see the absence of an ideal of life in our system of education". Any education which failed to be interesting was a failure. Here Crane singled out one of the consistently neglected means whereby art education could engender interest: "Enough account was not taken of the eye; its capacities were not enough appealed to or cultivated" and more scope was needed for the eye in our education. By focusing on the eye (as against the hand), Crane was arguing for enhanced stimulus to the imagination. This is apparent from his succinct description of the expressive power of art in conveying all kinds of ideas: art achieves this "in



the most definite form *through the eye to the mind*", and it is within and through this process, which bestows form on life, that the individual experiences 'inventive delight'. It will be noted that this kind of formulation, stressing, as it does, the power of art as a comprehensive conveyer of knowledge, helped to provide the basis for the subject-object epistemology which Mackintosh was to develop. However, as will be demonstrated below, such a formulation was already current in Glasgow before 1891.

Isobel Spencer has drawn attention to Crane's promotion of design in art education as representing "a valuable contribution to the modern movement". He encouraged experiment and spontaneity through his teaching, and thus "gave students a real sense of the resilience and adaptability which would be more and more required of designers if they were to respond to the needs of a developing society".<sup>91</sup> But the state of affairs in the Manchester School of Art, where this 'experiment and spontaneity' were alienated from the main course, was not paralleled in Glasgow where Newbery was attempting to integrate these new ideas into the main curriculum. Newbery was later to reflect (in 1902) on Crane's own 'methods and mediums', and to comment that "*the hand obeys the thought* in that wonderfully *unconscious* way that is the gift of the few".<sup>92</sup> It was not for nothing that Newbery viewed Crane as having been, in the 1880's, a 'pioneer'. But if Crane had started out as a pioneer, he had not, in Newbery's opinion, managed to establish a widely spread movement. Writing in a period of international success for the Glasgow movement (Vienna, 1900; Turin, 1902; Moscow, 1902) Newbery contrasted Crane's limitations with the strengths of the Scottish Art Nouveau approach to design: ". . . there is in Crane's work a certain want of *conviction* and a lack of relation to Nature, which appear to have arrested all progress above a certain plane".<sup>93</sup> But this was not all, and here Newbery spelled out what, to him, signified the most fundamental limitation underlying Crane's work:

"The history of book decoration finds in him an historian; and to all this may be added other labours, which speak of his unselfishness and disinterested devotion to the social

welfare of his fellow man. But there is a danger in all this - the danger that a man working in art may have no time to study that art itself!"<sup>94</sup>

The background to these comments is all-important; this was Newbery expressing opinions which were heavily influenced by Art Nouveau ideas at the same time as he was experiencing first-hand the success of Glasgow Style designers abroad. In other words, this was the Newbery who had, in crucial respects, *gone beyond* the ideas of Ruskin, Morris and Crane. The significance of a theory of art for the new movement is made explicit with this latter comment above about the need to *study the art itself*. (Says Lenning on the significance of *theory* in this context, ". . . without the theoretical aspect of the *Art Nouveau*, there could be no bridge from nineteenth century eclecticism to what we have come to know in the twentieth century as a modern art-form").<sup>94a</sup> The full implications of this view can only be adequately understood in the light of a consideration of the perception of Newbery and significant others of the socio-cultural role of the University, and of the relationship of the latter to institutions of art education.

##### 5. The Art School and The University [Part One]

The views expressed by Sir James Watson in the Glasgow School of Art prior to Newbery's arrival in the city, illustrate that the ideology of art education at that time embodied a central dialectical tension. A discourse centred upon a romantic-aesthetic conception of art appears, in respect of this tension, to be significant for the Glasgow School's ideology. It is at this point that links between the School and the University begin to betray more than a local institutional relevance, since the University's Principal in the 1880's placed himself squarely within a tradition of Scottish Hegelianism. Not only were *Idealism* and *Romanticism-Aestheticism* potent forces for Scottish Art Nouveau, but in addition, dialectical thinking has itself a central



role to play in Mackintosh's theory of architecture. This section begins by examining the influence of Hegelian ideas on the Aesthetic Movement in Britain.

By focusing on the form-content dialectic through the historical unfolding of art, Hegel presented the categories of symbolical (oriental), classical (Greek), and romantic (Christian) as manifestations of this dialectic. But the romantic was not the most perfect; rather, for Hegel, the interpenetration of matter and form, where the spiritual was completely drawn through its external appearance, represented a peak commensurate with the development of world spirit. This peak of matter-form interpenetration cannot be achieved by romantic art, since the latter's fundamental principle is "the elevation of the spirit to itself": external reality thus becomes inadequate to autonomous subjectivity and the classical spiritual-material interpenetration (i.e. form and content unified) disintegrates. The possibility of a classical harmony between sensuousness and intellect is destroyed. Romantic art, which, for Hegel, spans the period from the middle-ages to his own period, heralds the end of art, as art will be replaced by higher forms of consciousness (philosophy). As Karlheinz Stierle has affirmed,

"What for Hegel means the end of art is its sublation in knowledge. Knowledge no longer needs art in order to be represented. This, however, means concretely that the organizational forms to which knowledge was bound when it was not yet knowledge in the real sense are no longer necessary. Thus in the epoch of (scientific) knowledge those narrative, organizational forms become obsolete which previously were necessary for the articulation of experience".<sup>95</sup>

For Hegel, therefore, rational knowledge reigns supreme, and art, historically, was but an instrument for the articulation of it.

In England, with Walter Pater, and in the context of the Aesthetic Movement, a concept of history - derived from a reading of Hegel (and Darwin, among others) - was presented, within which a perpetual dialectic ensued between two fundamentally conflicting tendencies of wholeness and fragmentation. The former of these was to be identified with the classical tendency (centripetal) - an attitude towards discipline, order and

restraint; and the second with a tendency of romanticism (centrifugal) - abandonment in undirected imagination, delight in colour and vividness, in beautiful material and in everchanging diversity of form. Pater prefigured Art Nouveau's concern with music as the paradigm for an art that had transcended the form-content dichotomy and attained a new synthesis. He saw music as most completely realizing the artistic ideal of saturating form with matter (or content), subject with expression, end with means, thought with feeling : ". . . form and matter, in their union or identity, present one single effect to the 'imaginative reason', that complex faculty for which every thought and feeling is twin-born with its sensible analogue or symbol".<sup>96</sup> Pater considered that the function of 'speculative culture' (philosophy) was to stimulate 'constant and eager observation', thus facilitating insight and intellectual excitement. But experience itself, and not its outcome, was the end to be attained. In this manner, Pater linked abstract thought with aesthetic experience: "Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us".<sup>97</sup> But abstract theories and systems of ideas always foundered when confronting the fundamental potency of psychological immediacy. The limits to the coherence supplied by thought systems lay in the fragmented nature of human experience. 'All melts under our feet', impressions, sensations, are of the moment alone, and our experience betrays an 'awful brevity'.

Metaphorically speaking, Pater's Hegel-derived centrifugal and centripetal tendencies can be seen as having relevance to the Glasgow School of Art in Newbery's early period there ; discipline, order and restraint were highly characteristic of South Kensington teachings and methods (the centripetal); with the romantic-aesthetic orientation which emphasised inspiration, the 'ideal', and creative imagination representing the antithesis of the former within a tension-filled dialectical relationship. In the 1890's, the Art School - an institution of public art education with a predominantly utilitarian role - provided the locus for a synthesis of the romantic-aesthetic



orientation with the 'scientific' methods and teachings embodied within the national courses of instruction, and thus allowed, by encouraging artistic experimentation in the School as a whole, both the traditional dualism that had separated the intellect from the passions to be bypassed, and the Glasgow Art Nouveau movement to appear.

Edward Caird's book on Hegel (Hegel, 1883) had emphasised the relevance of the dialectical method in philosophy for demonstrating that antagonistic tendencies are always resolved in a higher unity. In that particular work he attempted to demonstrate that the antagonism between conventional religion and materialistic science could be transcended through a doctrine of scientific law as something spiritual or *Ideal*. In finding the Ideal (or the divine) everywhere, the Ideal could be found anywhere. Man, God and Nature - traditionally distinguished in theology - were perceived, Caird argued, by a genuinely philosophical theology (and Caird, in a manner characteristic of the Scottish Hegelians, viewed Hegel as being essentially a theological philosopher) as being combined in one single spiritual principle. This attempt at combining the everywhere with the anywhere through the medium of the ideal, can be seen to have its analogue in Mackintosh's theory of architecture: in that latter context, the specificity of the particular (the architecture of a given period, for which Mackintosh provides significant empirical exemplification) does not stand in opposition to architecture as historical universal. Nor does originality (as specificity of a particular creative work) conflict with logicity (the coherence purveyed through recognisable universal principles) for Mackintosh. A further characteristic of idealism in Mackintosh is to be found with his insistence that the art-worker/architect have 'convictions' (i.e. quasi-religious ideals). The early Art Nouveau preoccupation with the sources and motivations of organic life, and with the "power of life to transform itself eternally".<sup>96</sup> would, in the Scottish context, have found with Caird a convenient source of Romantic biological historicism: the 'higher unity' within which antagonisms become reconciled, Caird described as "unity as manifesting itself in an organic process of development".<sup>99</sup>

What Pater had specified as the problem of the fragmented nature of human experience seemed in many ways to present one of the central challenges which Scottish Art Nouveau addressed. Nothing so much as the striving towards coherence and unity typifies the thinking of Glasgow's new movement as it differentiated itself from the Arts and Crafts mentality. Newbery's discussion of the role of Art Galleries and Museums as specifically educative institutions (in 1895) illustrates in its essentials a transition point between the old and the new ideas; Cole ( who was of the opinion that "unless museums and galleries are made subservient to purposes of education, they dwindle into very sleepy affairs"<sup>100</sup> and Ruskin were brought together as representatives of the argument about the social role of art; but these were connected with the contemporary Art Nouveau preoccupation with the creation of the whole (unity, coherence) through a process of meaningfully relating the particular to the general (the anywhere to the everywhere, in Caird's terms) which asserts the powers of the mind. It should be emphasised that this latter mode of thinking displaces Ruskinian ideas. For example, Kenneth Clark drew attention to Ruskin's "indifference to his immediate surroundings" suggesting "a limitation of his critical faculties, that same preference of the part to the whole which cramped his judgement of architecture"<sup>101</sup> Clark went on to add that Ruskin's "rooms were full of Turner watercolours and other works of art, but he was so intent on looking *into* them that he did not look *at* them, or relate them to their surroundings"<sup>102</sup> Ruskin's thinking, therefore, was not essentially concerned with emphasising the *relationship* of the fragment to the whole.

Newbery's conception of the potential offered by art galleries for creating a quasi-religious 'wholeness' was a highly positive one, and to a considerable extent this was due to his appraisal of characteristics which were specific to Glasgow:

"Here in Glasgow the picture galleries are open week in and week out, day and night, from the first till the last day of the year. And the boon is inestimable ---- priceless. It is a privilege that is not possessed by Londoners, nor enjoyed in Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Berlin, Vienna, Florence, Rome or Madrid . . . And the sight of glad crowds of decent folk treading the marbles of the Kelvingrove Galleries, at night, is an acknowledgement of the equality alike of the rich man with the poor in the eyes of



Art. And this right has yet to be made possible in London and the majority of Continental cities. Well, then, the working man is there, and, having him, the city has, in the majority of cases, an intelligent man, able to receive instruction, and willing to learn".<sup>103</sup>

One means of appropriating this willingness to learn and of leading the attention towards art works was, for Newbery, a comprehensive and systematic lecture scheme: "*Any series may be complete in itself, but it must be part of a whole*". Included in this whole, there were to be lectures on the 'treatment of painting' which would include analysis of methods and mediums, "the painter's material and its uses; colour and its attached science; the history of processes with their applications and limitations". But, in addition, there were to be lectures on architecture, sculpture, and the decorative arts. The field for knowledge, clear and popular, Newbery insisted, was unlimited; but the ultimate aim of such schemes was to increase "study (of) humanity as expressed by Art":

". . . the hearers of such a lecture or series of lectures, would go away with some idea that a picture may be more than paint and canvas, colour and panel, and may contain as many lessons as a book; as many moralities as are possible to be preached from a pulpit in a year; as much religious appeal as a church service, and yet may fulfil the first and last necessary reason for its existence, and that is, that it be beautiful, because it is a work of art. And similar treatments could be made of the Social and Philosophical and Political sides of life by other selections of pictures, and by other demonstrations".<sup>104</sup>

What is most striking about these sections is the manner in which they focus upon an autonomous 'Art' and *aestheticization* in the attempt to create wholeness (intelligible structures) out of fragmentation and lack of unification; the description moves from the recognition of moral relativism ('as many moralities') to that of cultural complexity ('the Social and Philosophical and Political'). The drive towards coherence acknowledges fragmentation and heterogeneity but desires a cognitive synthesis that is to be achieved through (what Pater called) imaginative reason. The art gallery/museum provides a site for coherence by bringing together a diverse range of artistic/cultural objects and artefacts which are experienced as belonging to a totality. Even a multiple series of lectures, Newbery insists, must constitute a 'whole'; and on one occasion he said he

detested the ugly telephone wires in Glasgow because "there was no *unity* and no *harmony* in them".<sup>105</sup> Art (and the worship of beauty) is to perform the function no longer addressed by religion (in respect of this latter, a similar strain of thinking was already to be found with Ruskin). For this to be possible, the emancipation of the aesthetic from sacral functions has to be acknowledged, and this, Newbery does. The contemporary work of art, he claims, can present religious imagery, but its significance is now recognised as being aesthetic, not theological. Conversely, contemporary agencies of religion acknowledged the potency of aesthetic attributes and appropriated these for religious ends; "Religion building the house of God", wrote Newbery in 1902, "claims the same artistic hand to enrich the light streaming through its painted windows".<sup>106</sup> Historically, as the power of the church diminished, that of art increased: ". . . perhaps the reason why grand ladies posed as Virgins before Titian and Veronese, before Rubens and Vandyck, was because the power of the Church was no longer Canonical in the days of these artists, even as the religious sentiment is non-ecclesiastical, however deeply emotional, in Burne Jones".<sup>107</sup>

If the issue of the 'whole' was to have a thoroughgoing significance for Newbery under the influence of the new Glasgow movement, then this can be understood as being grounded in the acknowledgement that personality/mind/psyche always involved the creation of psychological *gestalten* which were subsequently externalized through forms of cultural creativity. The Studio, for example, reflected the relevance of such thinking for a true understanding and appreciation of the work of Glasgow Art Nouveau designers, when it discussed the McNairs contributions to the Turin Exhibition of 1902. Such examples of artistic creativity were found to be capable of "showing in what manner the necessities and beauties of life can be brought together in one harmonious whole".<sup>108</sup> In Newbery's article for The Studio on the English Section at the International Exposition of Modern Decorative Art at Turin, his criticisms of the Arts and Crafts exhibits on show centred upon the failure of the latter to achieve the 'wholeness' manifested by the



contributions of the Glasgow School in the Scottish section (this included work by The Mackintoshes, the McNairs, James Salmon, J. Gaff Gillespie, Ann Macbeth, Mrs. Traquair, Miss Beveridge, Mrs. Newbery, Margaret de Courcy Lewthwaite Dewar and Agnes Bankier Harvey) and the forty rooms in the German section decorated by twenty architects (Mackintosh did not exhibit a complete interior; he was represented by a furniture grouping occupying a position in a passageway) Newbery was appointed delegate for Scotland to collect and select work for the Exhibition. "The winter has been spent in obtaining from Scottish art workers the best that was obtainable by their efforts".<sup>109</sup> stated the Glasgow Herald, which acknowledged the essential nature of the Scottish approach in describing that ". . . the decoration of the whole section is to be in itself of the nature of an exhibit, the aim being that the spectator shall on his entrance be at once struck with the treatment".<sup>110</sup>

In describing the German section, Newbery had this to say:

"Olbrich, of Darmstadt, makes three rooms upon a given space. Each is a related and relateable structure, each has its proper plinths and decoration in perfect *ensemble*, and it is only by such work and through such means that decorative art can ever hope to have a place or make a progress. And it is because these things are neglected that the English section is the exhibition of a collection of work, arranged without idea and without scheme, instead of being a selection of art work, related by beauty and through utility to its purpose".<sup>111</sup>

'Beauty', 'utility', 'purpose' were categories which stretched backwards in time, through Ruskin and Pugin in the nineteenth century to Reynolds and Chambers in the eighteenth. But they now take on a new mode of application as they are integrated into Art Nouveau aesthetic theory employing innovative concepts of structure and space. A mere 'collection of work' without unity, says Newbery, brings to mind the contents of most museums where the layout of items is limited by 'the exigencies of space'. Such may satisfy the archaeologist, but not the artist. Space is thus acknowledged as being of central relevance to aesthetic responses, and, as with Mackintosh, Newbery considers architecture to represent the fundamental art form: "To cultivate the artist in the architect is the one aim of (the Glasgow School of Art's) curriculum", stated the

Glasgow Property Circular<sup>112</sup> in 1895. It was 'architecture' that was singularly absent from the English section at Turin: "Drawings, paintings, designs, sketches, modelled panels, executed work, elbow each other on the walls, without either sequence or meaning . . . . Where is the art in all this? What of the architecture which is the root and basis of all things artistic? What of the house for which all these objects were made, or of the room that, decorated by them, was further to be enriched of them".<sup>113</sup> (Wilhelm Scholermann, in 1897, had praised Crane - who both organised the English section at Turin and exhibited at it - for the very characteristic which Newbery claimed was absent from Crane's Turin contribution: namely, an *architectonic* sense of design)!<sup>113a</sup>

Notwithstanding Newbery's criticisms of an English Arts and Crafts approach to design, it is questionable to what degree he himself was able to fully and consistently transcend Arts and Crafts thinking with regard to art production, and embrace the modern design aesthetics of Sedding (which were obviously shared by Mackintosh). The latter, it should be stressed, was attempting to face squarely the issue of the decline in patronage for the arts in urbanised, massified societies. Furthermore, Newbery's emphasis upon architecture betrays more of Mackintosh's influence, in this, the latter's most successful period, than being related to any wide-scale movement of building in Glasgow. (For Mackintosh, architecture was indeed 'the root and basis of all things artistic', 'the 'commune of the arts' which embodied the synthesis of art and science, and he desired contracts from public agencies and authorities with a view to potentially transforming the entire public realm). The conflict between Scottish idealism and English empiricism (which was considered by the former as a means for fragmenting the world, and thereby rupturing the individual's relationship to it) is made apparent with Newbery's review of the Turin event. Undoubtedly, the experience of the German Section at Turin brought home to him with considerable force, the relevance of the close relationship between *gestalt* thinking in Scotland and Germany respectively, and the fruitfulness of this thinking for creative design purposes.



There can be little doubt that Newbery desired an intellectual and cultural credibility for Glasgow's School of Art. In the respect of intellectual and cultural status, the University held a monopoly, and, furthermore, in the eyes of not a few Glaswegians, the latter's representatives had for too long displayed an unjustly supercilious attitude towards the Art School. A high measure of indignation at this situation between the two local institutions was expressed through the press, and the opportunity was seldom missed to underline the intellectual and cultural significance of certain activities within the Art School. Thus the Glasgow Herald, even by 1910, was reporting on a lecture scheme for the public in such a way as to praise the School's progressiveness in supplying this service, whilst implying snobbish disinterest on the part of the University: "The new scheme (organised by Newbery) will be welcomed by the public, which has comparatively few opportunities in Glasgow of hearing first-rate lectures on literary and artistic themes. And it will unquestionably strengthen the claims of the School of Art to university rank in its own sphere . . . the University of Glasgow . . . has hitherto taken no notice of the fine arts".<sup>114</sup> On occasion, sufficient reason was found to consider the Art School a University in its own right: "The Glasgow School of Art might also claim to be a University of art, for they taught there those who were to be the teachers of others . . . during the past three years 2,500 teachers of Glasgow and the West of Scotland had passed through it".<sup>115</sup> These comments date from six years after the Scotch Office declared the Art School a Central Institution exclusively for Higher Education. This meant that the School was now authorised to award its own Professional Diplomas. Subsequent claims about its 'University status' were founded upon this development. But the University itself was often viewed in the most negative terms for being deprived of all that art was believed capable of bestowing. "Let us make our University a thing of beauty", wrote a 'Decorative Artist' bewailing the starkness of the building and its environs, "which shall be a lasting memorial to the skill of our artists and the public spirit of our citizens".<sup>116</sup> A similar sentiment

was expressed by a *'Membre de la Societe Des Artists Francais'*: "Our University as such does nothing to inculcate the appreciation of appropriate beauty or the understanding of the fine arts that glorify and dignify our lives. Our University is almost destitute of Art". But in this instance, Art was not to be confused with the arts, and the specifically aesthetic sensibility which an education in the former could potentially enhance, was not the preserve of the Art School:

"... the teaching of Art, in so far as it can be taught, is the function of the University, and not of the Art School. The teaching of the arts is direct and technical, the teaching of Art is indirect and suggestive. The student who lives and works amid surroundings beautified by all that Art can supply imbibes naturally taste and understanding which prepares him to enjoy all great Art, and condemn the meretricious. The halls and colleges of Oxford, the old and famous seats of learning on the continent, are in their buildings a never-ending lesson to their alumni. Shrines of the aesthetic cult, their mute appeal has an insistent eloquence that no Slade professor can rival".<sup>117</sup>

However, the *membre's* aesthetic mystification of Art seems to have been quite blind to its own contradictions. If 'all that Art can supply' extends to design, decoration and architecture, then universities were hardly likely to have supplied them. And if "the decorative artists of Glasgow at present stand as high in general estimation as any in Europe".<sup>118</sup> given the embarrassing reality of 'The Artless University', it made little sense to disparage the Art School which had made them possible. On the other hand, this kind of perception of the attributes of the University where art was concerned, was clearly of great relevance, and not least for such as Newbery.

The year after Newbery took up his position in Glasgow, the University's 'Very Reverend Principal', John Caird, brother of Edward, was giving one of his Lay Lectures on the subject of "that which is somewhat vaguely designated by the word 'Art'". Principal from 1873 until 1898, ex Professor of Divinity John Caird's Hegelian views were in close accord with those expounded by his brother. It is not known whether Newbery actually attended this particular lecture in person, but his personal scrapbook includes a cutting from a local newspaper which had reported fully on the lecture's content. On this occasion, Caird initially addressed himself to a number of issues that



were of pressing significance for those actively involved (in teaching etc.) within the School of Art: the nature of the educative function of art; differentiating the aesthetic content of works of art; the peculiar kind of knowledge imparted by the work of art; the role of the creative imagination in artistic production. What is so significant about Caird's arguments centring on this latter, is that he bestows an autonomy on the creative imagination which it never enjoyed with Ruskin. All of this would have been of intense interest to Newbery, as would also the insights being provided into how the present Head of the University (which had excluded the fine arts from its curriculum) actually perceived artistic subjects together with the desirable mode of teaching them. Some opening comments of Caird's must have given cause for not a little optimism as regards the University's acknowledging of the importance of art subjects: "if the higher education ought to embrace all departments of human culture, there is besides science, philosophy, languages, and literature - besides those studies which are already included in our university curriculum - one other important department which should not be ignored - namely, that which is vaguely designated by the word 'Art'".<sup>119</sup> But the function of the scheme of education, with reference to art, was subject to one obvious limitation which did not apply to the other established branches of knowledge: languages, science, philosophy, history, Caird asserted, were capable of being taught by experts, and every fairly intelligent pupil could, with 'ordinary diligence' become proficient in them. By contrast, however, "no amount of culture, no intellectual application, however unwearied, can make a man an artist. There is, indeed, a part, and that a necessary part, of the artist's equipment which can be taught and acquired. To draw, paint, model - to be a master of the various methods of execution in the pictorial and plastic arts - are not accomplishments which come by nature or can be attained without long and patient study and practice".<sup>120</sup>

Here lay the (normally widely separated) fine arts and the industrial arts: in both cases, a long and laborious apprenticeship was required before the learner could become a skilled artificer. But precisely because the technical part of an artist's equipment constituted such a large element of success, it was inclined to assume, in the view of

'experts', an exaggerated importance, and often technical considerations became the sole criteria of artistic merit. In attempting to differentiate the fine arts, and elucidate their unique characteristics, Caird began by testing out the relevance of a utilitarian criterion: "granting that art is a possible study, is it also a useful one? What benefits inward or outward is the student to gain from it?" This prompted a discussion of the functions and uses of art as "an element of human culture". Initially, said Caird, it appeared that an inquiry into art's uses involved a contradiction in terms, since what was sought in works of art was neither instruction nor information, neither material nor other advantages, but rather pleasure or enjoyment. It appeared that whatever the fine arts (music, poetry, painting etc.) achieved in the embellishment or decoration of human life, they obviously contributed nothing to the supply of life's practical necessities. Caird then set out to specify the precise nature of the functions which the fine arts could be said to serve:

"Whilst this view of the essentially non-utilitarian character of art may be freely conceded, there is nothing inconsistent with the concession in claiming for works of art a higher function than that of recreation or amusement, or in the assertion that they contribute in no slight or inappreciable measure to the formation of character and the intellectual and moral education of the community. In making this claim, however, it must be admitted that, in one point of view, the principle of 'art for art' is profoundly true. The educative function of art is at best an indirect one. Whatever intellectual enlightenment or moral elevation is to be gained from works of imagination, to communicate such benefits cannot be the conscious aim of the artist, nor is the merit of his work to be estimated by its didactic excellencies".<sup>121</sup>

Artistic inferiority attaching to bad or indifferent painting or poetry was not redeemed, Caird insisted, by the artist's moral or religious aims. Conversely, the highest qualities of art may be manifested in works which offend the moral susceptibilities. The 'noblest moral lessons' were indeed capable of being conveyed by artists through art forms, but *unconsciously*, "with as little didactic aim, as are the lessons which nature herself is teaching".<sup>122</sup> This shows to what significant degree Caird had digested the doctrines of the aesthetic movement. But although teaching is not the *direct* function of art, it does not follow for Caird, that art does not, in fact,



teach; that it does not convey modes of knowledge. He then addressed himself to the question that would occupy Mackintosh's attention also; namely, what is the nature of the knowledge which art communicates?

"Without direct scientific or ethical aim, works of imagination are not only the means of a purest enjoyment, but they convey to us an order of ideas of an altogether peculiar kind, reveal to us in nature and in human life much which it lies beyond the province of science or philosophy to disclose, and exert over the moral nature an elevating and ennobling influence, in some respects the more potent that it is not their direct purpose to produce it. What then, let me ask, is the sort of teaching which it is the unconscious vocation of art to communicate, what is the peculiar class of ideas of which works of imagination, in distinction from all other production of human thought, are the vehicles. The answer to this question may be summarily given by saying that it is the office of art to idealise nature and life, and to present their facts and phenomena in their ideal aspect".<sup>123</sup>

The modes of knowledge then, which art conveys, are *ideal* modes, and the medium through which the artist as observer confronts the real world, is the imagination. It is the quality of his or her imagination which enables the artist to transcend the self which is being celebrated and to interpret nature "with larger, other eyes than ours" (i.e. we non-artists), just as the scientific observer detects the presence of hidden laws and relations within the confused, accidental, unordered, outward 'facts' that are all that the 'ordinary', non-scientific observer perceives. Here, Caird's dialectical reasoning leads him to acknowledge that fact and concept are *mediated* by each other,<sup>123a</sup> as the mind seeking enlightenment discovers underlying laws in phenomena that are apprehended as being intrinsic to the whole. This insight, together with his combining of art with science, under the banner of 'imagination',<sup>123b</sup> provided the basis for aesthetic theorizing in Glasgow of a sophistication not hitherto encountered with Ruskin and his followers.

The influence of aesthetic-romantic idealism within the Art School is well illustrated by an account which a student gave of his experience there prior to 1900 (just how prior is not known):

"Eventually there came to me the new birth, a wonderful factor in the art life of every student, when everything is transmuted, and the transmuting power is in his own eyes -- eyes that before were blind and saw not. It is as if the heavens open".<sup>124</sup>

These are the theological metaphors of Scottish Hegelianism 'transmuted' into a language of intense idealist aestheticism owing much to Pater ("to burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life").<sup>125</sup> The essence of this kind of thinking was presented by Caird with his description of the artistic observer which is highly commensurate with Pater's centrifugal attitude of Romanticism: importantly, it is in this context that the significance of the distinction between imitation and imagination (crucial for Art Nouveau) was made explicit by Caird:

"For the artistic or poetic observer, for the mind that is in sympathy with the soul of things, sensuous forms, colours, motions, are alive with the spirit of beauty, transfigured with the hidden glow and splendour of a light that other eyes see not - a light that never was on land and sea. And it is his high vocation, not merely to copy, to tickle our imitative susceptibilities by a matter-of-fact imitation of what we saw before, but through the language of imagination to interpret nature, and make us look upon her face with larger, other eyes than ours. But we may go further than this, and boldly say that there is a sense in which art does 'improve on nature'. All art that is worthy of the name is creative, calls into existence something more than the bare facts which the outward world offers to the senses. These are the materials on which it works, but it does not leave them unchanged"



The Art School and the University [Part Two]

The insights of Scottish Hegelianism which stressed the implications of specifically *creative* imagination in art were to be seized upon by Mackintosh. What characterises the artist above all else, and what determines his vocation, Mackintosh declared, was "the exceptional development of the imaginative faculties - especially the imagination that creates - not only the imagination that represents".<sup>126</sup> John Caird had posed the question of whether art improved upon nature, or upon human life:

"can the loftiest genius invent a fairer world, can the most soaring imagination conceive, or the resources of art depict, forms more lovely, lights more dazzling, harmonies of tone and colour more subtle and various than those we have but to open our eyes to behold?"<sup>127</sup>

And Mackintosh, in taking up the challenge in favour of utopianism had answered,

"what is art but the fixing into substance of the 'invisible'? Are you discontented with this world? This world was never meant for genius to exist it must create another (the invisible). What magician can do more? What science can do as much?"<sup>128</sup>

As with the Cairds, science is here down-graded in a very specific sense; science alone is viewed as not being capable of producing charismatic individuals. Edward Caird insisted (in 1889) that "he who has received from nature the gift for pure art is distinguished in *kind* from those who merely imitate him", and that what ultimately distinguished an artist (notwithstanding the 'mechanical elements' of his work, which had to be learned) was "a faculty of free construction which cannot be fully explained".<sup>129</sup> The Mackintosh of 1893, in following this conception of art's autonomy from the praxis of life, was also perpetuating the cult of genius. From the vantage point of the Arts and Crafts movement, this was quite unacceptable. Writing on the subject of William Morris, Van de Velde made it clear that "pride in artistic genius and some form of special inspiration", was abhorrent to him. "'The talk of inspiration is sheer nonsense', he said; 'there is no such thing; it is a mere matter of craftsmanship'".<sup>129b</sup> Morris's notion of art thus involved portraying art as the practical alone, whereas Mackintosh began by separating art and the aesthetic from the

practical in order to stress the specificity of the former. It was acknowledged that art idealises life through the *medium* of the creative imagination. The autonomy which Idealism bestows upon the imagination was to have crucial implications for the formulation of the new aesthetics of Scottish Art Nouveau, specifically where art and science, idealism and materialism, are unified, because such was only possible on the basis of the recognition that imagination with its cultural symbols represents the crucial medium through which the inner confronts the outer, the subjective the objective, in all spheres of human culture. John Caird described how "Nature reflects herself in the mirror of man's mind, but the mirror in most cases is opaque or dim, sometimes distorted and fractured, *and the reflection takes its character from the medium by which it is produced*",<sup>129</sup> Such a view signalled the impoverishment of both naturalism in art and the assertion of the sovereignty of nature over culture. It firmly established that perception of 'reality' was an inherently phenomenological process; but in speaking of nature's 'reflections' within the human psyche, it pointed towards the potential in art for the freeing of 'primitive' or 'primary' sources of inspiration.

Mackintosh illustrates that Scottish Art Nouveau transcended the dialectic of art and science, feeling and intellectuality, by focusing upon particular characteristics of symbol systems as communicators of knowledge in both spheres. In seeking out the sources for the new aesthetics of the Scottish Ideology, the theories of the Scottish Hegelians must appear to be highly significant as formative influences for what became part of a new synthesis embracing both aestheticism-romanticism and utilitarianism-functionalism. Edward Caird desired a modern synthesis of science and spirituality. With Scottish Art Nouveau the synthesis, to be achieved through praxis, was to be of science and art, but the latter was acknowledged by such as Newbery as having replaced theology through its emancipation from ecclesiastical ritual. Thus, what was traditionally an artefact of theology, namely convictions, was expressed by Mackintosh



as a dimension of artistic *ideals* ("The man with no convictions - no ideals in art - no desire to do something personal something his own, no longing to do something that will leave the world richer his fellows happier is no artist").<sup>130</sup> Scottish Hegelian Idealism provided the substance for a concept of the relationship of the individual to the totality which emphasised the substantiveness of the inner world of the individual. It was thus in greater concord with symbolism than with Ruskin, for whom 'facts' of nature were paramount, and who was convinced that art, when followed for its own sake, destroyed what was 'best' and 'noblest' in humanity. In Glasgow, the Cairds taught the potency of an autonomous imagination as the dimension of unification of subject and object; they fostered the concept of the dialectic; and they juxtaposed art with science in such a way as to demonstrate that both were founded upon 'ideal' modes of thought. In Edinburgh, in the mid-1890s, Geddes proclaimed that the age of the 'dualism' of materialism and spiritualism was ended, and "that of an organic and idealist Monism is begun".<sup>130a</sup> Even the juxtaposing of two antagonistic orientations within the ideology of the Glasgow School of Art in 1884 can be seen as a manifestation of Scottish Hegelian thinking, since John Caird presented what was virtually an analogue of this ideology in his 1886 lecture.

Although such romantic-aesthetic ideals as were expounded by the Cairds were far from alien to Glasgow's cultured intellectual elite, it seems that, even in 1891, Newbery had yet to discover the true significance of imagination over imitation; in that year he was asserting that "true art is to *copy* nature". This was undoubtedly an artefact of his South Kensington background (Stage 8 of the National Course of Instruction's Drawing Course involved copying "Human or animal figures from the round or from nature"). But his dictum (which was reported in the Glasgow Herald's 'Notes and Comment' column) did not go unchecked, and his personal scrapbook contains within it a cutting of a letter from one Adam Drysdal of Glasgow, which had been sent to the Herald, and in which it was implied that Newbery's conception of the artist, was of the

latter as being an 'art mechanic'. This would have had the effect of criticising Newbery in direct relation to his South Kensington-derived position and function. "Mr. Newbery's dictum to 'copy' Nature is but rarely a true canon of art", proclaimed Drysdal:

"The truth he has been trying to express is evidently not such 'copying', but as I would say, adherence to the order observed in Nature, but always remembering that the artist is not a mere art mechanic or photographer, but is a sentient being with perceptions and feelings and conceptions and possibilities of projecting, glorifying *idealities*, even in the region of Nature. Let us consider the fitness of things in art and design, and not copy, but evolve from Nature"<sup>131</sup>

Drysdal had argued that imitating flowers for close viewing was absurd, since with imitations nature must always 'beat' the artist. A painter of flowers should therefore aim for a symbolic representation which would allow only the more prominent features of "form and foliage and efflorescence" to be recognised and identified. Many pictures considered 'classical' were composed of highly imaginative elements "to say nothing of incongruities and anti-naturalism", factors which meant that they should be "classed with the unrealities of dreamland and valued accordingly". (The Architectural Review, in writing about the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901, would make the claim that a great exhibition scheme "facilitates to an unusual extent the realisation of dreams which are not possible in the confines of everyday practice").<sup>132</sup> Drysdal incorporates here a number of elements that were to be central to Scottish Art Nouveau: namely symbolism, idealism, creative imagination, the notion of fitness, and, importantly, synthesis. Indeed, his description of synthesis could have been lifted from Maurice Denis who, when writing on Cezanne, described how the first symbolists (Gauguin, Bernard, Anquetin) were most struck by the effects that could be achieved through employing unity of plane (apparent with the 'enveloping chiaroscuro' of Venetian painting in the sixteenth century), and by sacrificing aerial perspective to a synthetic system of softened flat tints, followed by hard contours, and leading to a balanced decorative effect. Synthesis, Denis insisted, "does not necessarily mean



simplification in the sense of suppression of certain parts of the object; it is simplifying in the sense of *rendering intelligible*".<sup>133</sup> But Denis claimed that painting oscillated perpetually between invention and imitation, sometimes copying and sometimes imagining.

The fact that Drysdal's letter occupies a place in Newbery's own collection of press cuttings perhaps suggests something of its significance for him in terms of his attempts to come to terms with what he acknowledged to be Glasgow's own particular cultural ideas and artistic interests. At any rate, one of his first 'manifestoes' was laid down at the beginning of 1892 when arrangements were being made for the forthcoming Annual Public Meeting of the Art School. According to a Committee Minute, "It was deemed expedient on this occasion to have the Artistic element more prominently represented than hitherto on the platform and that invitations should be issued accordingly".<sup>134</sup> The prelude to this had been the appointment of 'Visitors' in painting, in 1891, such as James Guthrie and Joseph Henderson, to be followed by E. A. Walton and John Lavery. Newbery, with the Governors' approval, was thus 'opening up' the School to significant external influences. Before his arrival there had been no lecturer in Architecture. By 1891, two, together with a Visiting Master (not a 'Visitor') had been appointed. At the Public Meeting in 1892, the President of the Royal Scottish Academy, Sir William Fettes Douglas, appeared with six other eminent painters and one architect.

From at least Pugin's period in Britain, aesthetics had been viewed as part of the preserve of philosophy, and, more specifically, of German idealist philosophy. Hence, the institutional locus for theoretical elucidation with regard to the essential nature of art was widely perceived to be the University. In Britain generally, however, this philosophy was treated with some suspicion as being a 'foreign' importation. But, by contrast, in Glasgow, by 1880, there existed an established school of Scottish Hegelianism, and this would operate to bring a philosophy of aesthetics into closer

proximity with the local institutions of art education than was usual in English cities. By the time Bernard Bosanquet published his History of Aesthetics (1892), he had been made an Honorary Doctor of Laws by Glasgow University. One of the few English Hegelian Idealists, Bosanquet was also one of the few British philosophers to take aesthetics seriously enough to write an extensive work on the subject. He was offered a post at St. Andrews University, where he taught from 1903 until 1908.

For Newbery, it was not only that the work of the University "may be for the democracy, as the modern tendency is", or that it was "willing to recognise in her most fitting manner both the work of and the worker in art". Most importantly, the University owned what the Art School was yet to acquire:

"What is wanted is that cultured, *aesthetic side*, which is acknowledged to be lacking at the present time, and which the University with its organisation and tradition can supply. Thus drawing and painting, although taught outside the University, may satisfy all demands upon technical excellence and stand to an academical recognition, exactly as all good extra-mural teaching does or should do. But supplementing this direct study of drawing and painting from the antique and life are subjects like anatomy, social aesthetics, philosophy, classic history, mythology, and other aids to knowledge and imagination"<sup>135</sup>

Two years after these comments were made, the issue of links between University and Art School was again given an airing: this time, on the occasion of the opening of the second part of the new Mackintosh Art School building in 1909. Said the Glasgow Herald:

". . . while it is true that opulence has brought leisure to enjoy and utility to procure the pleasures of literature, music and art so that these flourish among us, it is equally true that real appreciation of aesthetic delights is diffused among the many by a slow educational process and hence the enormous value to the community of every institution that aims at cultivating taste"<sup>136</sup>

As with Newbery, the cultivation of 'taste' was now related to what an academic curriculum had traditionally placed on offer. But the actualization of a long-struggled-for new Art School building - "a great addition to an already handsome school"<sup>137</sup> - gave cause for increased optimism as regards a closer union between the University and the School of Art, and this was expressed by Professor Phillimore (Professor of Greek at the University) who



...inted at the possibility of a closer union . . . and one would be glad to see something of the kind. Already students of the School of Art are attached to other institutions to receive instruction in the theory and practice of communicating knowledge. It is not less important that they should dip into those humanities that have a natural affinity with the aesthetic arts".<sup>138</sup>

The rift between University and Art School in Glasgow had for long been a thorn in Newbery's side; five chairs of the fine arts existed in England and only one in Scotland, with no degree in fine art being granted by any Scottish university. He declared that a distinct and organised faculty of the fine arts was wanted which would have a Head occupying a seat in the senate, and with a staff of art teachers or professors "whose powers both as craftsmen and as teachers should meet all demands made by university requirements".<sup>139</sup> It was a matter for consideration as to whether the School of Art would itself be within University precincts, or be an extra-mural school. The central requirement in Newbery's opinion, however, was that the professor of fine art be a working artist; this was a *sine qua non* - he should be either a painter, an architect, or a sculptor, and, ideally, a combination of all three. Moreover, he should be a man of distinction in his art, and of culture in his outlook and work. But herein lay an enormous problem for the integration of artistic with academic education; a deep and established belief held sway among 'respectable folk' which portrayed the artist as an irresponsible being, of some questionable character, who was in possession of his own moral code and decalogue. According to this system of opinions, the artist

"went his way in spite of everything or anybody, either to the gutter or the House of Lords, just as circumstances tended or circumstances led, and no amount of society toleration or State recognition made a change in his nature Bohemian, or redeemed the prodigal from the joys of his ways".<sup>140</sup>

The history and development of art, and the history of social aesthetics, Newbery insisted, were parts of the larger subject of history; at any point in time the movements of a body of artists were simply those of a section of expressive humanity, and the influence and works constituting an artistic movement were historically relateable. With regard to the decorative arts under existing circumstances, the

University should provide both patronage and protection "because within its walls the students may work free from the control of the market and feel no need to respond to the call of commerce".<sup>141</sup> This may have been a utopian attitude, but it was undoubtedly a function of his concern over the devaluation of the artistic sphere by a commodity-based economy; one forever establishing its dictates *vis-a-vis* the Schools of Art. Additionally, however, the University was perceived as being *above* the 'call of commerce', free from the dictates of the market system.

How far removed this negative sentiment of Newbery's about commerce was from those of the Art School's Directors when Newbery was appointed can be gauged by considering some of Watson's comments on the occasion of Newbery's appointment in 1885:

"The numerous manufactures of Glasgow afford a very wide field of action, and it is to Glasgow manufacturers that the Directors look for encouragement and sympathy to further the future efforts and develop to the utmost the resources of the School in the subject of design. To further this work we have engaged a special teacher, whose best endeavours and energies will be directed to the making of the instruction given by him consonant with the requirements of Glasgow manufacturers".<sup>142</sup>

From Newbery's point of view, he had ultimately been forced to acknowledge the problems created for a wide acceptance of quality design by commercial agencies themselves: "it is not altogether a secret that Commerce and the Arts and Crafts are not considered bosom friends";<sup>143</sup> ". . . commerce should not be allowed to preach where she should pray".<sup>144</sup> However, the problem was that this predominantly Arts and Crafts mentality (and these latter remarks date from the peak of Glasgow's Art Nouveau success), and with it the practical work in the lighter handicrafts carried out within the Glasgow School of Art, was not establishing significant connections with contemporary technological developments in industry. The concepts of large-scale environmental design; of the mass production of well designed items which could enhance the quality of life in a massified society; of intensified cooperation between art and industry; and of an architectural milieu reflective of the social needs of the time, to a significant degree were absent from Newbery's perception.



Conclusion

The Glasgow School of Art in the 1890's undoubtedly witnessed a significant movement away from the established practices of copying, or imitating, natural objects, as required by the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, and this development helped to prepare the ground for the emergence of the Glasgow Style. Significantly, the School's Chairman, James Fleming, in 1894, was expressing relief that "within the last few years especially the tendency to merely imitate natural objects - 'objects of natural history' was the phrase in most catalogues - was gradually diminishing. At all events, the people who imitated them did so with more *artistic perception*".<sup>145</sup> But by 1910, the period of stressing experimentation and originality appeared to be over. Reporting on the annual competition by children in Glasgow and district schools of drawing specimens done in the Glasgow Museum, Newbery (with fellow judges James Grigor and Joseph Vaughan) directed the attention of teachers and competitors to suggestions for further improving the quality and character of work submitted. One of the criticisms made was that "in the representation of vases, whether plain or ornamental, the light and shade due to the cylindrical form of the object must be expressed. In many instances the contours of vases were drawn and the ornament copied just as though the surface were flat, like a wall paper".<sup>146</sup> If this resulted from a reaction to the old South Kensington approach, where drawing from the flat produced these kinds of result, the irony was that the free, decorative, two-dimensional, linear style of Art Nouveau practitioners - considered a significant advance in its time, not least in the form of innovative wallpaper designs - seemed now to have been quite negated as a desirable approach to drawing. Not only was naturalism being insisted upon, but experimentation, which had been greeted with little short of ecstasy in the 'nineties, now seemed to be strictly tabooed, as the old South Kensington requirement of 'accuracy' was emphasised: "all 'tricky' or mannered technique should be discouraged. The essentials of good work are accurate and searching observation of form, light, and

shade, or colour, to be expressed by careful, and intelligent workmanship in whatever medium may be selected".<sup>147</sup> Ironically, this was the very 'method' of art education for children which Crane had abhorred. For Crane, the ideal to be attained in primary art education was complete freedom of expression. By contrast, Newbery's position in 1910 placed him alongside Crane's opponent Lewis F. Day, who took up an intractable position with regard to the movement towards imaginative work. "Don't ask or expect originality from children", declared Day at a London County Council Conference on the Teaching of Drawing in 1908, "Let them begin by copying . . . the present reaction against it has gone far enough, if not too far".<sup>148</sup>

In fairness to Newbery, it should be pointed out that the strength of the approach to art education which he exemplified most consistently, and which he practised as much in 1891 as he would in 1910, lay in its awareness of labour and imagination as being intertwined (this had indeed been acknowledged by Ruskin). This much he certainly contributed to Scottish Art Nouveau. His concern to integrate the Art School and the University illustrates well his fundamental conviction that artistic perception and intellectual understanding were intimately connected, and that, for this reason, their epistemological and institutional separation represented the most pressing of problems. But in struggling to establish a sphere of freedom for artistic production for an art no longer restricted by traditional reifying distinctions (high art, applied art, industrial art etc.) the Art School-University dichotomy was viewed as representing a crucial field of determination desperately requiring to be transformed. If the route to an aesthetically significant art and design of the highest quality had, of necessity, to be through the medium of the existent reality, then the elements of cultural relevance for a new art within that reality needed to be fundamentally different from those that had preceded them. This was the imperative constantly fuelling the vision of the arts united with academic culture in Scotland, which, for Newbery, represented nothing so much as the summation of a clearly apparent onward going process.



## CHAPTER SIX

THE PRODUCTION OF 'GLASGOW STYLE'.

Introduction: The Context For Art Nouveau Production.

In this chapter we will examine Glasgow Art Nouveau in terms of its actual and potential production, and against the background of contemporary ideologies of cultural production. A clear understanding of the aims and preoccupations of Art Nouveau *vis-a-vis* the stage reached by capitalist productive capacities by the early 1890's is necessary in order that a meaningful distinction can be made between the Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts movements respectively. In too much of the current literature on these and their production, such a distinction is not presented. In attempting to achieve this analytic clarification, an empirical examination of relevant events and configurations is presented in such a manner as to avoid obfuscation and the misattribution of characteristics specific to one determinable complex of relations. With Scottish Art Nouveau we have seen that the Glasgow movement signified the attempt to rationalise art and integrate it organically within objective society at the same time as it emphasised individuality, creativity, spontaneity and experimentation, notwithstanding the mechanization, standardization and, above all, routinization of life under the capitalism which it confronted. This central tension-filled dualism, which was seeking a new synthesis of the artistic and the utilitarian within industrialism, has to be consistently borne in mind as we examine the social developments and problems which attached to Art Nouveau production in Glasgow from the early 1890's onwards.

An overtly artistic utilisation of iron could be viewed in Glasgow as early as 1891 with the East-End Industrial Exhibition. A contemporary description of work on show there which appeared in a newspaper, for example, stated that "Mr Adam, of Partick, shows here some fine examples of another revived art - the artistic use of wrought iron for decorative purposes - among which is most notable a gate leaf displaying the beautifully crisp forms that may be wrought out by an artistic hand in this metal". As Benjamin emphasised, iron was highly significant for the public sphere: it was used for



arcades, exhibition halls, railway stations and suchlike: "buildings which served transitory purposes".<sup>2</sup> Significantly, it was with the 1890-1891 Exhibition in Glasgow's East-End that the conscious appropriation of industrial materials such as iron for overtly artistic ends was to be clearly seen. Although the Walter MacFarlane company of Springburn, Scotland's largest manufacturer of architectural iron work, had produced a huge structure demonstrating the potential of decorative wrought iron for the 1888 International Exhibition in Glasgow, the significance of the East-End Exhibition of just over two years later lies with the factor of such work appearing within a new *context*. Crucially, that context was one which embodied a central contradiction, namely that between the mechanized production of industrial art objects in factories on the one hand, and the hand-crafted production of single, self-contained art objects, within the framework of relatively small workshops, on the other. To a considerable degree, this fundamental distinction between contemporary and neo-medieval forms of production was not made by contemporary commentators, far less its implications followed up. Given the specificities of the Glasgow situation, therefore, this represented a contradiction which the avant-garde could scarcely elide.

James Thomson, the President of the Philosophical Society of Glasgow, on the occasion of the Society's Winter Session held in its premises in 207 Bath Street, in 1890, described how the "large winter garden of handsome proportions, well stocked with flowers, plants, and statuary, and well provided with music",<sup>3</sup> when erected in the Botanic Gardens in the West of the city (1873), had failed to succeed in its purpose of placing recreational facilities at the disposal of the citizens. Thomson, in acknowledging a changed ethos, then proceeded to argue that "if such a place were set agoing now, with the increased population all round and tramway cars running to the very gate, the enterprise would be a most complete success".<sup>4</sup> The winter garden which had now come to potently symbolise recreation, was a cast iron and glass construction

(known then, as now, as the 'Kibble Palace'), and four years after the Peoples' Palace main structure (in pseudo-French Renaissance style) by A. B. Macdonald was built in 1894 - partly financed with funds from the East-End Exhibition - a similar structure (modelled on the shape of the hull of HMS Victory), though on a smaller scale, was incorporated into the design. Also, when the sons of the late James Reid, owner of the Hydepark Locomotive Works in Springburn, donated £12,000 to Glasgow Corporation in 1900 for the erection of public halls in the district, it was conditional on a winter garden being constructed in Springburn Park.<sup>5</sup> The form of the winter garden, in combining iron with glass, and engineering with ornamentation, was derived from the Crystal Palace, the advent of which, Mackintosh noted, accompanied "the belief in the invention of a new style".<sup>5a</sup> Facades featuring a mixture of cast-iron and masonry with glass began to appear in Glasgow in 1850 (Wylie and Lohead, Argyle Street). In 1855-6 the first fully (and overtly) cast-iron structure, with girders of cast and wrought iron, was erected for Gardner's the cabinet-makers and soft furnishings firm in Jamaica Street; the architect John Baird worked in collaboration with the ironfounder R. McConnell. The *Ca D'Oro* building, in Union Street, designed by Mackintosh's employer John Honeyman (1872), had a cast-iron fronting to the upper floors.

Mackintosh acknowledged that cast-iron could be useful and at the same time beautiful; but in his opinion civil engineering, which was 'quite a modern science' with 'plenty of scope', was too often guilty of unreasonably copying architectural forms of ornamentation.<sup>6</sup> Such could be seen, for example, in numerous bridges where cast-iron balusters had moulded parapets and cornices, hollow shapes which 'mimicked' stone mouldings. Structures of iron and glass would never replace structures in stone for 'domestic, civil, or ecclesiastical buildings', asserted Mackintosh, because of their lack of mass and hence their lack of an appearance of stability. The potentialities inherent in cast-iron had to be recognised as being of a different nature from those which attached to materials such as stone. Patterns manifesting the



most elaborate and beautiful design were possible with a material that was run into a mould, he argued, and moreover the results would be both more substantial and more economical than if executed in stone. Civil engineering, therefore, in Mackintosh's opinion, was fully compatible with architecture; however, the one was decidedly not to be employed as a substitute for the other. Walter MacFarlane and Company were responsible for architectural iron work which was of the type that Mackintosh explicitly criticised, because their work involved the utilisation of cast iron to simulate stone, e.g. balustrades of bridges (such as Kelvinbridge or the Albert Memorial bridge in Glasgow), frontages and fenestrations for buildings, canopies and porticoes, iron columns, street lighting and street furniture. The company published an illustrated catalogue which showed their standard designs, none of which employed Glasgow Style Art Nouveau. In fact, they perpetuated a variety of historicist 'styles' (Italian Renaissance, Romanesque, Greek, Gothic, Moorish) from the 19th. century. They even executed a complete maharaja's palace in iron architecture (with glass roof) for an Indian customer.<sup>7</sup>

Thomson's reference, in 1890, to the winter garden and the proposed Peoples' Palace, took place within the context of a discussion of the desirability of new art institutions for Glasgow (a fine art gallery, a museum of art and industries), and of a situation where the School of Art could enjoy financial and creative independence. Hence Thomson

"expressed the hope that our civic rulers would bestir themselves and place it (the Glasgow School of Art) on a proper footing, by giving it a building rent free and assisted with sufficient funds so as to carry on and extend its operations, and thus relieve the managers from continually going every year hat in hand and begging about rent and funds. If there be any meaning in the talk about contributing to art for all, it should be thrown into a fund for the establishment of a modern and fully equipped school of art for the city. (Applause)".<sup>7</sup>

Along with this particular kind of optimism about the new social role of art, and the corresponding concept of the Art School's relationship and responsibility to the surrounding urban environment, went a view of Glasgow as having developed its

industrial capacities in the direction of artistic products; in fundamental ways the East-End Exhibition was widely viewed as an accessible purveyor of the new artistic ethos. Importantly, in this period before an Arts and Crafts studio system was incorporated into the curriculum of the Glasgow School of Art, the Arts and Crafts section at the East-End Exhibition demonstrated that, to a significant degree, Arts and Crafts in Glasgow represented nothing so much as industrial arts. That is to say, what was signified by the designation Arts and Crafts was markedly different from the established English meaning, and this designation was clearly conditioned by the experience of Glasgow's industrial development and mass-production capabilities:

"The Arts and Crafts Section of the East-End Exhibition has the merit of being unique. It marks the first attempt to bring together in a public collection a comprehensive representation of native industrial art. A similar collection of exotic exhibits was shown in this city some time ago, but never before were the Arts and Crafts of indigenous growth honoured with a public exposition. The extent and variety of the industrial art products of Glasgow, all illustrated at the Bellgrove show, come as a pleasant surprise to many whose preconceived notions of the trades of our city were all but exclusively associated with iron foundries and shipbuilding yards. The Glasgow of pig iron is a myth. In this city industrial art lives and thrives; in some of its branches we are second to no town in the kingdom, and in others we can more than hold our own with foreign countries".<sup>8</sup>

It is notable that the designations 'industrial arts' and 'Arts and Crafts' at this time were being employed interchangeably, and in such a way as to give the impression that certain handicrafts, like glass-staining and hammered metal work, were, for all intents and purposes, flourishing *industries*, i.e. the preserve of the factory rather than the handicraft workshop or studio. In this way, glass-staining was portrayed as having similarities to textile, carpet, and wall-paper production:

"The carpets turned out in our East-End mills are the very best made in the kingdom. In cotton printing the city ranks almost equal with Manchester. The printed hangings and woven goods of Glasgow form the staple of their class in the London market. The superiority of the dyeworks of the city and neighbourhood is admitted by firms like Liberty and Company, by whom they are largely employed. Wallpapers manufactured in Glasgow are quite equal to anything made by London houses. Glass staining is an industry that is rapidly taking a foremost place in our city, while an increasing trade is being done in hammered metal-work. These are a few of the industries in the Arts and Crafts collection".<sup>9</sup>



It is striking to what degree some of the contemporary work on show reflected quasi-Art Nouveau stylistic concerns: one commentator, for example, in referring to an embroidery design which incorporated mermaids, described how "the free bold treatment of the *motifs* and their combination into an artistic whole constitute work of the most elevated class".<sup>10</sup> At the same time, the issue of the Art School and its relationship to industry was raised in the context of an admiring description of 'rich and harmonious' carpet designs: "The objection that the production of some of these on the loom would be too expensive applies only to a limited extent in regard to the productions of an art school, the purpose of which is not to produce designs but designers".<sup>11</sup> In other words, the role of the art schools was to supply industry with trained artistic designers. This was hardly an avant-garde view. Such had, after all, been the original aim behind the setting up of art, or, more accurately, design schools in the first instance, no less than five decades before. In respect of this, the ability of Britain to compete in world markets had always supplied the central motivating tendency. As Sir James Watson asserted on the occasion of the setting up of an Art School in Helensburgh in 1882, "It was only by means such as those afforded by the Art Schools of Britain that the tide of foreign competition could be stemmed".<sup>12</sup>

There can be little doubt that, in Glasgow, significant links between Art School and industry had not been forged by the time of the East-End Exhibition. Thus, Sir James King, in discussing the Exhibition surplus in Glasgow in February 1891, looked to other urban centres as having to a degree realised the hope that had never been achieved in Glasgow: "By encouraging such schools (as the School of Design) other towns had been enabled in some respects to make advances in the beauty of design attaching to manufactures to an extent which Glasgow had failed to accomplish".<sup>13</sup> In this, the sixth year of Newbery's period as Head Master, the Glasgow School was still not meeting the requirements of the various local trades. Indeed one of the most consistent aspects of the history of the Glasgow School of Art up to this point in time, was the lack of any

coherent conception on the part of the governors as to how the task of producing a succession of 'designers' for employment by local manufacturers should be operationalised. One account of the Art School's contribution to the East-End Exhibition is particularly revealing for the way in which it implies significant dislocation between the School's production on the one hand, and public taste and manufacturers' interests on the other:

'But the contributions from that school (the Art School) are not limited to designs for textile fabrics. They include a wide range of study, illustrating the full course of training for design students. The work may in some instances be in advance of, or not in sympathy with, public taste or manufacturers' present demands, but it has to be remembered that the object of study is not to produce designs but designers'.<sup>14</sup>

Clearly the latter comment was becoming something of a catch-phrase (the linguistic practice of separating designs from designers was, by 1896, sufficiently widespread for Newbery to stigmatize it as being founded upon 'a fundamental error' emanating from the 'mind' of the public).<sup>15</sup> It could hardly be expected to conceal, however, the factor of many of the designs themselves being too 'advanced' to elicit much in the way of a sympathetic response from public and commercial spheres. Something of the public's negative attitude towards the Art School is reflected in this commentator's apologetic sounding statement that "The present collection in the East End was hurriedly brought together, and probably enough it does not do full justice to the industrial art of our city. All the same, as a first effort the section makes a better show than what most would have expected".<sup>16</sup> Many of the products on show at the Exhibition illustrated the inroads that women had made into artistic design, and this raised the topic of certain artistic activities being distinctively womens' activities. Thus it was found that "The designing of wall papers and textiles had become quite a profession of late for ladies, and in other branches of art decoration, studies for tiles and stained glass and some characteristic and clever modelling - women artists show much originality".<sup>17</sup>

When in the summer of 1891 the Glasgow Herald, in covering the Exhibition of Prize Works at South Kensington, pointed out that "Glasgow students are strong in the



department of design",<sup>18</sup> it named the young Mackintosh as having won two of the 74 silver medals gained by Scottish students (for a science and art museum in pseudo-French Renaissance style and a public hall respectively). At the same time, The Builder was attacking both the policy of South Kensington and the architectural work on show there. Mackintosh's museum design was singled out for special criticism:

"... if the department (of Science and Art) can secure no higher standard than the things to which they award prizes, they had better give up teaching architecture at all. There is a silver medal to a Glasgow student, for instance, a design for a classic building, which is bad in every way, clumsy and heavy in design and defective in drawing".<sup>19</sup>

In contrast to this negativism, the St. James Gazette argued for the relevance of what was taking place at South Kensington, whilst pointing to the factor of public apathy as an obstacle to the proper utilising of the resources being provided by the Science and Art Department:

"The National Competition at South Kensington comes and goes each year, few people outside those immediately concerned interesting themselves much in it. And yet it mirrors the forward or retrograde movement of what is of greatest importance to Great Britain's commercial welfare - her position as regards every other nation in art industries. On this account it should be very carefully scrutinized, not only by manufacturers, but by the public and the press".<sup>20</sup>

It is not difficult to understand why South Kensington was seen as providing the most significant measure for gauging Britain's potential for competition in industrial arts with the continent. Such a strategy had the value of making a highly complex and continuing problem appear to have a clear-cut potential solution. In Glasgow certain fundamental questions had still not been adequately answered: how could the city's Art School effectively serve the needs of industry in concrete terms? Other questions followed from this, such as, what should be the appropriate organisational structure for the School itself in addressing this issue? In respect of these requirements there had never been any productive dialogue between the Governors of the School and the officials at South Kensington. At quarterly Board meetings, if the goals of the Art School were discussed, they were not considered sufficiently important to be recorded.

But there was also considerable ambiguity attaching itself to the actual relationship between art and commercialism within British society as a whole. On this front, the meaning of apparent developments accruing within the continental situation could be seriously misunderstood, as could the issue of how manifest artistic abilities could be fostered in the first instance. According to Baillie Dunlop, speaking in 1882, Britain had lagged far behind its continental rivals because it had proved incapable of recognising and developing the incipient talent and 'artistic genius' of the rising population:

"Communities and corporations must be on the outlook, watching for every development of art proclivities amongst the young around us, so that a kindly, fostering hand may be extended to them early in life, leading them upward and onward to success; and I say that art, to be prosecuted with success and comfort, must be taken up early in life, and followed with such an enthusiasm as art students alone can understand. Those nations who have excelled in art have enjoyed it for its own sake - rejoicing in it, fed themselves with it as if it were bread, basked in it as if it were sunshine, shouted at the sight of it, danced with the delight of it, quarrelled for it, fought for it, starved for it - did, in fact, precisely the opposite with it of what we want to do with it. They made it to keep - we, as a nation of shopkeepers, make it to sell".<sup>21</sup>

An idealistic/romantic conception of art here accompanies a negative view of commercialism; and yet this was expressed within the context of a speech given inside the Art School - a speech ostensibly addressing the issue of the position of art within the expansion of Britain's manufacturing and industrial products. The central tension embodied here is between the notion of the artist as craftsman and public servant, and the concept of the artist as exponent of art for art's sake, an individual separated off from the commercial life of his or her time, and someone who despises (as it were legitimately) both utilitarianism and a vulgar public lacking in aesthetic sensibility. The form of the 'discussion' here prefigures the polemics of Newbery in his period when the School of Art became a burgeoning institution; a similarly romantic view of continental art characterises the Newbery period, but in respect of the latter we confront an active attempt to penetrate the continent in order to appropriate elements from it for Glasgow.



One facet of the expressed optimism regarding Glasgow's ability to produce impressive 'industrial arts' at the time of the East-End Exhibition centred on the allegedly diminishing significance of continental designers for Scottish products:

"It would possibly be going too far to say that all the varied and beautiful objects on view are exclusively Scottish in conception as well as workmanship. We have not yet got quite as far as that, but it should be made known, for the benefit at least of those gentlemen who are always harping on the supremacy of continental nations, that the French designer, whose brains used to be indispensable in numerous trades to the employment of native labour, is rapidly disappearing from our country; in some important industries, indeed, he has taken his final adieu. As a general rule, it may be stated that French designs are now only used in cotton printing and the manufacture of ladies' dress goods. Otherwise, home designers hold the field".<sup>22</sup>

At the School of Art's Annual Meeting two years later, Newbery proclaimed that "What he wanted in Glasgow was an improvement in art industries, so that there might be no need to apply to foreign labour and production. (Applause)".<sup>23</sup> Then in 1896 he announced that "The French designer (as a worker) in Glasgow was now as extinct as the dodo".<sup>24</sup>

There is not a little irony in the fact that Newbery should have started out by expressing this (at the time undoubtedly popular) view, but then later be active in scouring the Art and Design schools on the continent in search of, not only ideas and stimuli, but importable artists and designers for Glasgow. Newbery's policy though, had all along been to have the School as open as possible to the best available external influences, and, given the real experience of the accolades achieved by the Glasgow Art Nouveau practitioners abroad, he clearly recognised, to paraphrase Pevsner, that the initiative in the modern movement had passed to Europe.

In June 1904, introductions obtained from the Foreign Office via the Scotch Education Department led to Newbery visiting "some of the Academies and the chief schools of Arts and Crafts in Germany and Austria".<sup>25</sup> In the previous year, Hoffmann and Moser had founded the Wiener Werkstatte; Muthesius was appointed Superintendent of the Arts and Crafts Schools of the Prussian Board of Trade in Berlin. In actualizing radical changes in German art education, Muthesius invited Peter Behrens to Dusseldorf and Hans Polzig to Breslau to respectively take up the position of Head of the Arts and Crafts Academy

in each city. At around the same time van de Velde became Principal of the Art School in Weimar, and Bruno Paul took up the position of Head of the Berlin School of Arts and Crafts. The clear 'initiative' then, was to be found by this stage in Austria and Germany. Unfortunately, however, when it came down to actually choosing new staff from Europe for the Glasgow School of Art neither of these countries was to figure.

In February of 1904 it was reported that a deputation from the Glasgow School, consisting of Newbery, James Fleming (the Chairman), W. Forrest Salmon and J. J. Burnet (the vice-chairmen), had recently visited

"some of the most typically important among the State and Municipal Schools of Art in France, in order to ascertain exactly wherein the work of the Glasgow School could be further improved and developed. Special attention was paid to the French Schools of Decorative Art and the relations existing between the various Schools of Art and the Art industries of the cities and towns were also carefully gone into. The governors had interviews in Paris with several of the better known designers such as M. Eugene Grasset and M. Karbowski, with the object of engaging a decorative artist to come to Glasgow and take charge of the Design and Decorative Department of the Glasgow School of Art and with special care of the students studying as textile designers".<sup>26</sup>

As a result of their efforts, Adolphe Giralton arrived from Paris to take up the position of Professor of Design and Decoration. Giralton's work was described in the Glasgow press at the time as being "strong and original, of a distinct character, and is carried out with that perfection of technique that is so noteworthy in all French craftsmanship".<sup>27</sup> It was indeed technical competency that the Governors chose to emphasise in justifying the appointment of a French designer. The Spectator referred to the School's continental appointments as being 'experimental', but did not eschew the articulation of certain misgivings about them:

"One of the most interesting experiments of recent years has been the appointment of M. Adolphe Giralton, a Paris designer of the first rank, as Professor of Design and Decoration, and of M. Eugene Bourdon as Professor of Architecture. In the latter case one need feel no surprise, so well known is the superiority of French methods of teaching architecture to our own, but that it should have been necessary to invite a French designer to Glasgow of all places is somewhat of a shock. Our design more than holds its own on the Continent, and though an infusion of new ideas may be useful, we have some doubts as to the ultimate success of this part of the venture. The report, however (i.e. the report of the School's Governors), lays stress on M. Giralton's technical competency, and herein we may certainly be content to be taught".<sup>28</sup>



In the report on French Art Education published by the Glasgow School of Art deputation at the end of 1904, it was asserted that the ordinary French art student followed a definite and vigorous course of training which ensured a thoroughness which it had not as yet been possible to reach in Scotland. Moreover, in France it was everywhere felt that art education was an 'absolute necessity': "It is encouraged alike by the State, by the civic authorities and by the manufacturers. The gratuitous instruction that everywhere prevails may partly account for the organisation and methods to be found in the French Schools".<sup>29</sup> The French people, it was claimed, took art and art instruction much more seriously than was the case in Scotland. The report, however, was careful to differentiate the Glasgow School of Art from its environmental context in this respect, and to point up the significance of the School's relationship to the continental situation: "The accommodation for work afforded by the Glasgow School of Art compares favourably, in many respects, with that existing in the French schools. The general excellence of the work of the Glasgow School of Art, in the opinion of the deputation, will bear comparison with that produced by the Continental schools".<sup>30</sup> The measure of excellence then was clearly to be provided by the continent, more specifically by France where the influence of art and art instruction were apparent in the civilisation surrounding art institutions, and consequently the incorporation of a continental element into the Glasgow School was deemed to be little short of an absolute necessity. But, not surprisingly, aspersions were cast by numerous locals upon the abilities of the continental contingent to supply what Glasgow really needed in the way of art education. A certain 'Simon Pure' wrote to the Glasgow Herald to express such reservations, making explicit the fact that these developments were symptomatic of an attitude of contemptuousness for local persons of merit:

"The governors at the meeting (of the School of Art in the Institute Galleries) kept continually harping on the great advantage (and great expense) it was to the school to employ three or four foreigners on the teaching staff. It seems to me there is no need to brag about this; it is simply casting a quite uncalled for slur upon native talent. There are far better art teachers to be had in this country than are made in Germany or other foreign countries; and I am informed, on the authority of competent judges, that

the method and style of work taught by the foreign element in the Glasgow School of Art is not nearly so good as in other schools. The work turned out is too machine-like in appearance and there is evidently no scope allowed for individuality".<sup>31</sup>

The latter comment here is extremely significant. If the work in question did indeed have a 'machine-like' appearance then it could be argued that logical principles of design and construction were being combined with machine mass-production possibilities. Such a move would have been commensurate with the central aims of the Art Nouveau movement, and, as we saw in chapter four, it was in the period of the Glasgow School's most notable successes abroad that Newbery was articulating the essentials of Art Nouveau theory (the total work of art) in contradistinction to the limited tenets of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Another interpretation of the above statement could be given. One could emphasise the point that the complaint made about there being 'no scope allowed for individuality' articulates a central Art Nouveau concern, namely, that insistence upon the cult of the individual which van de Velde had appropriated from Nietzsche for the purpose of disregarding contemporary collectivism, sentimentalism and eclecticism. In this context 'machine-like' appearance might be accepted as referring in the direction of the imitative design and irrational machine production which represented anathema to van de Velde himself. As we saw in chapter three, however, allowing scope for individuality was something which Newbery was widely commended for, not least by contributors to art and design journals. In a book entitled A Comparative Sketch of American Education as Shown in the St. Louis Exhibition of 1904, John Clark, who lectured on the subject of Education at Glasgow University, noted that

"It may be of more than passing interest to state that the descriptive articles of the Exhibition are unanimous in saying that the work of the Glasgow School of Art is unsurpassed, and that the general excellence of Great Britain in the teaching of Art - especially of industrial Art - can hardly be called in question".<sup>31a</sup>

But what was actually meant by 'industrial art' at this stage? The issue of the extent to which the 'foreigners' imported to the Glasgow School of Art could be said to be



exponents of artistic design for industrial production will be examined in greater detail shortly. In the meantime some clarification is required with regard to the manner in which the term 'industrial art' was being employed in a period witnessing an upsurge of interest in Arts and Crafts activities. The most relevant contemporary source for exemplification in this respect is the Wiener Werkstatte.

## 2. The Vienna Workshops: Luxury Goods and the Fetishization of Handicrafts.

Even those who acknowledged the fact that mechanization had arrived in England and that it was unlikely to go away, wrote Pevsner in 1949, can not be considered creators of the Modern Movement. "There is still an immense difference between this hesitating acknowledgement of machinery and the wholehearted welcome which it received in the writings of the leaders of the next generation. Not one of them was English; England's activity in the preparation of the Modern Movement came to an end immediately after Morris' death".<sup>32</sup> The initiative then passed to the continent and America. In attempting to explain this development Pevsner posited the view that "so long as the new style had been a matter which in practice concerned only the wealthier class, England could foot the bill. As soon as the problem began to embrace the people as a whole, other nations took the lead . . . nations that did not accept or did not know England's educational and social contrasts between the privileged classes and those in the suburbs and the slums".<sup>33</sup> Hence the innovations seen to attach to Morris had not transcended the sphere of interest and activity of the privileged who appropriated the products of those innovations in their attempts to achieve distance from the ugliness and sordidness of an industrialised, urbanised social reality. Pevsner implied a concept of English society as having at that time been polarised in economic and social class terms, and with a public sphere incapable of being penetrated to any significant degree by artists, designers and architects specifically because of this polarization.

The phenomenon of Glasgow Art Nouveau, however, which centred on the Mackintosh group, does not easily fit into this context, not least because a separate and distinctive movement from that in England emerged in Glasgow. In a letter written to Josef Hoffmann in 1902 on the subject of the setting up of a craft product workshop as an offshoot of the Vienna Secession, Mackintosh demonstrated, not merely his own wholehearted welcoming of mechanization, but also his ability to project forward in time to a stage of development where artistic quality and mass production could merge, thus allowing even the poorest-off members of society to acquire genuinely beautiful products of design: but by that stage, products that were the result of the machine rather than the handicraftsman. Importantly, Mackintosh's expressed views point beyond the Wiener Werkstatte's costly luxurious designs, as well as its own tension-filled relationship to mass-production which perpetuated the limited equation of quality with small-scale production. Clearly, he was able to acknowledge that machine-made goods did not necessarily have to be either plain or ugly; that machine techniques need not violate integrity of design (Pugin had argued this point in the 1840's):

"I have the greatest possible sympathy for your latest idea and consider it absolutely brilliant. Moser is perfectly right in his plans to produce for the time being only items that have been ordered. If your programme is to achieve artistic success (and artistic success must be your first aim), then every object you produce must have a strong mark of individuality, beauty and outstanding workmanship. Your aim from the beginning must be that every object is created for a specific purpose and a specific place. Later on, when the high quality of your work and financial success have strengthened your hand and your position, you can walk boldly in the full light of the world, attack the factory trade on its own ground, and the greatest work that can be achieved in this century, you can achieve it: namely the production of all objects for everyday use in beautiful (magnificent) form and at such a price that they lie within the buying range of the poorest, and in such quantities that the ordinary man in the street is forced to buy them because there is nothing else available and because soon he will not want to buy anything else. But until that time many years of hard, earnest, honest work by the leaders of the modern movement will be required before all obstacles will be removed either totally or partially. For a beginning the 'artistic' (excuse the term) detractors must be subdued and those who allow themselves to be influenced by them must be convinced through continuous effort and through the gradual success of the modern movement that the movement is no silly hobby of a few who try to achieve fame comfortably through their eccentricity, but that the modern movement is something living, something good, the only possible art for all, the highest achievement of our time".<sup>34</sup>



There is in this, as statements relating to 'the ordinary man in the street' and 'art for all' testify, an inherently democratic mode of thinking. Carl Schorske, in a reference to the Wiener Werkstätte, mentions how this Arts and Crafts cooperative was inspired by the English example, but 'minus the socialism'.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps this can be taken as touching upon a fundamental difference between the Viennese and Scottish schools from the outset; to what extent did Hoffmann and Moser envisage design standardization for a massified society? And to what degree did they compromise the underlying social-ethical concern of the English movement which inspired them?

The views expressed in this Mackintosh letter are extremely close to those of Muthesius who established the Deutsche Werkbund in 1907 (at which time Muthesius was aiming his invective at both craftsmen and industrialists for perpetuating outmoded traditional forms). Muthesius was attached to the Germany embassy in London for seven years (1896-1903) and it is known that he visited Glasgow on a number of occasions, spending time with both Mackintosh and Newbery. Muthesius viewed architecture and design as moving towards standardization, and he was convinced that this was necessary in order to achieve "that universality characteristic of ages of harmonious culture".<sup>36</sup> Standardization, for Muthesius, was not to be equated with sterility and the castration of creative talent (as van de Velde was later to claim when it was becoming apparent that standardisation and anonymity in industry were intensifying the subjugation of the individual), but rather with excellence and purity of design.

At the time when the letter was written, Fritz Warndorfer had travelled to Scotland to meet Mackintosh. On his return to Vienna he financed the founding of a workshop for the production of objects designed by the Secession which was to develop into the Wiener Werkstätte. The direction of the latter was entrusted to Hoffmann (who drew up bylaws and a comprehensive programme) and Koloman Moser, with Warndorfer assuming an administrative capacity as financial manager. Hoffmann had met Mackintosh in 1900 when Felician Freiherr von Myrbach, who was appointed Director of the Vienna School of Arts

and Crafts in 1899, had invited Hoffmann to London (according to a letter from Warndorfer Hoffmann spent two days in Glasgow).<sup>37</sup> Although the Wiener Werkstätte exemplified a considerable remoteness from the issue of the integration of art and industry (which, in a somewhat diffuse manner, it advocated) its sympathetic appraisal of Morris's idealization of the medieval craft manufacture of the guilds did not mean that it desired the restoration of the values of what Adolf Loos (an uncompromising critic of the Werkstätte) termed a 'true craft'. This talk of a 'true craft' was perceived by the Werkstätte as belonging to an outmoded language in contradiction with the spirit of the times. It is important to emphasise, therefore, the precise nature of the interpretation of Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement which Hoffmann and Moser were working with. In a letter to Thomas Howarth, written in 1947, in response to a request from Howarth for information about his 'adventure with Mackintosh' at the turn-of-the-century, Hoffmann wrote that "the Morris movement had been of very great interest to us of England's efforts in the subject of *industrial arts*".<sup>38</sup> This immediately raises an ambiguity. Why refer to the Arts and Crafts of the 'Morris movement' as 'industrial arts'? "So long as our cities, our houses, our rooms, our furniture, our effects, our clothes and our jewellery", proclaimed the 'Working Programme' of the Werkstätte in 1905, "so long as our language and our feelings fail to reflect the spirit of our times in a plain, simple and beautiful way, we shall lag infinitely far behind our ancestors; no lie can conceal these weaknesses". If Hoffman and Moser were really looking to the *Zeitgeist* for guidance (and it should be noted that this concept of a 'spirit of the age' obscures recognition of in-built contradictions, i.e. of obsolescent social forms co-existing with new modes of thought and action) then they could hardly avoid confrontation with the contemporary reality reflected in the achievement of industrial technology for material production (in 1907 Muthesius wrote about there being an "inner relationship between the *Zeitgeist* and the engineering spirit").<sup>39</sup> Art production - which always necessarily involves technical



process - could not be expected to remain outside of this and yet still claim to be essentially a 'product' of its time. It was on this point that the metaphysics of the 'Working Programme' ousted the materialism. But where a concrete instance of art production was cited, this made it clear that the initiators were actually opposing handicraft production to machine production, on the grounds that the two were mutually contradictory; thus it was asserted that "We want to do what the Japanese have always done, *and no one could imagine machine-made arts and crafts in Japan*". It follows logically from this statement that no one could imagine machine-made arts and crafts anywhere whatever. "Our aim is to create an island of tranquility in our own country, which, amid the joyful hum of arts and crafts, would be welcome to anyone who professes faith in Ruskin and Morris";<sup>39</sup> yet as Eduard Sekler points out, Hoffmann had neither the talent, temperament or background for a course of lonely opposition: "His strength was to design from an unflinching capacity to invent forms, not from a rigorously formulated and maintained revolutionary position. He was not fascinated by new technological developments and does not seem to have had any particular interest in the great forces at work behind the scenes of his time".<sup>40</sup>

The Wiener Werkstätte became a founder member of the Deutsche Werkbund in 1907. The Werkbund was established through the unification of a number of designers and manufacturers for the purpose of fostering industrial design and machine art. The Werkstätte maintained close ties with Germany throughout its existence and it established a joint sales arrangement with the *Deutschen Werkstätten für Handwerkskunst* (German Workshops for Handicraft) which offered products from the Werkstätte in their Hanover, Berlin, Hamburg, Munich and Dresden salesrooms. In 1910 a subsidiary company was founded in Berlin where the first WW exhibition had been held in 1904 (selected stores all over Germany displayed, in characteristically 'art exhibition' form, an assortment of WW goods) but expected turnover was disappointing and financial difficulties were encountered. It would therefore be inaccurate to portray the WW as

being consistently anti-commercial: world fairs, international art shows and exhibitions were, after all, explicitly designed to increase exports as well as to enhance reputations. However, a number of its members, particularly Hoffmann, had negative views of mass-production and the level of quality it could provide for attractive goods.

It was from Otto Wagner that Hoffmann learned clarity of stereometric form, that ornamental elements are accessories, and that large surfaces, space, compactness, simplicity of volume, involved geometric shapes. "The geometric interpenetration and optical clarity of the visual square", commented D. Frey, Wagner's contemporary, "have become the aesthetic experience of our time".<sup>41</sup> The geometric style, as applied by Hoffmann and Moser in particular to the works produced by the WW in what has been referred to as its 'severe period' raised important implications for the issue of the possible mass-production of certain WW creations. In drawing the contrast between the WW and Walter Gropius's Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau (1918-1932) W. G. Fischer makes the point that many of the former's designs can be viewed as "a brilliant anticipation of the Bauhaus idea".<sup>42</sup> Fischer recognises the potential inherent in what he terms 'constructional' Art Nouveau designs for large-scale reproduction. The intention of the Bauhaus was to create the kind of good quality prototype designs that could subsequently be mass-produced, "(world revolution permitting) to adorn the homes of the emancipated proletariat".<sup>42</sup> Despite the factor of the WW remaining faithful to the concept of individually made, unrepeatably objects, from a *stylistic* point of view, the architectonic logic and the geometric form-language (*Konstruktiver Jugendstil*) contained the potential for the kind of reproduction which Mackintosh clearly had in mind. Says Fischer, "one has only to think of the baskets and vases in white-painted, perforated sheet metal, *ready for mass production*, which look like a curtain-raiser to the great formal drama played out by the Bauhaus and De Stijl".<sup>43</sup>



But after 1904 the geometric restraint of the Werkstatte's early period gave way to a preoccupation with chic and frivolous stylization, and by the time of the *Kunstschau* exhibition of 1908 the promise of a truly challenging application of avant-gardist design theory had become exhausted. As Kirk Varnedoe describes,

"The loss of tectonic logic bespoke the demise of the early reform spirit of the Werkstatte enterprise. . . . The *Kunstschau* was a swan song. It marked the end of an epoch that had begun with the founding of the Secession, an epoch in which the decorative arts had been central to all that was progressive and ambitious in the modern movement. After 1908, the minor arts once again became minor, responding to taste more than shaping change; and the Wiener Werkstätte became, more and more, simply a business built on embellishment".<sup>44</sup>

2. In What Sense Was the Glasgow School of Art a Workshop?

At the Art School's Annual Meeting in 1895 James Fleming, the Chairman, spoke about the satisfaction which the Governors experienced in finding that a large proportion of the awards from the South Kensington competition had been granted in connection with designs as applied to manufacture, architecture and decorative art. He then went on to emphasise that the Governors, with the cooperation of Newbery, "were specially desirous of keeping the teaching of the school in this direction as much as possible, and he dared say they would all recognise that it was wise to do so when they remembered that they lived in a city practically living on its manufacturers".<sup>44</sup> The importance of new designs for commercial purposes was touched upon when Fleming referred to the fact that the public were "no longer content to buy old designs over again"; what they demanded was something better and more artistic than they had been getting. He squarely placed the onus upon manufacturers to acknowledge new artistic developments when he stressed that "the manufacturer who did not march with the times in this matter would not be able to maintain his position owing to the intense competition of modern times". Fleming (who was also Chairman of the Glasgow Liberal Council and President of the Liberal Club and who was knighted in 1906) was himself a managing partner of the firm of Cochran and Fleming, Britannia Pottery, Glasgow. An ex-student of the Art School, he was initially entrusted with supervision of the firm's pottery before becoming a partner.

A similar view had been expressed by Newbery two years previously. On that occasion it had been proclaimed that "commerce certainly still continues to pay homage to art".<sup>45</sup> In one of his most interesting polemics, Newbery here addressed the issue of the relationship of hand-crafted products to mass-produced goods, and in doing so illustrated that, at this time, his position was highly ambiguous in that he was both accepting and evading urban mechanized realities. In contemporary society, Newbery



maintained, men were striving to restore once again the lost position of the decorative arts. The tradition of workmanship, however, was not in as healthy a condition as in the past, and the combination of art and workmanship that was the rule in bygone days had become "chiefly remarkable by its exception from the general order of things". In establishing this point Newbery was clearly focusing upon mechanization as the major force that had corrupted the symbiotic relationship between art and workmanship which had proven so fruitful before the emergence of an industrial order. Mechanization had crucial consequences for the quality of design: ". . . design of a sort exists very much in our midst; but one is often tempted to wish that the machine had less power in the determination of public taste, and that hand-made products did not command an apparently fancy price, simply and solely because of a comparison of cost of production".<sup>46</sup> Art and workmanship reacted upon each other, but in order for the workmanship to progress it had to be as free as the art which it embodied; the machine was a poor apology for the hand, and yet the majority of designs being produced were executed for the machine, the minority for the handicraftsman. Nothing need be wrong in this, Newbery was swift to add, since the machine was a "perfectly passive agent, with a personality neither to mar nor make as far as art is concerned". Provided with a good design and good material to work upon, within its own limits the machine would give a sound piece of work in return. On the other hand, however,

"you cannot have the machine to do all, and yet expect the handicraft to thrive, especially when, as now, the action of the machine is distinctly aggressive, and is tending towards the displacement of all manual labour. Neither can you have good art if the one end and aim be its production by the machine, for that can but end in the possession of an art which is at the level of the machine. Still, this mechanical Frankenstein is a stern fact of our lives, and must perforce be accepted as such. Food, good or bad, it must have, and if its art be accepted the technical education necessary to the same must likewise be supplied. But we are at least at liberty to go higher. For, happily for the salvation of things concerned, the machine leaves us with productions purely art very much where the sometimes regretted medieval times left them. The machine cannot build a cathedral nor carve its wood and stones. It cannot fill its windows with stained glass, nor cover its floors with inlay, nor gild its roofs with mosaics".<sup>47</sup>

in other words, the machine was rendered impotent in the face of Arts and Crafts concerns. Art, and clearly this included architecture, was as free as ever it was, claimed Newbery, and was potentially capable of producing high quality work in design; but because this art could only be accomplished through the worker and his workmanship, it was the workman who required the greater attention, "not because of his lack of brains, but because of his lack of opportunities for using them". The older workman learned from his father, and operated within an environment which tended to enhance his role as a better instructor of his son in turn. But the modern workman had broken with this tradition, and as a consequence, had to send his son out of the workshop "to pick up his trade somewhat as the sparrows get their crumbs". Since, of necessity, art required certain conditions in order to express itself, if these conditions were restored as they had been, and in some cases, still were, art and technical education would again signify one and the same thing.

A number of points require to be made about the arguments in this lecture. Firstly, Newbery presents a negative appraisal of contemporary design and implies that mechanized production, because of the inherent limitations of contemporary machinery, is chiefly responsible for compromised design because designs are executed in the first instance in order to be reproducible by this inherently limited technology. Secondly, he portrays handicrafts as being superior to mass production on the basis of the assumption that handwork is not hampered by the limitations of machinery. Thirdly, mechanization is (somewhat reluctantly) accepted as being a fact of modern life commensurate with modern production requirements, but subsequently the problem becomes, not one of mechanization (and its correlate of dehumanization) as such, but of the disjunction between the technological and artistic spheres of production respectively: a disjunction that is reflected in separate forms of (artistic and technical) education. Thus handicraft production, whilst potentially innovative, flexible, and creative, has fostered highly-priced goods; and mechanized production, at the cost of



routinization and the worker's unhappiness, has made possible cheaply-priced commodities, but commodities which lack any admirable artistic qualities.

However much Newbery expressed the hope that this disjunction would be breached, it seemed that technology and art were to remain polarised in his eyes. "In the year 1846 the manufacturer wanted the art without the technique - which was foolish", he asserted three years after delivering the above lecture, "in the year 1896 the manufacturer wanted the technique with the art - which was still more foolish".<sup>48</sup> Behind this apparently irresoluble attitude lay the acknowledgement that Britain lacked a systematised technical education; and by this he was thinking of an education system capable of operating in conjunction with the institutional integration of art and architecture with industry. One major problem was attributable to the fact that "latterly the relations of art to industry were relegated to a separate and, as it came to be considered, an inferior class of artists".<sup>49</sup> Even in 1908 Newbery was complaining that "we suffered too much in Glasgow from the chasm which had lain too long between architecture and engineering; and in respect of that particular loss, which he thought was a great loss to the profession, he believed we suffer more in Glasgow than other great cities in Europe".<sup>50</sup> In 1896, when illustrating the erroneous nature of the thinking which bestowed a superior status upon the worker in fine art (the 'artist') in relation to the office of the worker in applied art (the 'designer'), Newbery put forward two significant arguments; firstly, he gave an instance of the Art Nouveau concept of the Universal Artist where he cited certain historical precedents:

"Van Eyck, Giotto, Botocelli, Michael Angelo did not confine themselves to painting pictures and decorating; they made drawings for the furniture of the church and of the palace, designed the banquet vessels, and prepared cartoons. Durer had left a book of designs which ranged from a chair to a chalice, from a boot to a book plate.

None of these great artists fancied they were demeaning themselves in so doing. There were no manufacturers in these days"<sup>51</sup>

Newbery's second argument had him focusing upon the continent where the disparity between the artist and the designer had allegedly been jettisoned. In Britain,

Even today a designer as such was not admitted to the membership of certain art circles. With us to starve in a £10 studio was considered more heroic than to earn an honest £10 a year by designing. In France the designer, whether of posters or to advertise pills, or of dishes to eat potatoes out of, could get the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and could have his works bought by the State as readily as the man who posed nude women lying on sofas or painted the victories of the French arms".<sup>52</sup>

In the light of this happy state-of-affairs in France then was it not to be bewailed rather than celebrated that in Britain "in the year 1896 the French monopoly of designing was as dead as Queen Anne"?<sup>53</sup> Indeed this was the central ambiguity in Newbery's position at that time; he had to pay lip service to the line that it was a good thing that the Frenchman who had, in the earlier part of the 19th. century, "supplied the design for the Paisley shawl, the Glasgow carpets, the Birmingham hardware, and the Nottingham laces"<sup>54</sup> was now no longer required, whilst at the same time acknowledging both, on the one hand, the disjunction in Britain between art and technology with the correlated inferior status bestowed on designers, and, on the other, the success and status enjoyed by designers on the continent. Where this latter factor was concerned, it had to follow that such status could only have resulted from the ability of continental designers to produce the kind of work which could extend the scope of art far beyond the limits of fine art, namely, in the direction of craft and technical application, while refusing to compromise artistic quality for artistic unity. But when it came to articulating the buoyant claim that Britain was now capable of producing goods that were both attractive and affordable, Newbery's focus became, not only narrowed, but considerably blurred. For one thing, he could hardly, at this point in time, in the light of his comments in 1893, suddenly express optimism about mass-produced goods in general. Nonetheless, he was prepared to claim that

"you could now get decent furniture designed and made in Britain; well printed books and really beautiful book bindings; and wall papers and cretonnes which gave the lie direct to the belief that the cheap always meant the nasty, and which have beaten the French on their own ground".<sup>55</sup>

This latter claim did not go unchallenged, and one commentator, subsequent to having interpreted Newbery as arguing that the degeneration in the art of designing - a



degeneration which Newbery had himself bewailed in the past - had lately given way to a considerably improved situation, proceeded to take him to task on the issue of the actual prices being asked for the items he had referred to:

"If I were on speaking terms with Mr. Newbery I should ask him to let me know where you get these things at a cheap rate. My experience - and it is a very recent one - is that if one wants to get really artistic and really good things, you have to pay pretty sweetly for them".<sup>56</sup>

Here was a problem that could scarcely be ignored. Newbery had allowed his optimism to run away with him; the ideal of cheaply priced goods of high design quality, in actuality, still seemed a long way off for Glasgow. But as he was already acknowledging, the most impressive initiatives in this area were to be found on the continent. But were continental designers really capable of supplying what Glasgow needed in the sphere of industrial art production?

By the middle of the 1890's, the numbers of students enrolled in the Art School had fallen considerably since 1880 when the total had been 953. Of the 600 attending the School in 1895, 200 followed no other occupation than that of student; the majority of these were day students. The occupations of the remaining 400 covered a very wide ground, from those of designer, draughtsman, lithograph artist and architect, to stone-carver, wood-carver, bookbinder, shopkeeper, warehouseman, accountant, clerk and housefactor. As in previous years, a substantial number were clearly using the School to advance their training in subjects in which they were already working. The decline in numbers was due mainly to the Glasgow Education Authority having organised, since 1884, its own system of elementary art teaching in schools. Throughout Newbery's period at Glasgow he had been actively increasing and reorganising staff. By 1894 a substantial increase in specialism accompanied what had been a considerable staff increase after 1890. Some idea of the direction in which the School was moving can be obtained from an examination of the specialist courses, which included Architecture and Building Construction, Architectural Design, History of Architecture, Glass-Staining,

Wood and Stone Carving, Needlework, Metal Work, Ceramic Design and Decoration, and Book Decoration. By 1900 the internal organisation of the teaching was structured around four main Departments: Drawing and Painting and Life Classes; Architecture; Modelling; and Design and Decorative Art. Almost all of the junior posts in 1900 were occupied by ex-students of the School who were selected by Newbery. The staff list of that year illustrates to what extent the appointment of eminent foreigners to the posts of Departmental Heads (or Professors) represented a new policy. By 1904 five of the six Professors were foreign (Giraldon, Delville, Artot, Bourdon and Baltus; Architecture had two Heads and there was, in addition, a 'Professor of Antique'). From 1903 onwards the School played a significant role in the training of local school teachers, enrolling in that year 734 such teachers, which, in addition to the 702 ordinary or diploma students, constituted a total of 1436. One notable aspect of the constitution of students in 1904 in respect of occupations, is that the greater majority were drawn from a much narrower range of design crafts than had been the case in the 1880's. In 1895 Newbery had stated in an interview<sup>57</sup> that designers, lithographic artists and draughtsmen predominated, and this remained the case in 1905; but as the Annual Report for that year shows, these three occupational categories were calculated together; in that year they accounted for 205, the next largest category being Architecture with 106. Under Newbery's control of artistic and educational policy the function of the School was to train those already embarked on a professional career.

In 1884 one of the Governors, Edward Howell, introduced at a Committee Meeting the issue of "commissions being invited from Manufacturers for Designs to be executed by Students of the School, the proceeds of which might be divided between the Committee, the Teacher and the Student".<sup>58</sup> If the cleavage between production and local demand, creation and application, was not breached as a result of this recommendation, neither was it to be breached with the subsequent emphasis placed upon Design in the Newbery period. The Programme for Session 1905-6 of the Advanced Course (First and Second



Divisions) in Design and Decorative Art, subsequent to Giralidon's appointment as Professor of that Department, illustrates to what extent a social situation in which the artist/designer worked for individual wealthy patrons was assumed. The Programme begins: "A rich Amateur, a great admirer of Shakespeare, desires a Hall to be decorated, in which lectures might be given on the great Poet and his works". The 'Requirements' for this included a silk hanging in one colour; a dado and a frieze in carved wood - "some parts may be Gilt"; eighteen windows in stained-glass; "A Memorial Tablet to be placed on the Wall. The Tablet must be of Marble and Enamel"; "A Case or Shrine to contain the manuscript of *Julius Caesar*, The Shrine to be of Gold, Silver, Enamel, and Precious Stones"; "mosaic Pavement of the Hall - four Colours"; "A Table Cover to lay on the Table upon which stands the Shrine, Silk Tapestry or Embroidery - one Colour and Gold".<sup>59</sup>

The hedonistic imagination fostering such luxurious, ornamental craft production was unquestionably far-removed from industrial art and the concept of general environmental design for a modern urbanised society favoured by Mackintosh. Under Giralidon Design in the Glasgow School of Art was being conceived in terms of ultra-chic Arts and Crafts, and in doing so it was unavoidably invoking the paradigm of the life-style of the cultivated wealthy. Such could hardly be said to be commensurate with the most modern European trends after 1900, which were concerned to propagate closer co-operation between architect, designer, worker and manufacturer. It is revealing that Mackintosh, on completing the new Art School building in 1909, should have chosen to indicate the progress of the School during the period that Newbery had been Director by mentioning expansion of staff alone; that "when he took up that position 25 years ago the staff numbered 9; today it numbered 60". No other achievement was referred to.<sup>60</sup>

By 1905 the Design and Decorative Art studio within the Art School was actively preoccupied with the kind of arts which Newbery, in 1893, had specified as being beyond the scope of mechanization. At that time, complementarity between craft production and

technologized production had been deemed a desirable (even a necessary) reality. Now, however, it seemed that Glasgow designers need not seriously consider the phenomena of mechanization and the mass-product at all, but should be content to promulgate forms of ornamentation which could have only the most limited social applicability.

In the early 1890's all of those who were active in setting up craft studios in Glasgow had attended the School of Art. Among the first of these were the brothers Peter Wylie and William Armstrong Davidson, trained silversmiths who established a metalwork and design studio in 93 Hope Street for both commissions and the execution of the designs of other practitioners (including Mackintosh). The former brother became acquainted with Mackintosh when both were attending evening classes at the Art School in 1884, i.e. before Newbery's arrival. As well as publishing two books on the craft of designing in precious metals, Peter Wylie Davidson also wrote on the craft of 'Decorative Leatherwork' (1923), drawing on his teaching experience at the Art School subsequent to his appointment there in 1897. This particular kind of work had been on show at the East-End Exhibition in 1891, and had been commented upon as a notable new example of the kind of industrial art being produced by certain local manufacturers such as the British Patent Leather Cloth Company ("Tasteful in design and artistically treated in colours, gold, and bronze, these panels are well fitted to show something of the 'possibilities' of this promising material").<sup>61</sup> Decorative leatherwork was not, therefore, a craft limited to the workshop in 1891.

William Kellock Brown, a metalwork teacher at the Art School (appointed in 1887), set up a studio in 1892, and in the following year a studio was established by Margaret Gilmour (who attended the School from 1877 until 1880) for teaching in leatherwork, beaten metalwork, enamelling, ceramics, embroidery and wood carving. The Davidsons, Brown and Gilmour all attended the Art School in the period in which that institution



was pursuing a somewhat narrow and conventional syllabus, and before an Arts and Crafts section was actively introduced into it.

In April 1895 an Arts and Crafts Exhibition in the Queen's Rooms, Glasgow, was organised by, among others, Newbery, Kellock Brown, George Walton, John J. Burnett, Alexander Paterson, John Guthrie and L. R. Crosskey (of the Industrial Arts Department of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College). A contemporary report<sup>62</sup> claimed that the exhibition had been first suggested by a Miss Boyle of Hillhead, whose idea was to confine the exhibits entirely to the work of amateurs; subsequently, however, the basis had been considerably widened, and although an amateur section was included, it was largely professional work that was shown. Interestingly, the whole affair was to have a charitable function. The proceeds were to go to the Soldiers' Home at Maryhill, an institution which had "already done much good work, keeping the men from the public-houses and other evils of the world".<sup>63</sup> Such charitable actions were characteristic of the more altruistic sections of Glasgow's middle class, disturbed as they were by the aspects of urban deprivation that were apparent to them, such as drunkenness or weak commitment to religiosity. The exhibition, so it was claimed, had 'caught on' and the attendances were 'excellent':

"The arrangement of the large hall reminds one of a bazaar - the resemblance, however, is only superficial, the contents of the stalls being infinitely more worthy of one's attention than the exhibits at a five-eights bazaar.

Craftsmen are on view, following all their varied occupations - carving wood, staining glass, making mosaics, etching, and pottery making - while the exhibits include examples of the finished products of their arts".<sup>64</sup>

When, at the end of 1896, Quiz reported on an exhibition of applied art by J. E. C. Carr and John Taylor Stewart in the studios of William Meikle and Son the glazing and glass staining company at 19 Wellington Street, which included mosaics, metal work, gesso, glass staining, 'general decorative, and general art furnishing', it was ostentatiously proclaimed that "It is undoubtedly the beginning of a new art movement in Glasgow".<sup>65</sup> What is most interesting about the manner in which the work on show was

described, is that, at no point was it called Arts and Crafts; this was specifically representative, it seemed, of a new movement in 'industrial art work'. Carr and Stewart, it was recounted, subsequent to having visited Sir Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris ("who, especially, took a great interest in their work"), Walter Crane, Sir E. J. Poynter and Lord Leighton, were confirmed in their ideas, and set on the right lines:

"As yet they are unknown to the great outside public, and only a limited number of art patrons in the West are yet familiar with their work. But it is safe to venture that it will not be long ere the artistic value of their productions is more widely recognised. During the last few days a number of local artists, architects, and others have paid a visit to the studios, and have been astonished at the work which is shown. To architects, in particular, the exhibits have been a revelation in industrial art. What the Kelmscott Press did for the beautifying of books, these two artists are doing in the direction of industrial work".<sup>66</sup>

The fact that the work of these two men (described as being 'Dumbarton men' when in fact only Carr emanated from Dumbarton; Taylor was born at Leslie in Fife in 1858) had proven to be such a revelation, hardly said much for the achievements of the city's Art School or for the, as was certainly the case, *similar work* being produced by studios already in operation, in particular, that of George Walton, which, as it happened, was also in Wellington Street.

Despite the claim that the work on show represented industrial art, a cursory examination of the descriptions provided of what was exhibited, illustrates that Carr and Stewart were as involved in the production of artefacts for the decoration of the leisure time and domestic environment of the affluent as were any of the other Arts and Crafts exponents in Glasgow at that time: "There is a very fine draught screen (yellow pine with copper decoration), which one would give a lot of money to possess. It is quite a surprise to the man who is only familiar with the common-place scrap-covered screen"; "Escretoires with copper repoussé panels, panels treated in copper repoussé, and brass worked finger plates are on view, showing how great an artistic effect the ordinary furnishings of a household may possess when so treated".<sup>67</sup> In searching for



examples of specifically industrial art for the public sphere of an urbanised society, among the output of the innovators of this 'new movement', all that is found are examples of mosaic, glass-staining (mainly for churches), designs for execution as murals or frescoes, and the occasional design for something like ship saloon fittings and decorations. In short, the work was highly commensurate with that already being produced by the George Walton studio, and, as Gleeson White emphasised in 1897,<sup>68</sup> Walton's work was completely devoid of the qualities which made the 'Mac group' so prominent. In making this distinction, White carefully separated off the work produced by the Macdonald sisters, Mackintosh, Mrs. F. H. Newbery, MacNair and Talwin Morris, as representing something distinctively new and radically different.

In arranging for the incorporation of a decorative arts department within the Glasgow School of Art, where artist-craftsmen were to give instruction in such subjects as "Glass-Staining, Pottery, Repoussé and Metal Work, Wood Carving, Book-Binding" and artistic needlework,<sup>69</sup> Newbery was not so much developing the teaching capacities of the School in the direction of actually supplying the needs of local manufacturing industries for new designs, as helping to provide what he himself believed these local industries should have been interested in acquiring. Indeed, the actual establishment of the department in 1893 appears, above all else, as the realisation of the desires of an Arts and Crafts ideologue forced by professional circumstances to argue that such activities were indeed commensurate with Glasgow's requirements in the sector of industrial arts. Hence, in 1896 Newbery was expressing frustration over the fact that "the British manufacturer in the majority of cases fought shy of the Arts and Crafts".<sup>70</sup> The mentality of Mackintosh, an exponent, not exclusively of Arts and Crafts, with its small-scale production and contraction from mechanization, but rather of Art Nouveau as defined at the outset of this chapter, was to a considerable extent moulded by the milieu in which the potential for mass-produced examples of industrial art was being acknowledged in Glasgow, and which can be seen to have reached a peak

with the East-End Exhibition of 1890-91. Mackintosh's stress upon the ideal nature of art and the charismatic status of the individual artist capable of spontaneity, represented an expression of art's autonomy, at the same time as it acknowledged that autonomy as having become exhausted. Thus he wished to integrate art fully with utilitarianism/functionalism in confronting technology. Both of these strains - that is the aesthetic (detached/hedonistic) and the utilitarian (practical/disciplined) - articulated *dimensions* of the capitalist division of labour. Furthermore, with Mackintosh 'astringent rationalism' is the complement of 'fervent instinctualism', and this takes place within a position of critical estrangement from the segregated utilitarian and aestheticized elements of turn-of-the-century capitalistic culture. It is this critical estrangement, with the 'moment of spontaneity' that it facilitates, which perceives that concrete institutional interrelationships between artistic and non-artistic forms of production have been compromised through the autonomy status bestowed on a non-practical art on the one hand, and the lack of (artistic) spontaneity obtaining within the technological status quo on the other.

In his memoirs Walter Crane, reflecting on the Turin Exhibition of 1902, cited a comment claimed to have been made by the Duke of Hesse Darmstadt on that occasion, in which the latter "expressed his sympathy with the English decorative art and was glad it was represented in the exhibition as he considered it a wholesome protest against the extravagances of L'Art Nouveau".<sup>71</sup> Newbery's highly critical and negative remarks on Crane and his work on the occasion of the Exhibition, did not lead to Crane's refusal to participate in the Presentation of Diplomas and Certificates at the Glasgow School of Art ten years later, by which date Mackintosh had become an Architect Governor.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, evidence of a *rapprochement* between Crane and Newbery is apparent, and it is of some significance that Crane should, at this point, have been portraying the Glasgow School as having returned to the system of the workshop. However, no aspect of uniqueness was being bestowed by him upon the Glasgow School: quite the opposite in



fact; Glasgow, according to Crane, presented a highly typical example of the art schools as a whole "becoming more really a substitute for the workshop than before".<sup>73</sup> It was just that the Glasgow School "seemed particularly fortunate in having the advantage of able professors in their different arts, and working with those professors and under them seemed to be getting back to the finer and more practical system which he had termed that of the workshop".<sup>74</sup> If Newbery had found Crane to be a living anachronism in 1902, there was even more reason to consider that, by now, he had deteriorated further. The Studio in 1900 had noted that the Glasgow School of Art was "not only a school but also a workshop, where the students are brought directly under the influence of efficient craftsmen, and where the studies of the whole school are directed by one who is himself an artist".<sup>75</sup> At around the same time Newbery had insisted that the School "should be called the School of Working Craftsmen".<sup>76</sup> But where the School had, from the early nineties to around 1905, emphasised individuality and audacious experimentation, Crane's description was of routinization — the technical without the aesthetic. And yet if a workshop system was being operated, production for social requirements on anything like a significant scale, was external to the School. In this respect the avant-garde were deprived of a consistently focused propagandizing role, since those who had been trained in the School did not subsequently have an institutional base other than their own limited locus of production. Meanwhile the School turned out cohorts of students, but it did not directly solve the crucial problem of the inadequate relationship between art/design/architecture and industrial production. Nor did the experimentation that was encouraged point in the direction of new ideas capable of effectively tackling this situation.

Eugene Bourdon, the Director of Architecture in the Glasgow School of Art, barely three months before Crane's visit in 1912, was bewailing the contemporary situation where the public and artists did not share the same ideal. Said Bourdon, "The public

neglected the living artist in a craze for archaeological curiosity and bric-a-brac furniture, and did not give that patronage which could alone call into being new forms of art".<sup>77</sup> If there was a public craze for bric-a-brac furniture and suchlike, there can be little doubt that, from the early 1890's, the Art School had been instrumental in fostering and extending it; but what makes Bourdon's comments so relevant is that they came from the actual individual who had been the controller of the scheme to integrate the teaching of architecture in the Technical College and the Art School respectively, by establishing a joint curriculum. The Technical College was to continue teaching architectural history and the 'Science of Building Construction', while the role of the Art School was to teach "Architectural Design and cognate subjects necessary to develop the artistic side of the budding architect's nature".<sup>78</sup> Thus Bourdon's attention was undoubtedly focused predominantly upon problems in the architectural sphere and his deploring of the public craze for archaeological curiosity and bric-a-brac furniture in 1912 must be interpreted as a contemporary acknowledgement of the kind of factors obstructing avant-garde artistic motivations in their ability to engender a new form of architectural environment.



#### 4. The Avant-Garde and the Potential for Large-Scale Production.

Glasgow's avant-garde needed to situate its practice in relation to the blossoming Arts and Crafts production stimulated by the Art School. It needs to be stressed that this avant-garde was comprised of architects *and* designers and not architect/designers. In many ways it developed along similar lines as Arts and Crafts since it failed to significantly penetrate industry and/or the public sphere; hence it weaved in and out of handicraft production. This was one of the central reasons why, as Howarth noted, "it was Mackintosh the designer of furniture, the decorator, and not Mackintosh the architect who received the plaudits of the Secessionists".<sup>79</sup> Like the Wiener Werkstätte, the Scottish Guild of Handicraft and the Scottish Society of Art Workers were both modelled on English Arts and Crafts prototypes such as Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft. Both of these bodies encompassed practitioners in Art Nouveau; the Scottish Guild, for example, had E. A. Taylor, John Ednie, Jessie M. King, Peter Wylie Davidson and Ann Macbeth as members. But what evidence is there of Art Nouveau penetration of local industry, and what of significance can be gleaned about the strategies employed for facilitating larger-scale production?

Something of the nature of the most relevant links established between the Glasgow School of Art and local craft activities can be obtained by focusing briefly upon John Guthrie. Guthrie was appointed superintendent of the School's Technical Studios from 1900 until 1903, where he taught enamels, mosaics, metalwork and interior decoration. He was one of the two sons of John Guthrie senior who had established, prior to 1870, the Glasgow painting and decorating firm of John and William Guthrie in Sauchiehall Street (the name of the firm was changed to J. and W. Guthrie and A. Wells in 1897 when John Guthrie (junior) formed a partnership with Andrew Wells). At the Glasgow Exhibition of 1888 the firm exhibited a series of large decorative screens with rectangular panels depicting 'Womens' Industries' (such as cotton spinning), and in collaboration with the architect William Flockhart a Scottish Baronial dining room was

decorated as part of Wylie and Lohead's Royal Reception Rooms.<sup>90</sup> One of the designers recruited by the Guthrie studio subsequent to the success engendered for them by the Exhibition, was William Stewart (1887-1930) whose design for a fifteen light window (probably from around 1890) appeared in the Studio Year Book for 1906. In the early 1890's Stewart experimented with "Tiffanyesque style windows using a very distinctive range of chunky opalescent glasses",<sup>91</sup> and his designs for the drawing, dining, and billiard rooms of the Ruthven Towers Hotel, Auchterarder (a Scottish Baronial mansion by William Leiper, built in 1882), reveal something of a Japanese influence.

In 1895, the architect John J. Burnett recommended the Guthrie firm to accept a commission for a complete scheme of stained glass ("a perpendicular five-light treatment, at once impressive in its architecture and offering a splendid field for design and colour")<sup>92</sup> for St. Andrews Church in Buenos Aires, to designs by David Gauld (Harrington Mann, who shared a studio with Gauld at 31 St. Vincent Street from 1891 until 1894 designed a rose window for the scheme). It was Gauld who introduced the young Mackintosh, around 1893, to the Guthrie studio, and Mackintosh subsequently designed for the Guthries a series of bedroom suites, a variety of complete decorative schemes (including one for a library), and some stained glass designs. In June 1896 the studio executed a stencilled frieze for Cranston's Buchanan Street 'Tea Saloon' of Mackintosh's watercolour panel 'Part seen-imagined part' which was purchased by Talwin Morris at an Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society exhibition.<sup>93</sup> Miss Cranston also employed George Walton and Co., and Alexander and Howell from Glasgow, and Scott Morton from Edinburgh for work on the Buchanan Street premises. With the flotation of the Cranston Tea Rooms as a business of heritable properties valued at £311,800 in August 1905, it was advertised that "continued success has attended the business of the Company, so much so that the Company's tea rooms are now well known and firmly established as special features in the business and social life of Glasgow . . . great



as their value is now, their situation is almost in itself a guarantee that not only will that value be maintained, but in time considerably enhanced".<sup>94</sup>

At the Paris Exposition of 1900, Guthrie and Wells obtained a bronze medal and an honourable mention for their stained glass window, and at the Glasgow Exhibition of the following year they exhibited "stained and leaded glass panels with hammered lead and copper work in relief introduced, illustrating how opaque and transparent materials can in many cases be used together with advantage".<sup>95</sup> The highest amount of money paid out for painting work in the second section of the Glasgow School of Art in 1909 went to Guthrie and Wells (£240.15.6d).<sup>96</sup>

John Guthrie was the first Secretary of the Scottish Society of Art Workers, of which Mackintosh was a member, and it is instructive to examine something of the treatment of this Society's first exhibition by the local press in 1899. One contemporary review conveys the distinct impression that the Society desired to keep a low profile, and in this respect, bearing in mind the manifest prejudices of the reporter, it was probably not untypical of such developments in Glasgow at that time:

"They have pretty 'cutely concealed themselves - the Scottish Society of Art Workers - in a tiny chamber at 187 Pitt Street, but I found them out last night after an hour's careful exploration aided by two cabmen, three policemen, and a butcher's boy. This coy aloofness of the society is its strongest characteristic. No vulgar ostentation about it, no advertisements (our courteous and always observant commercial department assures me), no jim-jam posters to hit you between the eyes. You simply hear rumours that such a society exists; that it has a show somewhere; that it is worth seeing; that if you see the show you have luck, or you have to thank me for exposing its existence".<sup>97</sup>

Given this low a profile it seems not in the least surprising that the Society's "subsequent fate is, as yet, unknown".<sup>98</sup> However, the implicit distinction in the above account pulls into focus the significance underlying the hostility towards Art Nouveau and its 'jim-jam' exponents. The middle class could accept the reticence of Arts and Crafts, which, after all, was concerned merely to produce crafted goods for a discerning clientele. But Art Nouveau, as its posters unashamedly demonstrated, represented morbid exaggerations, violent shocks, and ultimately the refusal to

cooperate with the upper middle class in its need for comfortable, backward-looking ideals. Forms of low-profile, small-scale production, could be conveniently ignored for the most part, even forgotten about, if indeed such were even discovered through the grapevine in the first place. A press description of the Scottish Guild of Handicraft Exhibition in 1902, having stated that the scope and aims of the Guild were to "place before the public the productions in metal, wood ware, or on canvas, of all art and craft workers" - in no sense something staggeringly new to Glasgow - proceeded to deliver the almost unbelievable assertion that

"Such associations of artist and craftsman, working in concert for the realisation of the best in design and execution, have been for some time in existence in some of the English towns, London and Birmingham showing the example, *but this is the first attempt to gain similar advantages for Scotland*",<sup>89</sup>

There were, undoubtedly, instances of Art Nouveau's penetration of certain industries in Glasgow, but the process was of a highly partial nature. Also, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, commercial application involved serious compromises, not only because the new style would be incorporated into a 'range' of marketable lines, but also because the actual style itself could become heavily modified. We saw how Taylor, Ednie and Logan, as a team employed to provide complete room interiors for Wylie and Lohead ('Designers and Manufacturers of Artistic Furniture, Decorators, Upholsterers and Licensed Valuers'), were responsible for softened, romanticised versions of avant-garde style. But this team also developed simplified, less elaborate schemes, clearly geared towards viable large-scale production. This involved careful strategies to keep down costs.

When Wylie and Lohead exhibited its suite of four apartments - a stylised pre-Raphaelite library; a lady's bedroom with enamels, curtains, tapestry and lilac and rose-coloured walls; an oak dining room; a violet drawing room - in a special pavilion at the 1901 Exhibition, The Bailie commented that "The furnishings of these rooms are complete, and the whole could be transferred without any change to a house in actual



occupation".<sup>90</sup> The Studio, when examining the furniture included in a modern dining-room and drawing room designed by E. A. Taylor, executed by Wylie and Lohead, noted that it was "inexpensive and unobtrusive — placed for a purpose, not for show".<sup>91</sup> There can be little doubt that the practice of simplifying the style in the direction of geometric form had crucial implications for the lowering of costs. As was noted above in the context of the Wiener Werkstätte at this time, the late Art Nouveau concern with architectonic principles and geometric simplicity was highly commensurate with mass reproducibility. The fact that the Wylie and Lohead team were actively involved in the striving for such simplicity is illustrated by an article in The Studio on George Logan; in his furniture designs, it was stated, Logan "aims at maintaining the architectural quality by preserving extreme simplicity of form in the leading structural lines, relieved in the secondary parts by ornamental detail".<sup>92</sup> Reference was made to the essential close relationship between the maker of the design and the maker of the product, and in this respect, wrote the anonymous contributor,

"no better instance could be adduced than the successful enterprise of Messrs. Wylie and Lohead. Such firms play an important part in the economy of the art world when the obvious tendency of the present day demand for art work is to cramp the designers into the narrowest type of specialism and to limit each man's effort to certain classes of achievement".<sup>93</sup>

By 1901 it had become quite common for firms to concentrate upon the market for forms of transportable decoration for the domestic interior. A firm such as Hugh McCulloch and Co. of 102 West Regent Street (opened in 1874), Glasgow, whose initial contract for the 1901 Exhibition had come from Arroll's Bridge and Roof Company for painting steel girders and corrugated iron roofing, were not slow to recognise a significant middle class interest in the potential of stained glass to beautify the domestic sphere. The McCulloch studio, in competition with that of the Guthries, had decorated one of Wylie and Lohead's Royal Reception Rooms at the 1888 Exhibition. They were sub-contracted to Wylie and Lohead on a regular basis, executing the stained glass and paintwork for the Pavilion at the 1901 Exhibition. The Room de Luxe in Cranston's Willow Tearooms had its

glass executed by the McCulloch studio. David Gauld designed a number of windows for churches for the firm in the 1890's. Stained glass production had been introduced in the studio in 1887 when McCulloch entered into partnership with Charles Gow the glass painter. According to the Glasgow Advertiser the passage connecting the Fine Art Gallery with the Grand Avenue at the 1901 Exhibition was "fittingly set apart to show the advance of art as applied to stained glass",<sup>94</sup> and the McCulloch company had filled five spaces in the west wall with a richly coloured representation of Robert Bruce's coronation at Scone. The 'whole work' was treated

*"both as to drawing, shading, and selection of glass, in a most artistic manner, and in its execution no other than mosaic glass has been used. While the work has been done to read through the whole five panels, it can be adapted for private decoration of door or window, and anyone wishing to have a souvenir of the Exhibition can have any portion of it, as it can be lessened or enlarged at will".<sup>95</sup>*

The firm of Stewart, Pollock and Company of the Govan Cabinet Works were, by the turn-of-the-century, established as 'high-class' furnishers 'in the front rank of the cabinetmaking industry', supplying the trade in Britain and the Colonies. The originality of their designs in bedroom suites was commented upon, as were "the many improvements they have introduced of great utility and beauty".<sup>96</sup> At the 1901 Exhibition the firm was conducting its retail business through Pettigrew and Stephens (whose Exhibition poster was distinctly Glasgow Style Art Nouveau) who had "bought the entire exhibit, and who, in their magnificent new building in Sauchiehall Street, have determined to do a first-class business second to none in the city".<sup>97</sup>

Art Nouveau decoration was assimilated to a number of fire grates manufactured by Allan Ure and Company at their Springbank Foundry at Keppochill in Springburn, thus illustrating the likelihood that the design services of qualified students from the Glasgow School of Art were being enlisted by the firm.<sup>98</sup> It is possible that the Ure company were sub-contracted by Wylie and Lohead to produce for them the kind of wrought-iron and copper fire grates employing Glasgow Style motifs that were illustrated in their catalogue of 1900.



A number of factors contributed to the potential for the mass-production of books manifesting Art Nouveau style. Representatives of the large, family-owned, publishing houses in Scotland (Collins, Blackie, Nelson, Blackwood, Chambers) made frequent visits to the continent for to take stock of new technical innovations there, and to place orders for machinery. With the Education Act of the 1870's, new markets had been created, not only for school text books in large quantities, but also for books which would be presented as school prizes, chiefly for diligence. By the turn-of-the-century compact 'library' editions, for example of poetical works by such as Keats, Shelley, Browning, had become popular. In 1893, Talwin Morris was appointed artistic director in the firm of Walter Blackie and Son. Previously, Morris had served a brief apprenticeship in an architect's office in London, and prior to taking up the Glasgow post with Blackie, he had been art editor with the weekly journal Black and White.

The perceptive points made by Joseph Pennell on the subject of Beardsley's style and the corresponding utilisation of certain mass-production techniques, applied equally to Morris. Pennell acknowledged that Beardsley had "recognised that he is living in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and he has *availed himself of mechanical reproduction for the publication of his drawings*".<sup>99</sup> Pennell persuasively argued the case for Beardsley's line block technique as being a great liberator from implied Arts and Crafts Ludditism, and insisted that "the artistic value of such designs is not lessened by the fact that they are quite as well, if not better, printed by steam than they had ever been by hand".<sup>100</sup>

When Gleeson White came to write about Talwin Morris in the second of his 'Some Glasgow Designers and Their Work' articles for The Studio in 1897, he was careful to point out the Beardsley influence upon a design by Morris for a stencilled curtain hanging. "The masterpiece illustrated . . . will give an idea of the character of the stencilled designs which have all been executed by the artist himself, these stencilled patterns rarely being repeated and exhibiting amazing facility in new combinations of a

few lines and purely geometric devices".<sup>101</sup> The potential inherent in this linear and geometric form-language, together with a correlated 'simplicity of motive', for facilitating mass-production, was acknowledged by White (himself a designer of book covers) who drew attention to the factor of Blackie having managed, to a successful degree, to avoid the problem of highly priced finished articles whilst employing Talwin Morris designs:

"That many, indeed most of these designs are for popular and inexpensive books, is a pleasant fact to record, for it shows that the enterprising publishers who issue them do not share the average opinion of the bad taste of the masses; but are willing to employ consistent and beautiful ornament on a school reading book, or even on a trade catalogue".<sup>102</sup>

In 1902 Blackie launched its 'Red Letter Library' series of poetry, prose and religious titles. Initially, these incorporated Morris-designed endpapers and title-pages, printed in three colours. Because of the expense of producing the latter, they were dropped after the first few titles. Subsequently, Morris created a frontispiece and title-page in two colours, and a more economical single colour endpaper design. Thus where production costs were deemed to be too high, Art Nouveau design was sufficiently flexible to allow modifications to be efficiently applied at the design stage to accord with revised production requirements.

Talwin Morris' period with the Blackie company ended in 1909, the same year that the Glasgow School of Art was completed. The reasons for his retirement are not known. He died in March 1911.

##### 5. Glasgow Corporation and the Potential for Art Nouveau Architecture

Glasgow after the turn of the century could hardly have been said to display much in the way of an extensive Art Nouveau architectural environment. In the commercial sphere, two banks (British Linen Bank, Gorbals and Glasgow Savings Bank, Anderston, both 1899-1900) had been designed by Gorbals-raised John Gaff Gillespie, who became a



full partner in the firm of Salmon and Son in 1897. Both Gillespie and James Salmon Junior exhibited at the Turin Exhibition of 1902.<sup>103</sup> As well as being the architect of the tallest building in the city at the time, the office block known as St. Vincent Chambers at 142 St. Vincent Street (nicknamed 'The Hatrack'), Salmon was responsible for the design for a church hall at St. Andrews in the East Church, 681 Alexandra Parade (1899). As with Mackintosh and his design for Ruchill Church Hall (1898), Salmon's firm did not receive the commission for the church itself "possibly due to the church's confusion over the significance of the Art Nouveau motifs over the doors and their close association with the Glasgow 'spook school'".<sup>104</sup> J. Gibb Morton of Beattie and Morton had produced "the best Glasgow example of Art Nouveau architecture outwith the orbits of Mackintosh and Salmon"<sup>105</sup> with his design for a five storey commercial premises in red ashlar in 118-120 Howard Street (1904). Aside from the Martyrs' Public School (1895) and Scotland Street School (1904) by Mackintosh, the only other example of Glasgow Art Nouveau as applied to school buildings was produced by Duncan and Alan G. McNaughtan for Royston Secondary School, 102 Royston Road.

Art Nouveau tenement buildings, such as the three at the corner of Balgrayhill and Barclay Street in Springburn by Beattie and Morton were extremely rare. The nature of Art School-oriented craft production, however, was widely manifested with the absorption of purely decorative elements into large tenements for the middle classes - internally and externally. For example, a block of six tenements of six and seven apartment houses in Falkland Street, and named Falkland Mansions, built by the firm of Duncanson and Henderson in 1902, had stained glass top sashes in the principal rooms, tiled closes, and mosaic flooring on the landings and entrances.<sup>106</sup> Companies in Glasgow producing mosaic flooring and marble paving included the British and Italian Mosaic Company of 342 St. Vincent Street; Galbraith and Winton of 129 St. Vincent Street; and Doulton and Co. of London, Glasgow and Paisley. In 1906 'Superior New Houses of Two Rooms and Kitchen' in Albany Street, Kelvinside, were advertised as

having tiled fireplaces, 'art brass interiors', tile surround ranges and 'tasteful decorations',<sup>107</sup> thus demonstrating that such artistic ornamentation in private sector housing had apparently become 'democratised' and was now available to those at the lower end of the market. But what was the structure of that market?

Of the 80,000 houses of three apartment or less (85% of all authorisations granted by the Dean of Guild Court) built in Glasgow over the period 1862-1901, only 19% actually were three-apartment. Almost half (48%) were two-apartment, and 18% were one apartment ('single ends'). Tighter building regulations were one result of the increased scale of municipal intervention subsequent to 1871, and one manifestation of this was increased costs of building houses generally. Decline in profitability in the 1890's - most apparent at the lower end of the market - led to a reduction in the building of one-apartment houses. This particular decline coincided with an expansion in attendance at model lodging houses, where the average nightly attendance had risen from 500 in the 1870's to almost 2,000 in the 1890's.

From the 1870's to 1900 enough wealth was in the hands of the lower middle class to enable the establishment of solidly built new suburbs (terraces and grander tenements) in a ring around the city. This involved colonizing the gaps in West End villa development left by the wealthier middle classes whose outward residential drive was continuing via commuter railways to Lenzie, Kirkintilloch, Bearsden, Milngavie and Helensburgh, and steamer services to Rothesay, Dunoon and other select localities on the River Forth. In this same period Glasgow's population increased from half a million to three quarters of a million, with the greater proportion of inhabitants living near the town centre. With the demolition by the 'City Improvement Trust' together with the Railway Companies (anxious to secure central city facilities) of the old black spots, subsequent to the City Improvement Act of 1866, a new zone of dilapidation and overcrowding developed around the commercial and administrative centre as these inhabitants flooded outwards and thus penetrated the next inner districts, "into



housing squeezed in amongst the factories of Anderston to the West, into Bridgeton and Calton to the East, and Laurieston/Gorbals to the South". Municipal authority had, as a direct result of the Trustees ambitious assault on the worst slums in the old heart of Glasgow between the West and East ends, been extended into the sphere of housing, new houses remaining, after the initial phase of demolition, within city corporation ownership. Thus began the process whereby most city housing was to come under the control of the local authority.

In the context of a discussion of the 'Housing of the People' in 1901, Lord Provost Samuel Chisholm, chairman of the City Improvement Trust's Committee, presented what was in effect a succinct summary of the history of the Trust since its inception. When the Trust was originated, he explained, the Corporation had no idea of starting to erect houses for the poor. The intention had been to clear and raze the slum buildings to their foundation on the assumption that private builders would offer adequate prices for the land and subsequently erect buildings of a suitable kind for the poor. For a variety of reasons this had not come about, and the Trust, in possession of cleared areas with no buildings, set about the task of utilising the ground for housing for the poor. No sooner had they began, than they found that a large number of people from both the demolished slums and the slums in the area considered for demolition were unable to acquire suitable accommodation:

"There were thousands of such cases in the city. Now the Corporation, unable to erect in the centre of the city houses which they could provide at a paying price, looked about for such an area at some little distance from the centre of the city - in Calton, Bridgeton, and in the north, and found themselves in the possession of an area on which they could erect houses for the respectable poor. Some thousands of such houses had been erected, and for every house they had twenty or thirty applications. The Corporation sifted the applicants, and tried to find out, first, those who were eligible, i.e. who were unable to afford bigger houses and pay bigger rents, and were fairly respectable"<sup>108</sup>

The fact that Mackintosh could have been given the opportunity to become involved in the production of tenement houses and other buildings for the Corporation is evidenced by the designs for 'Tenement Buildings' which he submitted for one of the competitions

sponsored by the Trust in 1891, on the eve, so to speak, of a period of intensive house building. On that occasion, the plan was to redevelop the area around the Cathedral with blocks of tenements. Part of Mackintosh's entry included a design for what was intended to be a residential facility of some six floors for the elderly (referred to, somewhat inaccurately, in a recent publication as an 'old people's home').<sup>109</sup> The entries were unsuccessful, but notwithstanding the plain unadorned style apparent with the drawings, this could easily have been for economic reasons; the Trustees were always more interested in standardisation than in style, but, at that, standardisation at the most economical price. For example, on one occasion in 1901, on receiving the Measurer's report upon the tenders received from companies for a range of work required in connection with the proposed erection of new buildings in the King Street area of the Southern District, the Trust's sub-committee, in agreeing to recommend acceptance of the offers for excavator, mason, brickwork etc., stated that "All these offers, with the exception of the offer for steel work, are the lowest."<sup>110</sup> But it should not be complacently assumed that, within the limits and constraints of Corporation house building, a firm like Honeyman, Keppie and Mackintosh would not have been allowed the scope to design significant numbers of tenements. As late as 1912-13 Mackintosh's firm received a commission from the Improvement Trust, but this was only for two blocks of two tenements which were built in Rutherglen Road, Hutchesontown. By contrast, the firm of Burnet and Boston produced a number of tenement schemes for the Improvement Trust, such as the 'Bell o' the Brae' on the High Street and at the corner of Woodlands Road and St. George's Road, Charing Cross (architect of both W. J. Boston); on the west side of High Street and in Baltic Street in the Eastern District (architect Frank Burnet). In fact, Burnet received payments 'to account of his fees' for these latter two schemes from the sub-committees on Eastern and Northern District Properties respectively, on consecutive days in August 1901.<sup>111</sup>



When the Glasgow and South Western Railway Company moved its engine sheds to a more expansive site at Corkerhill on the Paisley canal line, it set about building a model village to accommodate its employees. Five blocks consisting of 60 dwellings (40 one room and kitchen, 20 two rooms and kitchen) were tenanted in November 1897, to be followed in 1899 by five blocks of 52 dwellings. A population of 602 were accommodated. In describing these pseudo-Scottish-vernacular style houses, Frank Wordsall states that they were

"arranged in two-storey blocks of twelve houses each. Upper floors were reached by means of an outside stair leading to a balcony. The earlier portion had crow-stepped gables and harled brick walls, but the later part was in bright red brick. The wash-houses were particularly attractive - single-storey buildings with the roof rising to a central chimney-stack".<sup>112</sup>

Significantly, the Trust appear to have been extremely interested in the railway village as providing a possible stylistic model for their own housing schemes. In 1900, by which time the Railway Companies as a whole owned 674 properties, members of the General Committee were recommended to visit and inspect the housing, "with the view of obtaining any information which may be of use to them in considering the question as to the kind of dwellings which should be erected upon the portions of ground acquired under the powers and for the purposes of Section 12 of the Act of 1897, so far as still unbuilt upon".<sup>113</sup> This illustrates that a modicum at least of town planning theory, and a corresponding awareness of the desirability of stylistic homogeneity in housing, had penetrated to the Trust's members. The Art Nouveau style, however, was not to partake of involvement in this particular sphere of activity.

In the 1880's and 1890's Corporation lodging houses in Glasgow were showing substantial profits of over £4,000 per annum. On this apparently secure financial basis, further developments in the direction of additions and extensions were made to a number of these houses. In 1896 a 'Family Home' for widowers with young children was built at a cost of £12,000. There appears to have been some local animosity directed at this particular permutation of the lodging house principle, because even some five

years after its opening, Councillor J. Shaw Maxwell was seizing the opportunity to 'explain' and 'justify' the Corporation's decision in establishing it. At the same time, Maxwell made it clear that the apparently unrelated actions of the Improvement Trust, "in substituting ware-houses and shops in the centre of the city and building houses on cheap ground on the outskirts" were, in fact, ultimately related, and moreover, were both determined by the scale of poverty within the city; thus "the housing problem was not in its essence a separate problem, but part of that great problem, the problem of poverty".<sup>114</sup>

In the Art Nouveau period in Glasgow, lodging houses were improving their image and facilities out of all proportion to what had gone before. The Corporation had begun by building a lodging in the Drygate. By 1901, they had seven lodging-houses, such as Hydepark Street Home in Springburn, and the Star Home in Watson Street. It is important to be clear as to the sociological role effected by such accomodation in the period in question. John Butt has made the point that the achievement of model lodging houses was "not financial but social".<sup>115</sup> That is to say, it is inadequate to consider them as primarily profit-producing agencies. Says Butt, "they acted as an agency for the improvement of the private sector. So did a system of regular inspection and tighter local control".<sup>116</sup> In the period 1900-1901 private individuals owned 56.1% of the properties representing 58.9% of annual rentals. The private housing market represented the only recourse for the majority of working class families. It was pressure on accomodation, therefore, which led to the expansion of the model lodging house movement, an expansion which reached its peak in the 1890's, by which time the phenomenon of regular attendance at models was quite well established.

In November 1901 the members of the Architectural Craftsmens' Society paid a visit to what was referred to as 'the ideal lodging for men', namely White House in Springburn. This had been designed by W. B. Whitie, a native of Galashiels who had just recently arrived in Glasgow. Initially he was employed at the office of John Gordon, but



subsequently entered the Glasgow Corporation service under the City Architect.<sup>117</sup> White House was not, however, a Corporation lodging house, but rather a 'residential hotel' funded by Councillor Hoey, a local owner of general retail stores in Springburn, and groups of leading Springburn residents, partly for the accomodation of migrant workers employed in the area's locomotive works.<sup>117a</sup> The Springburn district had a high concentration of engineering workers, and the turn of the century witnessed an upturn in the amount of skilled work available to engineers. In 1898, for example, Quiz commented that, for Springburn's engineers, "savings are accumulating, and the annual holidays will, unlike those many previous years, stand special expenditure".<sup>118</sup> According to the Glasgow Advertiser the promoters of White House were to be congratulated in their very effective solution to the problem of providing "home comforts for the working classes in an establishment palatial in its construction and replete with all the commodities that ensure the health and happiness of its dwellers at a cost which must be considered by even the poorest paid of the artisan class to be extremely reasonable".<sup>119</sup> The management's idea, it was stressed, had been to provide for permanent or weekly boarders rather than single night lodgers; the recreational amenities provided were described as being of the most cultivated, and the seal of approval was retained for the artistic sensibility as manifested through the architect's 'admirably modern' design:

"For the modest sum of 13s.6d. per week a working man has his breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper daily served in a dining-room, large, airy, and well lit, on spotless tablecloths, and waited on by attendants smartly attired and courteous. His evenings - if he be of a literary turn - he can spend profitably in the library or in the recreation room, where no less than thirty-five different newspapers and periodicals may be consulted. The recreation and billiard rooms are all that could be desired, and if the boarder cares not for the time-honoured games of draughts, chess, and dominoes, why he can have 'ping-pong', followed by selections of Exhibition music by the pianola

The buildings reflect credit on the architect - Mr. Whitey (sic), of this city - treated as they are in a most artistic fashion, combined with strict economy in their design. The walls are constructed of brick, rough cast, cemented on face, with red-tinted cement as dressings".<sup>120</sup>

For 13s.6d. to be considered a 'modest sum' the 'working man' would have required to be, not only earning decent wages as a *skilled* worker, but earning them on a regular basis; one significant problem was that "low incomes and irregular work ensured that adequate housing could not be obtained for large numbers of the working class".<sup>121</sup> But just how 'modest' were the charges really, considering that the New Century Hotel in Holm Street, Glasgow, which advertised itself as 'The Pioneer Middle-Class Hotel in Great Britain' with 'All Modern Hotel Comforts and Conveniences, Cuisine Perfect, Luxurious Furnishings', charged one shilling per night for rooms in 1901; and the 'London Hotel' in Buchanan Street had "Bedrooms (with Attendance) from 2s. to 2s.6d.",<sup>122</sup>

Evidence provided by John Duncan, the superintendent of the model in Portugal Street in 1903, illustrates that White House was significantly superior to the typical model lodging house at that time, in terms of both the amenities that it provided, and the clientele which constituted its boarders. According to Duncan the majority of the boarders at Portugal Street (76%) were unskilled men who could earn between 22s. and 25s. per week in periods of regular employment. Because they only occasionally worked a full week their average earnings were 18s. per week. Skilled men accounted for 24%. Duncan expressed the view that, in his opinion, the men preferred to live in the lodging-house rather than in private lodgings because they could have relative freedom, and because the 'surroundings were *modern*',<sup>123</sup>

The potential here for Art Nouveau architects to cater to an expressed preference for modern, spacious, living environments facilitating sociability need not be laboured. However, the inescapable truth is that no self-respecting Art Nouveau exponent, concerned with faithfulness to materials, and honesty of execution, would have been content to employ splashed-on facades and brick and mortar substitutes for real stone: a 'strict economy' requirement happily met by such as Whitie. And yet how carefully the contributor to Glasgow Advertiser defines such work as being 'most artistic'. A cursory



examination of the extant photograph of this building quickly disperses any likelihood of accepting such a description, but the obvious question which springs to mind is, by comparison with *what kind of buildings* was White House considered artistic? Whilst acknowledging that "it may be necessary in a brick wall to weather proof it - internally or externally it does not matter - with plaster or cement", Mackintosh was unequivocal in his criticism that "the practice is detestable where it is scored over to delude into the belief that stone is used".<sup>124</sup> As it stood, this left aside the issue of cost, and there is strong evidence to show that the issue of the costs of materials and practices required for the execution of quality Art Nouveau architecture represented a strong factor in local agencies inhibiting the development of the latter. The final section of this chapter examines this issue in relation to the building of the Glasgow School of Art.

#### 6. The Art School Buildings and the Factor of Cost.

In his thesis on Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Secessionist Movement in Architecture (1949), Howarth described how Mackintosh had "witnessed the rapid consolidation of the Secessionist Movement in Europe in which he himself had played a not inconsiderable part - yet in his own country he received little or no public acknowledgement".<sup>125</sup> In emphasising further the type of problems confronting Mackintosh in Glasgow, Howarth singled out for comment factors such as the architect's having to argue, cajole, and struggle in order to have his plans for Scotland Street School approved and passed by the authorities (the School Board of Glasgow), and the difficulties he encountered with the governors of the School of Art seeking "ways and means of preventing him from introducing costly innovations to the new West Wing".<sup>126</sup>

Desmond Chapman-Houston recounted in his memoirs how Mackintosh had spoken to him about his three year long 'daily fight' with the Corporation Committee responsible for the work done on the School of Art. The people of Glasgow, Chapman-Houston complained, "who have hardly a decent building to look at, now like to pretend that they discovered Mackintosh, employed him, and made him famous. They did no such thing. So little did they think of his potentialities that they gave him for his School a steep, cramped site on a hillside in a narrow back street. From no angle can the building be looked at or its significant form, magnificent proportions, and fine detail and craftsmanship be examined. . . (Glasgow's) banal City Hall, pompous derivative University - even its cinemas, have been given worthy sites, but its one modern architectural gem had to put up with a cheap, sordid setting".<sup>127</sup>

When the Art School was finally completed, at the end of 1909, Sir James Fleming, in his speech at the opening ceremony, referred to how, in the 'old days' of the School, Glasgow Corporation derived an inconsiderable revenue from it; he went on stress the point that "its generosity in these later times had not been meagre".<sup>128</sup> Yet if evidence is sought of the scale of the financial support which the Corporation actually provided for the Art School's building fund, this does not seem to have been particularly generous. In 1901, for example, the Committee of Finance, having "carefully considered and discussed the applications", recommended a grant to the School of £1,000 for maintenance, and £500 for the building fund. By comparison, the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College, albeit a somewhat larger institution, was furnished with a grant of almost £4,000 (£3,788.9.10d) for maintenance, and £4,000 for its building fund.<sup>129</sup> According to The Scotsman the Scotch Education Department had initially offered £15,000 towards the new building on the understanding that the School's governors raised a similar sum. The constitution of the latter was as follows: "Of the £15,000 required to build the first section of the structure, the Bellahouston Trustees granted a donation of £4,000, besides giving a free site, valued at £6,000. Glasgow Corporation gave £5,000, and the remaining £6,000 was secured through the generosity of Sir James (then Mr.) Fleming and a few of the other governors. The second portion of the buildings cost £10,000".<sup>130</sup>

At the opening of the first section of the School in December 1899 (the architect was not at that time named), the Glasgow Evening Times carried a brief description to the



effect that, externally, the School, "as everyone with an appreciation of artistic simplicity and fine design is bound to confess, a structure which will long remain as a monument to the strong originality and artistic conception of Glasgow designers . . . both in building and furnishings the School is primarily utilitarian".<sup>131</sup> Some time later, on the occasion of the Annual Public Meeting of the School of Art at the beginning of 1901 (Mackintosh and Geddes were on the platform), Sir Thomas D. Gibson-Carmichael,<sup>131a</sup> on congratulating the School on its new buildings, remarked, apparently facetiously, that he "had thought until a few months ago that any man who was fond of art had better live in Athens in the 5th. century before Christ or in Florence at the end of the 14th. century, but he saw now that the real place to live was in Glasgow".<sup>132</sup> These comments were greeted with laughter and applause, but what came next could hardly have elicited much in the way of friendly feeling from Mackintosh and his supporters: Gibson-Carmichael, having confessed that he was delighted and surprised to hear from Fleming that the Governors were absolutely satisfied with the new premises, proceeded to state that "It was the first building he ever heard of where the architects did exactly what they were told".<sup>133</sup> No statement could have more successfully conveyed contempt for the architect here being deprived of any personal commendation for his highly original forms. But more was to come. After this, the topic was quickly moved to that of cost, and the implications were made clear enough: architects had been overstepping themselves with their demands for materials, resources, and scope for execution. Underlying this non-specific generalisation lay the knowledge that the Art School's new building had eventually cost considerably in excess of the initial estimate given. Hence, the complaint being voiced was that

"nothing in this country tended more to prevent the erection of good buildings than the fact that the persons wishing to build them did not know what they would cost. (Hear, hear). If the Glasgow students could learn to tell that, he would prophesy that they would be the only art students employed all over Europe".<sup>134</sup>

In effect, this was saying that, if all architects expected to behave as Mackintosh had expected to behave with the execution of the Art School, then there would be no employment for them. Actually, this was to attack one of the central experimental facets of Art Nouveau building. To a significant degree, the designs were executed in an organic manner *in situ*. The original Dean of Guild drawings, where extant, illustrate that the completed work could manifest considerable modification of the original plans.

All that exists of the plans for the first section of the Art School is a single one-sixteenth inch scale preliminary sketch for the North facade on tracing paper. The illustrated scheme, wrote Howarth,

"must have been too extravagant and it was drastically modified . . . (the drawing) provides interesting evidence of the architect's search for new forms in the early stages of the design. The qualities which are so admirable in the finished building, however, are conspicuously lacking in this preliminary sketch".<sup>135</sup>

Howarth, in documenting the modifications which Mackintosh made to his design for the subsequent West wing between September 1906 and May 1907, and thus illustrating how Mackintosh put into practice his 'delightful, but uneconomical theory' that the designer should be given the liberty to redesign as work progressed, pointed out that, by this stage, "not even Newbery could prevail against the Governor's determination to stop his costly experiments. They absolutely refused to meet an interminable number of accounts for extras, and insisted that all drawings be signed by the Chairman of the Governors and the Convener of the Building Committee, before they were passed to the contractor".<sup>136</sup>

This represented the social context in which Mackintosh was hammering home his distinction between building and architecture. Builders, not architects, were responsible for most of the working-class, and some of the middle-class, tenements in Glasgow. The function of this practice had been to make the erection of houses as cheap as possible. In Glasgow, housing was developed as a form of speculation, with building



being financed by local businessmen, including shopkeepers, who would subsequently receive rents from the tenancing of their properties. To employ an architect involved paying his fees for designing. Builders built 'downwards' to a basic standard for cheapness. As long as the builder was aware of Dean of Guild specifications (minimum room size, quality of materials etc.) he could construct the building to a simple, standard scheme. Such procedures had been common in local building traditions. The housing sector in Glasgow thus represented a general social phenomenon which was the actualization of the interplay of particular interests. Municipalism *moved into* this expanse of fragmentation and negotiated with the forces of ownership. The City Improvement Trust perpetuated, as an adjunct to its sectionalised, ad hoc, tenement building projects, a starkness of non-design that was itself a symptom of the prior malady. The attitude which viewed the involvement of architects as a superfluous luxury travelled widely, and it permeated the discourse, so characteristic of Glasgow's business 'community', which dogmatized the claim that utilitarian considerations were always and invariably fundamental. It was not for nothing that Mackintosh linked the products of this attitude with ugliness.

**CHAPTER SEVEN**

**DISSEMINATION AND RECEPTION.**



1 Introduction: Nationalism, Class Antagonism and Cultural Fragmentation

The following chapter, in elucidating contemporary responses to the dissemination of Glasgow Style, includes an examination of the theoretical themes developed by Geddes within the pages of The Evergreen ('*a kind of Scottish Yellow Book*') which have an important bearing upon the Glasgow Art Nouveau movement and its ideas. These themes can briefly be referred to as (a) nationalism; (b) cultural regeneration through democratisation; and (c) the relation of aestheticism to utilitarianism. The first section deals with the popular press, its class constitution, its ideological sympathies, and its relationship to commercial and artistic activities in the period under examination. The central purpose behind the approach taken at this point is to help to illuminate the cultural context within which Art Nouveau as an avant-garde movement emerged, by providing an analysis of the language and imagery fostered by those cultural agencies involved in expressing new ideas through popular means of communication to a mass reading public.

The remainder of the chapter elaborates on contemporary attitudes toward the traditionally separated cultural spheres of the artistic and the functional (or technical). We shall see how the avant-garde vision of the unity of art and functionalism can be differentiated from (a) attitudes within the architectural profession in Glasgow about the need for buildings capable of being both functional and attractive; (b) attitudes about the desirability of keeping artistic and functional concerns rigidly separated; and (c) attitudes towards the question of how new design should be adapted to commercial ends.

Writing on the subject of nationalism, Tom Nairn<sup>2</sup> has emphasised the point that, in Scotland, a modern, developmental nationalism (the latter defined as a specific complex of events, feelings and ideas as distinct from straightforward national and cultural

differences) has never come about; ethnic and cultural 'differentiae' could not be mobilized in the direction of a new, national, romantic culture because of the too rapid advance of Scottish civil society (and for Scotland after the Union of 1707 this civil society confronted a state which was non-Scottish) with the Scottish Industrial Revolution affecting the Lowlands. This vital transitional period was not accompanied by (national) superstructures of state and cultural hegemony, and thus Scotland was unable to become an 'organic' national community. However,

"The new bourgeois social classes inherited a socio-economic position in history vastly more favourable than that of any other fringe or backward nationality. They were neither being ground down into industrial modernity, nor excluded from it".<sup>3</sup>

The problem of Scottish differentness for the Scottish bourgeoisie therefore became "one of *neutralizing* or repressing the country's more distinctive and proto-national forms"<sup>4</sup> (including alienating the intelligentsia) through the external instrument of imperialism. Even when a heightened consciousness of its capacity for nationalism developed in the nineteenth century, because of the conflict between the latter and its real economic interests, the Scottish bourgeoisie repressed the nationalist impulse. This left the field free for the emergence of a national intellectual 'class':

"a 'national culture', in that sense which had become newly important, entailed an intellectual class able to express the particular realities of a country, in a romantic manner accessible to growing numbers of the reading public - a class operating actively in the zone of general and literary culture (rather than the specializations Scots became celebrated for)"<sup>5</sup>

(The latter refers to fields such as medicine, engineering, and the natural sciences).

The intelligentsia, argues Nairn, in disseminating nationalism 'downwards', functions as "the most conscious and awakened part of the (new) middle classes".<sup>6</sup> But the would-be national middle class, in attempting to arouse and harness the latent energies of their mass society, are compelled to appeal to 'the people'. Thus, political compulsion engenders contradiction, antagonism, and extreme fragmentation, as the middle class increasingly employ 'dialects', attempt to look sympathetically upon general 'culture', and come to terms with "the enormous and still irreconcilable *diversity* of popular and



peasant life".<sup>7</sup> The 'true nerve' of political nationalism is constituted by a distinctive relationship which has emerged between the middle class intelligentsia and the masses. The historical 'precursors' of nationalism in Scotland, according to Nairn, that is, the romantic movement of the 1850's and the successive Home Rule movements (1880-1914), were characterised by feebleness and political ambiguity.

"Political nationalism of the classic sort was not necessarily democratic by nature, or revolutionary in a social sense (notoriously it could be inspired by fear of Jacobinism, as well as by Jacobinism). But it *was* necessarily populist by nature. The political and social variables to be observed in its development are anchored in this constant, which steadily expressed the class machinery of the process".<sup>8</sup>

What can be said empirically about 'a class operating actively in the zone of general and literary culture' in Glasgow at the end of the nineteenth century and to what extent can such a class be characterised as 'intellectual'? More specifically, how can populist ideas be seen to articulate with middle class attitudes and values within the culture products of this period? It will be argued below that, because of the precise nature of the class stratum which operated actively within this cultural zone in Glasgow at the end of the nineteenth century, that is, in terms of its values and structural position (relative to the middle class and the masses), the 'particular realities' which it expressed often took on an ambiguous, and frequently contradictory, form, because it confronted a cultural complexity and fragmentation which made consistency and coherence (nationalist or otherwise) increasingly difficult. On the other hand, it will also be argued that this class stratum, which ostensibly constituted the potential market for mass-produced goods manifesting 'artistic' qualities, was to a considerable extent ambivalent towards art and intellectuality (it is in respect of this particular ambivalence that Bourdieu's assertion that "the preferences of a class or class fraction constitute coherent systems"<sup>9</sup> can be shown to be relevant to the discussion of the context under analysis), and that this ambivalence was crucial *vis-a-vis* reception of the ideas and activities of the emergent Art Nouveau

movement. In establishing a contemporary 'centre of gravity' for analysis, we will begin with Patrick Geddes.

"Ideas once fresh from life wither and dry, but may still be utilised, infused anew, albeit in dilute form, by the help of commentaries. So commentary succeeds commentary, and criticism is piled upon criticism, copy upon copy, the lower industry must have its lower journalism, its lower art to match - so at length the slum newsagent's window, full of the strongest parodies of the art and science and literature of the educated classes",<sup>10</sup>

So wrote Patrick Geddes in a chapter of The Evergreen in 1895 entitled 'The Sociology of Autumn'. One of his central intentions with the journal was to bring "some feeling for art to 'that inferno of industry' which was Glasgow".<sup>11</sup> In the light of the success enjoyed by the Glasgow School of Painters within and without the city of Glasgow, this may well have seemed arrogant in the extreme. But to Geddes the "new and imaginative developments of architecture as well as of painting"<sup>12</sup> that were under way in Glasgow signified part of the beginning of a new widespread cultural movement within which Scotland's old continental sympathies - more particularly the ancient league with France which had "deeply marked Scotch history, and even moulded Scotch architecture"<sup>13</sup> - could be revived and developed for the future.

By employing a Durkheimian conception of modern industrial society as a unity with fixed boundaries, Geddes was able to focus upon the issue of hegemony, that is, of the values of the dominant class suffusing the whole of the social structure. If 'culture' therefore is being said to emanate in the first instance from the 'educated classes', the assertion that "the culture of any city or period is really more of a piece than we like to believe" would appear to indicate that the totality of apparent social relationships represents a structure within which the people as a whole are organised in accordance with social norms formulated by those occupying positions at the top of the (hierarchical) structure. But this would not be an adequate interpretation. Along



with the labour of the 'populace', the latter's thought, Geddes argued, was full of the future as well as of the past, its literature containing as many keynotes as echoes:

"And though the learned see their lore is vulgarised to the people, and often, of course, spoiled in the process, they seldom know the converse truth. That is that the strength and the weakness of their specialism are but a reflection and outcome of those of our modern industrial world, of the division and subdivision of labour, which have long kept so far in advance of the organisation of it".<sup>14</sup>

This means that 'specialisms' are the result of a social evolutionary development towards increasing complexity within the division of labour (production), and hence are a product of expanded structural differentiation. In Durkheim's analysis, with the development of specialisation of production organic solidarity emerges, since individuals or groups are increasingly interdependent through systematic relations of exchange. Because of the inherent complexity here, organic solidarity increases the differences between individuals. In The Division of Labour Durkheim made the claim that an historical precondition of this was the concentration of authority (legitimated power) in the hands of a centralised agency (the state) within an industrialised society. If the inner structuration of society is to be found with the division and subdivision of labour, and if the latter are reflected in the specialisms of those in dominant social positions whose principles of organisation (what Durkheim termed 'moral regulation') of the labour structure lag behind the social fact of the latter, it becomes clear that in pointing to the primary significance of the division and subdivision of labour within a society which to a considerable degree lacks the kind of organisation of that labour which would encompass the latter in a wholly 'organic' sense and thus make it part of a coherent social totality (and we have already noted the kind of factors specific to Scotland which obstructed the possibility of the dominant class constructing an 'organic' national community), Geddes is drawing attention to a sphere of actual and potential conflict. If the culture of the city is significantly 'of a piece', therefore, this should not obscure the crucial relevance of the contradictions, tensions and antagonisms which would be reflected within those

commentaries, criticisms and copies referred to by Geddes, that are produced by the industry of 'lower journalism'. But to speak of 'lower journalism' within the context of a social theory which has begun by acknowledging that forces and processes of cultural mediation between the socially dominant and the socially subordinate do not operate in a mono-directional manner, is to implicitly raise one crucial question: what is the *structural* position of this industry and how do those active within it 'handle' material which reflects the social and cultural experience of radically contrasted social strata? Although the term 'class' rarely appeared in The Division of Labour, the final section of the book contained a theory of class conflict within the context of an analysis of the crisis of European culture: class conflict was viewed as expressing the incomplete realization of organic solidarity within the newly developing industrial order. Geddes had, in fact, already addressed himself to the issue of class conflict in his lecture entitled On the Conditions of Progress of the Capitalist and the Labourer delivered in Edinburgh in 1886. There, the Durkheimian element was already apparent in the view that conflicts resulting from class interests were effects of tensions in normative requirements; hence the social scientist was recommended to examine labourer and capitalist "in a quiet natural history sort of way",<sup>15</sup> so as to avoid the anarchy of thought that was a reflection of the prevailing chaos in the world of action. Going beyond this chaos, Geddes would subsequently proclaim, required the social world to mirror the static perfection of which only art was capable. But one of the most pressing problems was that of 'mis-instruction', and it is with the phenomenon of the inadequate conveying of information that Geddes is to be found venting his rage against the lower middle class. Members of this class were the scholastic successes of the institutions of compulsory public instruction produced for the debilitating system of cultural mediation and control which the twentieth century desperately needed to transcend: "The three R's were the ideal of the paleotechnic, Mammon-centred, life-denying nineteenth century, and served only to provide that system with cheap clerics



able to read and count and with cheap bureaucrats to carry on the task of administering more mis-instruction to more potential clerks and functionaries".<sup>16</sup>

R. Q. Gray has described certain aspects of the cultural activity of the occupationally heterogeneous middle strata (characterised as comprising mainly business proprietors and white collar employees not generally engaged in the production of surplus value) in Scottish urban society at the turn of the century in Geddes's own city of Edinburgh.<sup>17</sup> Having emphasised the point that the middle strata are distinct from the two major classes of capitalistic society in that the former range from the lower fringes of the bourgeoisie to the upper fringes of the working class, Gray proceeds to argue that the acceptance of dominant values by this strata "practised at their distinctive social level, produced the behaviour which has been a recurrent theme of literary caricature; imitation, pretension and occasional impotent rebellion".<sup>18</sup> More than anything else the lower-middle strata tended to adopt a rigid, deferential, passive and partly archaic version of the system of hegemonic values which they accepted, although this was combined, according to Gray, with "innovation in certain restricted areas".<sup>19</sup> He provides the example of a magazine for Edinburgh pupil-teachers which illustrates a mixture of limited criticism and deferential acceptance of dominant values. These cultural innovations, however, were "set within definite limits", and the most fundamental of these limits was signalled by the strata's acceptance of the individualistic values encapsulated within hegemonic ideology; "such innovations involved important shifts in the forms of hegemony; the middle strata emerged as a solid bloc of support for a modified version of the dominant values, while the growth of heavily capitalized leisure and communications facilities represented an important new form of concentrated cultural power".<sup>20</sup>

## 2. Class Attitudes in The Popular Press at the Time of the 1901 Exhibition.

In Glasgow, during the Art Nouveau period, the main organs of leisure communications were the popular journals The Bailie, Quiz, and Saint Mungo, and in all cases recreation appears well separated from the activities of work characteristic of the urban centre that Glasgow was. This is apparent both in the mode of presentation within these journals (art, concert, and literary reviews, coverage of popular entertainments such as Hengler's Circus, 'humorous' articles, etc.), and in the 'style' (or rather 'styles') of writing (whimsical, ironical, puerile, individualistic/subjectivistic, sarcastic, and often employing colloquial dialect). Something of the 'concentrated cultural power' possessed by The Bailie (the longest lasting of the journals - it survived into the 1930's, whereas the other two 'folded' in the 1890's) in particular, can be gauged by that journal's boast that "apart from its great popularity in Glasgow and the West (it) circulates all over Scotland and the Colonies; it has therefore a standing and a position such as is possessed by no other Provincial Weekly Journal".<sup>21</sup> The Bailie laid claim to being a recognised authority on all matters connected with finance and the 'Money Market', and emphasised its ability to give special attention to municipal politics. It proclaimed, moreover, that "every Social Movement is discussed in its columns; and it deals with the latest developments in Art and Music".<sup>22</sup> The manner in which it dealt with art and artistic activities is especially telling, both for the conservatism/traditionalism apparent, and for the elements of contradictoriness. The only kind of art worthy of serious consideration, it appeared, was fine art - hence the consistent detailed coverage, employing the discourse of connoisseurship, of exhibitions of paintings in the 'Megilp' columns, and the frequent recommendations to prospective buyers/collectors to purchase. It was acknowledged that Glasgow had achieved significant international renown in the artistic sphere but even in 1901 there was to be no intimation that the most dramatic acclaim now being enjoyed by Glasgow artists abroad was being elicited by examples of applied decorative art



rather than paintings : "Our painting clan is to be numbered by its scores, nay, rather by its fifties. And not only this, but the city is famous all over the globe for its artistic accomplishment. The 'Glasgow School' is a name to conjure with from Munich to St. Louis, from Melbourne to Copenhagen".<sup>23</sup> For 'Glasgow School' read 'Glasgow Boys': this much is clear from the cities chosen for naming, for example, the Boys exhibition in the Munich *Glaspalaste* (1890) and the St. Louis Exposition of 1895. But the refusal to include Vienna here (the most recently resounding 'Glasgow School' success) smacks of a conspiracy of prejudiced silence. Even if the Bailie be considered benignly anachronistic in such instances, there is little doubt that it was quite at home when sneering at art, and especially at those with 'artistic' (and thus 'foreign') interests: "We have become Cosmopolitan. And then there is the vast good the (1901) Exhibition has done to those freaks who study pictures and machinery, and exhibits, and other uninteresting things".<sup>24</sup> In comparing the 1901 event to its predecessor in 1888, it was found that "Just as the latter (1901) is by far the biggest enterprise materially, so it is also by far the most satisfactory, by far the more important enterprise, whether regarded from its edifying or amusing side".<sup>25</sup> And yet, in contradiction, it could also be considered that "the Exhibition is about as entertaining as a debating society's discussion on the time-honoured chestnut 'Was Hamlet mad?'".<sup>26</sup> On one level, such contradictory expressions illustrate the individualistic approach to 'reportage' employed; each to his own view. But they cannot avoid revealing uncertainty. The uncertainty of a class (or 'stratum', to employ the more loose term preferred by Gray) experiencing a special kind of social dysjunction? In describing the middle class since the emergence of the 'new middle class' "with its army of 'employees', minor civil servants and private officials, commercial travellers and shop-assistants",<sup>27</sup> Arnold Hauser spoke of how this class "has always felt menaced from above and below, but has preferred to give up its real interests rather than its hopes and alleged prospects. It has wanted to be reckoned as part of the bourgeois

upper class, although in reality it shared the lot of the lower class".<sup>28</sup> Hauser emphasised that it was the lack of a clear-cut and clarified social position which deprived the middle class of a coherent consciousness and consistent outlook on life. There seems little evidence to suggest that Glasgow's middle-class was atypical in this respect.

T. J. Clark has made the point that in the later nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, the middle class - neither bourgeois nor proletarian, and with social values oscillating between populism and social climbing - "had not yet invented an *imagery* of its own fate . . ."<sup>29</sup> Which is to say that, through control of the means of symbolic production and representation, it was actively feeding upon the values and idioms of the classes it wished to dominate; "and doing so involved it in making the idioms part of a further system, in which the popular was expropriated from those who produced it - made over into a separate realm of images which were given back, duly refurbished, to the 'people' thus safely defined".<sup>30</sup> This involved renewing and recasting 'popular' material commonly used by the working-class. Strategically employing, so to speak, Geddes' 'lower art' and 'lower journalism' in a (dilute) form carefully contrived to negativise, for example, radical working-class movements, at the same time as acknowledging the actual significance of *movement* as embracing the possible future as well as the past. "'During the last week the *Labour Leader* has found its way into every second house in Glasgow' - a misprint, I presume, for public house".<sup>31</sup> Such feeble-minded moralising was as much a consistent trait as was the attempt to depict working-class socialism as the politics of the rabble:

' . . . Socialism as affected in these islands under the banner of the Keir Hardie crew, is a crude creed, the adoption of which can lead to nought save unspeakable chaos, and in all probability ultimate and irrevocable ruin. Be that as it may, the voice of the Socialist is daily becoming louder in the city. It is heard at Ward and political meetings, and in the Town Council of late it has developed into a nuisance of the first water. What nine out of ten of our local Socialists badly want is education, and it behoves the citizens to see that they get it, otherwise mischief is bound to be done ere long. With the true Socialism little fault can be found. It is the shoddy article that does the harm".<sup>32</sup>



'Education' was here a code word for incorporation; what the 'true' socialism was, however, remained a mystery, and the factor of the 'innocuous' Independent Labour Party reflecting trends associated with both the (Marxist) Social Democratic Federation (set up in 1883) and the reformist-oriented Fabian Society (established in 1884) was valuable in helping to further obscure the issue. But the inherent conservatism and deference to ruling ideas and values was manifested also in reaction against other forms of radicalism (womens' suffrage) and non-conformity (in the Bailie not marrying was designated as 'decadence').

An image of 'populist' sentiment was central to Glasgow's petit-bourgeois journals - the Bailie had a weekly column entitled 'What the Folks are Saying' - and two dimensions of this pseudo-populism were to be found in anti-intellectualism and anti-aestheticism. Sneering at the pretensions of the intellectual 'coteries' was a regular theme: "The Bailie, unfortunately, had not the privilege of a University education. His 'father wis a weaver'. All his life he has been outside of the High Street and Gilmorehill coteries".<sup>33</sup> The ability of the society to allow upward mobility is implicit in this, and, despite the expression of annoyance at exclusion from privileged social elites, an inverted snobbery commends the movement possible from (inarticulate) weaver to (articulate) journalist. The pretensions of the 'coteries' were sometimes portrayed as being not only intellectual (and thus effete), but as being rooted in particular motivations towards the accumulation of wealth and status within the financial sphere of the large modern city. Thus, the same journal which provided weekly up-to-date information on the Stock Exchange and the international situation in business and finance, could carry an article expressing the view that

"There is something awful, something ominous, something suggestive of untold millions made in three short minutes on the Stock Exchange, which appeals to the aspiring city youth, in the two short words 'City Man'. Innocent and simple words, but how suggestive . . . There is something daring in the mere idea of dabbling in stocks that dazzles the academic youth of Gilmorehill, the smart accountant's apprentice who talks so much about Great Easterns, etc., or any others of the numberless tribe of aspirants to city manhood".<sup>34</sup>

Such expressed contempt for financial and commercial endeavour, however, was bogus. At the close of 1900, the Bailie, in summing up the nineteenth century as "the most wonderful in the history of industrial and scientific progress that the world has known",<sup>35</sup> celebrated Glasgow's 'highest point' of contemporary commercial prosperity. The future historian looking back over the dying period with dispassionate eyes, an historian capable of weighing the most significant causes for the city's growth and development, it was asserted, would be "compelled to admit that commercial ability, not intellectual achievement, has placed it in the vanguard of industrial progress". But this 'commercial ability', clearly the preserve of Glasgow's affluent business class, was on this occasion portrayed as being wholly in harmony with the interests of the 'common people'. Class divisions and the gross inequalities of power and privilege which accompanied them, were thus conveniently obfuscated through the use of a mystificatory image of collective physical/materialist industriousness; an image which served the purpose of making thought and imagination ('separated off' and made the preserve of the academic institution) appear unproductive and peripheral to social development;

"It has never been the student, the dreamer of dreams, but the worker who toils with subtle brains and lissom fingers that does the service work of the world; and the strong hands and healthy brains that have built St. Mungo were owned by men with the blood of the common people flowing in their veins . . . The roll which bears the name of the business men who have made Glasgow what it is, in the last hundred years, is a long and illustrious one".<sup>36</sup>

On another level, however, the images here are much less crude than they may at first appear to be; the combination of subtle and healthy brains with 'lissom fingers' and 'strong hands' in the activity of labour - in describing the active *interplay* of mind and body this represents a potent formulation. It is one which Carlyle, Ruskin and Geddes would have instantly responded to. But the effect of the use of a collectivist concept here is all important, and that is undoubtedly the concealment of the asymmetric balance of power within the class system which leads to the very



organisation and control of workforces in the first instance. Thus the uncritical optimism permeating such passages reveals its inherently petit bourgeois character.

If it be argued that what was being extolled, was not so much commercial and business activities in themselves, as what these were being seen to give rise to in the form of a force of cultural moulding which had transformed the city, then some credibility for such an interpretation is provided by an editorial in the Bailie from the beginning of 1901, where a comparison is drawn between the Glasgow of 1851 and of 1901. In the former year, it was claimed, the city was given over exclusively to money-making, whereas, half a century later, although the 'golden calf' is still worshipped, this is to be understood as a worship that has become transformed; "In the early Victorian era money was hungered and thirsted after simply because it was money; today money is largely valued because its possession lends a further grace, a more delicate zest, to life. And one result of this change of attitude has been the erection of Glasgow into a leading art centre, not only of the United Kingdom, but of all Europe . . ." <sup>37</sup> Here attention is now being drawn away, not so much from the image of *homo oeconomicus* to one of *homo aestheticus*, as from production to the world of commodities and consumption. Money is no more to be valued for what it is (or rather what it is represented as being in terms of an abstracted cash nexus), but for what it can buy; and what it can buy is supposed to enhance the experience of living; thus the *function* served by money is claimed to have changed, and what used to be saved or accumulated is now used to purchase commodities. Given the ideological nature of the claim that money enhances life, works of art become the ideal commodities. The industrial society has become the acknowledged consumer society, and within a few months Glasgow's largest International Exhibition would demonstrate to all that the capitalist market was the one dominating reality. Everything - including art - had to justify its existence in market terms. "Now that the Exhibition is in full train", said the Bailie of the Fortieth Exhibition of the Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts, "let us hope that

picture buyers and the general public will see their way to make it a monetary, as it certainly is an artistic, success".<sup>38</sup> Artistic success is therefore the prelude to monetary success: the 'goods' are placed on show, and their exhibition can represent a legitimate social event in itself; but the true function of such an event is to make manifest a world of objects waiting to be appropriated, highly-priced super-commodities set out for pre-sale perusal, but at the same time embodying an essentially 'artistic' nature which allows them to appear to be free from purely commercial imperatives. Their purpose is thus the enrichment of life, and money is only important as the means to the end of their acquisition. Such is the metaphysic underlying the entire commodity realm, and the means to the concealment of the fact that what is being consumed is the exchange-value of things.

Alongside the recognition that social activities were now bound to the market in new ways, went a nostalgic reflecting on what had been lost. It was apparent that the lives of the people of Glasgow had been deprived of something valuable in their mid-nineteenth-century forms as the commercial market had actualized its logic of expansion, appropriation, and standardization:

"One of the marked differences between the Glasgow of today and the Glasgow of fifty years ago is provided by the loss of character undergone by the several divisions, or rather districts, of the city. Up to the forties and fifties, Calton and Anderston, Gorbals and Bridgeton, were in a sense separate and distinct individualities. Indeed they could all boast of Provosts and Bailies, Town Clerks and policemen of their own. They were independent burghs, each with its independent burghal privileges . . . up till the seventies and eighties, Bridgeton was essentially Bridgeton. Its people had their own ways of looking at public matters, whether these were local matters, or matters affecting the nation at large".<sup>39</sup>

In the midst of the business activity being celebrated then, the apparent diminution of behavioural and attitudinal diversity was eliciting some alarm as the negative side of commercialism came under scrutiny:

"Have you ever noticed the groove in which the ambition of all classes of city youth seems to run. Take the young collegiate, the stock-broker's apprentice, not to mention clerks of every description; they are all much alike. They have all one great ambition round which their whole lives centre, viz., emulation of the 'city man'".<sup>40</sup>



The effortless tossing off of the euphemism 'all classes' and the crude homogenizing - albeit for the purpose of bewailing a new type of conformism - concealed, not only the realities of urban class division, but also the problems associated with 'classifying' class, that is, of determining precisely who belonged where with regard to stratification. The Section of the British Association devoted to Economic Science and Statistics arranged a discussion on the 'Housing of the People' in September 1901 at which one speaker stressed that "there was a difficulty as to what was meant by the working class, the labouring class, and the poor".<sup>41</sup> In his opinion 'the poor' meant those who earned less than 25 shillings per week all the year round, and that this also included families whose collective income did not exceed 30 shillings per week. Consequently, artisans and skilled labourers earning 38 shillings (and in some ironworks 42 shillings) a week, and with family earnings of 50 to 60 shillings a week, manifestly were not poor. The problem of classification was further compounded on this occasion by Glasgow's Lord Provost Chisholm, who referred to the difficulty of deciding on how to classify labourers who were earning 17 and 18 shillings per week "and who, by the aid of the members of their family were striving to make ends meet and keep themselves off the poor roll. There were thousands of such cases in the city".<sup>42</sup>

Together with the Bailie's nostalgia for 'authentic' cultural diversity at the level of the 'people', however, went a hard-headed promotion of the imperatives underlying the whole process of commercial activity. On this level it was important to perpetuate an image of Glasgow as an entity whose state of health had, of necessity, to be diagnosed at all times, and in all spheres, in terms of commercial prosperity. Often this involved concealing from view real commercial difficulties, since public awareness of these difficulties could safely be assumed to have a dramatic effect upon the subsequent functioning of a given enterprise. For example, the Bailie's recommendation to purchase pictures shown at the Fine Arts Institute's fortieth exhibition was made at a point in time when the Institute was experiencing a considerable falling off in its

receipts, and was desperately attempting to win 'the public' back in paying numbers by inviting English artists of repute to provide pictures that had been hung recently at the Royal Academy and the New Gallery in London (by Sargent, Irving, Waterhouse, Watts).<sup>43</sup> There was nothing unique to Glasgow in this move, since other provincial fine art exhibitions in Britain were suffering similar setbacks; however, at Glasgow a new Chairman of Council and a new acting secretary were appointed in this year to effect significant changes. None of this was mentioned by the Bailie.<sup>43</sup> When the Glasgow Calico Printers' Association became an obvious example of a consistently unprofitable business, the Bailie was not slow in producing its own brand of understated ridicule, but at the same time the Coats company, which had earned extra profits for six months in 1900 when foreign trade was favourable (subsequent to trade prices being raised in January of that year), was presented as a paradigm of what a successful commercial operation should ideally be. The figures of Coats balance-sheet were referred to as 'phenomenal', and the combine was claimed to be steadily piling up profits year after year: ". . . there was a tall story going round, the other day, anent the prospect of a certain well-known personage, connected with the great Paisley thread combine, taking an active part in the management of the Calico Printers' Association. The statement has, of course, received an unqualified denial, but such was scarcely necessary, as the gentleman in question was not likely to risk the great reputation he has earned by endeavouring to make the Calico Printers a commercial success . . ." <sup>44</sup>

The concern with commercial success is central to popular press coverage of the 1901 Exhibition. It is significant that, the more 'artistic' elements were acknowledged as being assimilated to commercially viable goods and enterprises, the more they were deemed worthy of commendation. But it is important to emphasise the point that 'artistic', when employed as a descriptive term in this context, did not invariably refer to aspects of Art Nouveau style; indeed, underpinning the notion of the



'artistic' found in the popular press lies a considerable lack of understanding as to what the aims of the Art Nouveau movement were in crucial respects, such as, for example, its opposition to the eclectic use of historical styles. Even in 1909, the Baillie, in describing specimen rooms by Archibald Stewart and Co. of Union Street as being "furnished in a harmonious and artistic manner", proceeded to applaud "The drawing room in Louis XIV style; the Renaissance dining room in green and oak and old tapestry; the grey and silver bedroom, entirely modern and original, with its helio walls and floor cloth; the Georgian bedroom, in grey and mahogany; the girl's bedroom - a sweet apartment in dainty white",<sup>45</sup> and so on. The 'modern and original', here deprived of any meaning specific to itself, has become merely another aspect of the variety offered by commercialism, and it is placed alongside the very historical elements it set out to destroy. Deprived of any accompanying unsettling ideology of absolute 'newness' through its position within a relationship of eclectic absurdity, a version of 'modern style' had thus comfortably become complete commodity.

The Aesthete in Glasgow: The Creation of a Caricature.

The facetious and 'humorous' tone adopted by the popular journals proved to be a valuable device for rendering hostility and ridicule palatable for the readership. Throughout the eighteen-nineties one of the most striking images created was that of the 'decadent' aesthete, and it was in no sense accidental that this rarified personage should have been portrayed as one of the fashionable consumers of the *outré* modernity purveyed by Cranston's Tea Rooms:

"He was a long-haired soulful aesthete, one of the distinguished ornaments of Buchanan Street, and that resting place of the weary dude - Cranston's. He was seated there the other day, gracefully posing as he awaited the ministering handmaiden. His elegant neck was encircled by one of those new turned down collars, when a shrill childish treble sounded in his ears, 'Ma, look at that gentleman with the long hair, he has a collar on exactly like the one that nurse wears'".<sup>46</sup>

A common ploy was to make the aesthete appear to be a fake, a *poseur*, someone equally as ordinary and as 'innocuous' as everyone else who appeared to be refusing to conform; but more importantly, a person who was, in actuality, the very opposite of what he was so pretentiously pretending to be, and who was ultimately more respectable than the respectable:

"Everybody who is anybody in Hillhead and Kelvinside knows Wattie Dick. He is the innocuous gilt-edged chappie you meet at every 'At Home' and dance in the Alexander-Williams set. The first time I met Wattie, was at Alexander's place, and unfortunately for me, Wattie was in what they who know him called 'excellent form'.

He came late - I understand he always does - and was got up in an extraordinary style which included the most voluminous stand-up collar I had ever seen, a flowing tie of bed-quilt pattern, a black frock coat with a well-defined waist, very light pants, shiny court shoes, with fine big bows, and a liberal show of immaculate linen. He looked as if he had stepped from a band-box, and one expected to hear him say 'Waltzing class this way, please.

He seated himself beside Miss Jay Penne, the flippant, and the two talked for twenty minutes of the Yellow Book, and the decadents' moods and tenses, the last 'daunce' and the Glasgow School, the incoming spring, and so on.

Wattie is in reality not the man my experience of him led me to imagine. He is the sole support of a widowed mother and a large family of children, works like a bee with his pen, dashing off *vers de societe* and stories in the style of Kipling after his day's work, dances and 'At Homes' are over, is president of the Society for the Better Clothing of the Polynesians, reads the *Gospel Trumpet* and *Annie Swan*, and has sittings in at least three kirks".<sup>47</sup>



On occasion, the phenomenon of the aesthete leaving behind the sanctified atmosphere of his private chamber and actually entering the world of self-satisfied respectability and confronting the commonplace, could be more than a fabrication of lower journalistic imagination:

"Mr. Richard le Gallienne, Minor Versifier, Decadent, and Logroller, lectured to Crosshill folks on Tuesday evening on 'The Revolt of the Daughters' . . . The lecture was brimful of good things, but several of the Le Gallienisms were slightly *risque* and made Crosshill Respectability shiver. But everything passed off well".<sup>48</sup>

But with the first of the Wilde trials barely over, and with aestheticism unambiguously linked with the unsavoury topic of homosexual 'perversion', an emphatic tone of outrage demonstrated that the time for humour was now over. It was thus proclaimed that

"a crisis in literature has been reached. The Decadents, the Neuroticists, the Yellow-Bookists, the Ibsenites, the Passionists, the Egotists, the Keynotists, the Yellow Asterites, the Ships-That-Pass-in-The-Nightists, and all the rest of the morbid and effeminate crew have been voted impossible".<sup>49</sup> But the repetitive and circular

representations of 'Artistic Glasgow' continued: the array of stereotyped 'descriptions' still being presented as the outcome of the reporter/observer's confrontation with real-life situations:

"We spent about a couple of hours in the Fine Art Institute Galleries on Monday evening. Artistic Glasgow was there; it was the occasion of the *conversazione* held to inaugurate the Institute art season. Every room was crowded; and altogether the evening was most depressing. It is questionable if any one person saw more than a dozen pictures the whole evening . . . Art is fashionable nowadays. Even though you can't distinguish the artistic difference between a Whistler and a Beattie-Brown, you must at least pretend to take an interest in Art. Consequently, Hillhead and Kelvinside, not to mention Pollokshields and far-off Denistoun, turned out in full force. Claw-hammer garb was the order of the night. Even the artists wore the conventional swallow-tail. It was easy to distinguish him. He slouched about the rooms, looking as if he wished somebody would go away and he might have a pipeful of tobacco and a schooner of beer . . . There was the tall, languishing-eyed female with ideas, the sympathetic old party whose delight seemed to be calendar-like interiors with the tearful mother and her soldier boy, the gay old gentleman whose bent was for the nude, and all the rest of the crowd".<sup>50</sup>

Aside from the crass attempts at stigmatizing humour the most obvious aspect of this is the crude and contemptuous stereotyping through the use of static 'descriptions' of

'arty' types. But can such practices be said to constitute the elements of an ideology? According to Clark,

"The sign of an ideology is a kind of inertness in discourse: a fixed pattern of imagery and belief, a syntax which seems obligatory, a set of permitted modes of seeing and saying; each with its own structure of closure and disclosure, its own horizons, its way of providing certain perceptions and rendering others unthinkable, aberrant, or extreme. And these things are done - I suppose this is the other suggestion carried in the word - as it were *surreptitiously*. Which is to say that ideologies, like any forms of knowledge, are constructs; they are meanings produced in a special and partial social practice; they are most often tied to the attitudes and experiences of a particular class, and therefore at odds, at least to some extent, with the attitudes and experience of those who do not belong to it".<sup>51</sup>

In presenting constructed and disputable meanings in and on an *active* process of representation as if these were hardly meanings at all, ideologies naturalize such representation, by setting limits to discourse, and by closing speech against consciousness of itself as production, process, practice, subsistence, and contingency. The function of ideology, according to Clark, is to dispose, as far as possible, of the ground for conflicts between different classes.

What then is the relevance to our analysis of acknowledging this particular form of ideology as practiced by the 'cultural' petite bourgeoisie involved in the media of symbolic presentation and representation in Glasgow at the close of the nineteenth century? Clark helps to provide an answer to this question when he points out that

"The various forms of commercialized leisure which bulked so large in the late-nineteenth-century city were instruments of class formation, and the class so constructed was the petite bourgeoisie. It was defined primarily by its relation to the working class, and by that relation being given spectacular form. Popular culture was produced for an audience of petite bourgeois consumers; a fiction of working-class ways of being was put in place alongside a parody of middle-class style, the one thus being granted imaginary dominion over the other".<sup>52</sup>

Both the 'fiction' and the 'parody' are recognisable elements within much turn of the century popular 'leisure' writing in Glasgow. For example, in the whimsical book 'Erichie' by Neil Munro (actually Hugh Foulis) a chapter describes a visit to the Willow Tearooms. Amusement centres on the effects, recounted by working-class Erchie, of the new decorative art upon the lives of he and his wife. Thus the aims behind the art



itself, and the products of it, are made to appear ridiculous through the device of playing upon the sense of the incongruity of 'artistic' objects being used to decorate a tenement interior. But the sense of incongruity extended also to middle class interiors where, for example, the effects of modish stained-glass windows could provide amusement:

"My love has purple hair,  
And auburn eyes in hue;  
Her forehead is green,  
Her cheeks are drab,  
And her neck a soft sky-blue"<sup>53</sup>

On occasion, the element of contemptuous resentment underlying the parodies of middle-class style would lead to an intensification of the fiction of the working-class, with the latter being romanticised to a quite ludicrous degree:

"Possibly you observe also one or two members of the working-class (promenading Great Western Road), and they alone seem to be really happy and free in their ambulation. Not a rush do they care for quality and pattern; they are walking up an appetite for tea, and of indigestion they have no present knowledge".<sup>54</sup>

The commonest means whereby Glasgow's petit-bourgeois journals set limits to discourse on and around avant-garde artistic developments was undoubtedly by ignoring to a striking degree the Art School and most of the events relating to it. In 1901 The Studio remarked upon "the influence of that 'local patriotism', of pride of local citizenship, which in the old days was a source of such potent encouragement to every kind of art work in European towns and cities".<sup>55</sup> This same influence, it continued, still operated here and there, "as in Glasgow; but it is quite unknown in many Scottish and English towns". It has to be stressed, however, that this particular kind of encouragement was not characteristic of Glasgow, despite the civic enterprise and civic pride manifested within the city throughout the nineteenth century. A significant gap existed between the Art School and local trades and manufacturers; an emphasis was placed in the former upon working on precious metals and jewellery, handmade ceramics, carved wood, stained glass, mosaic, book-decoration, needlework and embroidery, which

was not connected to modern technological potentialities. It is as if, in acknowledging this gap, the popular press - greatly in tune as it was with commercialism - set out to demonstrate its contempt for such antiquated endeavours. But this was not all; the fact that a new and distinctive local style had been created, passed apparently unheeded, and there appears to have been a deeply-rooted hostility towards the overtly 'artistic' and the very aspects of 'advancement' that were being applauded abroad. When the Art School forwarded 110 exhibits to the Liege Exhibition of 1895, *L'Œuvre Artistique* commented that

"Our Schools of Art are far, very far indeed, from being so advanced as yours and what has above all astonished us in your work is the great liberty left to the Pupils to follow their own individuality. Such is so different from the ideas current in our Schools of Art that it is difficult for us to comprehend this freedom although we admire it very much".<sup>56</sup>

It seems that the press in Glasgow, together with a significant section of the local artistic establishment, had difficulty in comprehending it also. The Belgian Art Nouveau architect Paul Hankar was sufficiently impressed by the Glasgow School's work shown in Liege to comment that "It would be highly desirable if this exhibition could be studied by all the heads of the 'drawing factories' which in Belgium are known as Academies of Fine Arts".<sup>57</sup>

An Inspector from the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, in his visit to the Glasgow Art School in 1897, had referred to the latter as being "one of the most enterprising and vigorous schools in the Kingdom . . . The variety of the work and the practical nature of the instruction reflect great credit on Mr. Newbery".<sup>58</sup> Later in the same year, *Saint Mungo* (which, in contrast to the other journals, chose not to consistently ignore the School, and which took delight in ridiculing the work and activities of the School as well as its Director Newbery) printed a 'Burlesque Operetta' ('Potentate and Painter') in which Newbery, as 'Diavolo Oldberry', was derided for being a theorist, an aesthete, and a follower of Whistler:

'With great ideas I'm brimming o'er  
Relating unto Art;



Of Schools I'll found at least a score -  
 On this I've set my heart,  
 I dream of greens and blues and reds  
 By day as well as night;  
 When other folks are in their beds -  
 I'm sensitively quivering,  
 Aesthetically shivering -  
 Intellectual spasms flutter fiercely at my heart;  
 I'm soulfully a-scheming,  
 And ethereally dreaming,  
 To grind another gospel out of Art, Art, Art!"<sup>59</sup>

This made explicit how the Art School and its ethos were perceived by many: the fact that Newbery's own flat was decorated in the manner of the Aesthetic Movement, with eastern rugs, tapestries, and washed-out walls, would have provided substance for the mythology of 'decadence' being promulgated. The Evening Times commented on the Macdonald sisters looking 'most aesthetic' in their 'sacque gowns and muslin fichus'.<sup>60</sup>

Significantly, however, a contrast emerges in the manner of portrayal of the Art School between the popular journals and the local newspapers. With the latter, effete decadence and aesthetic bohemianism gave way to disciplined utilitarianism as the claimed central characteristic of the institution. On one noteworthy occasion the utilitarian aspects were so heavily emphasised by the Glasgow Evening News, and in such an idiosyncratic manner, as to portray even that bastion of rigorous discipline, South Kensington, as being 'decadent':

"The school is under South Kensington - the South Kensington that is understood to make for all that is feeble, meaningless, and effeminate in art - yet the school prospers, and produces work which may be eccentric, daring, and, occasionally, crude; but is seldom weak or deficient in originality, suggestion, and resource. Round the school there has sprung up a distinct Art Student coterie, the members of which live and move much as did Clive Newcome in his day, and as do his up-to-date prototypes of the big Continental schools. Their talk on and off duty is of Art - schools, movements, methods, values, motives, and the rest - and their jargon is the jargon of the studio. In one respect, however, they differ - fortunately or unfortunately, as you please - from their fellows in France, Germany, and Holland - there is not much of the Bohemian element about them; they seldom hear the midnight chimes; they never give wine parties; and the police don't know one of them by sight even. The Glasgow Art student is a conscientious mortal, he looks ahead, and his school days are for him no time of play"<sup>61</sup>

Whether the School was being denounced or commended, therefore, the criteria of judgement employed were almost invariably rooted in prejudice in favour of utilitarian values.

A couple of months after this description appeared, Geddes addressed the issue of the relationship of aestheticism to utilitarianism within the pages of the Evergreen. Characteristically, his discussion of these 'polarities' focused upon the elucidation of what he believed was their involvement in an evolutionary dialectical movement. As with Mackintosh, the scientific and the artistic were viewed as having a common grounding in the dynamic imagination which mediates between subject and object. When he came to consider the doctrine of Art for Art's sake ("and we all know how superior Art is to any restraints of morality") Geddes employed an image of the aesthete as a self-sufficient individual, sheltered amid the wealth and comfort of the modern city. In the cultivation of an aesthetic appreciation of the world, this individual has ignored the call to action and has calmed his 'questioning intellect': dispassionately absorbed, he impartially observes the rich variety and contrast of modern life. Hence, the aesthete develops as never before,

"his impressionist mirror growing more and more perfect in its polished calm. So develop new subtleties of sense; and given this wealth of impressions, this perfection of sensibility, new combinations must weave themselves in the fantasies of reverie. Our new Merlins thus brighten our winter with their gardens of dream".<sup>61</sup>

Eventually, the morbid strain which lies latent in every individual life is roused as an effect of this inaction. As though in an aside to Beardsley and his consumptive condition, Geddes described how "the degeneration of the artist may set in from the physical side".<sup>62</sup> Because this degeneration must find outlet, the temptations of the urban aesthete begin to arise and increase. His training in ascetic moral and intellectual resistance having been steadily relaxed, the aesthete is unable to resist these temptations. Does this mean then that all aestheticism is ultimately evil, and



only (work-directed) activity good, asked Geddes. Has the last word to reside with the jeering, coarse, utilitarian, the joyless ascetic?;

"Not so; the road of life ever lies forward, through the present phase of evolution, not back from it, be its dangers what they may. This so-called Decadence of literature and art which, as we have seen, science fully shares, is no hopeless decline, but only an autumn sickness, and one of rapid growth and adolescence. For man is increasingly master of the world and of his fate; he does not merely rest in his environment and take its mould, but rises superior to environment and remoulds it. So art and science, which we have seen unite in imagination, find unity in Action also, in that detailed reorganisation of urban and rustic life into health and beauty, which is the ideal of the Incipient Civilisation, and which distinguishes it from the confusion of the Contemporary yet Disappearing one . . .

Thanks then, and even honour, to the art and science of the Decadence, since from it we have learned to see the thing as it is; it has even helped us likewise to imagine it as it might be; it remains only to ask if in some measure we can make it as it should be, and here lies intact such originality as is left open to us - that of Renaissance".<sup>63</sup>

Thus in Geddes' view, Aestheticism, in opting out of utilitarian functioning, has facilitated the distance required for a new kind of 'seeing', a qualitatively new perception of society at the height of modernity, and this has, in turn, engendered the hypersensitivity and imaginative potential required for the necessary vision of a new social order. A vision which replaces confusion, instability and fragmentation with unity, creativity and coherence; "To see the world, to see life truly, one must see these as a whole; and only those who see this in movement do see it in whole".<sup>64</sup> It is not so much the perception of being, therefore, which engenders wholeness, as the perception-apperception of *becoming*. Hence Geddes spoke of survival *and* initiative; conservation *and* innovation; decline *and* renaissance. Fundamentally, the attention is drawn to the phenomenon of Decadence in *fin-de-siecle* society as having facilitated, through a retreat to the inner sphere, the social distance necessary for an aestheticization of reality which is effected through an aestheticization of thought. David Frisby has pointed out that the "retreat into inwardness (*Innerlichkeit*) and the *interieur* is often taken to be a consistent feature of *Jugendstil*",<sup>65</sup> and in discussing Simmel's 'The Problem of Style' (1908), he draws attention to the argument that the attempt by the individual to escape from the exaggerated subjectivism fostered in

modern capitalistic society elicits a 'thirst for stylization' which is focused upon the (spatially confined) living environment. This stylization of the domestic sphere is central to *Jugendstil* and its attempt to realize the 'total work of art'.

Similar concerns are to be found in Glasgow in the same period. "The room gradually became regarded as a work of art in itself", wrote Hermann Muthesius in describing the 'element of novelty' characterising Scottish Art Nouveau, "not merely an accidental outcome of various artistic details collected together".<sup>66</sup> The actual aesthetic effect achievable by stylizing the interior of the dwelling house and treating it as a harmonious work of art could be considerable. Desmond Chapman-Houston, an Anglo-Irish actor, writer and biographer, and a close acquaintance of the Mackintoshes, reflected that "To enter the studio of Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh is to realize very vividly that only dreams are true".<sup>67</sup> And Chapman-Houston would have been less than perceptive had he not realised that these were the dreams of an aestheticism energised by the drive towards maximizing the 'space' between (stylized) interior and (urbanised/commercialised) exterior. Thus the Mackintosh studio was

". . . far away in that mist-encircled, grim city of the north which is filled with echoes of the terrible screech of the utilitarian, and haunted by the hideous eyes of thousands who make their God of gold. Vulgar ideals, and the triumph of the obvious, are characteristic of the lives of the greater portion of its population; and yet, in the midst of so much that is incongruous and debasing, we find a little white home, full of quaint and beautiful things, with a big white studio empty of everything but the Artist's Jesso panels, all prepared and made beautiful for her by her artist-husband, in order that her genius may have a fitting home, and her exquisite, quiet art congenial and fitting surroundings".<sup>68</sup>



Local Reaction to the Appearance of the New Style and the Significance of Beardsley

There is, perhaps, a deep irony in the fact that Margaret Macdonald's 'quiet art' should, along with that of her sister, in the beginning, have elicited the kind of outrage which has often accompanied the reaction of a complacent 'public' to the kind of 'artistic' experiences which it would rather not have. The description 'quiet art' is, in this context, a ridiculous one. In 1894 Glasgow was presented with images so strikingly modernist that the ensuing hostility of the local artistic establishment must, in retrospect, appear to have been inevitable. The fact that this hostility was far from being an overnight affair, that it was rather to have a lasting effect upon local perception of Glasgow's avant-garde, must be viewed as a fundamental indicator of the depth of resentment felt for this new development on the eve of its inception.

At the Students' Exhibition of Holiday Work housed in the old Fine Art Institute in the Spring of 1895 "The Four" isolated their contribution and in their section, was seen the first blooming of a new style in Architecture, internal decoration, and in various crafts".<sup>69</sup> Thus ran Mrs. Jessie Newbery's description of the event which appeared to signal the origins of the Glasgow Art Nouveau movement. But even before this particular exhibition, work by the Macdonald sisters had elicited in many quarters a hostility strongly characterised by the desire to equate the style and imagery manifested in the work with decadence, morbidity and wayward affectation. Underpinning the reactions there were hints at associations with sexual licence, disease and degeneration. The initial expression of revulsion came from Alexander Roche, one of the Glasgow School of Painters, who referred to the water colours by the Macdonald sisters which were shown at the Exhibition in November 1894 on the occasion of the Distribution of Diplomas to the Glasgow School of Art Club:

"As regards some of the extraordinary things which were exhibited, he personally felt that they were dreadfully clever, but the question he asked was - Where is this thing leading? It seemed to him to be leading to the graveyard. (Laughter). He thought: the designs he referred to exhibited a very unhappy spirit, which should not go very much further. He would like to say nice things, but after examining some of these productions he had had a dreadful nightmare and one of his fellows was now ill.

(Laughter). If he had an opportunity, he would press upon future judges the desirability of putting down this ghoulish sort of thing . . ."<sup>70</sup>

The tenor of Roche's comments (not so much his emphasis upon death as being the meaning underlying the artistic liberty manifested in the work, as his insistence upon increased control) mirrored that of the Westminster Gazette, which had remarked of Beardsley's work in the first edition of the Yellow Book (April, 1894), "we do not know that anything would meet the case except a short Act of Parliament to make this kind of thing illegal".<sup>71</sup> The day after Roche's outburst was reported, a letter appeared in the Glasgow Herald making explicit the relationship between the style of the posters on show (by unnamed students) and the style of Beardsley:

"If Beardsleyism be a novelty, if it cannot defend its style as the old rhymer did his pretty tale:-

*Take Yt On This Condition,*

*Yt Holds Credyt By Tradition,*

It can at least claim to be original. That Beardsleyism is not yet a convention is no reason why a student, who may be so minded, may not try how far he or she may express himself or herself by it. Mr. Roche cannot expect the students to invent brand new styles before they are out of their pupilage. I have no fault to find with what seems to be the maxim of the new school - 'Try all things and hold fast to that which is good'.<sup>72</sup>

But not everyone considered the work worthy enough to be considered alongside that of Beardsley (recently dubbed Weirdsley by a contemporary art critic) or his true followers. When in January 1895 a poster executed by Mackintosh (though not credited to him at the time; it was even suggested that the work was, in fact, by Beardsley) for the annual exhibition of the Fine Arts Institute appeared, a lover of Beardsley, signing himself 'No Flim-Flammy', registered his complaint:

"I, with many others no doubt, have been looking out for the Fine Art Institute poster. If it is meant as an imitation of Aubrey Beardsley, it is a libel on that artist, who in all his drawings shows genuine artistic elegance and correct perspective. This poster has none of these qualities, except that the colour printing is good".<sup>73</sup>

The real sense of outrage, however, had been directed at the works by the Macdonald sisters seen in November 1894. A letter from 'A Mere Outsider', printed in the Glasgow Evening News, contained the germ of what was to blossom into the 'official'



interpretation of the new style: this was the work of inept amateurs, who, in setting out to employ the device of shocking the public, attempted to conceal their lack of genuine ability and mastery of technique:

"Painting figures with no clothes on has always excited opposition from a large portion of the public, but these ambitious enthusiasts in their search after truth paint their figures without even their flesh on. The only consolation I can see is they can't go much further. What I want the 'Life Class Student' and 'Amateur Artist' to tell me is - (1) Will this new art do anything to elevate the masses to a higher degree of culture? and (2) What new beauty has been created by it for the solace of mankind?"<sup>74</sup>

The one thing that both the admirers and the detractors were agreed upon, was that the work on show represented a style that was, unquestionably, new, and in respect of this, the significance of the gender of the artists involved did not go unmarked:

"Many of the pictures exhibited by ladies at the Exhibition of School of Art Work in the Fine Art Institute are fearfully, wonderfully, and weirdly 'new'. Their impressions of the female form, particularly, are startling".<sup>75</sup>

A view such as this of the 'New Woman' (independent, creative, career-oriented) in art was undoubtedly illuminated by an awareness of the political significance of a transformed perception of womens' artistic abilities, and may well have come from someone active in the womens' suffrage movement. At the time of the Four's controversial debut Jessie Newbery began teaching her embroidery class at the Art School. Along with a number of other women artists and designers in Glasgow (Ann Macbeth, Helen Frazer), Jessie Newbery was active within the womens' suffrage movement, and attention has recently been drawn to the practice, by Glasgow School of Art students, of stitching suffrage banners between embroidery classes.<sup>76</sup> The fact that certain practitioners of the 'new style' were also 'new women' would, in itself, have been sufficient to engender local hostility, even without the presentation of shocking images. Thus, along with the dangers of aestheticism went the threats posed to the traditional middle-class requirement that women acknowledge their social duty and become settled, respectable, wives and mothers. Given that the Macdonald sisters did actually marry, their position as wives and active artists could not help but be a

contradictory one in the context of conventional gender stereotyping and role requirements. "If Eve is to be allowed to come in and interfere in civic affairs", proclaimed the Bailie on the topic of the 'mad' suffragette 'ladies of Glasgow', "then Heaven only knows what will occur. Why won't she stay at home and see to the cooking of the broth and the darning of the stockings?"<sup>77</sup> The 'new woman' was clearly perceived as being disruptive and dangerous; such a woman (as against 'lady') would be expected to cultivate bizarre tastes and interests, and Quiz made it clear to its readers that one such interest, namely in aesthetics, could even help provide for the new woman access to the detested Gilmorehill coteries (albeit through a man);

"She spoke. 'James', she said, 'promise - (sob) - you'll - (sob) - wear pale blue - (sob) - ties no more, and - (sob) - that you'll attend - (sob) - University Extension courses on Aesthetics - (sob) - Geology - (sob) - and Physics - (sob)'"<sup>78</sup>

When Quiz referred to the 1894 Exhibition it was to commend landscapes, flower studies and etchings: "As for the 'ghoul-like' designs of the misses Macdonald", it complained, echoing Roche, "they were simply hideous, and the less said about them the better. Distinctly the authorities should not halt till such offences are brought within the scope of the Further Powers"<sup>79</sup> (The latter was a recently introduced bill providing the police with the power to remove unruly individuals from the city's streets). More abuse was to come, and in February 1895 it emanated from the direction of the by now well established Glasgow Boys. James Guthrie, in delivering a half hour long address to Glasgow School of Art students, seized his opportunity to damn the efforts which were proving so controversial, and, significantly, to present them as evidence of brash inexperience and lack of disciplined abilities:

"In his criticism of the endeavours of the Glasgow School of Art - some of them exceedingly wild endeavours, be it parenthetically remarked - Mr. Guthrie, whilst commending in warm terms the originality displayed by the students in all their work did not spare their ludicrous striving after that supreme simplicity which comes only after long years of weary, hard, and laborious study. He seemed to insinuate that these students, or at least many of them, at the outside of their careers, fancied that simplicity of *technique* was an easy thing to acquire, and that they had only to go imitating some master or other with a simple style and, - hey presto, - they would all be painters. On this score he disillusioned them effectively, at the same time emphasising the value of a simple style in the hands of one who knows how to use it.



The splendid simplicity of Phil May is in reality elaborate complexity, and the myriad of mediocre pen-men who have endeavoured to follow in his footsteps and tumbled into the ditches of oblivion, is surely a warning to the young men and women who study Art and Posters, under Mr. F. H. Newbery".<sup>80</sup>

But what of Beardsley? The most exciting 'new designer' of the period, the man widely acknowledged as providing the model for so much of the work eliciting reaction in Glasgow, merits not a mention by Guthrie (whose work, ironically, appeared, along with that of Roche, in Volume XI of The Yellow Book). This was hardly accidental, far less an example of Guthrie's ignorance of new developments; here was another instance of setting limits to discourse. The contrived silence, the refusal to raise the controversial issue of 'decadence', and the expressions of contempt for the deserving victims of oblivion, would undoubtedly have had the effect of engendering the view that Glasgow's most experimental artist-designers were producing work which was original, but which was technically deplorable. Thus questions of content or meaning, questions which could not have avoided confronting the implications of this apparent language of dissolution (that is, of artistic form *and* cultural coherence), were conveniently circumscribed by focusing exclusively upon technique and by delivering "an instance of the backward complaint that avant-gardistes never learn to draw".<sup>81</sup> This point cannot be overstated because such an 'interpretation' was subsequently to be applied with unbending consistency to avant-garde developments in Glasgow. Even in 1901 the Glasgow Advertiser referred to the 'abortive efforts' which resulted from Art School 'amateur workers' "with just enough knowledge of art to copy its eccentricities".<sup>82</sup> No specific names were named - such an action may have had the dreaded effect of encouraging interest - but since 'straining after effect' was the specified crime, then Glasgow's press-informed citizens would have had knowledge of who some of the worst culprits were. Seven years may have elapsed since the initial controversy, but the ensuing silence had been pervasive enough to virtually eliminate any confusion as to who were being (not) referred to.

Something now requires to be said about the nature of those early works in order to better understand why they met with such hostility. Howarth commented upon the similarity of form, technique, and emotional content between the early drawings of the Macdonalds and those of Mackintosh and MacNair. The earliest dated example of a water colour by the group was Frances Macdonald's 'Ill Omen', or 'Girl in the East Wind and Ravens Passing the Moon', executed in 1893, and which appeared (along with works by Margaret Macdonald and Herbert MacNair)<sup>82a</sup> in The Yellow Book, Vol. X, July, 1896.

Howarth found this work

"surprisingly mature, and hardly suggests an initial essay in a borrowed style . . . The style is well developed and technically the painting is more accomplished than, for example, Mackintosh's *Conversazione Programme of 1894*".<sup>83</sup>

It was indisputable, on the basis of a close examination of their early work, asserted Howarth, that the Macdonalds played an important part in the evolution of the Glasgow Style. But which particular works were shown at the controversial 1894 Exhibition? It would appear that 'A Pond', 'The Fifth of November' and 'Summer' (a stained-glass design) were seen, for two reasons; firstly, these were reproduced in the Spring and November numbers of 'The Magazine' (now in the Glasgow School of Art) in 1894; and secondly, they correspond to contemporary descriptions which appeared in the press. One contributor to the correspondence columns of the Glasgow Evening News complained:

"Imagine human-beings drawn on the gas-pipe system - arms, legs and bodies of the same skinny pattern with large lips and immense hands. The background of one of these masterpieces consisted of various parts of anatomy subjects, floating about in an objectless manner in a sea of green mud".<sup>84</sup>

This was clearly 'A Pond' by Frances Macdonald, a pencil and wash drawing symbolizing November. In Howarth's description this work is

"a composition of two repulsive, emaciated human figures representing dragon-fly nymphs framed by aquatic plants, and crowned by a writhing group of tadpole-like masks. The subject is *A Pond* and admirably captures the atmosphere of a most unpleasant submarine world of stagnation, slowly undulating slimy vegetation and decay, the principal colours being mauve and green, now greatly faded - a most peculiar choice of subject for a young lady of the 1890's!"<sup>85</sup>



Howarth compared this work with the 'somewhat bizarre' subterranean-symbolistic design by Mackintosh which appeared on the cover of The Magazine in the Spring 1894 Number; he concluded that the two works were "of particular interest because of the contrast between Frances Macdonald's hideous, angular, and greatly distorted females and the plump, well-proportioned nudes by Mackintosh". He expressed the rather psychologistic view that "Sadness and tears always seem to dominate the minds of the sisters",<sup>96</sup> and that the 'gently flowing curves' apparent with their experimental early work were "the curves of *art nouveau*".<sup>97</sup>

Some comments made by Adorno on the subject of modernism seem peculiarly apt to the works under consideration, and may help to illuminate the nature of the reaction which they elicited. In his Aesthetic Theory, Adorno, in rejecting a subjectivist interpretation of new work which elicits a shock effect, insisted that the category of the new in art has nothing to do with base sensationalism; rather, newness "emerges irresistably with the development of art itself".<sup>98</sup> The concept of modernism, says Adorno, was necessarily abstract, and it indicated firmly that "something ought to be negated, and what it is that ought to be negated".<sup>99</sup> Abstraction challenged the illusory notion that, in a society of economic power and bureaucratic control, meaningful life still subsists, and it provided a means to achieve aesthetic distancing from tradition and social conditions. In a non-traditional society that is constantly engendering change the dynamic quality inherent in that society's concept of historical tradition makes the notion of aesthetic tradition highly dubious. Thus where styles and artistic practices were negated by new styles and practices before modernism, the latter negates tradition itself: "In so doing, it extends the sway of the bourgeois principle of progress to the field of art. The abstractness of that principle is tied up with the commodity character of art . . . the new is intimately related to death".<sup>90</sup> It is in its mimetic relation to a petrified and alienated reality that the modernity

of art is to be found, and it is this which makes it 'speak'. The new is thus a necessary outgrowth of what is objective rather than subjective:

"As soon as capital does not expand, or, in the language of circulation, as soon as capital stops offering something new, it is going to lose ground in the competitive struggle. Art has appropriated this economic category. The new in art is the aesthetic counterpart to the expanding reproduction of capital in society . . . The only way in which art can henceforth transcend the heteronomy of capitalist society is by suffusing its own autonomy with the imagery of that society".<sup>91</sup>

When viewed in this way it becomes apparent that there was nothing accidental about the juxtaposing of 'decadent' modernist subjects with examples of poster art in these 1890's exhibitions. The motivations towards the symbolism of decay, despair, morbidity and death in early Glasgow Art Nouveau are inextricably linked with the motivations towards a poster art which, most relevantly with Beardsley, was making overt its attempts to aestheticize commercial imagery. "Advertisement is an absolute necessity of modern life", Beardsley had declared in New Review in July 1894, "and if it can be made beautiful as well as obvious, so much the better for the makers of soap and the public who are likely to wash".<sup>92</sup> The existence of the poster was justified, Beardsley continued, on the grounds of utility, "and should it further aspire to beauty of line and colour, may not our hoardings claim kinship with the galleries".<sup>93</sup> The attempt to combine beauty with utility represented the starting point for Glasgow Art Nouveau and it is extremely significant that this strategy should have been recommended by Beardsley, long since acknowledged to have exerted a considerable *stylistic* influence upon The Four. The best poster art from the 1890's illustrates well the striving for intensified abstraction with its elements of linearism and stylized two-dimensionality, and with Beardsley the very aestheticization of images for advertising purposes heightens the sense of distance between the image and the product that it is advertising.

In Adorno's view then there is a point at which modern art surrenders itself to that which it opposes, and identifies with the negativity of social conditions. In this



context he could easily be taken to be describing the reaction to early Art Nouveau in Glasgow when he asserts that "The noisy witch hunts and the charges of decadence that have been an abiding feature of the reception of modern art take off from here".<sup>94</sup> This identification with social negativity on the part of artists and intellectuals, whilst acknowledged by Geddes, represented for the latter something to be transcended. Such transcendence could only be achieved subsequent to the realisation that the negativity was, in fact, objective, and not merely subjective, as he believed Freud was claiming:

" . . . these horrors which Freud and others treat as simply psychological and biological, are also deeply social in nature and origin".<sup>95</sup>

As was noted in the previous chapter, Art Nouveau was associated, in the early period, with unconscious, instinctual drives, and indeed in the early 1890's training at the Glasgow School of Art involved the endeavour to free these drives as much as possible for purposes of artistic experimentation. But here Geddes points in the same direction as does Adorno, (and of course Simmel, Benjamin and Nietzsche), and orients the discussion of modernism towards a recognition of its crucial relationship to a 'decadent' modern social reality. Where artists indulged themselves in the creation of images of horror through the 'art play of imagination', their 'Modern Art', said Geddes, resulted in "too much pathological phantomology with a touch of technical invention".<sup>96</sup> At this point Geddes virtually replicates the criticisms that were directed at the paintings of the Macdonalds: note, in particular, the aspersions cast upon adequate technical ability. For art to survive meaningfully in a future, qualitatively transformed, social state-of-affairs, imagination needed to be more fully related to emotion and intellectualism. Too many artists were 'Thought-Derelicts', "or else at best worshippers of phantoms, when not of fossils".<sup>97</sup> They lacked ideals, and a philosophy of reality: ". . . modern art and poetry are too often morbid, despairing, even delirious, with confused design, even vague vision, since lack of purpose".<sup>98</sup> The tragedy of modernism was that it proferred images of a dead social reality: "in modern

days we see our poor, empty, circumstances, our sad physical facts, in pictures, too, more often dead than alive!"<sup>99</sup> Geddes' creed was that the next stage of 'civilisation' would require a synthesis of art and science, to be achieved through active labour - a working Philosophy of Life. Mere sense-data alone could not constitute art:

'Art . . . demands *Practical Co-ordination*, plus *Conception* (Imagination, Design), plus *Workmanship* (Technique); then *Passion* will give creative execution; a combination of Intuition with Emotion, yet with Intellectualism, too. Thus can be created enduring images of the dreams drawn from Folk-feeling, Place-feeling, Work-feeling, with Folly and Idealization; and all this with individual wildness, tempered with reason; for personal freedom has to be tempered by the stern discipline of each real art whether Architecture, Sculpture or Painting, for Comedy or Tragedy; or, perhaps best of all, Music".<sup>100</sup>

Individual 'wildness' - reason; personal freedom - stern discipline; imagination - technique - practical coordination; intuition - emotion - intellectualism; the nature of the combination of these elements, and not just their being specified, illustrates that Mackintosh was deeply influenced by the idealism of Geddes. As the sensuous and symbolic Glasgow Style of the 1890's gave way to an increasingly austere, abstract and functional form-language around the turn of the century, it is perfectly possible to conceive of Glasgow's avant-garde, already fully in tune with the combination of art and utility, nodding with some approval at Geddes' recommendation that art merge with science, free creativity with discipline, whilst being actively involved in the process of developing their modern style. But having already acknowledged the importance of architecture as a 'real art', a problem remained: given the prevailing lower middle class ambivalence to modern art in Glasgow, an approach to architecture betraying the influence of the new art was not going to be easily countenanced. Glasgow's 'public' would not quickly forget the links between newness, either in art or in women, and 'decadence'.



An Avant-Garde Approach to Uniting Art With Utility

There had long been a tension in Glasgow between the elements of the artistic and the technical as these affected the perception and practice of architecture, particularly where the city's architects themselves were concerned. As early as 1861, Alexander Thomson, in his capacity as Chairman of the first meeting of the session of the Glasgow Architectural Society, proclaimed that the object of the society was not technical. "We do not wish to wrap our art in mystery in order to gain an ascendancy over a superstitious public".<sup>101</sup> In terms of the view from South Kensington, as presented by Thomas Armstrong in an address delivered in Glasgow in 1889, however, it was not the technical side that was wrapped in mystery so much as the artistic:

"If you can get the artisans to your school (i.e. the Art School) the general well-being of your town will be promoted, for every mechanic, and especially those connected with the building trade, can be taught that something which will make his labour more valuable. For these, generally, I attach more importance to mechanical drawing with instruments - geometry, drawing to scale, and the elements of architecture. Such work is apart from and beyond its immediate commercial value to the workman, an intellectual exercise of the highest value, inducing accurate habits of thought as well as dexterity of hand".<sup>102</sup>

But for Scottish Art Nouveau, technical concerns merely represented the basic starting point for architecture. As Mackintosh made clear, it excluded what was fundamental to the development of a new architecture. For quality and originality to be at all possible, the true aim had to be an artistically informed one, and this required a clear distinction to be made in the first instance between the grammatical (syntactical) and meaningful elements of architecture:

"Architecture must no longer begin and end with the mechanical possibilities of the tee square the set square the pencil bows the deviders (sic) the undoubtedly meritorious work of those necessary instruments may be likened to the alphabet, the grammar, of language (;) the artistic and beautiful phrasing of literature (likened) to the more precise adornments of a building, and that is just where the real work of an architect as an artist should and must begin if the architect is to be appreciated as an artist, if his work is to be given to the world and understood by its people as the great mother art, the all embracing the comprehensive embodiment of all the arts. But to do this requires conviction".<sup>103</sup>

This illustrates that, even in 1902, by which time Mackintosh's work had become more overtly 'functionalist', the basic Art Nouveau 'conviction' had not been sacrificed. To assert that the real work of an architect should be likened to 'the artistic and beautiful phrasing of literature' involved perpetuating the language and imagery of aestheticism (in the sense of the motivation towards beautifying both life and art) and there can be little doubt that Mackintosh was fully aware of the connotations which this orientation conveyed in his contemporary Glasgow. Aestheticism was by now widely associated with decadence, amorality (or at least the rejection of moral purpose), hedonism, contemptuous mocking of the traditions and conventions so beloved of the middle-classes, and, ultimately, with the transvaluation of bourgeois values. If Wilde's dictum that "industry without art is barbarism"<sup>104</sup> seemed harmless enough and not too disruptive of the status quo, the dangerous intensity so characteristic of aestheticism had produced the 'perverse' opinion that true beauty resided in "that which the middle-classes call ugly"<sup>105</sup> (and that what they called beauty did not exist). In 1897 Saint Mungo had already invoked populism as a weapon against Glasgow's Art Nouveau practitioners (whom it dubbed 'Jim-jammers'). They were mocked in characteristically 'ironical' fashion, and portrayed as having an elitist contempt for 'the public':

"INTENSITY is the other quality we strive for. It is so charming to be intense - don't you think so? The poster, it was evident from our exhibition, is the MANIFESTATION of the MOVEMENT at its best. To be weird, to be quaint, to be *outré*, to be absurd, (in the common estimate) is not so easy as one would think, but we achieve it in the poster. Our artistic creed is:-

- 1.- The public must be knocked.
- 2.- Knock them honestly if possible - but anyhow knock them.
- 3.- It is better to be *bizarre* than to be beautiful."<sup>106</sup>

In taking account of 'Muir's' description of the architectural scene in Glasgow in 1901 it appears that considerable optimism was attaching itself, at least in some quarters, to the ability of architectural 'style' to develop in accordance with functionalist and constructivist principles. But in terms of the commendation of such



principles alone, apparent 'artistic' elements, such as organic symbolism, were negatively differentiated on the basis of their exhibiting an allegedly effete or 'weedy' influence:

"... within a radius of half a mile from the Exchange there is much that is balanced and well relieved, and the newest comers are breaking up the skyline with an almost startling variety of profile, while the sparing use of the emphasis of detail upon wide, tranquil spaces lends it the sudden brilliance of a good 'attack' in music"<sup>107</sup>

So far, this commendation of a 'sparing use of the emphasis of detail' to the end of aesthetic effect is commensurate with Mackintosh's recommendation that attention to the 'more precise adornments of a building' should represent the starting point for the architect who desires artistic credibility. In both cases the analogy is with art forms dear to the aesthetic movement, namely, music and literature. But when the aesthetic effect of apparent construction is acknowledged, the significance of adornment is downgraded. Consequently, this has crucial implications for the Art Nouveau influence, since the latter had been associated with the practice of adding 'artistic' adornments and decorative motifs to the basic structure of a building:

"There is to be noted, also, a growing tendency to accentuate the constructional lines. The style has become not only simpler, but more varied, and almost everywhere the belief that honesty lies at the root of good art is refreshingly evident. Some few things here and there show a weedy, 'arty' influence, and in certain places the strange idea seems to obtain that the vegetable is the architect's pattern. But it must be said, on the whole, that architecture is distinctly promising in the West of Scotland".<sup>108</sup>

From the vantage point of Mackintosh's architectural philosophy a description such as this presented an unreal distinction; a distinction founded upon the assumption that between the 'arty' and the functional/constructional a universe obtained; and that if the latter came into any sort of contact with the former, then it was hopelessly enfeebled as a consequence.

In 1960 Pevsner pointed out that, shortly after 1900, a wave of influence affected the Continent from Britain which appeared to be anti-Art Nouveau in its apparent pointing towards a twentieth century style, but which, in fact, involved a synthesis,

emanating from Mackintosh ('a Scotsman and a Celt') "of Art Nouveau and anti-Art Nouveau which was the most inspiring of British exports".<sup>109</sup> A similar view was expressed in Line in 1953, where it was argued that

"In architecture Mackintosh subordinated the vegetable writhings of *Art Nouveau* to massive stonework reminiscent of 17th. century Scottish castles. His famed Glasgow School of Art so well integrated the two that critics today vehemently disagree as to whether the building was a flowering of *Art Nouveau* or a foreshadowing of Gropius' bald glass and concrete Bauhaus building at Dessau".<sup>110</sup>

Such views represent a not very successful attempt to pin down just what was distinctive about Glasgow Art Nouveau. Why should functionalism/utilitarianism be 'anti-Art Nouveau' if Art Nouveau was avant-gardism which was motivated towards the integration of art into a fundamentally utilitarian society? But even 'Muir' could not consistently maintain the distinction between the 'arty' and the 'honest', even within the confines of a single book, and this is nowhere more apparent than with 'his' appreciation of the specifically artistic qualities apparent with the Mackintosh tearoom designs. In this context, all connotations of 'weediness' were conveniently subverted as the 'world of art' and the world of the 'Glasgow man' were seen to be capable of harmonious unification within specific social locations.

On the concrete level, a process of attempting to unite (a utilitarian) architecture with art can be delineated in Glasgow at the turn-of-the-century, and the prime agency of motivation in this was undoubtedly the Art School. The Builders' Journal, in discussing the classes at the Art School which were considered to be of especial use to architectural students, mentioned those on geometry and perspective, life and antique drawing, modelling, design and decorative art.

"The classes in design and decorative art are conducted in specially-erected studios, to enable students to learn design in and through the use of material. We strongly recommend all students of either architecture or of design and decorative art to take both courses, for no thoroughly good work will ever be done in the arts that relate to architecture unless the worker has some considerable knowledge of the sister arts".<sup>111</sup>

Newbery urged the importance of public control over city architecture, suggesting, at the same time, the possibility of such a body as a committee of public taste. His



attention focused upon Paris, where the Art Nouveau style had recently been presented to the world at the International Exposition of 1900: "In Paris an architect was an artist. Here we treated our architects as builders".<sup>112</sup> This succinctly specified the direction in which the avant-garde wanted architecture to move. The best architecture, he continued, was a crystallization of thought, architectural instinct, and artistic insight. Even Lord Provost Chisholm (forever being lampooned in the popular journals), in bewailing the 'dull monotony' of the city's skyline, polemicised about bringing an artistic approach to bear on the public sphere. He acknowledged that the bestowing of an artistic quality on the environment wherever possible, redeemed much of the sordidness of city life, and he expressed the desire to see "even our lamp-posts and other adjuncts of the city, not only useful but giving expression to some aspect of beauty of form and design".<sup>113</sup>

The area contained within a thirty mile radius of Glasgow's city centre was considerably more heavily populated and densely built than any other Scottish area of similar dimensions, and thus spare or open ground was at a high premium, a harsh factor of the city's reality which could, on occasion, be conveniently obscured by those with a vested interest in supplying exclusively the needs of the middle classes. For example, the architect Alexander N. Paterson (1862-1947), responsible for the designs of the National Bank, 22-24 St. Enoch Square (1906), and the Liberal Club, 54 West George Street (1909), both of which completely ignored the new style, was concerned that architecture, and particularly domestic architecture, was a subject "which should have a very large interest for the general public".<sup>114</sup> But Paterson's 'general public' excluded those huddled in overcrowded tenement buildings in and around the city centre. Of all types, domestic architecture (which Paterson defined as the art of planning and designing the house and its appurtenances) was

"the most personal, both as regards the occupier . . . and the designer; it is the most varied, inasmuch as individual men for whom houses are built differ more in their tastes and requirements than do groups or bodies of men for whom churches, exchanges, schools, and hospitals are required; it has the oldest history, the longest traditions,

and it is the most completely modern in its developments, and freest from constraints of style".<sup>115</sup>

Precisely what the connection was between domestic architecture's oldest history/longest traditions, and its alleged ability to spring forth in a completely modern *form* (if not in a modern *style*) was not made clear. Importantly, however, what was made clear was that the arts and "every department of human thought and work" were, for Paterson, 'ruled by tradition'.<sup>114</sup> But if modern domestic architecture was being claimed by the traditionalists to be significantly free from constraints of style, it could hardly have been said to be free from constraints of land-value. Indeed Paterson's own Liberal Club design itself demonstrates the effects of such constraints in the way in which it incorporated a style of balcony derived from that in J. J. Burnet and J. A. Campbell's Royal Scottish Academy of Music (Athenaeum). This latter design of 1891-3 had 'pioneered' the narrow frontage vertical composition that subsequently became common in Glasgow with the increasing redevelopment of highly priced Georgian house plots.

The problems of land values, restricted space, and the kind of bland utilitarianism which Mackintosh denounced, produced, in the form of the design for the new Royal Infirmary, a focus for criticism from those elements in the architectural profession who welcomed the interpenetration of the utilitarian with the artistic. Subsequent to having viewed the front elevation of the design chosen by Glasgow Corporation for the new Infirmary building in 1904, Horatio K. Bromhead, President of the Glasgow Institute of Architects, complained that

". . . the proposed sky-scraper could only be considered a calamity to the most venerable specimen of architecture in Scotland, the Cathedral. If it were for the public good, feelings might be stifled, but when it was known that the most modern and perfect ideas were dead against it, when one saw that the most remarkable modern hospital (Belfast) was only one storey high, and the intended new building at Birmingham was to be only two storeys high, one could not help seeing the ill-advisedness of spending a large sum of money after the manner of a bygone generation".<sup>116</sup>



Bromhead proceeded to underline his argument that the problem lay with the 'unfortunate tendency' to divide the architectural profession into two parties: firstly there were those "who seemed to want to make out that art was everything, and who struggled to get elected into some art atmosphere, which they possibly imagined was superior to architecture, where they could ignore business capacity and practical knowledge by employing skilled specialists to do the real work for them".<sup>117</sup> On the other hand there were those who were content with making their work purely practical and businesslike, and whose skill enabled them to employ materials sensibly and in an economical manner, "but with little thought of suppressing what was ugly".<sup>118</sup> It was a disaster, said Bromhead, referring to the recent agreement between the Glasgow School of Art and the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College, to confine the 'art teaching of architecture' to the former, and the constructive and scientific branches of architecture to the latter. The antidote, however, was 'in the air', as exemplified by what had become a pressing contemporary question, namely, the statutory registration of architects, and this, Bromhead concluded, was the 'happy medium' represented by a combination of both ideas.

But one issue that the statutory registration of architects was not going to affect was the relationship of women to architecture, and this has crucial implications for the consideration of Glasgow Art Nouveau, because the latter was a movement in which women were prominent. When Ethel and Bessie Charles became members of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1898 and 1900 respectively, there was fierce reaction. In Glasgow, even where womens' 'enterprise' and 'unconventionality' in art production were acknowledged, the traditionalists still considered that unconventionality was not a desirable attribute for cultivation in women:

"If there be any doubt about the prevalence of the (female) sex in the artistic world, one has only to go to the Art Institute tonight and see the appalling prominence of the girl pupil in Mr. Newbery's school. Nowhere, indeed, is the girl more bounding than in the Glasgow School of Art, where, by her enterprise and her excesses in unconventionality, she has far outstripped her brethren of the brush".<sup>119</sup>

With the exclusion of women from the architectural profession, apparently fundamental attributes of architecture itself were equated with masculine properties, and values rooted in gender stereotyping were projected onto architectural creations. The most obvious of these was 'structure', which was connected semantically with positive qualities such as stability, strength, honesty. When the quality of Mackintosh's work was being debated in the 1930's, it was the constructivist elements in his architectural practice which were singled out for commendation. Conversely, the 'artistic' or 'decorative' aspects were negativised, and in such a manner as to present the latter as having been unfortunate manifestations of the (feminine) influence of Margaret Macdonald. Thus P. Morton Shand, in the 1930's, writing in a letter upon the issue of a proposed exhibition of work by the Mackintoshes, stated that

"Roughly speaking, what will interest the Continent is purely Mackintosh's architectural-structural work; not the dead and forgotten 'artistic' or 'decorative' frills which so often marred it . . . These are not my views . . . but those of the whole body of international post-war architectural criticism. They do not make any 'distinction' between husband and wife; they simply do not consider there was a 'wife' in that sense . . . I cannot say anything to imply that I attach the slightest importance to Mackintosh's 'Decorative' work, or to any of his wife's whatsoever".<sup>120</sup>

The previous month, Shand had written that Mackintosh's mentality "anticipated the future with amazing provision, hers was statically contemporary, and contemporary to a still-born, purely decorative phase of art".<sup>121</sup> These criticisms occupy a midpoint, so to speak, between 'Muir' at the turn-of-the century, and Howarth in the 1950's, within a modern 'tradition' that has consistently devalued the significance of the 'artistic' or 'decorative' side of Glasgow Art Nouveau. In this respect it has perpetuated the kind of prejudices that were originally directed at the aesthetic movement; namely, that a conscious desire to 'beautify' or 'decorate' manifests inherent elements of weakness (associated with 'femininity', or, worse, if the culprit is male, effeminacy and gender-inversion). Underpinning such prejudices lay associations with weirdness, effete-ness, selfishness and morbidity. J. Meier-Graefe, ten years after the exhibition which had first presented the Macdonald sisters work to the Glasgow 'public',



illustrated something of what Glasgow Art Nouveau inherited when he commented that "In Glasgow English art was no longer hermaphrodite but passed into the hands of women".<sup>122</sup>

#### 6 Architectural Theory in the Glasgow School of Art: McGibbon and the Relations Between Tradition and Originality and Functionalism and Aesthetics

As we saw in chapter three, the potential for decorative art to begin to colonize the public sphere in Glasgow was being acknowledged in the city prior to 1890. In the context of the International Exhibition of 1888, the year of the first Arts and Crafts Exhibition, the Glasgow Herald, when referring to the design by the architect James Sellars for the galleries which were to contain the art works (paintings and sculptures, but also photographs) to be exhibited, commented upon the decorative treatment to which the walls of the galleries were being subjected. What was desired as much as anything, it was stressed, was to make the gallery itself 'in the first place' attractive. The initial focus of attention was viewed as settling on the design of the room itself: ". . . to get a room which by its own beauty shall restrain people from hurrying through it is one of the first steps towards getting them to examine its contents".<sup>123</sup> The actual significance of the relationship between the room, salon, or gallery, and the objects deployed within it, was thus already becoming an issue for comment, and the work of the architect was being placed in the primary position. Where new concepts of artistic design were concerned, the importance of theories emanating from architects in this period cannot be overstated.

T. L. Watson, in introducing the first of a series of lectures on the 'Principles of Medieval Architecture' sponsored by the Art School, and delivered (illustrated by 'line-light views) in the Corporation Galleries in 1894, stressed that the significance of a knowledge of architecture went far beyond the architectural field itself:

"To students of architecture it went without saying that the history of architecture was an absolutely necessary part of their study, but it should also be considered that

for all engaging in any class of art work, the study was almost equally important in order to perfect familiarity with the forms of architectural styles. That, he thought, was being recognised more and more every day. They would find that the best designers in different classes of work were those who had studied architecture, which was not only the foundation but also the union of the different arts in one harmonious whole. The period to be treated in the lectures was a highly important one - there was none would better illustrate the harmony and the unity of the various arts employed".<sup>124</sup>

Here was not only reference to the Art Nouveau concern with the unity of all of the arts, but also a specification of the central relevance for contemporary arts of what the Gothic Revival had drawn attention to as the principles underlying all of the best architecture. Having thus presented medieval architecture as signifying a paradigm of artistic unity with contemporary relevance, Watson went on to say that, in its architecture, Scotland had borrowed from England almost until the Renaissance, by which time indebtedness was transferred to France in a period when that country was taking the initiative in stylistic development. The perpendicular, Watson claimed, represented the first true English style, the 'perfect development' of which was intruded upon by the Renaissance. However, the Gothic revival had demonstrated that the life of Gothic was not extinguished, but rather, had been merely repressed, and "today Gothic is a living style, and will live".<sup>124</sup>

The sense in which Gothic was to be understood as representing a 'living style' was demonstrated by Alexander McGibbon (1861-1938), the Director of the Glasgow School of Art's Architecture Department, and a regular acquaintance of Mackintosh, in his opening lecture. To McGibbon medieval meant that which applied to both Romanesque *and* Gothic, in opposition to Byzantine, Egyptian and classic, since in his view Gothic was allied to Romanesque in England, and Scottish work could only be understood in conjunction with English, Scottish being a much simplified transcript of English. McGibbon cited Viollet le Duc's definition of Gothic as "equilibrium obtained in the system of construction by active resistance afforded to active forces, architectural effect, the simple result of the structure and the practical necessities of the work, decoration derived simply from the local flora, statuary tending to the imitation of nature and



seeking dramatic expression",<sup>125</sup> McGibbon took exception to both clauses of this ('widely accepted') definition. The first clause, he claimed, could only be received as being partly descriptive of Gothic architectural principles; whilst being applicable to French work, it failed to express English, where instances of solid walls actually bearing weight, and arches which were resisted by mass rather than by counteracting thrust were to be found. Although the apotheosis of the arch seemed to be the aim of French Gothic architects, often they failed in its attainment because of a lack of constructive skill, or of the necessary means. English work was in marked contrast to this because "our builders really preferred wood roofs to vaulting, hence the flying buttress is quite rare",<sup>126</sup>

As to the second clause of le Duc's definition, said McGibbon, if the view that architectural effect resulted from the structure and the practical necessities of the work in question was accepted as the whole truth, then this would mean that 'utilitarianism was the root-principle of Gothic, and so the style would require to be transferred from the province of architecture into that of engineering'.<sup>127</sup> As with Mackintosh, McGibbon's view was that the building, pure and simple, which ministered to man's physical nature alone, was not architecture; architecture only resulted when the service of purpose in design coincided with the aim of eliciting 'mental pleasure'; and in emphasising this point, McGibbon too cited Ruskin (that is, architecture proposed 'not merely a service to the human frame, but also an effect on the mind'). The alleged utilitarianism of Gothic, McGibbon insisted, was only partly true:

'. . . one recalls both French and English examples of wall-arcading and panellings and pinnacles, features of wholly decorative function. Only a passing examination of the most logical example is required to show that with compliance to the structural necessities of the work there was interwoven extraneous features in obedience to manifold canons of art and conventions of precedent. Of the influence of geometric proportions in design I will treat in a later lecture, of alleged symbolism presently; but neither of these are matters of artistic taste - certainly not of constructive necessity - and yet both are, on M. le Duc's showing, potent factors in the style'<sup>128</sup>

This is a crucial passage; it illustrates that McGibbon (a 'rational admirer of Gothic') was conceiving of Gothic architectural practice as having involved a creative process within which both structuration *and* artistic designing were entwined with each other. This had strong implications for the argument that symbolism was fundamental to the style, and, on this issue, McGibbon focused his criticisms upon the ecclesiologists who had, in his opinion, attempted to discover the relationship between the Christian faith or creed of the medieval ecclesiastics, and the material structure of the architecture that was co-extensive with the work of the former. "Architecture is history written in stone; the most cursory glance at medieval remains shows that symbolism held an important place, forms being met with that cannot conceivably have been delighted in for their esthetic worth, only cherished because of sacred association, as parables that speak to those willing to hear - the initiated, that is - though silent to all others".<sup>129</sup> But it was a mistake to see moral maxim and religious dogma in forms which the designer had only intended should please the eye. Much of the supposed symbolism of Gothic churches was imaginary, a matter of superstition. As an example McGibbon rejected the ecclesiological claim that the Cross form of the church plan was consciously conceived; this was to view architecture as being a wholly subjective art, and to misrepresent what were, in fact, manifestations of a desire for architectural effect (but to be achieved by legitimate means). It was spurious to patronise Gothic on the grounds that it was an exponent of Christian doctrine.

But Gothic needed to be defended from a different kind of defender, McGibbon warned, such as was represented by Morris and Ruskin, both of whom proclaimed its moral significance. On a visit to Glasgow some years previously Morris had denounced the choice of Italian Renaissance as an architectural style for the City Chambers because of the association of that style with the 'lustful tyranny of the Medici!' For McGibbon, such evaluations betrayed 'a perverse exaggeration of moral sentiment' which refused to judge buildings as they actually were; 'blind to grace of detail and



grandeur of scale' everything was condemned on the basis of the alleged moral turpitude of their designer. "This is narrow-minded bigotry, never surpassed by any Puritan, and seriously diminishes the worth of his (Morris's) approval of medieval art".<sup>130</sup> The intelligent interest in Gothic architecture that Ruskin's writings had evoked in the cultured public was more apparent than real, in McGibbon's opinion, since attention had been directed to what architecture was supposed to teach that Ruskin considered to be of moral value.

McGibbon then presented the essentials of his theory of architecture which can be summarised as follows; architecture was rooted in human cognitive capacities which embraced both scientific and aesthetic motivations, and which were mediated through the individual imagination on the micro level, and by way of philosophical knowledge accumulated through human history on the macro level.

"Gothic architecture was not elevated when it was so eloquently argued (by Ruskin) to have direct connection with nature, as manifested in the human form and in plant life; the truth being that architecture proper finds no prototype in physical nature, but is among the most artificial of arts. She has, indeed, to do with nature as exhibited in gravitation, in heat, light, and sound; with nature in man's mental capacities, and the development of his esthetic sense. History is the biography of mankind, and architectural history is this biography restricted to the study of how he has conjoined things lovely with things honest and necessary. It is a mere fanciful analogy that is drawn between shady avenue and vaulted aisle - between the human skeleton and the iron construction concealed in a building; and the source and standard of true architecture is found in man himself . . . with architecture, tradition and imperical rules (sic: this is clearly meant to be empirical), the concentrated philosophy of forty centuries of builders, make up her canon of taste".<sup>131</sup>

The latter point raised the question of how much authority was ideally to be attached to universal precedent since, for McGibbon, many of the rules of architecture were empirical, 'the concensus of cultured opinion', and, as such, had to be respected. But in his view, this regard for precedent would not harass true originality, which latter would assert itself and receive its due recognition *because* of the traditional canon. The reason why this was the case was due to the factor of the work of the past that has gained respect, always having had the intrinsic qualities of proportion, beaut. and unity. The aim for contemporary architects should thus be to study the best Gothic

architecture of the past 'and reproduce THAT, so far as consistency allows'. There was, however, no probability of a universal Gothic style in modern times, because of *development*, historical tendency, and the *unconscious* growth of style. In studying and reproducing the best Gothic "a result will emerge that will render it quite impossible for the New Zealander to confound the work of today with that of ten years past, or that of ten years hence. But the change, I am assured, must be the result of tendency, not of individual caprice".<sup>132</sup>

The conclusions here were, of course, obscure, and they demonstrate an over-zealous belief in the ability of processes of evolution to, in themselves, constitute new forms. How was an adherence to the qualities intrinsic in Gothic architecture (proportion, beauty, unity or whatever) as such, purely because of historical evolution, likely to be capable of producing a modern style? On a theoretical level McGibbon could obviously conceive of a modern version of a universal style - the Art Nouveau ideal - even if he did not have an image of such a style. But it is extremely telling that he should come down wholly on the side of historical/evolutionist 'tendency', and against what he carefully negativises as 'individual caprice'; this was to effectively devalue the role of originality and experimentation in the search for a new universal style, and to dissolve away the significance of what was crucially significant for Mackintosh, namely, the role of creative imagination. We shall see shortly what the results of this limitation were to be for McGibbon's response to the *actual*, as against a theoretical, new Glasgow Style in architecture and the decorative arts.



## 7. From Hypnosis to Synthesis: The 1901 Exhibition as a Site for Education

On the surface of things, Glasgow's largest International Exhibition, that of 1901, might easily be assumed to have provided a significant opportunity for the city's avant-garde artistic movement to demonstrate not only its style, but also something of the ideology behind that style. Such, however, would have required a quite different type of exhibition from what was actually mounted; and what was mounted was hardly a serious follow up to the Paris Exposition of 1900. The nature of the problem was highlighted by McGibbon, who had started out by comparing the Glasgow event with the achievements of Chicago and Paris, both of which had been "truly expositions of the world's progress in art, science and commerce".<sup>133</sup> He then proceeded to reveal the kernel of the issue: the Glasgow Exhibition was a highly generalised affair, initiated by those whose main motive had been to give delight to the city's citizens and to accumulate an economic surplus. "Doubtless a more directly educative result would have been attained, had the promoters attempted some specialised display of Scottish - not to say British - arts and industries on a somewhat more extensive scale than that of the London series, the 'Fisheries', 'Naval', and others".<sup>134</sup> The Exhibition did not, therefore, provide the opportunity for Scottish work to be either coherently or comprehensively displayed. But overall, the lack of any display theory or technique was painfully apparent. "The first impression of a Great Exhibition is bewildering", declared Lewis F. Day in The Art Journal, "simple as the plan of it may be, and in this case it is".<sup>135</sup> From the vantage point of the spectator confronting a multiplicity of commodities the initial psychological effect was one of mind-numbing confusion and incoherence:

"It appears to be impossible, and Glasgow is no exception to the rule, to keep incongruous things apart - pottery and cotton, mustard and sewing machines, parasols and furniture, bankers' safes and flower-pots - things like these come so nearly together as to disturb each the effect of the other. It takes some time for the mind to adjust itself so as to see things at all in focus . . .

As far as the public is concerned, the most successful exhibit is that which is displayed best, a consideration not seldom lost sight of by the exhibitor, who sometimes shoots his goods upon the floor of the exhibition with no more taste or

judgement than if it were the store. Another common mistake is to remind us too forcibly of the shop counter. It is possible to spend money upon an exhibition without exhibiting one's wares to advantage. By the time the world is quite weary of exhibitions we shall begin perhaps to understand the art of exhibiting.

It is possible that time of weariness has come already".<sup>136</sup>

McGibbon had a similar response; he complained that "much of the Exhibition, as an object lesson in the progress of humanity, and an illustration of the development and correlation of mind and matter, is lost in the very multiplicity of the display".<sup>137</sup>

Significantly, the way in which McGibbon expressed concern over the effects of a multiplicity of stimuli upon consciousness illustrates the influence of Geddes' thinking within the School of Art in Glasgow. Geddes, in the Evergreen had welcomed what he called the larger view of Nature and Life, and he expressed the conviction that such a view resulted from "a rebuilding of analyses into Synthesis, an integration of many solitary experiences into a larger Experience . . .".<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, McGibbon's invoking of an image of a correlated mind and matter which has developed through history, relates directly to Geddes' notion that, towards the close of the nineteenth century, in the 'science of life', mind and body were coming together again. This was apparent, Geddes argued, with the psychologist now having become also a physiologist; the converse being equally true for the anatomist. In tune with the Scottish Hegelians, the fundamental theme of Geddes' philosophy emerges out of the fusion of Romantic biological historicism with idealism; but in his case there is, in addition, a heightened awareness of the potentiality within such an orientation, for the unification, not only of science and art, but of (natural) science and social science. Thus the coming together of mind and body through dialectical processes on the level of thought has its analogue in the interpenetration of the 'science of energy' with the science of society: " . . . physics and aesthetics, economics and ethics are alike steadily recovering their long-forgotten unity. The age of mechanical dualism is ending; materialism and spiritualism have each had their day; that of an organic and idealist monism is begun . . .".<sup>139</sup> The 'Return to Nature' was a rallying call which



each successive historical age had to answer in its own way. For the nineteenth century the answer had been written large in Science and Industry, and in Literature and Art. But many solutions remained lacking. "Many of us are no longer satisfied with analysis and observation, with criticism and pessimism; many begin to ask for Synthesis, for Action, for Life, for Joy. The solution lies through action, through experiment . . .

"<sup>140</sup> The action and experiment which Geddes' *fin-de-siecle* optimism was recommending were intended to engender a life-centred 'neotechnic' twentieth century culture capable of replacing the nineteenth century culture that he would later stigmatize as having been Mammon-centred and life-denying. As regards the desired education of the individual who was to be free of pedants and philistines, this was to progress from initial attention being given to emotional development, through unimpeded physical growth, to strictly intellectual training in adulthood. It will be noted then, that the properly educated adult will manifest the interdependence of feeling and thinking through the subjective capacity for experience. As we saw in chapter four, the interpenetration of thought and feeling signified the new kind of mentality which deeply concerned both Mackintosh and the Viennese Secessionists.

At the time when the Evergreen appeared, Geddes was actively involved in redeveloping Old Edinburgh, demolishing and rebuilding specified areas, with the financial and nationalist support of 'sundry local capitalists'.<sup>141</sup> In 1901 the Glasgow Exhibition provided him with the opportunity of educating large numbers of visitors into a better understanding and appreciation of what they were being shown. Since his conviction was that the arts and sciences were "but so many specialised and technical ways of showing and seeing the many scenes and aspects of this great unity, this mighty drama of cosmic and human evolution"<sup>142</sup>, the products of the arts and sciences on show offered the opportunity for demonstrating, with the necessary teaching, the *associated* nature of things. The potential for such a scheme had already been provided at the Paris Exposition of 1900, and its desirability for the Glasgow event was drawn attention to

by McGibbon who indicated that the International Assembly inaugurated in Paris had set itself the task of remedying the problem of the confusion engendered by the multiplicity of items on show at the Exposition by instituting a course of lectures by experts in the 'various departments'.

"The tourist and visitor availing himself of these, would find himself put in possession of the key to the situation, the plan of what to the un instructed must be a 'mighty maze' Should this commendable project be repeated, many would willingly, and to advantage, accept its guidance.

Without being utilitarian, it is quite legitimate to expect from so considerable an effort of municipal energy, more than a summer's amusement; and many will welcome a more systematised course of sightseeing by which a master in his subject - applied art, craftsmanship, educational or social science, industries and manufacture - could demonstrate his argument and verify his conclusions"<sup>143</sup>

McGibbon went on to say that a project of this nature should be worthy of the attention of the University, which was in the position of dominating the Exhibition from its site on Gilmorehill. Moreover, the University "should accept of the cosmopolitan gaiety at its foot as a temporary museum in which each of its faculties may find concrete examples of the greatest value".<sup>144</sup>

In March of 1901, the Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular reported that an International Assembly similar to the one organised in Paris for the previous year's Exhibition there, was proposed for Glasgow, and that a meeting was held in the School of Art on Wednesday 6th. of March, presided over by the Lord Provost, at which Geddes, who had been one of the secretaries of the Paris assembly, "explained fully the constitution of the assembly held there, and in his own original way enforced the method evolved, and its application to the World's Fair to be held in our midst - the aim being to interpret the Exhibition to all comers".<sup>145</sup> As Secretary of the British and American groups Geddes had already traced the development and work of the association (which had its offices in the Palais de Congres overlooking the Seine and the Rue des Nations) in a report read in the Petite Palace in Paris on 14th. September 1900. Large committees had been formed subsequent to the Dover and Boulogne meetings of the French and British Associations for the Advancement of Science which were held in



September 1899. The following month brought the constitution of both the British and French groups. On the basis of language, cooperation ensued between the French group and Belgium and Switzerland, with the British group establishing links with America and Canada (over the period from 1901 to 1910 Britain invested 21% of its total capital in the U.S.A. and 30% in the Dominions). Russian and German sections subsequently joined the association. "As a result - through lectures, visits, excursions, and literature - there grew up an informal but real union of experts in special departments, of educationists of all levels, from kindergarten to university, together with a wide and varied representation of the public".<sup>146</sup>

Geddes once remarked that anything he was capable of doing he largely owed to Paris. In April 1900, the Geddes family (Geddes, wife Anna, children Norah, Alasdair and Arthur) settled in Paris for a nine month period, latterly occupying a flat near the Champs Elysees and the Exposition. Geddes "used the Paris of 1900 as a vast laboratory in which to work out his sociological ideas and his system for unifying all knowledge and at the same time as an illustrated reference book for his lectures to visitors".<sup>147</sup> A miniature Outlook Tower, based on the one in Edinburgh which had considerable symbolic significance for Geddesians, and index-museum were set up in a high gallery of the Trocadero overlooking a considerable section of the city, and general tours of the Exposition (presented as a 'laboratory of social evolution') began from there.

"The Tower with its vantage-point for physical orientation and with its specific outlooks (of scientist, artist, citizen, etc.), with its classification of sciences, for giving intellectual bearings, said Geddes, provides the means of triumphing over what is incomprehensible chaos. Once in possession of a method of interpreting history and of linking together the scattered details of human science, industry, and art, the visitor might then grasp the significance, in part and as a whole, of the *Exposition Universelle* : 'A synthesis of the nineteenth century, it will make the philosophy of the twentieth'".<sup>148</sup>

In Glasgow the following year, the University Court granted permission for a portion of the desired lectures (being delivered by 'experts' representing the five national groups), to be given in the University. The plan was to provide twenty lectures, half

of which would be in English, and twenty guidances (the larger proportion in English) each week, with the assembly meeting six days weekly. The subjects were intended to constitute a thoroughgoing scheme, and included Art, Scottish History and Archaeology, Hygiene and Civics, Physical and Applied Science, Education, Agriculture and Forestry, and Geography. The lecturers included, of course, Geddes himself.

With regard to the issue of the Exhibition engendering amity among nations, the parochial Bailie, cynical as ever of high-sounding ideals, made manifestly clear what the real priorities were to be. In reporting a speech made by Lord Provost Chisholm at a dinner given in the Windsor Hotel by the French Committee of the Exhibition, at which he had stated that Glasgow looked to the Exhibition "for the diffusing of that fellowship among nations which was the highest ideal of our national life", the journal remarked that "he was careful, however, to allude, at the same time, to the charm possessed by the prospect of 'a big surplus ; a large return'. And if the truth must be told, so that the show leaves us with a 'big surplus', the 'diffusion of friendship among nations' won't bother any of us one bit. It's the 'big surplus' we're after, and the 'big surplus' we mean to have. As for the 'diffusion of friendship', well, let it diffuse. We won't interfere".<sup>149</sup> This was exactly the kind of dangerous and destructive mentality that Geddes had attacked when spelling out the crucial need for a new age of cooperation to replace the "Stone Age of predatory economics and its accompaniment of mutual slaughter".<sup>150</sup> To him it was a dead mentality which articulated only the economic maladjustments and the waste of natural resources characterising the rapacious imperialism of the later nineteenth century. And at the close of the Glasgow Exhibition, in November 1901, the issue of whether the educational potential offered by exhibitions had been realised in this instance, was treated by the Bailie with typical banality:

'I am impressed with the educative value of Exhibitions. The most unobservant person will at once see what a vast difference the show has made in the citizens. Before it was opened the Glaswegian was a poor, grovelling creature, a man who 'didn't matter', badly dressed, whose wildest gaiety was a bowling or Burns club supper. But. by



masters, isn't all that changed? Now there flits across our vision smartly-dressed Johnnies, whose thirst for lager has been assiduously trained at the bars of the Exhibition".<sup>151</sup>

Thus it appeared that Geddes' failure at the Paris Exposition was repeated in Glasgow the following year. In describing the former, Philip Boardman wrote that "After an hour or two tramping about the exposition grounds (people) were thirsty all right, but not for knowledge. So the general public let the vast International Association advance Science, Art and Education without any interference from them".<sup>152</sup>

### 8. Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau at the 1901 Exhibition.

In the first of the five 'Notices' which he wrote for the Art Journal, Lewis F. Day, one of the founders, with the architect Norman Shaw, of the Art Workers' Guild, complained about the inadequate representation of English art and craftsmanship "as it is at the beginning of the new century",<sup>153</sup> on show at the 1901 Exhibition. (The Art Workers' Guild had been established subsequent to the founding of the Century Guild in 1882 by Arthur Mackmurdo and Selwyn Image. These two bodies in conjunction provided the foundation of the Arts and Crafts movement in England). If the North seemed perhaps to have outdistanced the South on the basis of what was on show, that would prove merely that it was better represented, and of this, said Day there was no doubt. The exhibition provided an opportunity, never so fully enjoyed before, of appreciating the quality and value of Scottish decorative art, in comparison with the best contemporary English and foreign works:

"We knew before that Scotland was artistically very much alive, and that the centre of artistic life in Scotland was Glasgow; we knew that Glasgow had broken fresh ground, that the local school had long been making daring attacks upon traditions which the world at large was still content to adapt. Certain of its adherents had taken us more or less captive by the strength of their colour and astonished us by the weirdness of their design; but we had hitherto to judge this Northern art by isolated examples, often unhappily placed amidst work conceived in a spirit quite unfriendly to it; here it is at home, its foot upon its native heath. What will be the effect of it upon us upon nearer and fuller acquaintance? will it grow or pall upon us? That is what the Glasgow Exhibition should show. A fortnight or so in its atmosphere can hardly leave a Southerner precisely where he was in its appreciation - pending which time it will be as well to keep a discreet silence".<sup>154</sup>

The 'Northern art' was certainly upon its native heath, but whether this particular context was as sympathetic to it as Day implied is another question. Hostility towards the examples of Art Nouveau style apparent at the Exhibition was certainly expressed by English journals, such as the Architectural Review, but in terms of the Glasgow press, it was as if Art Nouveau as a developed style was as yet to be invented, let alone represented at the Exhibition. On the other hand, the euphemism 'artistic' was so overused, and so arbitrarily employed, as to render it useless for any purposes of



reasonably accurate description. The Glasgow Advertiser, for example, referred to the Doulton pottery company's salt-glazed products as 'art examples', and to its 'artistically-coloured' slab mosaic panel in Parian ware (a material with a dull egg-shell texture) "depicting Progress seated on a throne, with on her left the latest types of battleships afloat, and on her right numerous factories".<sup>156</sup> Many of the innumerable examples of Doulton pottery wares were claimed to be "extremely handsome and artistic".<sup>156</sup> Ironically, Day should have been well pleased with the manner in which the Glasgow Advertiser chose to commend the English Arts and Crafts movement whilst at the same time belittling the achievements of the Glasgow School of Art. This deserves to be examined in some detail, not only because of the significance of a local publication negativizing (albeit in an unspecific way) the 'authentic' Glasgow Art Nouveau style that had been winning accolades abroad; but because a distinction was made *vis-a-vis* Arts and Crafts products between an 'artistic' and a commercial approach to design, and on the basis of this distinction the work of the Art School was portrayed as representing inferior quality Arts and Crafts products.

The context within which English Arts and Crafts were considered began with a description of the pavilion designed (i.e. plans and decoration) by William Arthur Smith Benson of New Bond Street, London. The exhibit was described as being a combination of 'artistic work' by London firms, illustrating some novel constructional features, and consisting of a long central-vaulted room, with small offices leading off it, in which were exhibited Benson's electric fittings and art metal work. A number of cases displayed table ware, tea and coffee suites, kettles, trays, dishes, lamps, vases and drawing-room ornaments in brass, copper and electroplate. Three large gilt electric pendants, characteristic of Benson work, hung from a vaulted ceiling and various other electric fittings were shown on the walls or in the inner offices: "These are few in number, and are placed effectively for lighting the pavilion, so as not to destroy in any way the effect of what is intended to be *an artistic rather than a commercial*

*exhibit*".<sup>157</sup> The firm of James Powell and Sons of Whitefriars was responsible for the glass used extensively with the Benson fittings and mounted vases, some 'new types of decorative glass' for above-positioned small windows, and for mosaic panels in the corners on either side. Wall papers by Jeffrey and Co. of Essex Road, Islington (including the famous tulip frieze by Heywood Sumner), lined the ceilings, offices, and the central room. A grate designed by Ernest Newton was made by the Falkirk Iron Company in Scotland, and enclosing tiles were the work of the Pilkington Tile and Pottery Company of Burslem. The chief point of the exhibit, it was claimed, was to illustrate on a small scale the work of various firms associated with the "best traditions of the English Art Movement"<sup>158</sup> (Voysey, Crane and Mucha worked for Pilkington's, at which Lewis F. Day was chief Artistic Adviser);

"This movement, which started with William Morris and his pre-Raphaelite collaborators in the sixties, has effected a great and memorable revolution in popular taste. Closely allied in its origin with the English architectural revival, it has established an influence which is even more widely recognised on the Continent than in its native country. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the English movement is the original source of nearly all that is best in Continental applied art and decorative work, seeing that this indebtedness is freely admitted by foreign writers of authority".<sup>159</sup>

The primary purpose of this movement, however, had been somewhat lost sight of in the profusion of 'extraneous growths' that had sprung up around it. These growths were none other than the Art Schools, which, although

"founded with the worthiest motives and doing excellent work, have nevertheless fostered a host of amateur workers with just enough knowledge of art to copy its eccentricities, and just enough technical skill to endow them with slovenly workmanship. These abortive efforts do not in any sense represent English 'arts and crafts'. They are a thing altogether apart from the ideal which actuated William Morris and his successors, of an artist's brain directing and controlling the craftsman's hand. The characteristic of all the work exhibited in the Benson Pavilion, whether metal work, glass ware, wall papers, or pottery, is THOROUGHNESS. Good design goes hand in hand with the most perfect workmanship obtainable, and not a trace will be found of that straining after effect which is responsible for so many odd creations masquerading in the name of art".<sup>160</sup>

This was a calculated insult directed at Newbery (who arranged the exhibits of sculpture and architecture at the Exhibition), at Mackintosh, who designed the Glasgow School of Art Stall (and a stall for Pettigrew and Stephens), at all of those in and



around the School who could be accused of 'eccentricity', and ultimately at what was clearly acknowledged to be the assimilation of (English) arts and crafts into the Glasgow School of Art. But it was more than this. It effectively raised once again the old prejudice about the School's experimental work signifying inexperience and technical deficiency combining with a motivation towards outrage; in fact the very criteria employed by contemporary Arts and Crafts representatives in England to denounce the avant-garde work of the Glasgow School were here being re-invoked within Glasgow itself (Madsen noted that Benson "who had been in contact with Morris, regarded the simple unornamented form as so essential that he hardly made contact with the (Art Nouveau) style").<sup>161</sup> But this was a double-edged sword; because the Advertiser was wholly in concord with the commercial exploitation of 'artistic' elements, it was, in effect, in a somewhat ambiguous position with regard to the Arts and Crafts movement, particularly where the latter were still emphasising the artistic *as against* the commercial. But viewed from the angle of its pro-commercialism the Advertiser could be claimed to have favoured the kind of approach to industrial design and mass production represented by such Arts and Crafts-derived ideologues of a modern design aesthetic as John D. Sedding. However, if it were to be suggested that the advocacy of commercially mass-produced 'artistic' goods was what lay at the root of the hostility expressed towards the Art School (which was not making significant connections with local manufacturing industries) it would have to be stressed that the Advertiser, in its coverage of the Exhibition, was commending both the commercial *and* the 'artistic' endeavours on show, but that where the latter were concerned these were allegedly at their 'purest' when demonstrating their allegiance to the standards of the English Arts and Crafts movement. Thus having established the latter as the paradigm of quality artistic design achievements, the Glasgow School, assumed to be following in its footsteps, by being evaluated in terms of the same criteria would have its

manifestations of experimentation interpreted as lack of firm knowledge and proper understanding of the true canons of Arts and Crafts technique and teaching.

Strong dissent from such a view of Arts and Crafts was provided by Alexander McGibbon, who, as well as being Director of the Architecture Department in the Art School, was also Lecturer in Architectural Design, Sketching and Measurement, and the Decoration of Interiors. McGibbon referred to the Canadian Pavilion as being "of the style sometimes described as arts and crafts",<sup>162</sup> but refrained from making any further comment at this point. However, when he later came to discuss the eight corner pavilions in the Industrial Hall, he complained that ". . . it cannot be argued that the elements elsewhere employed - dado, column, entablature and attic - were in their adaptations exhausted; why then need they have been discarded for a form not in itself particularly beautiful. *It is a gratuitous surrender to the trivialities of the latter-day arts and crafts cult in architecture*".<sup>163</sup> The most obvious question which follows from this is: how did McGibbon view Glasgow Style Art Nouveau? And how did the latter differ in his eyes from English Arts and Crafts?

The slavish following of English developments was by no means something new in Glasgow and it was certainly not unique to the Glasgow Advertiser. Considerable controversy surrounded the choice of an English architect of dubious merit for the permanent Art Galleries. "Even now Glasgow has architects not unworthy of her", proclaimed Dugald Sutherland MacColl in the Architectural Review:

"Messrs. Burnet and Campbell, to name no more, have done good and congruous work. Why, then, did the Corporation, when they had a museum to build, go out of their way to introduce into the town the style of Mr. Waterhouse? That style has pervaded England because Mr. Waterhouse is a favourite with local committees who wish to have an academical assessor to aid them in their judgement. Candidates thereupon design in the manner most likely to meet with Mr. Waterhouse's honest admiration. But why, in the name of Scottish independence, did Glasgow follow this English custom like a sheep? The result is a fidgetty building, out of character with the surroundings in form and colour".<sup>164</sup>

The Bailie Described the Galleries as belonging to the 'bride cake' order of architecture, and pronounced them a failure "as far as their outside aspect is



concerned".<sup>165</sup> As regards the interior, Joseph Pennell, the celebrated black and white poster artist and friend of Whistler and Gleeson White, asserted that he had never seen space so wasted, and complained that the lighting was so atrocious that it was impossible to see the pictures; "You would say that the last thing thought of was the very object for which the building is supposed to have been designed".<sup>166</sup>

McGibbon had referred to the Canadian Pavilion as 'arts and crafts', but when subsequently noting that it had been designed by local architects (Walker and Ramsay) he commented that some of its details illustrated the 'Glasgow School': "that section of it at least whose energies are employed not in the fostering of a renaissance of national tradition in architectural style, but in timidly adapting the riotous unconventionalities that in Germany have already been freely exploited".<sup>167</sup>

If McGibbon had the Art Nouveau style in mind, then the most recent and accessible evidence of this style's 'riotous unconventionalities' on the continent had obviously been found at the Paris Exposition of the previous year, where the house of the *Art Nouveau Bing*, with its six rooms designed by Georges de Feure, Eugene Colonna, and Eugene Gaillard, had assured the success of the new style. It had elicited the response from the critic Charles Gennys (in the *Revue des Arts Decoratifs*) that "It is claimed that the *Art* called *Nouveau* consists of new forms substituted for other outmoded forms, yet it is forgotten that (the *Art Nouveau*), like its predecessors, must remain logical, well constructed, and observe the limitations imposed by the materials employed".<sup>168</sup> Among the sections on show, Germany had occupied the most space. The German gallery of decorative arts had *Jugendstil* decor that was already veering towards the kind of heavily linear and geometric simplicity which would come into its own in 1925 with the Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Paris. The German national pavilion manifested an 'official' classical style of straight, 'modernist', lines, emanating from Berlin; but the decorative section was dominated by Munich. The latter had presented a *Salle Gieberschmid* with work by Hermann Obrist (embroidered draperies with rectilinear as

well as curved motifs), Bernhard Pankok (chair and dresser with curved sections) and Richard Riemerschmid. Madsen found in Riemerschmid's furniture contributions evidence of an Arts and Crafts (and, confusingly, 'Modern Movement') austerity and constructive simplicity; by contrast, his ceiling frieze was described as being unmistakably in the Jugend style ("we find the scroll motif in *entrelac* in the form of a frieze").<sup>169</sup> Was it then, the Jugend style which McGibbon saw being assimilated by a 'section' of the Glasgow School?

The first thing to be said is that McGibbon does not make a distinction between architecture and applied arts when talking about the 'Glasgow School'. This leaves us to consider the distinction he does make - that is, between the renaissance of national tradition and the assimilation of modern continental trends which were breaking with convention - in the light of his acceptance of the 'Glasgow School' as representing the kind of artistic unity which he himself clearly welcomed. Consequently, both parts of his distinction can be seen to apply to Glasgow Art Nouveau. However, the distinction itself is wide of the mark and raises doubts about McGibbon's ability to understand fully the aims of the movement as articulated by Mackintosh. The fundamental aim was something McGibbon himself was obviously in favour of, namely universality. Under Mackintosh this was to be achieved through, on one level, the creative synthesis of old and new elements (the combination of the kind of principles which McGibbon considered underpinned Gothic architecture and which Mackintosh found manifested in indigenous 'national' architecture with a modern inventiveness); and on another the integration of contemporary international stylistic elements towards a

'modernist' universal style. The German contributions to the Paris Exposition had already elicited from the critic Andre Hallays the assertion that "The Germans streak the draperies of their most Gothic interiors with weird designs and produce an extraordinary mixture of the medieval and the new".<sup>170</sup> Hallays found that everything on show manifested the 'decorative parody' of the new fashion that had emanated from



Belgium and which had now spread across the world. English art was to be found at the origin of the Belgian movement, "But today, in everything called Modern Style, in France, in Germany, or elsewhere, one finds only a slavish imitation of Belgian art".<sup>171</sup> This meant, of course, that Austria and Scotland were 'imitating' it also. But it is certainly not the case that the Germans were at that time content to view themselves as slavishly imitating what the Paris Exposition was presenting as the genuine Art Nouveau with its *Art Nouveau Bing*. Max Osborne, writing for *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, commented that "For us Germans (the *Art Nouveau*) is a bit too feminine, too whimsical, too *cocotte*. For the French, perhaps, exactly what they desire"<sup>172</sup> (the French journal *L'Art Décoratif* printed an article on the Scottish style in 1898 in which it was stated that the style was unsuitable for Paris). The Preface to the official catalogue for the German section at the Dresden exposition of 1906, however, illustrates that the reference to the influence of Belgian Art Nouveau upon the Germans had not been rashly made. In singing the praises of van de Velde, it was stated that

"Above all, it is this Belgian who has made us Germans aware of Brussels; this man who, for the last ten years, has made Germany the centre of his activity, through whom our arts have found an encouraging direction, and around whom we have fought for recognition; a man whose work has endowed the evolution of German applied arts with an undeniable energy. Belgium gave him birth and educated him. She has endowed him with the determination of a revolutionary as well as a sense of tradition . . . Germany has assigned him a place among his peers".<sup>173</sup>

Georges Lenmen (1865-1916), the Belgian painter and admirer of Crane who joined the new applied art movement, and who worked with van de Velde on the Dresden Exposition Lounge in 1897, had already demonstrated that, before this date, a linear as well as a stylised floral technique (such as was characteristic of Serrurier-Bovy's early work) was to be found in Brussels as early as 1894. In 1897, the exhibition at the Congo Colonial Rooms, at Tervueren, Belgium (van de Velde, Hankar, Serrurier-Bovy) showed a result manifesting "a surprisingly rectilinear architectural layout".<sup>174</sup>

It is likely that McGibbon was presenting yet another negative appraisal of the 'Glasgow Style' of Art Nouveau, and, moreover, that he was thinking at least as much of

Austria as of Germany when referring to 'unconventionalities': after all the Glasgow School had participated in the Viennese Secession Exhibition, with significant success, just the year previously; McGibbon's omitting to mention this important fact must be considered a further instance of the active setting of limits to discourse on the topic of Glasgow's avant-garde and its activities. The form-language of Austrian (late) Art Nouveau is linked to that of the Darmstadt group in Germany through the involvement in the latter of the Austrian Joseph Olbrich (1867-1908). With the Darmstadt group *Jugendstil* elements, such as the decorative thickening of curved lines and the use of floral details, are greatly reduced in favour of stylised, abstract patterning, and are moderated by being combined with a system of horizontal, vertical, and parallel lines. Olbrich executed a room interior for the Paris Exposition as did also the *Wiener Kunstgewerbeschule* (with Hoffmann-designed walls).

The views of McGibbon illustrate that, even within the Art School itself the most progressive artist/designer/architects could not rely upon consistent support for the style they were developing. Elements in McGibbon's own theory of architecture were sufficiently close to Art Nouveau ideology for to indicate where his sympathies lay with regard to the results of the intertwining of utilitarian and aesthetic motivations. His response to the *actual* 'Glasgow Style' was, however, another issue, and appears, at best, to have been ambiguous. At any rate, the main lines of the Canadian Pavilion he described as being 'fairly orthodox'. His remarks on the Glasgow School seem all the more ambiguous when his positive response to the Russian contribution to the Exhibition is considered (see below).

There was obviously confusion over how to categorise those styles of architecture on show at the Exhibition which deviated from apparently straightforward historical models. The Benson pavilion, so eloquently commended by the Glasgow Advertiser for its English Arts and Crafts integrity and its "novel constructional features which are intended for the information of architects and builders",<sup>176</sup> was found by D. S. MacColl



to manifest "a little too much of '*L'Art nouveau*'".<sup>176</sup> McColl, painter and critic (for 'The Spectator'), had been an ardent supporter of Degas and of French and British Impressionism; but with the work of the Post-Impressionists (Van Gogh, Cezanne, Gauguin) he betrayed, as William Gaunt pointed out, a hatred of change, considering the new work to demonstrate a lack of skill and culture. Speaking of the group of critics who had supported Impressionism, of which McColl had been a member, Gaunt noted that "A native conservatism appeared in their desire to preserve a revolt as an institution . . . . To welcome a second revolt was unprincipled".<sup>177</sup> When it is borne in mind that Post-Impressionism emphasised form over content, and the primacy of the mode over the object of representation, then a relationship becomes apparent between McColl's hostility towards Post-Impressionism and his dislike of Art Nouveau, which latter exploited the evocative power of formal qualities to an even greater degree.

More than anything else, with the Benson pavilion it appeared to be attempts at 'novelty' which elicited McColl's annoyance: the novelty of laying the tiles on the roof flat side by side (and thus allowing rain to come through them); the novelty of the treatment of the windows in the booth: "These are apparently glazed in a metal framework of rather clumsy design, but on a nearer view it is discovered that the framework is in no way attached to the glass, which is simply an ordinary pane in front of it".<sup>178</sup> In Glasgow itself, the 'malady' of Art Nouveau had numbered many victims, according to MacColl: "One finds old firms of cabinet-makers like Messrs. Wylie and Lothead, renowned in the past for sober and solid workmanship, breaking out into lurid and fantastic display. But the farther afield the disease travels the more acute becomes its virus. The Russian booths, with their monstrous decorations, made everything else appear quiet by comparison".<sup>179</sup> The latter was a reference to the 'Russian village' which sported an agriculture pavilion with pale green and salmon pink walls and Indian red shingles; a mining pavilion with green shingles; a cubic style forestry building with 'warm light brown and buff' walls and 'grey-blue' shingles.<sup>180</sup>

The Russian contribution proved controversial in more ways than one. In August, an interim interdict was applied for by Glasgow Corporation subsequent to the allegation having been made that some of the stalls in the Russian section had "got into the hands of a gang of German Jews",<sup>181</sup> and that goods claimed to be the work of Russian peasants were being shipped from Germany, France or Italy. It was even claimed that goods manufactured in Birmingham ('the centre of cheap jewellery')<sup>182</sup> were sent to St. Petersburg only to be re-shipped to Britain described as being 'Made in Russia'. It was reported that a table centre, for which four shillings was charged at the Exhibition "could have been purchased in Glasgow at the rate of sixteen shillings per dozen!",<sup>183</sup>

Day found it impossible to take seriously such 'aggressively strange architecture' as the Russian exhibit, finding it ungainly and unacceptable to anyone who appreciated the "logical development of design out of given conditions".<sup>184</sup> If it represented anything at all then it was 'the new art' but viewed through distorting Slavonic glasses. "It is the mad imagining of the newest of new artists, in short an architectural nightmare".<sup>185</sup> By contrast, McGibbon found the Russian section "quite the most important display made by any foreign power",<sup>186</sup> and referred to the varied colouring as being 'quite harmonious', although he expressed disappointment at there being no carving, and at the fact that the possibilities offered by a colour scheme of unpainted wood had not been exploited (when later, the architect of the Russian Exhibition buildings, Shekhtel, was to be found 'propagandizing' the white lacquering of the Glasgow Style circa 1901 that he had earlier confronted on his visit to Scotland, Mackintosh had moved away from lacquering wood in this manner, to a more consistent presentation of 'natural' grains). The Bailie started out early in 1901 with characteristic sarcasm to ridicule the Russian builders who were at this stage involved in erecting their Pavilion. A Cartoon Supplement ('Russia at the Exhibition') had depicted the Russians as a sullen army of long-jawed characters, humourless and involved to the point of fanaticism in setting up the construction. Accompanying



captions read: 'The Russian Axe: The Workman's Principal Tool'; and 'Part of the Exhibit: Looks like a Gas Work?'.<sup>107</sup> But by April it seemed that prejudice had given way to admiration: "The Russian section, in the way of painting and decoration, puts all others in the shade. The style of ornament, quaint and, in appearance, occidental, and the beautiful harmony of colours is deserving of all praise. One has only to compare it with the painting and decoration of certain other of the erections on the grounds to see what depths of vulgarity the ordinary house-painter in this country descends".<sup>108</sup> In one sense this is a surprising evaluation: that Day's 'architectural nightmare' of 'new art' should be considered quaint, stylish and harmonious by this most chauvinistic of petite-bourgeois journals is deserving of comment. But if this aspect is unusual (and it could well have been conditioned by the factor of there being substantial commercial trade links between Scotland and Russia), what is not is the predictable mockery directed at local examples of design, through, on this occasion, invoking the image of the 'vulgar' house painter; an image contrived for the purpose of deflating the 'artistic' pretensions of certain local exponents of the 'decorative craze'.

The incorporation of aspects of the new decorative art forms into commercialism can be viewed from the vantage point of the contemporary advertising which accompanied the 1901 Exhibition. Processes of cultural fragmentation can be seen at work where only selected elements of the 'new' were integrated into commodity production. What now could be marketed along with the goods was an image of these products as embodying an inherently artistic meaning that was wholly contemporaneous. A washable water paint marketed under the name of 'Duresco' since 1876 was used for the Exhibition buildings (Concert Hall, Russian Section, Irish Pavilion, etc.), and not only were the manufacturers (James Duthie and Co. of Glasgow and Dublin) able to boast that sixty tons of the paint had been used for the occasion, but they lost no time in capitalizing on the 'we are all artistic now' situation, and in such a way as to present their

product as a medium capable of satisfying the highest *artistic* requirements. Hence Duresco was claimed to be 'The Modern Equivalent of the Fresco of the Old Masters'; the contemporary association of white with modernity could make it 'The Paint of the Twentieth Century' specified by 'leading Architects', and recommended by 'Up-to-date Decorators' because it was 'Economical in Use, Artistic in Finish, Durable in Results'.<sup>189</sup> Is it merely coincidental that Mackintosh's return to 'natural' wood finishes took place after 1901? The Duthie company were, of course, by no means unique in playing up the artistic language. Copland and Lye, which, with the expansion of the range of customers for branded goods in Glasgow in the 1870's and 1880's, had established itself on the model of the large department store in 1878 (Pettigrew's followed in 1888 and Treron's in 1890), now advertised 'Reversible Art Carpets', 'Tapestry Carpets', and 'Inlaid Linoleums' ('The Floor Covering of the Future'). Pettigrew and Stephens, whose display at the Exhibition sported a stand designed by Mackintosh (who also designed exhibition stalls for Rae Brothers and Francis Smith's cabinetmaking firm), employed aesthetic movement language ('the designs are exquisite') in describing their 'Magnificent Brussels Carpet Squares'. This firm formally opened its Sauchiehall Street warehouse, subsequent to 'elaborate structural alteration' to coincide with the start of the Exhibition. A wide pillar-supported entrance, marble staircases, stained-glass windows, 'effective' lighting, an elevator, and 'the most rapid cash service' were all incorporated. But perhaps most noteworthy was the inclusion of a Geddesian 'outlook tower' which incorporated a camera obscura, as did the one in Edinburgh.

When Lewis Day came to consider the show of carpets in the Kiosk of James Templeton and Co., he was moved to assert that "Perhaps in the determined effort to meet the every want of retail trade, they (the Templeton company) allow themselves to be led sometimes in a direction which their better judgement must tell them is not the way of art".<sup>190</sup> What Day really meant was 'not the way of utility', since it is clear that his



criticisms were directed against what he saw as a process which was compromising the functional in order to exploit public taste for an enhanced 'artistic' appeal in goods for the domestic interior. Whilst conceding that carpets which had "more the appearance of delicate tapestry than of carpet" were triumphs of manufacture, and although "Flowers and arabesques could hardly be better painted in wools", Day was not restrained in expressing what he took to be the major error of this development: such carpets were unfit to be trodden upon, whether based upon historical or modern designs:

"That may be said to be rather the fault of the French style than of the Scottish manufacture. But a similar forgetfulness of the position to be occupied by carpets, is shown in designs more up-to-date. The latest thing in carpet design seems to be to plan it as if for hangings or wall-papers. Designers appear to be claiming a freedom from restraint which amounts to licence - Mr. Walter Crane himself giving the countenance of his name and authority to a practice more honoured, it seems to me, in the breach than in the observance"<sup>191</sup>

If Day was here emphasising the ethics of functionalism/utilitarianism from his Arts and Crafts standpoint, then it is of the utmost significance that when it came to acknowledging the functionalist approach of Mackintosh, he took the path of portraying the latter's inventions as examples of the work of a stalwart individualist who had risked eccentricity in order to manifest his originality. Thus the severe simplicity of the Glasgow School of Art Stall, "a sort of cage in which to confine a pair of lady bookbinders"<sup>192</sup> was, in fact, designed

"to show how simply an erection of the sort may be built, the straight lines naturally suggested by carpentry construction being allowed to assert themselves, with no attempt at ornament beyond what is afforded by judicious distribution and proportion. A similar severity is to be observed in Mr. Mackintosh's permanent building for the Glasgow School of Art - planned apparently on lines nakedly utilitarian, yet everywhere revealing the marked individuality of the artist. His symbolism, as in the case of the ring and balls framing the name of the school (adjacent), is his own, and apparently for himself; he takes, at all events, no pains to make it intelligible to the mere Southerner. So imperturbably does he work on his own lines that to eyes unsympathetic it seems like affectation; but there is honestly no doubt as to the genuineness of the artistic impulse. Whether it is quite wise in him to follow it so unhesitatingly is another question - which time will answer".<sup>193</sup>

When Day had, earlier in the year, described a house by George Walton shown at the Exhibition, he took this as being representative of the work of the newer generation of

Glasgow designers. At this point, the aim of newness in design had not seemed to be a great problem. He had found that "There is throughout a determined effort to do some new thing in design, and it is not often that it fails".<sup>194</sup> Elsewhere he had specified the two main ideas underlying the work influenced by the Glasgow School of Art as being the determination to be new, and an effort at simplicity.<sup>195</sup> But in comparing the Wylie and Lohead exhibit (designed by Taylor, Logan and Ednie, whose names were suppressed at the time by the firm) with the traditional furniture exhibit of Howard and Sons, Day revealed the kind of 'functionalist' criteria that he was (for the most part implicitly) bringing to bear. After the experience of newness, the first impression created by the Howard exhibit was "how dull the old work is! how often we have seen it before! how well we know it! No! it does not strike one at all; we pass it by".<sup>196</sup> But dullness and the homeliness that accompanied it were to determine, so it seemed, the ultimate choices made. The new, whilst undeniably striking, was not amenable to comfort.

But if it should occur to us to question which is the more comfortable, which is the more homely, which one would rather live with - the answer is not doubtful. The armchairs on page 240 are an invitation more cordial by far than any utterance of the new art. There is hope in that perhaps; in this there is satisfaction".<sup>197</sup>

Against these kinds of criteria the aesthetic-asceticism of a spare modernist functionalism has failed before it has begun. But despite the careful attempts to sound neutral when discussing the manifest attempts at newness in Glasgow, Day was, in actuality prejudiced from the outset. When writing on the subject of Art Nouveau in The Art Journal in October 1900, he had expressed the view that, when the English spoke of the 'New Art' it was with an inflection of irony, since "It shows symptoms not of too exuberant life, but of pronounced disease".<sup>198</sup> The same sentiments were expressed by him in 1901, in The British Architect (June), and in Macmillan's Magazine (November). Access to the press was clearly not a problem for this Arts and Crafts



traditionalist,'<sup>99</sup> but it has to be said that Day's admiration for the Howard furnishings even makes a nonsense of Arts and Crafts concerns.

It is possible to discern here something of the divide between the taste patterns and correlated life-styles of the avant-garde and its intellectuals, and the bourgeoisie; a divide which would increasingly come to characterise twentieth century capitalism. In recent years Bourdieu's empirically-grounded work on class in France led to his establishing specific categories of 'intellectuals' and 'bourgeoisie'.<sup>200</sup> 'Intellectuals' (artists, lecturers, etc.) possess significant cultural capital but little economic capital. The 'bourgeoisie' (as distinguished from the 'new bourgeoisie' of private sector executives active, in particular, in areas such as finance, marketing, purchasing, design; and who possess both cultural and economic capital in significant quantities; and the 'new petit bourgeois' (service class) comprising those in occupations such as advertising and sales and in public service) are strong on economic capital but are weaker on cultural capital. The latter, with their 'material base, this-worldly satisfactions', are dependent upon the intellectuals for signs of distinction. But the limits to this dependence are determined by the fundamental divide separating these two groups within the 'dominant class'. This divide is expressed, according to Bourdieu, through the intellectuals' symbolic subversion, or reversal, of the rituals of bourgeois culture, and one form that this takes is the manifesting of 'ostentatious poverty': the intellectuals' tastes for functionalism/modernism in design are thus contrasted with the bourgeois' attraction to the sumptuous and the indulgent.

Bourdieu's survey can help to shed some light on the turn-of-the-century situation we are examining. If Mackintosh can be viewed as an early modernist exponent of functionalism, an exemplar of intellectual taste, Day, while hardly fitting the description of the full-blown, opulence-consuming bourgeois, does represent something of the 'innocuous compromise' (Adorno) characteristic of the bourgeois taste which modernism was refusing to tolerate. However, it should be remarked upon that, where it

is Day's reaction to those manifestations of the new art that could be described as being softened by romanticism (the novelty of the 'pre-Raphaelite ideal' striven for with the Wylie and Lohead Pavilion, which was, incidentally, disliked by the Hungarians for its whimsy and exclusiveness when it was displayed in 1902 at the Iparművészeti Múzeum in Budapest) which focus his priorities and preoccupations, the really significant contrast inheres in his position *vis-a-vis* the 'nakedly utilitarian' work of Mackintosh with its aesthetic-asceticism and its architectonic qualities which make an expressive element of construction through the rejection of traditional and semi-traditional forms. It is here that the gulf between Day's desire to "preserve the old amid the new",<sup>201</sup> and the uncompromising radical functionality of Mackintosh is at its greatest. In highlighting the dispiriting experience of the old in the light of the new, Day, ironically for the ultimate placing of his priorities, illustrates well the truth of Adorno's statement that "The only refuge the old has is at the vanguard of the new, not at the rear; it can be found in the interstices of the new, but it would be useless to expect the old to furnish continuity . . . Works that do not live up to this principle immanently, i.e. in their own context, become inadequate".<sup>202</sup>

#### Conclusion: The Tension Between Avant-Garde Functionalism and Commercialism

In 1901 similar attitudes towards 'Glasgow School' work as those that were directed at the early paintings and posters of the Four are to be found. The central avant-garde commitment to modernism of the movement, in no sense compromised but rather developed, continues to elicit hostility and misunderstanding. Thus Lewis Day finds that Jessie King's "strange treatment of the human figure" employs "a maze of sweeping lines, ornamental indeed, but so altogether unintelligible, that you wonder how the artist ever arrived at them"; and that Ann Macbeth employs a 'savage type of ornament' of 'severe simplicity'.<sup>203</sup> Here Day is reacting to the two-dimensional decorative approach



characteristic of Art Nouveau which has pattern predominating over traditional perspective; but it is possible, in the light of the involvement of such avant-gardists as Macbeth in forms of political radicalism, to read a wider meaning into his use of terms like 'savage'. Significantly, he was unable to decide on whether the work of the Glasgow School of Art (which he found "does not make the show one would have expected of it")<sup>204</sup> was inherently individualistic or nationalistic.

A contrast which requires to be highlighted is that between the 'Glasgow Style' as manifested in the Wylie and Lohead Pavilion (and, additionally, with Walton's work) and the rectilinear cubic functionalism of Mackintosh. Speaking of the former, Juliet Kinchin points out that "For the modestly affluent, middle class audience they wished to attract, Wylie and Lohead could now offer a more decorative and homely version of the experimental designs produced by the Four in the 1890s - Mackintosh without the Spooks and Ghouls".<sup>205</sup> Whilst this description convincingly relates the limited acceptance of the Four's work to the period of reaction to the early works, it has the effect of diverting attention away from the crucial area of contrast between their work and that of others, and between the aims of the avant-garde and those of commercialism. Under the auspices of Wylie and Lohead the team of Taylor, Ednie and Logan aimed for a *mediation* between the modernist principles of Art Nouveau (as a style and an ideology) and the requirements of bourgeois taste, through a compromised 'tinkering' with the Glasgow Style as developed in the 1890's; Mackintosh sensuously tarted up and with greatly diminished asceticism. But Wylie and Lohead's commercial concerns represented a nonsense of Art Nouveau's anti-historicist aims. The company produced, alongside 'their' version of the Glasgow Style, still popular 'revivalist styles', and these were shown in their 'Royal Reception Rooms' at the Exhibition (Louis XV Drawing Room; Jacobean Dining Room). Of the Four, Mackintosh in particular had moved on to develop a spare/ascetic cubic, rectilinear, geometric style, a new form of Art Nouveau which was commented upon in *Dekorative Kunst* for its striking closeness to the style of

the Viennese School. Significantly, the contrast between the (earlier) curvilinear and (later) cubic-constructivist permutations of Glasgow Style Art Nouveau was manifested at the 1901 Exhibition with Mackintosh's very different designs for commercial companies (Pettigrew and Stephens, Rae Brothers, Francis Smith) and the Glasgow School of Art respectively. Only the latter could be considered overtly constructivist. Since with construction, as Adorno puts it, "Art takes on expression through frigidity",<sup>206</sup> the broad, unmodelled, cubic planes of Mackintosh's style in this the Viennese Secession's 'geometric' period, were more expressive of modern aims in the specific sense that the works are taken beyond their own functionalist language, and as a consequence, purpose itself is manifested as content. Purpose becomes the complement of aesthetic effect which is achieved through the medium of enhancing form. This was to realize the Art Nouveau ideals of combining form with content and the artistic with the utilitarian for the 'total' work of art. On occasion, the one could over-balance the other, of course, as with certain objects of furniture which underplay (and compromise) practicality to the end of aesthetic effect. At any rate, it is these works of Mackintosh which demonstrate McGibbon's thinking with regard to the intertwining of the elements of symbolism, artistic design and structuration. But when this approach is related to that of Ednie, Taylor and Logan for Wylie and Lohead, we have, on the one hand, Art Nouveau, and on the other, a compromised commercialised version of it which was already assimilated to the eclecticism that Art Nouveau had set out to oppose ideologically and stylistically. Whilst the form-language of geometric abstraction and tectonic constructivism in late Glasgow Art Nouveau could be taken as reflecting a mass-producible commodity character, an 'artistic' autonomy was maintained which placed these productions in a relationship of tension *vis-a-vis* commercial imperatives and commodity markets. In fact, the situation illustrates well why van de Velde was so concerned about commercial agencies colonizing the sphere of artistic activity and modifying designs to the ends of marketability.



It would appear that a solid bloc of opposition towards Art Nouveau, one which viewed it as an essentially continental style, had been established by the Arts and Crafts movement by 1901. By employing Arts and Crafts criteria in their much publicised judgements of new work, critics such as Crane and Day were able to obstruct a full understanding of what was being signified through the new form-language. This much was made clear by George Donaldson, who had acquired around thirty pieces of Art Nouveau furniture shown at the Paris Exposition. When the works were exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the summer of 1901 there was considerable reaction, and the South Kensington Board of Education issued statements to the effect that modern continental style was not consistent with the teaching in British Art Schools. Donaldson's reply was that "this selection of 'New Art' furniture demonstrates at least that there are forms and combinations of line, colour, and materials not hitherto dreamt of in the philosophy of English designers and producers of furniture . . . "207

**CHAPTER EIGHT**

**THE DEMISE.**



Throughout the analysis we have been conducting, it became apparent to what degree experimentation and conscious control over technical procedures were important issues for the Glasgow avant-garde. These were apprehended as the means towards the emergence of new types of art. In tracing the career of the Mackintosh movement, we have illustrated something of the truth of the proposition that a dilemma for those seeking the new consists in the fact that what emerges *as new* is never integral or 'complete'. This helps to explain the significant changes which affected the form-language of Scottish Art Nouveau over a period of time. We also saw the kind of problems which resulted from the attempts to objectify the new within a cultural environment pervaded with traditional aesthetic norms. But the movement itself was never 'complete', and before 1914 it had dispersed. In this final chapter we will examine the main local and national (in the Scottish *and* the British sense) factors which had a crucial bearing upon the inability of the avant-garde to consolidate its position in Glasgow.

Undoubtedly heartened by the final completion of the new Art School building in 1909, Newbery, the following year, was polemicizing about the opportunities afforded by the sites of the three great railway stations in Glasgow "for the erection of buildings such as might give beauty to the city in these latter days, as the fortress, the cathedral, and other buildings did in earlier times". This represented an outright expression of contempt for the actually existing cast-iron and glass structures, the products of engineers, which had been erected in the 1870's by the railway companies and which continued to dominate their locations. At this time, the second phase of Wagner's massive *Postparkasse* project in Vienna had just begun. In 1901 the final section of the Stadtbahn network had come into service thus bringing to completion seven years of the most ambitious work embracing the design of everything in the metropolitan railway network, from stations, embankments, tunnels and bridges, to signal boxes, booking offices and subways. Wagner, as adviser to the Transport

Commission, was able to become involved in what was concretely required technologically in his contemporary Vienna. Nothing on this kind of scale was happening in Glasgow; and if the respective roles of architect and engineer could be combined in the execution of Wagner's work, it seemed that, in Glasgow, petty officialdom could not reach a consistently workable relationship with architects. In 1910 Newbery was reduced to arguing the case for architects working with the Corporation being allowed the autonomy to determine the actual design of important public buildings:

"... the best architects in Glasgow should have an opportunity of displaying their skill upon such work. With regard to semi-public and private buildings, it was all very well to blame the architects for the style of the work that was produced. But it was a moot point in regard to any building how much of the design was the work of the architect and how much the work of his client. Very rarely was an architect left free".<sup>2</sup>

An indictment of the Corporation's role in the construction of ugly buildings throughout the city, had been delivered by the Lord Provost in 1907. In taking note of the buildings erected by the City Improvement Trust in the High Street, he remarked that he had been reminded of the 'gospel' he had preached in previous years as to relieving the dull monotony of the city's sky-line. As it was, "the habitual tenement building of Glasgow presented nothing but a dull straight line as its whole sky effect".<sup>3</sup>

After 1904, the architectural sphere was facing a period of depression. The statistics just published by the Burgh Engineer demonstrated that the monetary value of recent architectural work was considerably far below the average. In future, warned Professor Baldwin Brown, Glasgow's architects "should watch jealously any ill-considered attempt to modernise or reconstruct what they valued in the old; and at the same time assert their right to advise as to the expediency of what was new".<sup>4</sup> Brown's words were carefully chosen so as to present the architectural profession as possessing a security and an autonomy which it was becoming clear it did not have. In Vienna, by this time, Wagner had learned through the experience of confronting contemporary needs



that the alliance of tradition with the modern world, as desired by such as Brown, must of necessity be conditioned by the new role of the architect as collaborator with the engineer. Such collaborations were no new thing in Glasgow by the turn of the century. But where Viennese officialdom, in their concern to enhance rather than destroy the city's appearance with a metropolitan railway network, were able to appoint Wagner as overseer of the entire project, Glasgow, where its railways were concerned, already manifested the problem of an environmental ugliness, denounced by Mackintosh, which was the direct consequence of the piecemeal operations of a group of privately owned railway companies. However, the consequences for the environment of the activities of the railway companies helped to reveal to the more perceptive that the most fundamental problem facing Glasgow's architects was that of the nature of the city's economic and industrial life.<sup>4a</sup>

Commerce and heavy industry represented the mainstays of Glasgow's economy at the close of the nineteenth century. In terms of housing the enormous workforces required, shortage of land was a major problem; paradoxically, the poorest class occupied the most expensive land in and around the city centre. The housing layout, if such it could be called, reflected the economic morphology; moreover, it provided the most unfortunate consolidation of the non-existence of innovative concepts of large-scale environmental planning and/or design. In 1909 'A Special Correspondent' for the Glasgow Herald expressed his interest in how Vienna was attacking the problem of its slums, and at the same time made it clear that the major obstacle to progressive town planning in Glasgow lay with the piecemeal nature of the planning activities within the city's housing sector:

'It is not enough to demolish slums on dear land, costing £2 or £3 a yard, and to reconstruct blocks of buildings here and there on land at 10s. to 15s. a yard a little further away but still within the city. This would be no true solution of this difficulty. What is required is some such system as has been evolved in Vienna, where, as Mr. Inigo Triggs informs us in his book on 'Town Planning', 'in order to make ample provision for future growth, and both to regulate the expansion of the suburbs and to preserve the charms of the landscape surroundings, a great effort has been made to acquire a broad belt of land known as the Walde und Wiesengurtel at a cost of about

50,000,000 kronen, which sum it is proposed to raise by means of a loan . . . ' By this far-sighted policy Vienna will eventually become one huge garden city, within well-defined boundaries, and with ample means of communication between all parts of the suburbs and the Ringstrasse. Such a policy the city of Birmingham is seeking to carry out at the present moment".<sup>5</sup>

Even if a proper scheme of town planning, along the lines of such as recommended by Geddes, had been capable of being implemented in Glasgow, and it was not, because of land values and the fragmented nature of land availability, patronage, and property ownership (as well as the scale of the latter), it is unlikely that the new movement would have been given much opportunity to be involved in it because (a) the aims of the movement were not adequately understood locally; (b) there was significant hostility towards it, it being portrayed as bizarre, effete, decadent, etc.; (c) the issue of potential costs for large-scale environmental transformation would have been a fundamental factor acting against it; and (d) there was disjunction between the artistic and technical spheres which was concretised in the institutional separation of art and architecture. In 1904 Horatio Bromhead of the Glasgow Institute of Architects articulated the argument that artistic-utilitarian synthesis in architecture was necessary for the avoidance of environmental disfigurement, but complained that such synthesis was not taking place in Glasgow. With hindsight it is possible to see that any avant-gardist attempt to realise the fruits of a successful institutional combination of artistic and architectural/technical elements would still have had to confront the realities of Glasgow's economic morphology. But there were other obstacles also.

There appeared to be a woeful lack of understanding in Glasgow, not merely of what was actually required in the way of building, but of what was really taking place on the building front. In January of 1901, the Glasgow Advertiser informed its readers that "Tenement and self-contained houses have been comparatively neglected, and preference given to building ground and public works".<sup>6</sup> By April, an 'about-turn' on the issue of tenement building had become apparent: "In what is being done in the way



of building, whether on account of the burgh or on the part of individuals, as evidenced in the town hall, public baths, and tenement construction, an enterprising spirit prevails".<sup>7</sup> The accelerated rate at which this 'enterprising spirit' had suddenly manifested itself should have evinced more than a little scepticism: in January it had been asked whether the 'disease' afflicting the volume of business during 1900 was general or confined to a district. The answer given was that "An analytical study of the subjoined district table brings out the fact that, with the exception of Pollokshields, Queen's Park, and environs, the depression is common to the whole".<sup>8</sup> This was undoubtedly true, and although the description here is of Glasgow, it was Glasgow's position within 'the whole' that was British capitalism which had, at this precise point in time, taken on a heightened significance. Considerable concern was expressed in Glasgow, subsequent to the closing down of the 1901 Exhibition, over the withdrawal of "over a million and a quarter of gold from the Bank of England"<sup>9</sup> to meet unexpected demands from Germany and France, because it was believed that such demands would continue into the future. Before the Exhibition actually began it had been anxiously stated, against a background of rapidly declining monetary value, that it was "desirable money should not be allowed to fall much in value, so as to retain as much gold in London from going to the continent"<sup>10</sup>. In October The Bailie proclaimed that it went without saying that the 'hopeless state' of markets and the worsening state-of-affairs on an already inactive Stock Exchange were causing concern "amongst capitalists and investors throughout the country"<sup>11</sup>, and the Glasgow Advertiser asserted that it was evident that the Bank of England would "require at once to take steps to obtain some control of the market, especially in view of our enormous indebtedness at the moment to the French market"<sup>12</sup>. This indebtedness was having the effect of fanning the flames of an already overheated anti-continental feeling.

The Glasgow avant-garde did indeed foster a Scotto-Continental artistic style, but the ideological components underlying this nationalist *and* cosmopolitan style were of

fundamental significance for the success or failure of the movement within the context of culture and class structure in Glasgow at that time. Turn of the century Glasgow, as Sydney Checkland describes, "contained the full range of social classes as determined by the technology of the maturity phase of the first industrial revolution; there were magnates, middle and lesser capitalists, managers, foremen, and a workforce ranging from the highest level of skill to the lifting, carrying and cleaning labourer".<sup>13</sup> Notwithstanding factors such as the complex railway network connecting Glasgow with London since 1847 (fundamental to the commercial prosperity of the city), and with the remainder of Scotland by the 1880's, the city in the last quarter of the nineteenth century had continued to encapsulate what was essentially a local society, one considerably isolated culturally from British-national concerns. Even the large engineering, chemicals, and textiles firms, in the 1880's, reliant as they were upon world markets, were largely under the control of local capital subscription and local management. But around the turn-of-the-century, Glasgow's industry was becoming increasingly controlled from London. Hence there was an intensified interest in the *British-national economy* which was focused upon dealings in the London Stock Exchange. Scottish businessmen were now establishing syndicates for capital export, credit, and trade, and were purchasing shares in foreign stock markets via the London market. Subsequent to the period when heavy industries were built up in the lowland regions of the country, the bourgeois class in Scotland, as a component within the system of British capitalism, and as a recipient of the benefits of that British imperialism which had transcended nation-state boundaries, wanted to compete with the continent in markets for popular commodities. In this respect they desired the production of goods manifesting a quality of design capable of meeting continental goods on their own ground; only thus could the competitive potential of Scottish light engineering manufactures in world markets be enhanced. But competition involved also importation, and increasingly the latter was viewed as a threat to Scottish securities. In 1901 a



range of Glasgow workers in various occupations combined to restrict the importation of foreign-made joiner work, finishings and suchlike, at the same time as slate quarry masters proposed the boycotting of foreign slates. These actions were denounced by George Herbertson at a meeting of the Architectural Craftsmen's Society, as being 'contrary to the spirit of Free Trade, which was the policy of this country'.<sup>14</sup> The limits to this 'policy' were to be found in British attitudes towards continental 'Free Trade' legitimacy. "Even if we do not carry a commercial war into the camp of our enterprising Continental neighbours", the Glasgow Advertiser broadcasted when spelling out the imperative necessity for institutionalised commercial education in Britain to match that already under way in Germany, Switzerland, America, France, Belgium and Japan, "we ought, in justice to ourselves, to prevent them working havoc in ours".<sup>15</sup> Over the next decade foreign competition undermined heavy industry in Glasgow, with steel manufacture, ship and locomotive-building, and engineering seriously affected.

By the 1890's the economic and social advantages enjoyed by the Scottish bourgeoisie - many of which were to an extent disseminated, albeit unequally, throughout the social hierarchy - were inextricably connected to the economic, ideological and political role of that class within British capitalism as a whole. New ideas grounded in a synthesis of 'genuinely' Scottish (such as Celtic ornamentation, or vernacular architecture) with contemporary continental cultural elements could not help but conflict with (a) the deferential relationship of the Scottish bourgeoisie to their counterpart in England; and (b) the ideology of British imperialism which, after the outbreak of the Boer War (1899) gave rise to increased widespread British-nationalist hostility towards the continent. With regard to the latter point here, it was made clear by the popular Glasgow press that 1901 was not a time when the concerns of Geddes and his followers the 'Geddemaniacs'<sup>16</sup> with 'amity between nations' (his major interest in the Exhibition alongside that of education), and the revival in a new form of Scotland's pre-1707 'Auld Alliance' with France, were likely to be appraised sympathetically. This was the

year after the success enjoyed by Glasgow's avant-garde in Vienna (which was ignored by the Glasgow press) and a year before their involvement in cultural events at Turin and Moscow.

Against a background of introverted 'nationalism' in Scotland (which for the most part took the form of carefully contained *kailyairdism*<sup>17</sup>; the use of 'dialect' in the popular journals, for example, was never allowed to spill over into the articles, employing Standard English, on 'serious' issues such as the Stock Exchange or the art market), English Arts and Crafts, and English artists, designers and architects, were lauded with praise and provided with commissions, whilst local practitioners were either given mediocre projects, or were ignored, slandered, and often portrayed as being inferior plagiarists of English ideas. Even William Young (1843-1910) the winner of the architectural competition for the design of the city chambers in George Square, Glasgow (1883-88), although born in Paisley, was a 'London Scot', an emigre who had moved south subsequent to having completed his architectural training in Glasgow. The architects James and Thomas MacLaren, Lorimer, Dunn and Robert Watson, were either London Scots or were trained in London. In the sphere of cultural production overt nationalist ideology represented a kind of symbolic subversion, which carried with it the risk of possible disruption of the status quo. Only with the support among sections of the middle and lower middle classes for the Liberal Party's policy on home rule for Scotland did the issue of nationalism take on an overt form; and that form reflected, before anything else, Scottish support for the British political system, within a strategy implemented by a party desperately trying to combat the problem created for it by a fully formed Labour Party which had appropriated the support of large numbers of the ex-Liberal-voting working class.

The 1888 Exhibition in Glasgow was opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales, and Queen Victoria inaugurated the city chambers in the same year. Victoria was instrumental in fostering an image of the romantic Scottish highlands against a



background of historic links between the Hanoverian monarchy and the Stuart dynasty. This made it respectable to be both a Scot and a loyal subject of the London-based monarchy and the empire; dimensions of British sovereignty which Victoria potently symbolised. But Victoria was also the 'mother' of the 'nation', and when Albert died she was popularly dubbed the 'widow of Windsor'. She thus epitomised a conservative family morality commensurate with the values on which the empire was built. In Glasgow, when the first exhibitions to include work by The Four were seized upon as providing evidence of a threat to public welfare, a widespread puritanical morality and fear of sensuality and spontaneity persisted in the city, and against this background the new artistic developments were interpreted as manifestations of aesthetic movement opposition to the most revered aspects of the British character and way of life. Also, the sexual elements in the symbolism employed by The Four in their early works were clearly perceived, although, characteristically, these were not drawn attention to in any explicit manner by commentators.<sup>17</sup> Considerable concern was expressed over the corrupting effects on the moral sense of women students in the Art School, of the requirement of drawing figures from the nude. To a striking degree France and Belgium were taken to be inherently amoral, and it appeared that this was nowhere more apparent than with their artistic productions. In respect of such attitudes in Britain, many of the 'artistic' were in the forefront. A certain William Kidston, who had visited and lectured upon the International French Exhibition of 1878, was years later referring to the French school of painting as being "to a large extent meretricious and in bad taste, as well as lascivious in its character".<sup>18</sup> Significantly, Kidston was looking to South Kensington for the hope of diffusing a taste for works of art displaying a specifically English sensibility throughout the provinces, by welcoming the forwarding of selections from the Museum there. Such morally grounded 'artistic' attitudes were often focused upon the activities taking place within the country's art schools. One of the pupils of the architect Norman Shaw (another London Scot), G. C. Horsley, who was

officially connected with South Kensington, was outraged that at the National Exhibition of Student Work in 1885 the three studies of 'naked women' to be seen, the only such works on show, were all the products of female students; this showed, Horsley concluded, that in British art schools women were being "trained at the public expense to assist in the degradation of their sex".<sup>19</sup>

The popularity of an overt Scottish baronial 'style', either in architecture or in interior design (such as the interiors marketed by Wylie and Lohead) can not be adequately understood without a consideration of Victorian/Edwardian novelty 'Scottishness', that is, a *mock-Baronial stylism*, as a manifestation of the Empire in which Scotland participated. This reached its peak with the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry in 1911. On this occasion all of the main buildings manifested pseudo-baronial stylism. To engender some historical credibility there was a 'Highland Village' and an 'Auld Toon', and authentic furniture and paintings were loaned from various famous collections. A loosely-based reconstruction of Falkland Palace, employing steel frame with concrete 'shirt front', was erected as a 'Palace of History'. Relics of Scottish cultural history were absorbed into the most commercially ostentatious presentation of the Scottish-imperialist apparatus of tartanry. This meant that any anti-English significance attaching to the incorporated representation of the memory of Scotland's Auld Alliance with France (which anyway included an embarrassingly small number of exhibits) was severely curtailed.

As with the 1901 Exhibition, the newest ideas in Glasgow architecture were excluded, and the 1911 affair, on the eve of the First World War, demonstrated to what degree a banal 'nationalist' historicism mystifyingly emphasising the status and power of Scotland's landed gentry was the current vogue. Glasgow's real wealth and power in this period, however, were more realistically reflected in the neo-classical monumentalism of the soaring commercial blocks built by the Assurance companies and Banks in the city centre (Phoenix Assurance Building, St. Vincent Street, by A. D. Hislop, 1913; Northern



Insurance Building, St. Vincent Street, by J. A. Campbell, 1908; Edinburgh Life Insurance, St. Vincent Street, by J. A. Campbell, 1906; Commercial Bank, St. Enoch Square, by A. N. Paterson, 1906). The Exhibition of 1911, by which time Mackintosh was completing the Cloister Room and Chinese Room for Cranston's Ingram Street Tea Rooms, was thus as underwhelming an architectural experience as 1888 and 1901 had proven to be, with again the new directions that were being indicated here and there in the city, excluded from the grand event. The involvement of Mackintosh and the Macdonald sisters was restricted to the provision of the interior (Mackintosh) and menu card (Margaret Macdonald) for Cranston's 'White Cockade' tea room. The menu card for Cranston's Red Lion cafe was designed by Frances Macdonald. The predominating role of the Glasgow School of Art in developing the field of decorative arts, to the exclusion of industrial arts, was here forcibly demonstrated by the erection of two totally separate buildings - an Industrial Arts building and a building devoted to 'Decorative and Ecclesiastical Arts' - with the School only figuring in the latter.

With the Labour Party's representation in parliament from 1906 demonstrating forcibly where the political sympathies of the mass of the working class now lay, the Liberals were now exploiting the nationalist feeling of those Scots and Irish who had helped to consolidate the party's success through their voting in the 1910 election. In Belgium, the Belgian Workers' Party associated Art Nouveau, as a progressivist movement, with the radical aims of the working class; the renewal of society as a political imperative was placed alongside that of the renewal of art and architecture. Nothing akin to this happened in Glasgow. Newbery's notion of a committee of public taste could be argued to derive directly from his knowledge of the Belgian Public Art Society which had its first International Congress in Brussels in September 1898. Newbery the polemicist was clearly concerned with the issue of encouraging the working class of Glasgow into an enhanced appreciation of art, but his publicly expressed attempts to diffuse knowledge of art among the mass of the citizens excluded any reference to the new movement or its

significance. Diffusion thus gave way to diffuseness. One searches in vain through his populist outpourings in the local press, where the most pragmatic-sounding statements struggle to extricate themselves from a glutinous language of mystification, for something reminiscent of the brief exposition contained within the article written for The Studio on the theory underlying the unified designs on show at Turin in 1902. In the former, Scottish Art Nouveau idealism is sometimes apparent, particularly where the concern with coherent 'wholes' is given articulation, but the consistent impression remaining is of a refusal to focus upon anything as concrete as the existence of an actual avant-garde group of Art Nouveau practitioners in Glasgow at the time. But Newbery obviously had difficulty in properly understanding the essentials of Art Nouveau. In 1902 he was unsparing in his criticism of Crane for failing to keep abreast of new artistic developments. Crane, in expressing the hostility of the contemporary Arts and Crafts fraternity, had overtly lampooned the 'malady' of Art Nouveau, and it is tempting to portray Newbery as being outraged at this on behalf of the Glasgow movement. However, Newbery's attempts to define the essence of the distinctive newness of the avant-garde's approach - with the aid of a description half-way between Geddes and Muthesius - were still made from within the Arts and Crafts fold; and in his own pleadings on behalf of Arts and Crafts *vis-a-vis* manufacturing industries he replicated the denunciation of commercialism which the Arts and Crafts ideologues of the 1890's used as a weapon against Art Nouveau style when they portrayed the latter as an essentially commercially-oriented, and therefore vulgar, and despicable, fashion.

Thus Newbery, as a polemicist for the avant-garde, lacked the clarity of thought and firmness of understanding necessary for the presentation, within an easily assimilable framework, of the fundamental tenets of a movement attempting to firmly break with historicism/eclecticism and develop a new visual ideology. There can surely be no more telling evidence in this respect, of the ideological gulf between Newbery and Mackintosh, than the former's reference to J. J. Burnet's recently completed (1900)



pseudo-Baroque extension to his father's Savings Bank building in Ingram Street as "an absolute work of art, and one of the most beautiful things in Glasgow";<sup>20</sup> or his expressed admiration for Alexander Thomson's classical style Great western Terrace ("there was no feature in it that could be taken away, and no feature that could be added").<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Newbery was certainly not in agreement with Mackintosh's expressed conviction that "construction should be decorated, and not decoration constructed": his view being actually the opposite, namely, that "a designer took nature and constructed out of it ornament".<sup>22</sup>

When the experimentation, spontaneity, and free creativity that were being encouraged in the Glasgow School of Art as early as 1891 were commended in the local press, it was on the basis of the recognition that these alone could engender new ideas, and that new ideas were desperately needed in the production and marketing of desirable commodities. At the same time, the factor of new design ideas being too 'advanced' for current public taste was acknowledged. This focused the problem: in commercial terms new ideas and images were only viable so long as they were sellable in the form of new fashions. They must be 'understood' as representing the latest commodities within a commodity realm where the significance of the relationship between the old ('old fashioned') and the new was emphasised. Just enough 'newness' and the eliciting of interest and excitement were possible; too much, and there was hostile reaction. The impact that unintelligible works can have upon consciousness is not something desirable where commercial imperatives rule, and where taste and interest need to be 'manufactured', manipulated and administered.

Institutionally, the introduction of an Arts and Crafts studio into the Glasgow School of Art, and the orientation of the School's material and mental activity around handicraft production (a move undoubtedly conditioned by the percentage of women attending the School),<sup>22a</sup> whilst undeniably motivating an innovative period in decoration and the applied arts (with Glasgow School successes at continental

exhibitions appearing to consolidate the correctness of the move), led to a side-stepping of the problem of how to confront (and potentially initiate improvements in) contemporary manufacture and technology. An enclave fostering handicraft production and the utilisation of expensive luxury materials, would, in following its own interests, ultimately hinder rather than facilitate, a movement with its roots in the experience of urban modernity, and which desired the democratisation of art and design. No contradiction is to be found in Mackintosh's extolling of the creative imagination, whilst at the same time welcoming technological process for the mass production of functional art objects. This was merely to acknowledge that a radical utilisation of technology was ultimately commensurate with the Art Nouveau drive towards new meaning, which had begun by seeking meaningfulness in nature (Mackintosh was quite specific in his claim that the proof of the rightness of combining beauty with utility was to be found in the world which was external to the subject). In this way meaning derived from nature, and meaning derived from technology, were both justifiable, in opposition to the claim of the 'artistic' fraternity that meaning was necessarily inherent in the subjective dimension alone. Hence meaning was always rooted in the acknowledged nature of the *relationship* of the subjective to the objective; the dimension of mediation encompassing both human intentionality *and* the articulation of forms and forces emanating from nature. The new visual ideology, as it emerged out of experimentation, and was subsequently developed in yet other new ways (and never to a point of ultimate completion), was something beyond, not only intentionality and nature, and thus the intentionality-nature dialectic, but, crucially, was also beyond the contemporary methods being employed in its production.

The concept of the total work of art - parts organically integrated into the whole: functional content in harmony with abstract aesthetic form - when hampered by the parameters of costly interior design, could not help but prove to be a liability when anything like commercial exploitation of it was attempted. This much is clear from a



consideration of the experience of the Wiener Werkstätte. It was not for nothing therefore, that Wylie and Lohead were concerned to engender the means whereby the costs of their 'whole' rooms could be effectively reduced. But the all-embracing newness of Mackintosh's interiors, with their ascetic-aestheticism, was not something that this, or any other contemporary furnishing firm in Glasgow, wished to risk. Hence, wherever commercial exploitation of Art Nouveau modernity was attempted, it was accompanied by compromise on a number of levels. Commercialisation also rendered the style susceptible to fashion, and to production for the middle class domestic interior. The 1890's style itself was 'softened' and the *meaning* of modern style was obscured (one of Wylie and Lohead's advertisements presented what was termed 'Tudor' style, and this incorporated Glasgow Style elements). This undermined the intention behind the rational modernist interiors of Ednie and Taylor, which was to teach about a new mode of living. The enduring qualities of Mackintosh's work are to be found in the latter's autonomy from pre-given conventions, and this had crucial implications at the time for its potential marketability. Muthesius recognised that Mackintosh-Macdonald interiors were estranged from the tastes, life-styles, and purchasing power of the public which denied them resonance. But this should not be taken as the final word on the failure of the movement.

Glasgow Art Nouveau embraced the ethos of the industrial manufacture of 'artistic' products, something of the mentality of aestheticism with that orientation's desire to beautify life (even if it got no farther than the stylization of the domestic interior), many of the activities of the Arts and Crafts movement, and the practice of architecture within the public *and* the private spheres. If it "contained a kind of self-frustration within itself" (to cite Schmutzler on the subject of "the entire Art Nouveau movement"),<sup>29</sup> this was not merely the substance of its romantic nature making it shrink from the harsh reality of modern industrialisation (it was certainly susceptible to this), but also the frustration arising from the attempt to negotiate

various entrenched socio-cultural spheres - manufacturing industry, the art establishment, the University (which contained the only 'intelligentsia' to speak of in Glasgow), the architectural elite. The real acid test of its success or failure to synthesise the ideas and stylistic elements which it considered most significant, and to integrate the results of imaginative creativity into contemporary society, that is to *externalise* what Benjamin called the 'forces of interiority', would, of necessity, have been a practical and dynamic one. The partial and fragmented nature of its attempts to penetrate that society bear testimony to the power of the forces which it was opposing, and to the continuing influence of the conventions it was attempting to transform. By 1915 the very medium which had originally introduced Art Nouveau to Glasgow, namely the poster, appeared to represent the one remaining success of the venture to take art into the city: "We feel - that is, the cosmopolitan will feel - after a survey of the works, or reproductions on view, that, after all, there is a soupçon of truth in the Ruskin dictum that advertising - per poster, of course, - is nowadays the only living art".<sup>24</sup> As a 'living art' it was inhabiting an environment full of the residues of dead artistic hopes.

In 1898 MacNair left Glasgow for Liverpool. In 1910 The Bailie commented upon the 'exodus of citizens from the city'.<sup>25</sup> Two years before, E. A. Taylor had moved with Jessie King to Manchester; in 1913 the Mackintoshes left the city; in 1918 Salmon complained that Glasgow was "so ugly that the more there is the more's the pity".<sup>26</sup> The most devastating end had come, to the already dispersing Glasgow Art Nouveau movement, with the First World War.

There can surely be no more potent evidence of the erroneous nature of the claim that Mackintosh had 'declined' even before he left Glasgow (with the alleged aid of an addiction to whisky) than the work executed subsequent to his having joined the exodus. Not only did the work commissioned by W. J. Bassett-Lowke demonstrate an assured style combining Viennese Secession with proto-Art Deco geometric forms, but, as Roger



Gilcliffe perceptively noted, many of the furniture items, "with their clean lines and simple applied decoration would have been ideal for mass production".<sup>27</sup> Of all the members of the Glasgow movement, by this stage, it was Mackintosh alone who had developed the inner dynamics of the potentially flexible 'Glasgow Style' which had, after 1900, absorbed the lessons taught by the Viennese. If the old contradictions remained - advanced design but hand-crafted production employing traditional materials - this illustrates potently that architect/designers such as Mackintosh, in contrast to painters or sculptors, are never 'alone' before their work (indeed he himself elaborated on this very point), and that, as a consequence, the objects which they produce are not things in themselves (despite the most recent instances of their fetishization within 'post-modern' commodity society). The recent history of appreciation of their qualities - figurative, abstract, formal, structural or whatever - should not be allowed to obscure what they signified through their antithesis to the conventionality apparent within their contemporary contexts; and that included their failure to effect on a significant scale the aesthetic/functional changes in social living which they themselves symbolised. The contradictions signified by Mackintosh's late work for Bassett-Lowke are highly revealing in that they pull into focus the nature of the difficulties confronted by Art Nouveau practitioners concerned to go beyond the constraints imposed by a system of workshop production. Traditional construction methods employed under Bassett-Lowke's direction ensured a quality of build which contrasted with that apparent in the furniture of the Glasgow period. However, the really significant relationship is to be found between, on the one hand, Mackintosh's practice of employing artistic activity and artistic form in the 1920's for objects capable of being mass-produced, and on the other, his practice of leaving technical problems of execution to the employees of a variety of local sub-contracted firms in the Glasgow period. In both cases, a central problem has to do with construction, but it is a problem for different respective reasons: in the Glasgow

period, an urban-based, modern-type division of labour between the design stage and that of execution led to the production of poorly constructed end products. In the Northampton context of the 1920's, the problem of poor construction was being solved, but at the cost (a term to be used advisedly in this context) of a work process involving closely controlled hand-crafted execution. In both cases, the limitations being imposed upon the design-to-execution process were fundamentally of a technical nature.

In considering Glasgow Art Nouveau as a movement motivated by what Madsen specified as the central idea underlying Art Nouveau style, that is the "idea of revitalising industrial arts by a return to stricter aesthetic demands and a higher level of craftsmanship",<sup>20</sup> then consideration of the conditions of contemporary technology in Scotland for the facilitating of such a revitalising process is of cardinal importance for our analysis. The phenomena of economic depression as these affected Glasgow within the context of Britain as a whole at the turn of the century, demonstrated a new depth of the city's dependence upon the British-national economy, with the correlate of restricted investment in new technologies for mass-production. Given the contemporary context of already restricted mechanization in Britain, it is not surprising that Mackintosh's optimistic exhortations on the availability of cheaply priced, mass-produced articles of artistic quality, should have been both prospective, and directed at continental practitioners. Despite the course taken by the Wiener Werkstatte - and here, paradoxically, because of Hoffmann and Moser's worshipful attitude towards Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement, the emphasis placed upon craft production, albeit directed towards style and fashion, reflects vividly the English preoccupation with producing the best possible articles of high individual quality - the continent at the beginning of the twentieth century was noticeably moving more swiftly in the direction of mass-production and large-scale output. These were being achieved, as was the increasing standardisation of consumption patterns, through the adoption of new



techniques of manufacture and methods of distribution. In purchasing hand-crafted products, those members of the Glasgow middle class who were attracted to, and who had little difficulty in affording, such products, were appropriating, not only the artefacts of an hypostatised, 'ideal' form of production, but also symbols that emanated from a sphere of activity which appeared to be characterised by ambivalence towards commercial interests, and (illusory) distance from the 'harsh realities' of contemporary urban society. Actually, those in Glasgow who followed Newbery in encouraging handicraft production were not so much opposing commercialism as what they believed was the debased 'taste' of the masses for ugly mass-produced goods. As Talwin Morris put it, "The manufacturer callously meets the requirements of the shopkeeper, who in turn will declare with equal callousness that he is dictated to by the demands of his customer, and cannot afford to experiment".<sup>29</sup> In the struggle for artistic experimentation therefore, appeal was made to the notion of the artist as craftsman, that is, an individual who combines the charisma and creativity of the artist with the craftsman's technical knowledge of tools and their capabilities. But the greatest difficulty in real terms was experienced in attempting to move beyond individualised methods of production which had come historically to characterise the 'autonomous' artist, in order to penetrate *contemporary* production outwith the spheres of art. However, for all its inner contradictions, Glasgow Art Nouveau under Mackintosh was, from its inception, capable of firmly confronting technical developments for the mass production of merchandise; such was the depth of commitment to its ideal of the artist coming to determine the nature of the contemporary commodity form.

But in real terms there was no linking of the avant-garde with (a) a coherent critical intelligentsia capable of taking up a consistently oppositional stance; and (b) agencies capable of promoting the kind of technical developments that could facilitate the large-scale production of goods manifesting artistic qualities. Ultimately, this was a situation compounded by the economic crisis at the turn of the

century. In essence, avant-garde *theory* pre-dated a situation where artists/designers could combine with groups in possession of the kind of technological expertise necessary for the full actualization of the avant-garde endeavour. As it happened, the avant-garde were hampered by the parameters of their involvement with craft production, the only tenable 'productive' sphere open to it. Given the limited nature of this type of production - small output, high costs, restricted availability etc. - alongside the factor of the inability of the Art School to penetrate manufacturing industries, there could be no real scope for the stimulation of market demands on anything like a significant scale. The production and sale of bric-a-brac represented an attempt to avoid confrontation with modernity and the avant-garde suffered as a consequence of the lack of viable alternatives.



## **CONCLUSION.**

This thesis has addressed the issue of the social possibilities attaching to the emergence of an avant-garde in Glasgow in the eighteen-nineties. I consider the content to be relevant to present-day concerns in a number of ways. So far, the discourse on Art Nouveau in Glasgow has said nothing about the precise nature of the new aesthetics which the avant-garde was fostering. An understanding of the role which this new aesthetics played for the avant-garde is crucial for explaining how Scottish Art Nouveau was contrasted with the movements which preceded it in the late nineteenth century, and how it was related to the modern movements which it helped to inaugurate. A detailed case-study of this should be of value within the context of current theories of modernism and post-modernism, many of which appear to manifest the syndrome of what I would call cultural amnesia (lack of awareness of certain 'contemporary' positions having been already adopted in the past).

There is, as yet, no coherent *theory* of Scottish Art Nouveau. The 'orthodox' view continues to be that Mackintosh (invariably the main focus of attention) was not capable of articulating a coherent theory of architecture. In my view, this is to condemn Mackintosh for failing to match up to what commentators, usually with an overt bias towards the history of architectural *works*, have decided he ought to have been. The assumption appears to be that a unique genius, capable of producing work of greatness, should, ideally, have had a transparent understanding of every issue with a greater or lesser bearing upon his practical and conceptual experience. The absurdity of this position exposes the continuing reductionism which has plagued a subject area colonised by art history with its characteristic 'techniques' of analysis. The outcome has been that the small amount of extant written material by Mackintosh has been deemed of negligible value. I have tried to show that a great deal can be learned about the avant-garde to which Mackintosh belonged when this material is related to other contemporary material, and when the endeavour is guided by a theoretical understanding of what Art Nouveau as a widespread cultural phenomenon involved. This is a crucial



point: the inherent objectivity of Art Nouveau works themselves is reflective of forces that are always *beyond* the intellectual and technical resources of their creators. Art Nouveau artists were *struggling* with issues which affected, not only the means of the production of their creations, and the technical methods for their execution, but also the objective outcomes of their ostensibly 'subjective' innovations.

Empirically, I have demonstrated that a system of ideas existed within and through certain institutions in Glasgow, and that this helped provide the basis for a new mentality. In the sphere of architecture, the seeds of anti-historicism were being sown; the Art School was attempting to unite art with technical skills and with architecture; the University was disseminating aesthetic theory; in the press, popular discourse was describing the potential for the beautification of the environment. The avant-garde mentality which emerged out of this configuration of cultural forces was new in a number of respects. It was clearly progressivist to insist, as Mackintosh did, that architects and those who worked in the industrial production of design should, from the outset, be artists. Architecture signified the means for a transformation of values through a modern visual ideology which took the fusion of art and science as its paradigm. The concept of the general improvement of public taste was certainly not novel. By 1890, this had been a South Kensington dogma for several decades. The achievement of the new mentality was to conceive of artists leading the way in the practical sphere, and becoming involved in the task of supplying the needs of a mass society. What was perceived as fundamental was the need for cultural meaning, for *form*. In terms of the search for a meaningful visual language which could symbolise the relations of objects to their true contemporary totality, freely invented abstract forms became increasingly non-representational of the shapes of nature. The artist's estrangement from the practical was to be overcome within a new form of the unification of art and technology. The main issue here was not merely one of welcoming the large-scale manufacture of well-designed goods. The designs that industry produced were to be

free from the commercial domination which reflected economic imperatives alone. The latter was seen to be perpetuating a plethora of redundant ideas and images.

I have argued that the true significance of the views on beautiful products for living becoming independent of their designer, which Mackintosh was expressing in 1902, need to be understood in the light of the ideas on the relationship between art and the machine which were formulated by Muthesius at this time. The unadorned designs which Mackintosh was producing, involved shape and proportion made possible by a knowledge of artistic principles combined with knowledge of enhanced functionality. These were undoubtedly conceived against a vision of rational standardisation within a society that had engendered mass cultural education. From its inception, Art Nouveau had striven for a deeper perception of the potentialities of new forms. It wished to posit meaning through a synthesis of cultural forms and, crucially, through overtly synthetic (artificial) form. In the Scottish context, the static neutrality of geometric form in late Art Nouveau has its philosophical counterpart in Geddes's desire for modern technological society to manifest the static perfection of art through the unification of the world. It had come to be acknowledged that manufacturing industry was reflecting a disintegrating society through its anarchic enslavement to economic imperatives. As van de Velde insisted, the problem did not rest with technology as such, but rather with the forces of commercialism which were perpetuating dead forms.

In empirically examining the Glasgow situation in the light of a sociological perspective on Art Nouveau, I have tried to show that the encouraging of innovation and inspiration within the Art School around 1890, was symptomatic of a spirit of optimism about the potential now being offered for new designers within industrial art and architecture. It should not be considered that the provision of some 'space' for students to invent their own vision and express individual ideas was something necessarily excluded from utilitarian concerns. Radical innovation in artistic activities was strongly motivated at this time by a heightened expectation of



technological innovation. But with local manufacturers' apathy towards an incipient 'new race of designers' on the one hand, and the increasing retrenchment into handicraft teaching within the Art School after 1900 on the other, routinisation and conservatism replaced experimentation. In integrating a bloc of handicraft subjects within the School, Newbery was implementing what was, to all intents and purposes, the contemporary South Kensington requirement. The Central School, in being forced to confront limited technical expertise in Britain's manufacturing industries, was trying to regulate supply and demand in the sphere of handicrafts. In the Glasgow context, this signified nothing so much as the beginning of the end of Scottish Art Nouveau as a genuinely avant-garde movement with a project for wide-scale change in the manufacture, display, and sale of new designs. Twenty years after Mackintosh had enrolled at the School, in 1884, the range of occupations which the School was administering to in its curriculum had narrowed drastically, and the emphasis now placed on design crafts was clearly apparent.

FOOTNOTES.



## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER 1.

1. R. Schmutzler, Art Nouveau, (trans. E. Roditi), Thames and Hudson, London, 1964, p.276. Published in Germany in 1962 by Verlag Gerd Hafje, Stuttgart.
2. T. J. Clark, The Painting of Modern Life, Thames and Hudson, 1984, p.7.
3. Ibid.
4. G. Grosleri, Josef Hoffmann, Rizzoli, New York, 1985, p.14.
5. Schmutzler, p.8. See note 1 above.
6. Ibid., p.10.
7. E. Michalski, Die Entwicklungsgeschichtliche Bedeutung Des Jugendstils, Repertorium fur Kunstwissenschaft, Berlin, Vol. XLVI, 1925, p.135.
8. Schmutzler, p.12. See note 1 above.
9. Ibid.
10. W. Pater, The Renaissance, Mentor, 1959, pp. 97/98.
11. R. Schmutzler, Art Nouveau, Thames and Hudson, 1978, p. 25. Carter Ratcliff makes the point that  
  
". . . Whistler put an extreme construction on an idea common since the appearance of modern market economies: that personal experience is in some way a form of capital. He dandified the idea by insisting that the most valuable kind of experience is that of being a superior sort of person rather than of doing the sort of painstaking work, whether with a brush or some other tool, that is generally considered useful. The elements that combine to form the idea of experience as capital appear, disconnected, in John Locke's theories of property and perception".  
  
C. Ratcliff, 'Dandyism and Abstraction in a Universe Defined by Newton', Art Forum International, December, 1988, p.89. fn.
12. Schmutzler (1964), p.12. See note 1 above.
13. J. R. Taylor, The Art Nouveau Book in Britain, Paul Harris, Edinburgh, 1966, 1980, p.156.
14. P. Barker, 'Art Nouveau Riche', in P. Barker (Ed.), Arts in Society,

Fontana, 1977, p.180.

15. S. T. Madsen, Sources of Art Nouveau, Aschenhoug, Oslo, 1956, p.431.
16. Ibid.
17. Schmutzler (1964), p.260. See note 1 above.
18. Ibid., p.272.
19. R. Macleod, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Hamlyn, 1968, p.40.
20. T. H. Bryce, 28th. April, 1933. Mackintosh Archive, University of Glasgow.
21. Schmutzler (1964), p.274. See note 1 above.
22. E. R. Curtius, Marcel Proust, Berlin and Frankfurt am Main, 1952, p.86.
23. Schmutzler (1964), p.276. See note 1 above. See also Carter Ratcliff, 'Dandyism and Abstraction in a Universe Defined by Newton', Art Forum International, December, 1988:  
  
 "The dandy is entrepreneurial, but not in the right market. Accepting only the admiring glance as a token of exchange, he does no business of the proper bourgeois sort. For Charles Baudelaire, this withdrawal was no fault. Dispensing with the moral conventions that require disapproval of the dandy's aloofness, Baudelaire posed it instead as the first step toward 'establishing a new kind of aristocracy', all the more difficult to break down because established on the most precious, the most indestructible faculties, on the divine gifts that neither work nor money can give' - among them, taste so refined that its judgements cannot be exploited for moral or utilitarian purposes. 'An institution outside the law', dandyism challenges received standards with new ones calculated to discomfit, even to disrupt. The Baudelairean dandy is a recent ancestor of the 20th-century avant-gardist". (p.82, Baudelaire quotations from *La Peintre de la vie moderne*, 1868, in Oeuvres Complètes, C. Pinchois (Ed.), Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1976, 2:711, 709.
- "Dandified emptiness and immobility are means to freedom from institutions - means ironically deployed, for, as the dandy knows, only the image of such freedom is possible . . . The dandy may not exactly perceive or comprehend the institutional vision of the self as a definable, therefore manageable, function of a play of causal forces, a datum to be controlled. He senses it, however, and his inertia is in part an attempt to remove selfhood from that demeaningly manipulated play of causality. Yet the dandy never complains about the aspects of modern life that he finds so tedious; a complaint would be too obviously an effect generated by some cause". Ibid., p.86.
24. S. T. Madsen, Art Nouveau, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967, p.9.
25. P. Vergo, Art in Vienna 1898-1918: Klimt, Kokoschka, Schiele and Their Contemporaries, Phaidon, 1975, 1981, p.133.



26. W. Morris, Collected Works, London, 1915, p.352.
27. C. R. Ashbee, Craftsmanship in Competitive Industry, Campden, 1908, p.194. C. R. Ashbee, Should We Stop Teaching Art?, London, 1911, p.4.
28. S. Diaghilev, 'Moskovie Novosti', Mir Iskusstva, 1903, No.3, p.9.
29. Madsen (1956), p.150. See note 15 above.
30. Madsen (1967), p.12. See note 24 above.
31. K. Kraus, Heine und die Folgen, Auswahl aus dem Werk, Munich, 1957, p.190.
32. Madsen (1967), pp.12-13. See note 24 above. Significant examples of these periodicals throughout Europe are The Architectural Review (London, 1896), The Evergreen (Edinburgh, 1895-97), Kunst und Kunsthandwerk (Vienna, 1898-1921), Pan (Berlin, 1895-1900), La Revue (Ghent, 1891), The Savoy (London, 1896), The Studio (London, 1893), Ver Sacrum (Vienna, 1898; Leipzig, 1899-1903), Joventut (Barcelona, 1900-3), Mir Iskusstva (St. Petersburg, 1899-1904), L'Art Moderne (Brussels, 1881-1914), L'Arte (Rome, 1898-1901), La Plume (Paris, 1889-1913), The Craftsman (New York, 1901-16).
33. Glasgow Herald, 23rd. January, 1899.
34. B. Laughton, 'The British and American Contribution to *Les XX*, 1884-93', Apollo, Nov. 1967, p.372.
35. Ibid., p.379.
36. Op. Cit.
37. W. Crane, Of the Decorative Illustration of Books Old and New, London, 1896, p.228
38. H. R. Hitchcock, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Baltimore, 1958.
39. A. M. Fern, Art Nouveau, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1960.
40. Quoted in R. Melville, 'The Soft Jewellery of Art Nouveau', N. Pevsner and J. M. Richards, The Anti-Rationalists, Architectural Press, 1973, p.143.

41. Madsen (1956), p.236.
42. T. W. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986, p.192.
43. H. Bergson, Time and Free Will, London, Allen and Unwin, 1910, p.12.
44. A. Defries, The Interpreter Geddes: The Man and His Gospel, Routledge, 1927, pp.303-4.
45. P. Geddes and J. A. Thomson, The Evolution of Sex, London, Walter Scott, 1889, p.312.
46. Ibid., p.312.
47. E. Caird, Hegel, William Blackwood, 1883, pp.113-4.
48. H. von Hofmannsthal, *Der Dichter und diese Zeit*, in M. Gilbert (Ed.), Selected Essays, Oxford, 1955, p.133.
49. N. Pevsner, Pioneers of Modern Design from William Morris to Walter Gropius, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1949, p.105.
50. L. Hevesi, Acht Jahre Sezession: Marz 1897-Juni 1905, Wien, 1906 (Reprint 1984, Klagenfurt).
51. T. Howarth, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952, Second Edition 1977, p.xxxi.
52. Cited by Pevsner (1949), p.105. See note 49 above.
53. Madsen (1956), p.431.
54. Ibid., p.431.
55. D. Chapman-Huston, The Lamp of Memory, Skeffington and Son, 1949, p.125.
56. T. Morris, Concerning the Work of Margaret Macdonald, Frances Macdonald, Charles Mackintosh and Herbert McNair: An Appreciation, Unpublished Article, circa 1897, in Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery.
57. Op. Cit., p.31. See note 51 above.
58. Taylor, p.20. See note 13 above.
59. Ibid., p.58.



60. Ibid., p.19.

61. ". . . the loftiest order of art selecting only the loftiest combinations is the perpetual struggle of humanity to approach the gods. The great painter or architect embodies what is possible to man it is true - but what is not common to mankind" (Paper on Architecture, 1893).

"Art is the flower - Life is the green leaf. Let every artist strive to make his flower a beautiful living thing - something that will convince the world that there may be - there are - things more precious - more beautiful - more lasting than life. But to do this you must offer real living - beautifully coloured flowers - flowers that grow from but above the green leaf - flowers that are not dead - are not dying - not artificial - real flowers springing from your own soul - not even cut flowers - you must offer the flowers of the art that is in you - the symbols of all that is noble - and beautiful - and inspiring - flowers that will often change a colourless cheerless life - into an animated thoughtful thing" (Seemliness, 1902). Mackintosh Archive, University of Glasgow.

62. Evening Times, 5th, February, 1895.

63. M. Sturrock Newbery, The Costume Society of Scotland, Bulletin 5, 1970.

64. Op. Cit.

64a. G. Naylor, The Arts and Crafts Movement: a Study of its Sources, Ideals and Influence on Design Theory, Studio Vista, London, 1971, p.169.

65. Ibid., p.124.

66. Taylor, p.66. See note 13 above.

67. Op. Cit., p.240. See note 1 above.

68. Ibid., p.240.

69. Ibid., p.240.

70. Ibid., p.240. An anonymous contributor to The Scotsman in 1979 wrongly attributed the Glasgow Style rose motif to Talwin Morris :

"His (Talwin Morris') paper ('Black and White' in London) featured the work of Charles Ricketts and Walter Crane and his own tautly wrought designs often headed articles. The Glasgow 'rose' first blossomed on one of his Blackie's book covers in 1893, and his interest and influence would have certainly helped Mackintosh's circle out of the Celtic other-world of love-lost spooks into the mature work illustrated in his book". The Scotsman, 27th, October, 1979.

Morris's earliest designs for Blackie's certainly used stylized floral motifs (along with whiplash lines) but he appears not to have incorporated the

distinctive 'rose' until after he purchased the Mackintosh watercolour panel *Part seen, imagined part* (which includes this motif) at the 1897 Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society exhibition. Gerald Cinamon remarks of one of Morris's first Blackie designs in 1894 that "The binding is covered in *art nouveau* whiplash lines. On the front cover is a decorated panel and lettering not unrepresentative of fussier gothic design of an earlier decade". 'Talwin Morris, Blackie and the Glasgow Style', The Private Library, Volume 10:1, Spring, 1987, p.7.

71. H. Muthesius, 'Mackintosh's Art Principles', Haus Eines Kunstfreundes, Darmstadt, 1902.
72. D. Chapman-Huston, Dreamers in the Moon, Typescript in Mackintosh Archive (MA), University of Glasgow. Chapman-Huston was such an ardent admirer of Rossetti that his autobiography The Lamp of Memory (1949) derives its title from a Rossetti sonnet.
73. Macleod, p.33. See note 19 above.
74. Ibid., p.31.
75. J. Sturrock Newbery, 'A Memory of Mackintosh', MA.
76. Ibid.
77. Glasgow Herald circa 1907, 'Glasgow Artists in Vienna: Kunstschau Exhibition', cutting in Glasgow School of Art Library.
78. M. Battersby, The World of Art Nouveau, London, Arlington, 1968, p.126.
79. See note 24 above.
80. Ibid.
81. H. van de Velde, Renaissance in Kunstgewerbe, Berlin, *Neue Ausgabe*, 1901, p.63.
82. Op. Cit.
83. E. Godoli, 'To the Limits of a Language: Wagner, Olbrich, Hoffmann', in F. Russell (Ed.), Art Nouveau Architecture. Academy, 1979, p.244.
84. Ibid., p.244.



95. Cited by E. Sekler in Josef Hoffmann, Princeton University Press, 1985, p.54.  
Translated by the author. (German version 1978).
96. Cited by P. Selz in P. Selz and M. Constantine, Art Nouveau, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1959, p.20.
97. Godoli, p.244. See note 83 above.
98. For an account of Benjamin's distinctions between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* and of the different types of memory possible with the continuity embodied within *Erfahrung* see I. Wohlfarth, 'On the Messianic Structure of Walter Benjamin's Last Reflections', Glyph, No.3, 1978, pp.148-212.
99. Schmutzler (1978), p.212. See note 11 above.
90. Schmutzler (1964), p.239. See note 1 above.
91. Ibid., p.239.
92. Macleod, p.43. See note 19 above.
93. Ibid., p.38.
94. Howarth expresses the view that ". . . Miss Cranston raised the tea-room business in Glasow from the level of mundane commercialism to that of a profession, if not a fine art". (p.123) Yet with the flotation of Cranston's Tea Rooms Limited in 1905 the Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular made no reference to Miss Cranston's role: "Mr. Stuart Cranston's name as an expert tea-taster has long since made his Tea Saloons world-famous. The success attending his various enterprises has been phenomenal". GAPC, Tuesday 31st. October, 1905.
95. Op. Cit., p.267.
96. Ibid., p.267.
97. Ibid., p.268.
98. Vergo, p.64. See note 25 above.
99. Op. Cit., p.269.
100. Ibid., p.270.

101. Godoli, p.244. See note 83 above.
102. Sekler, p.40. See note 85 above.
103. Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration, Vol. III, 1898. pp.197-219.
104. Special number of The Art Journal, edited by D. Croal Thomson, London, 1901, p.112.
105. The Studio, XXI, 1900, p.114.
106. Cited by Sekler, p.36. See note 85 above.
107. The Studio, XXII, 1901, p.261 ff.
108. Op. Cit., p.40. See note 85 above.
- 108a. G. Daniel, 'Decorative Arts', in Selz and Constantine, p.102. See note 86 above.
109. 'An Interview with Mr. C.F.A. Voysey', The Studio, Vol.1, 1893, p.233.
110. Glasgow Herald, 2nd. November, 1911. My emphasis.
111. Ibid.
112. P. Selz, Introduction to Art Nouveau, p.9. See note 86 above.
113. Bergson, p.17. See note 43 above. Emphases in original.
114. Lecture delivered before the National Association for the Advancement of Art, 1889: Transaction of the Art Congress, Edinburgh, 1889, pp.202-220.
- 114a. H. van de Velde, 'Prinzipelle Erklärung', Kunstgewerbliche Laienpredigten, Leipzig, Hermann Seemann, 1902, p.188.
115. Op. Cit.: "It is imagination which has taught man the moral implication of colour, line, sounds and scents. At the beginning of the world it created analogy and metaphor".
116. P. Gauguin to his friend Schuffenecker, 14th. August, 1888; quoted in J. Rewald, Post-Impressionism from Van Gogh to Gauguin, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1956, p.196. Revised edition, London, 1978.
117. F. Orton and G. Pollock, '*Les Donnees Bretonnantes: La Prairie de la Representation*', Art History, Vol. 3, No. 3, September, 1980. E. Verhaeren, 'Le



- Salon des Independants', La Nation, reprinted in L'Art Moderne, 5th. April, 1891.
118. Ibid.
119. Selz, p.54. See note 86 above.
120. Khnopff was invited by the art critic and novelist Joseph Peladan to exhibit with the latter's *Ordre de la Rose + Croix Catholique du Temple et du Graal* in 1892, and he subsequently became a regular contributor, as did Jean Delville, the symbolist artist invited by Newbery to teach Painting at the Glasgow School of Art. In the studio of his house on the *Avenue de Course* (no longer extant), Khnopff had an altar dedicated to Hypnos upon which was inscribed '*on n'a que soi*' (one has but oneself). This sported lapis lazuli blue glass by Tiffany. Hoffmann may have played some role in the design of this house which was built in 1900. The interior was reminiscent of Hoffmann's manner and Khnopff was in Vienna around 1898, at which time he could have become personally acquainted with Hoffmann.
121. The Studio, Vol. XI, 1897, p.227.
122. Ibid., p.228.
123. T. Morris, Concerning the Work of Margaret Macdonald, Frances Macdonald, Charles Mackintosh and Herbert McNair: An Appreciation, Unpublished Article, circa 1897, in Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow.
124. C. E. Schorske, 'MOMA's Vienna', New York Review of Books, Vol. XXXIII, No. 14, September, 1986.
125. Howarth, p.145. See note 51 above.
126. N. Pevsner, 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh', Il Baccano, Milan, 1950. See also N. Pevsner, 'Studies in Art, Architecture and Design', Thames and Hudson, 1968, where it is claimed that Mackintosh "discovered the necessity and the possibilities of abstract art in his wall-panels several years before Picasso and Kandinsky had begun their efforts to liberate art from nature, and he discovered abstract metal sculpture of a transparency in which outer and inner, space are made to merge when

Moholy Nagy was only eleven, and Alexander Calder five". (p.175)

127. Howarth, p.27. See note 51 above.

128. Ibid., p.30.

129. Ibid., p.31. My emphasis.

130. Ibid., p.31.

131. G. Gresleri, Josef Hoffmann, Rizzoli, New York, 1985. Gresleri writes of the

"unreal Celtic dream of Lethaby's *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, a book whose influence on the atmosphere surrounding *Ver Sacrum* makes it easy to grasp how much the Viennese movement owed to the ornate robe in which William Morris dressed his wife in the painting of her as Queen Guinevere . . . But the Hohe Warte (a pleasant suburb of Vienna) on the edge of the Wiener Wald was not the place where Queen Guinevere and her famous robe would be embodied; the space and form of her boudoir were still too orthodox. It was in the magic white, lilac, and rose interior created by Charles Rennie Mackintosh for Fritz Warndorfer that the seeds of a subtle subversion of the Viennese aristocracy were first planted".

(Op. Cit. pp.10-11).

132. C. R. Mackintosh, Paper on Architecture, 1893, MA.

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid. At the first exhibition of *La Libre Ésthetique*, in February

1894 in Brussels, van de Velde delivered his lecture *L'Art Futur* in which he

stressed the relationship between all of the arts and the potentiality of a

transformation of the environment for a healthier form of contemporary living. In

the first issue of *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* (May 1897) Alexander Koch

insisted that all artists, architects, sculptors, painters, technical artists,

should be integrated, through their work, towards a 'larger whole'.

135. Ibid.

136. C. R. Mackintosh, Lecture delivered to a literary society, circa 1905, MA.

137. C. Baudelaire, '*Le Peintre de la vie Moderne*' (1868), in *Oeuvres Complètes*, C.

Pichois (Ed.), Paris, Editions Gallimard, 1976, p.712.



## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER 2.

1. P. Bürger, Theory of the Avant-Garde, 2nd. edition, 1980, English translation by M. Shaw, Foreword by J. Schulte-Sasse, Manchester University Press, Minneapolis, 1984, pp.95/96.
2. Ibid., p.xxxvii.
3. Ibid., p.50.
4. Ibid., p.xxxviii.
5. Ibid., p.46.
6. Ibid., p.22.
7. Ibid., p.90.
8. Ibid., p.54.
9. Ibid., p.50.
10. Ibid., p.41.
11. Ibid., pp.49/50.
12. Ibid., p.34. My emphasis.
- 12a. Ibid., p.19. My emphasis.
- 12b. Ibid., p.18.
13. J. Wolff, Aesthetics and the Sociology of Art, Allen and Unwin, 1983, p.29.
14. Bürger, p.70. See note 1 above.
15. Ibid., p.56.
16. Ibid., p.56.
17. Ibid., p.70.
18. Ibid., pp.72/73.
19. Ibid., p.72.
20. Ibid., p.80.
21. Ibid., p.80.

22. Ibid., p.79.
23. Ibid., p.82.
24. Ibid., p.40.
25. W. Benjamin, 'Paris: The Capital of the Nineteenth Century', in Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism, H. Zohn (trans.), IV - Louis Philippe or the Interior, New Left Books, 1973, p.168.
- 25a. Ibid., p.168.
26. W. Benjamin, Das Passagen-Werk, R. Tiedemann (Ed.), Frankfurt, 1982, p.232.
27. Ibid., p.236.
28. Paris, p.168. See note 25 above.
29. S. T. Madsen, Sources of Art Nouveau, R. Christophersen (trans.), H. Aschehoug, Oslo, 1956, p.222.
30. E. Grasset, 'L'Architecture Moderne jugée par Eugène Grasset', L'Emulation, Vol. XXI, 1896, p.59.
31. Madsen, p.229. My emphasis. See note 29 above.
32. W. Benjamin, 'Central Park', L. Spencer and M. Harrington (trans.), in New German Critique, No.34, Winter, 1985, p.33.
33. Ibid., p.34.
34. Ibid., p.34.
35. Ibid. p.34.
36. Ibid., p.42.
- 36a. M. Mikhaylov, 'Ist zu Wienerische', Iskusstvo Stroitel' noe i Dekorativnoe, 1903, p. 18.
37. Aesthetics and Politics, R. Taylor (trans. editor), Verso, 1980, p.118.
38. T. W. Adorno, letter to Benjamin, 2nd. August, 1935, in ibid., p.118.
39. Ibid., p.118.
40. T. W. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, C. Lenhardt (trans.), G. Adorno and R. Tiedemann



(eds.), Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984, p.11.

41. Ibid., p.11.
42. Ibid., p.12.
43. Ibid., p.11.
44. Ibid., p.23.
45. Ibid., p.169.
46. Ibid., p.169.
47. Ibid., p.170.
48. Ibid., p.170.
49. Ibid., p.172.
50. Aesthetics and Politics, p.119. See note 37 above.
51. Aesthetic Theory, p.336. See note 40 above.
52. Ibid., p.336.
53. Ibid., pp.336/337.
54. Ibid., p.442. Bürger states that "aesthetic experience is the positive side of that process by which the social subsystem 'art' defines itself as a distinct sphere. Its negative side is the artist's loss of any social function" (p.33).
55. Aesthetic Theory, p.339. See note 40 above.
56. Ibid., p.381.
57. T. W. Adorno, 'Functionalism Today', J. O. Newman and J. H. Smith (trans.), Oppositions, 17, 1979, p.34. Originally a lecture presented to the Deutsche Werkbund, Berlin, 23rd, October, 1965.
58. A. Loos, 'Ornament and Crime' (1898), in U. Conrads Programmes and Manifestoes on 20th. Century Architecture, MIT Press, 1970. A. Loos, 'Architecture', in T. Benton, C. Benton and D. Sharp (eds.) Form and Function, London, Grenada, Open University, 1975, p.45.
59. A. Loos, 'Furniture for Sitting', Spoken into the Void, H. Damisch (trans.),

- Cambridge, MIT Press, 1981, p.29.
60. A. Loos, Architecture. See note 58 above.
61. C. R. Mackintosh, Lecture Delivered to a Glasgow Literary Society, circa 1905  
Hunterian Archive, University of Glasgow.
62. T. Morris, Concerning the Work of Margaret Macdonald, Frances Macdonald, Charles Mackintosh and Herbert McNair: An Appreciation, circa 1897, Glasgow Art Gallery and  
Museum Archive.
63. Ibid., my emphasis.
64. C. E. Schorske, 'MOMA's Vienna', New York Review of Books, Vol. XXXIII, No. 14,  
25th, September, 1986.
65. C. E. Schorske, Ein-de-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture, Alfred A. Knopf, New  
York, 1980, p.209.
66. Ibid., p.84.
67. Ibid., p.85.
68. Ibid., p.87.
69. A. Loos, 'Die Potemkinische Stadt', Ver Sacrum, I, 1898, pp.15-17.
70. Schorske, p.73. See note 65 above.
71. Ibid., p.271.
72. Ibid., p.325.
73. Ibid., p.325.
74. Ibid., p.325.
75. MOMA's Vienna. See note 64 above.
76. 'Glasgow Artists in Vienna: Kunstschau Exhibition', Glasgow Herald (date unknown),  
cutting in Glasgow School of Art Library.
77. Ein-de-Siecle Vienna, p.362. See note 65 above.
78. Ibid., p.363.
79. R. Schmutzler, Art Nouveau, Thames and Hudson, 1978, p.214.



80. Burger, p.63. See note 1 above.

81. D. Sternberger, '*Jugendstil, Begriff und Physiognomie*', *Die Neue Rundschau*, Berlin, Vol. XLV, September, 1934, No. 9, p.258.

82. F. Whitford, *Bauhaus*, Thames and Hudson, 1984, p.26.

83. *Ibid.*, p.26.

84. When Philipp Häusler, a graduate of the Vienna *Kunstgewerberschule*, became 'Chief of the General Management Directorate responsible for the central administration of all enterprises' in 1920, at Hoffmann's invitation - initially for the purpose of reorganisation - he attempted to establish a viable economic basis for the Wiener Werkstätte. Under Häusler, who had been chosen by Hoffmann to be a collaborator in his own drawing office, the WW was to provide designs and large firms were to carry them out, under contract, for a percentage of the profits. Thus artists would be designing specifically for industrial production. Häusler's numerous connections with industry, a result of his own previous activities in supplying designs to workshops and industrial enterprises, facilitated the negotiation of a series of licensing agreements with industries, e.g. Wolfram made stencils for mural decorations; Flammersheim and Steinmann made wallpapers; Berndorf manufactured cutlery. However, a quarrel with Hoffmann developed which, in conjunction with other contributory factors, ultimately led to Häusler being sacked; the latter's working towards a broadening of the base of the WW and for a degree of standardisation of output conflicted with Hoffmann's predilection for uniqueness. "It had proved possible", wrote Häusler of the WW's situation in the strained economic circumstances of the 1920's,

"after months of negotiations, to conclude with Arthur Krupp at Berndorf an industrial working contract of the kind which I had introduced to the WW when it became clear to me that this was the only way in which its future survival could be secured - and this particular contract earned millions for the WW. At this memorable moment, I asked Hoffmann: 'so you think it's wrong for us to work with Berndorf'? And his historic answer was: 'when our things are on view in every shop in the Mariahilferstrasse', and he pointed an accusing arm in that direction, 'it will be all up with us'". Letter to Carla Oster-Solm, 31st. October, 1953,

cited in W. J. Schweiger, Wiener Werkstätte: Design in Vienna 1903-1932, London, Thames and Hudson, 1984.



## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER 3.

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2. Asserted by van de Velde in 1897. Cited by F. Whitford in Bauhaus, Thames and Hudson, 1984, p.23.
3. 'Extracts', p.148. See note 1 above.
4. B. Colt de Wolf, 'Municipal Art in Belgium', The Art Journal, 1901.
5. Ibid.
6. Alexander Paterson, who was an ardent admirer of Viollet-le-duc's attempts to rationalise domestic architecture, described how the principles of heredity continued markedly in art "as in every department of human life". Architects took from the general evolution of nature, claimed Paterson, a concern over which (architectural) type should be followed in going beyond "the feverish borrowing from every foreign source which has marked recent years". This process of selection had become, to some extent, conscious and individual, and it involved the judicious employment of knowledge of past styles. As did Mackintosh, Paterson applauded the apparent contemporary "healthier return to the study of national type" as representing the evolutionary outcome of "the slow growth of the national styles during the earlier centuries of development". Lecture on 'Domestic Architecture' in Glasgow Corporation Galleries for Glasgow School of Art; Architectural Section. Reproduced in Glasgow Property Circular, Tues. 3rd. Dec., 1895.
7. The Scotsman, 14th. Jan. 1908.
8. 'The Principles of Ornament and Decoration', lecture in the Technical Institute, Dundee, circa 1894. Cutting in Newbery Scrapbook (NS), Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
9. W. Gropius, Concept and Development of the State Bauhaus, 1924.

10. 'Belgian Artists in England', The Studio, Vol. 64, 1914, p.200.
11. J. Delville, The New Mission of Art: A Study of Idealism in Art, F. Colmer (trans.), London, Francis Griffiths, 1910, p.125.
12. Cutting from unknown newspaper in NS, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
13. The Scotsman, 5th. Feb. 1889.
14. Address at 52nd. Annual Meeting of Glasgow School of Art, 1895. Reproduced in Annual Report, 1896.
15. R. Billcliffe, The Glasgow Boys: The Glasgow School of Painting 1875-1895, John Murray, 1985, p.300.
16. F. Newbery, Introduction to D. Martin, The Glasgow School of Painting, G. Bell and Sons, 1897, p.xv.
17. Ibid., p.xx.
18. Ibid., pp.xii-xiv.
19. P. Burger, Theory of the Avant Garde, M. Shaw (trans.), Manchester University Press, 1984, p.41.
20. P. Geddes, 'The Sociology of Autumn', The Evergreen : A Northern Seasonal, 1895.
21. P. Geddes, John Ruskin, Economist, Edinburgh, William Brown, 1884.
22. F. Newbery, 'How to Popularise Our Art Galleries and Museums', two articles for Glasgow Evening News, 6th. December, 1905. The influence of pre-Raphaelitism on Glasgow works is apparent with the Rossetti-like figures in David Gauld's illustrations for 'Lays of Middle Age and Other Poems' (1889). As Billcliffe points out, "the first imaginative works which Mackintosh produced, a series of watercolours beginning in 1892, draw quite clearly on Gauld's interpretation of Pre-Raphaelite imagery" (Op. Cit., p.266.
23. Ibid.
24. Glasgow Herald, Mon. 20th. Dec. 1909.
25. J. H. Muir, Glasgow in 1901, W. Hodge, 1901.



26. Ibid., pp.24-25.
27. T. J. Clark, The Painting of Modern Life, Thames and Hudson, 1985, p.147.
28. Muir, p.30. See note 25 above.
29. Ibid., p.29.
30. Ibid., pp.30-31.
31. Ibid., p.21.
32. Op. Cit., p.147.
33. Op. Cit., p.202.
34. F. Fénéon, 'L'Exposition Volpini', La Cravache, 6th. July, 1889. Reprinted in F. Cachin (Ed.), Félix Fénéon Au-Dela de L'Impressionisme, Paris, 1966, p.110.
35. Hornel's painting 'Pigs in a Wood' (1887) can be taken as marking the beginning of the Glasgow School's preoccupation with colour, pattern and design, here presented in a composition without a horizon or other perspective-indicating landmarks. The ornamental predisposition is emphasised by the treatment of varying textures in the depiction of trees, leaves, shrubs, undergrowth. With increased awareness of the function required of materials, the properties of materials, and of methods and forms of execution emerging with Art Nouveau, natural forms such as leaves and shrubs, in being treated more and more in a consciously decorative manner, would become increasingly abstracted, symbolic, and ultimately metamorphosed.
36. Billcliffe, p.226. See note 15.
37. Ibid., p.137.
38. Ibid., p.39.
39. Glasgow Herald, 16th. Dec. 1909.
40. 'The Exhibition: My First Visit', The Bailie, 23rd. Oct. 1901.
41. Glasgow Herald, March, 1888.
42. Op. Cit., 5th. Oct. 1890, p.565.
43. Quiz, 2nd. Nov. 1888.

44. Op. Cit., p.30. Over 20 years later, this decorative approach continued to characterise the work of Hornel and Henry. A Glasgow critic commented in 1912 on how
- "Mr. E. A. Hornel, though reiterative, continues boldly and adroitly to render little maids who sit by lily ponds, whereon sail stately swans. This artist excels less in general design than in patterning, and the way he 'gets' his effects is interesting. Essentially decorative in aim, too, is Mr. George Henry's 'By the Lake', in which he dispenses with labour to an imitative end in favour of broad harmonies of colour". (Glasgow Herald, Feb. 1912).
45. 'The Glasgow School in America', article in Glasgow Evening Times, 14th. Nov. 1895.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. H. Obrist, 'Wozu uber Kunst Schreiben?', Dekorative Kunst, Vol. 5, 1900, p.190.
49. 'The Glasgow School in America'. See note 45 above.
50. Ibid.
51. A. Mackworth, 'The Relation of the Easel Picture to Decorative Art', The Art Journal, 1901.
52. L. F. Day, 'Decorative and Industrial Art at the Glasgow Exhibition: Second Notice', The Art Journal, 1901, p.241.
53. C. Cooke, 'Fedor Osipovich Shekhtel: An Architect and His Clients in Turn-of-the-Century Moscow', Annals of the Architectural Association School of Architecture, No.5. C. Cooke, 'Shekhtel in Kelvingrove and Mackintosh on the Petrovka', Scottish Slavonic Review, No.10, 1988.
54. E. A. Taylor, 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh: A Neglected Genius', The Studio, Vol. CV, p.348.
55. H. Muthesius, 'The Glasgow Art Movement', Dekorative Kunst, Vol. 9, 1902, p.194.
56. In Das Englische Haus Muthesius described how, for the Scottish movement, the design of the room was but the beginning for the design of the whole house. That is to say, interior design and exterior architecture were organically connected



through this work.

57. Muthesius, p.194. See note 55 above.
58. Ibid., p.198.
59. Ibid., p.198.
60. Ibid., p.215.
61. H. Muthesius, '*Die Ausstellung der Wiener Secession*', *Dekorative Kunst*, Vol. 7, 1901, p.180.
62. Ibid., p.181.
63. Evening Times, 15th. Dec. 1909.
64. P. Jullian, *Dreamers of Decadence*, R. Baldick (Trans.), New York, Praeger, 1971, p.208.
65. 'Glasgow - A Model Municipality', *Fortnightly Review*, Vol. 63, 1895, p.608.
66. Op. Cit., p.222.
67. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular (GAPC), 6th. Dec. 1898.
68. GAPC, 22nd. August 1899.
69. *Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest*, Scottish Development Department, 1985.
70. T. Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952/1977, p.256.
71. Ibid., p.257/
72. G. Larner and C. Larner, *The Glasgow Style*, Paul Harris, 1979, p.3. This 'flowering' of the decorative arts in Glasgow had a restricted life-span and it cannot really be said to have lasted much beyond 1910. Indeed 'late' Glasgow Style, of immediately before and after the 1914-18 War, is restricted to embroideries (the pupils of Jessie Newbery and Ann MacBeth), stained glass, hand-painted pottery (Jessie Keppie, Elizabeth Watts), decorative watercolours (Annie French, Cecile Walton, Meg Wright), book illustration, and beaten metal mirror

frames and wall sconces (Margaret Gilmour, Mary B. Henderson): in short, primarily two-dimensional work, by then stylistically undistinctive.

73. Ibid., p.1.

74. Ibid., p.20.

75. 'Stylish Glasgow', The Scotsman, 27th. Oct. 1979.

76. The Glasgow Style 1890-1920, Department of Decorative Art, Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1984, p.6.

77. Ibid., pp.6-8.

78. Ibid., p.36.

78a. 'Die Schottische Kunstler', Dekorative Kunst, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1899, p.49.

79. A. Gomme and D. Walker, Architecture of Glasgow, Lund Humphries, 1968, p.215.

80. K. B. Hiesinger, Art Nouveau in Munich: Masters of Jugendstil, Prestel/Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1988, p.23.

81. J. A. Lux, Das Neue Kunstgewerbe in Deutschland, Leipzig, 1908, p.144.

82. H. Muthesius, 'Die Kunst Richard Riemerschmid', Die Kunst, Vol. 10, 1904.

83. Ibid., p.283.

84. L. Hevesi, Altkunst - Neukunst: Wien 1894-1908, Vienna 1908, p.220.

85. Cited by P. Jullian, p.85. See note 64 above.

86. H. Muthesius, The English House, J. Seligman (Trans.), New York, Rizzoli, p.51.

87. Ibid., p.51.

88. H. Muthesius, 'Neues Ornament und Neue Kunst', Die Kunst, Vol. 4, 1901, p.350.

89. Dekorative Kunst, Vol. 9, 1902, p.215.

90. J. Kinchin, 'The Wylie and Lohead Style', 'Aspects of British Design 1870-1930', Journal of the Decorative Arts Society, No. 9, 1985, p.9.

91. Ibid., pp.9-10.

92. Op. Cit., p.262. See note 70 above.

93. B. Rauecker, Das Kunstgewerbe in Munchen, Stuttgart, 1911, p.18. Cited by



Hiesinger, p.22. See note 80 above.

94. H. Muthesius, 'Art and Machine', *Dekorative Kunst*, Vol. 9, 1902, p.141.

95. Cited by G. Bollenbeck, '*Stilinflation und Einheitsstil*', *Stil*, H. U. Gumbrecht and K. L. Pfeiffer (Eds.), Suhrkamp, 1986, p.226.

## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER 4.

1. Referred to in a letter from Philip Mairet to W. A. Murray Grigor, 2nd. March 1967, Mackintosh Archive (MA), University of Glasgow.
2. T. Howarth, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952, p.255.
3. Letter by Hoffmann sent by Max Welz to the members of the *Wiener Werkbund* in March 1933 on the occasion of *Werkbund* events, reproduced in E. Sekler, Josef Hoffmann, Princeton University Press, 1985, p.498 (Appendix 15).
4. Cutting from unidentified newspaper in Francis Newbery's personal press cutting-book, Mitchell Library, Glasgow. My emphasis.
5. R. Macleod, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Hamlyn, 1968, p.154.
6. The Bailie, 1918. Cited by A. Gomme and D. Walker, Architecture of Glasgow, Lund Humphries, 1968, p.277.
7. The Studio, Vol. XXXIII, 1904, p.222.
8. R. Billcliffe, Mackintosh's Furniture, Lutterworth Press, 1984, p.18.
9. M. H. Bailie Scott, 'On the Characteristics of Mr. C. F. A. Voysey's Architecture', The Studio, Vol. XLII, No. 175, October, 1907. In his Houses and Gardens, George Newnes, London, 1906, Scott has this to say on the subject of exhibition rooms for firms in Berlin and Dresden: "It appears to be a growing custom with the principal furniture firms in Germany to invite representative architects to contribute to such periodical exhibitions, *and in these it has been Mr Mackintosh and myself who have represented the British section*". My emphasis, pp.235/6
10. C. R. Mackintosh, Literary Society Lecture (LS) in MA.
11. Ibid.
12. C. R. Mackintosh, Critique of Ruskin's 'Stones of Venice' (RSV) in MA.



13. B. Bernard, Mackintosh Architecture, Academy, 1977/ 1984, p.9. She appropriates this assertion verbatim from Howarth (p. 7). See note 2 above.
14. "Wagner war mit Mackintosh und van de Velde persönlich bekannt"; H. Geretsegger und M. Peinter, Otto Wagner 1841-1918: Unbegrenzte Grossstadt Beginn der Modernen Architektur, Residenz Verlag, Salzburg, 1964/ DTV, 1980, p.24. See also C. M. Nebhay, Ver Sacrum 1893-1903, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979, p.194.
15. O. Wagner, Moderne Architektur, Vienna, 1895.
16. G. Semper, Kleine Schriften, Berlin 1884.
17. Op. Cit.
18. LS.
19. Eugene Grasset, the French symbolist painter and decorative artist who adopted the Art Nouveau style in the 1890's, asserted that "Art has been born precisely from the need *To clothe the purely useful (sic) which is always repugnant and horrible*". 'L'Architecture Moderne Jugée par Eugene Grasset', L'Emulation, Brussels, Vol. XXI, 1896, p. 59. Emphasis in original. Grasset was interviewed in 1904 by Newbery and three other of the governors of the Glasgow School of Art in their search for a new Professor of Design and Decorative Art. Whatever the reasons, he was not appointed.
20. LS.
21. LS. "There never was more flagrant nor impertinent folly than the smallest portion of ornament in anything concerned with railroads or near them". J. Ruskin, The Seven Lamps of Architecture, London, New York, 1907 edition, p.122. "Will a single traveller be willing to pay an increased fare to the South Western, because the columns are covered with patterns from Niniveh?" Ibid, p.129.
22. C. R. Mackintosh, Paper on Architecture (PA) in MA.
23. G. Simmel, 'Space and the Spacial Structures of Society', Soziologie, 5th. edition, Duncker and Humblot, Berlin, 1968.

24. LS.
25. C. J. Carter (Ed.), Art, Design and the Quality of Life in Turn of the Century Scotland (1890-1910), Proceedings of Symposium Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee, 1985, p.63.
26. RSV. My emphasis.
27. Glasgow Herald, 16th, December, 1909.
28. C. R. Mackintosh, Scottish Baronial Architecture (SBA) in MA.
29. LS.
30. Dekorative Kunst, VII, 1ff. My emphasis.
31. Cited by A. Gresleri, Josef Hoffmann, Rizzoli, New York, 1985, p.21.
32. LS.
33. Gresleri, p.9. See note 31 above.
34. Sekler, p.19. See note 3 above.
35. C. R. Mackintosh, Elizabethan Architecture (EA) in MA.
36. C. R. Mackintosh, Diary from Italian Tour (DAT) in MA.
37. LS.
38. Ibid.
39. Annual Prize Distribution, Council of R.I.B.A., 1905. Cutting from unspecified newspaper, Glasgow School of Art Library.
40. I. Kant, Critique of Judgement, Oxford University Press, 1952, p.50.  
Emphasis in original.
41. J. Wolff, Aesthetics and the Sociology of Art, Allen and Unwin, 1983.
42. LS. My emphasis.
43. Ibid. My emphasis.
44. A. Gerard, Essay on Taste, London, 1759, p.94.
45. D. Hume, Philosophical Works, T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (Eds.), London, 1875.  
Section I, IV, p.172.



46. D. Hume, An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Collier Books, 1962, p.162.

47. C. R. Mackintosh, Seenliness in MA.

48. LS.

49. Ibid. Edward Caird, when writing on Kant's aesthetics, emphasised that, in the perception of beautiful forms, inventiveness was apprehended as being *combined with* underlying principles, but that the latter were not easily specifiable:

" . . . we do not ascribe beauty to a rectangular figure, such as a geometrical diagram, which thrusts upon us a definite conception of the law of its construction, and so brings the imagination under visible restraint. *We recognise beauty only in forms in which there is an appearance of free play, and yet a secret order with which we are pleased though we cannot define it*". (The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant, Vol. 2, Glasgow, James Maclehose and Sons, 1889, p.401. My emphases).

It will be seen, in considering the description above, that, from Mackintosh's point of view, the 'laws' of construction for true architecture were to be *manifested through* this hitherto 'secret' order, the latter acknowledged by Caird as being an essential component of aesthetic responses.

50. H. Meller, Patrick Geddes and City Development in Scotland, in C. J. Carter (Ed.),

See note 25 above.

51. Letter to W. A. Murray Grigor, 2nd. March, 1967 in MA. Mairet writes that when

Geddes returned from India he

"at once busied himself about finding work for the architects who were disemployed through the war. This project, very successful, in which the architectural societies cooperated, did not provide employment for Mackintosh, however, and Geddes took a personal interest in his case; doubtless because he had previous knowledge of his work though I don't know what personal contacts there may have been between them".

52. Meller, p.27. See note 25 above.

53. Glasgow Herald, 1st. March, 1901.

54. P. Geddes, An Analysis of the Principles of Economics, Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, XII, 1884. Reprinted by Williams and Norgate, London, 1885.

55. Ibid.

56. P. Boardman, The Worlds of Patrick Geddes, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, p.64.
57. P. Geddes, John Ruskin Economist, Edinburgh, W. Brown, 1884. The young Geddes corresponded with Ruskin between 1877 and 1885.
58. P. Geddes, Edinburgh Summer Meeting, Prospectus, 1895.
59. Boardman, 1978, p.129. See note 73 above.
60. P. Geddes and J. A. Thomson, The Evolution of Sex, London, Walter Scott, 1889, p.314.
61. Ibid., p.314.
62. P. Geddes, Lecture Life and Thought, August, 1895, 9th. Summer Meeting, Edinburgh.
63. A. Defries, The Interpreter Geddes: The Man and his Gospel, London, George Routledge, 1927, p.137.
64. Ibid., p.137. My emphasis.
65. Ibid., p.137.
66. Ibid., p.135.
67. Op. Cit. My emphasis.
68. PA. My emphasis.
69. LS.
70. Seemliness. My emphasis.
71. Ibid.
72. Seemliness.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid. My emphases.
75. Glasgow Herald, February 22nd., 1906.
76. Seemliness.
77. H. F. Lenning, The Art Nouveau, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1951, p.7.
78. Seemliness.
79. All these sections are from Seemliness. My emphases.



80. F. Walker, Mackintosh and Art Nouveau Architecture, in C. J. Carter (Ed.), See note 25 above.

81. PA.

82. The significance of Spencer for Scottish Art Nouveau theory was made apparent by Mackintosh in 1893. Two years previously a collection of essays by Spencer had appeared which addressed some themes that would have been of undeniable interest for the Glasgow avant-garde. The acknowledgement by Spencer of asymmetry as a central element within indigenous vernacular and 'castellated' architecture appears to point in the direction of a late Art Nouveau concern with a non-organic form language embodying asymmetry, at the same time as it locates this element in the building of the past, where it is taken to be some kind of cultural representation of the asymmetry apparent in nature:

"Of the alleged connexion between inorganic forms and the wholly irregular and the castellated styles of building, we have, I think, some proof in the fact that when an edifice is irregular, the *more* irregular it is the more it pleases us. I see no way of accounting for this fact, save by supposing that the greater the irregularity the more strongly are we reminded of the inorganic forms typified, and the more vividly are aroused the agreeable ideas of rugged and romantic scenery associated with those forms".

H. Spencer, 'Architectural Types', in Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative Vol. II, Williams And Norgate, 1891, p.377.

83. Seemliness. My emphasis.

84. Ibid. My emphasis.

85. G. Naylor, The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of its Sources, Ideals and Influence on Design Theory, Studio Vista, 1971, p.188.

86. Unspecified Glasgow newspaper, August 1897, Cutting in Glasgow School of Art Library.

87. LS.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. J. Hoffmann, 'Simple Furniture', Das Interieure, II, 1901.
91. E. Sekler, 'The Stoclet House by Josef Hoffmann', in D. Fraser et al (Eds.) Essays on the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkower, Pitman, 1967, p.239.
92. See for example Glasgow Property Circular, 28th. May, 1895, 'The Glasgow School of Art at Melrose'.
93. LS.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. F. Newbery, The Future of Art, Lecture 1895, cutting from unspecified newspaper, Glasgow School of Art Library.
97. LS.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. J. Hoffmann, 'My Work', Lecture given on 22nd. February, 1911; excerpts transcribed from lecture manuscript by E. Sekler, Appendix 7, p.488, my emphasis. See note 3 above.
102. P. Burger, Theory of the Avant-Garde, Manchester University Press, 1984, pp.41-2.
103. Gresleri, p.9. My emphasis. See note 31 above.
104. PA.
105. Ibid. Mackintosh may well have also consulted Spencer on the question of the role of signs in (visual and spoken) language. Spencer's views on the importance of simplicity for communication are highly in tune with those of the Glasgow architect:
- "Regarding language as an apparatus of symbols for conveying thought, we may say that, as in a mechanical apparatus, the more simple and the better arranged its parts, the greater will be the effect produced . . . A reader or listener has at each moment but a limited amount of mental power available. To recognize and interpret the symbols presented to him, requires part of this power; to arrange and combine the images suggested by them requires a further part; and only that



part which remains can be used for framing the thought expressed . . . . How true, language must be regarded as a hindrance to thought, though the necessary instrument of it, we shall clearly perceive on remembering the comparative force with which simple ideas are communicated by signs".

H. Spencer, 'The Philosophy of Style', in Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative Vol. II, Williams and Norgate, 1891, p.335.

106. On this point see Introduction to M. Sahlins, Islands of History, Tavistock, 1985.

107. H. Muthesius, The English House, trans. J. Seligman, Rizzoli, New York, 1979, p.61. My emphases.

108. J. Ruskin, The Two Paths, London, Blackfriars, p.151.

109. The Pall Mall Budget, of 15th. October 1885 referred to this original article and a cutting of it from the former appears in Newbery's personal scrapbook.

110. C. E. Schorske, Fin-de-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1980, p.325.

111. Cited by Sekler. See note 3 above.

112. E. Caird, Hegel, William Blackwood and Sons, 1883, pp.149-50. For Scottish

Hegelianism, the crucial sphere for the mediation of thought and feeling, and of subject and object, was that of the integration of imagination and intellect:

"Knowledge is essentially *communicable*; it is what holds good for every subject equally, what is true *for* consciousness in general, and therefore what is true *of* the object. And knowledge depends on the agency of the imagination and understanding, working together in a certain harmonious way: the former combining the manifold of sense, the latter bringing the manifold so combined under the unity of thought. Now, there is, in the case of each different object, a certain proportion or balance of these faculties which is most suitable for knowledge, and which we are capable of *feeling* as a stimulus to their activity. And this feeling must be as communicable as the knowledge which is the result of such activity".

E. Caird, The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant, Vol. 2, Glasgow, James Maclehose and Sons, 1889, p. 400.

113. Walker, p.56. See note 62 above.

114. Ibid., p.55.

115. Seemliness.

116. Ibid.
117. PA.
118. The phrase was used in a letter from Hoffmann to Howarth dated Vienna, 20th. December, 1947. "He (Mackintosh) seems to us a deliverer from dead styles - a founder of new forms and an impressive renovator of Scottish peculiarities". T. Howarth, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Secessionist Movement in Architecture, Glasgow University Thesis No. 935, 1949.
119. R. Macleod, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Hamlyn/Country Life Books, 1968, pp.37-8.
120. W. R. Lethaby, Architecture, Nature and Magic, Duckworth, 1956, p.16. With this work Lethaby attempted to clarify the meaning and content of his ideas as expounded in Architecture, Mysticism and Myth. Certain of his comments make it clear that he considered the earlier work to have been misread in some quarters.
121. Cited by C. E. Schorske, 'Schnitzler und Hofmannsthal', in Wort und Wahrheit, XVII, May, 1962.
122. Sekler, p.238. See note 88 above.
123. PA.
124. Sekler, p.24. See note 3 above.
125. PA.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Naylor, p.187. See note 66 above.
130. Funzig Jahre Deutscher Werkbund.
131. Op. Cit.
132. Ibid.
133. PA.
134. Ibid.



135. LS.

136. O. Jones, The Grammar of Ornament, London, 1856, p.4.

137. PA.

138. Seemliness.

## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER 5.

1. J. D. Sedding, Art and Handicraft, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1893.  
Reprint of 'Our Arts and Industries', paper read at the Liverpool Art Congress, 1888, p.144.
2. R. Macleod, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Hamlyn/Country Life, 1968, p.38.
3. T. Howarth, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952. Second Edition, 1977, p.248.
4. C. Cooke, 'Fedor Osipovich Shekhtel; An Architect and his Clients in Turn-of-the-Century Moscow', Annals of the Architectural Association School of Architecture, No. 5, p.6.
5. Report from the Select Committee on Arts and their connection with Manufactures, with the minutes of evidence. House of Commons, 9th. Sept., 1835.
6. G. Naylor, The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of its Sources, Ideals and Influence on Design Theory, Studio Vista, London, 1971, p.17.
7. F. Newbery, Lecture on 'Art and Commerce', press cutting in Newbery Scrapbook, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
8. On the issue of setting up a school in Glasgow, the Council reported that  
  
"a memorial was received from the principal municipal authorities, merchants, and manufacturers, of that city, applying for a portion of the Government funds pursuant to the resolutions of a large public meeting on the 4th. of March, which was unanimously of opinion that Schools of Design are well calculated to advance the interests of our manufactures connected with the art of design, and to improve the general taste of the people, and which stated that, the establishment of a School of Design had long been felt to be a desideratum in Glasgow; and that annual subscriptions for its maintenance, during three years, had already been obtained, to the extent of £300. Under these circumstances, Glasgow appeared to have peculiar claims on the consideration of the Council, as forming, in conjunction with Paisley, a centre of various manufactures". Third Report of the Council of the School of Design, 1843-44.
9. S. Macdonald, The History and Philosophy of Art Education, University of London Press, 1970, p.108.



10. Glasgow Evening News, May 1895.

11. The Governors, in their Annual Report for 1848-9, were careful to conceal the precise details of the events:

"The Committee have to report that since the last Annual Meeting an important change has taken place in the direction of the School, by the appointment of a new Head-Master and a Second Master in the places of the gentlemen who previously filled these stations. The Committee do not think it necessary to enter into any detail of the reasons which induced them to apply to the Central Committee of Management to make this change, which . . . they felt was essential to the well being of the Institution under their charge. After due inquiry, the Central Committee acceded to the wishes of the Local Committee, and offered the appointment of Head Master to Mr. Charles Heath Wilson . . . Your Committee have to express their high satisfaction with these appointments . . ." Op. cit., pp. 6/7.

12. Macdonald, p.102. See note 9 above.

13. Naylor, p.19. See note 6 above.

14. Op. cit.

15. Sessional Papers, 1864 Select Committee on Schools of Art, p.233.

16. Macdonald, p.157. See note 9 above.

17. Minutes of Committee, 7th. November, 1857 - Mr. Hannan.

18. Letter to J. R. Herbert, published in The Builder, August 2nd., 1845.

19. The Collected Works of John Ruskin, Cook and Wedderburn (Eds.), London, 1903-12,

*Fors Clavigera*, Letter 79.20. Collected Works, Preface to Laws of Fesole, Vol.

XV. See note 19 above.

20a. The Builder, August 2nd., 1845.

21. 'Universal Infidelity in Principles of Design', The Times, reprinted in the Journal of Design, Vol.V, 1851.

22. Q. Bell, The Schools of Design. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963, p.245.

23. Transactions of the National Association for the Advancement of Art, Edinburgh Transactions, p.55.

24. R. R. Anderson, Presidential Address, Section of Architecture, Edinburgh Transactions, p.55.

25. J. D. Sedding, Art and Handicraft, p.129. See note 1 above.
26. Quoted by I. Spencer in 'Francis Newbery and the Glasgow Style', Apollo, No.98, October, 1973, p.288.
27. Naylor, p.21. See note 6 above.
28. Macdonald, p.236. See note 9 above.
29. R. Redgrave and S. Redgrave, A Century of Painters, Smith, Elder, London, 1866, pp.564-5.
30. The Builder, 10th. October, 1891.
31. Op. cit., p.289. See note 26 above.
32. 'Some Glasgow Designers and Their Work', The Studio, Vol.XI.
33. Op. cit.
- 33a. H. Muthesius, The English House, New York, Rizzoli, 1979, p.161. Ruskin complained that "the pre-Raphaelites are all more or less affected by enthusiasm and by various morbid conditions of intellect and temper" ('The Unity of Art', in The Two Paths, London, Blackfriars, p.70.
- 33b. Ibid., p.161.
34. Annual Report of The Glasgow School of Art and Haldane Academy, year ending July, 1884.
35. Cutting from unknown newspaper in Glasgow School of Art Library.
36. Annual Report, 1884.
37. Ibid.
38. Op. cit.
39. Annual Report, 1884.
40. Ibid. My emphasis.
41. J. Ruskin, A Joy for Ever, George Allen, London, 3rd edn., 1893, p.221.
42. Ibid., p.229.
43. Modern Painters, Vol. III, Part IV, Ch.X, pp.14/15.



44. H. Spencer, Education, Williams and Norgate, London, 1878.
45. W. Benjamin with A. Lacis, Programme for a Proletarian Childrens' Theatre, trans. S. Buck-Morss, Performance, 5, March, 1973, p.30.
46. H. Spencer, Education, p.80. See note 44 above.
47. Ibid.
48. C. R. Mackintosh, Seemliness, 1902. Lecture notes in Hunterian Archive, University of Glasgow.
- 48a. cited by P. Geddes in John Ruskin, Economist, Edinburgh, William Brown, 1884, p.3.
49. J. Ruskin, Lectures on Art, Lecture I, 1870, cited by K. Clark, Ruskin Today, Penguin, 1967, p.213.
50. Glasgow School of Art Head Master's Report, 1885.
51. P. L. Waterhouse, The Story of Architecture Throughout the Ages, London, Batsford, 1902, p.255.
- 51a. "Idealists are always producing more or less formal conditions of art . . . they seek for the pleasure in art, in the relations of its colours and lines, without caring to convey any truth with it . . . You will find that the art whose end is pleasure only is pre-eminently the gift of cruel and savage nations, cruel in temper, savage in habits and conception . . . when you examine the men in whom the gifts of art are variously mingled, or universally mingled, you will discern that the ornamental, or pleasurable power, though it may be possessed by good men, is not in itself an indication of their goodness, but is rather, unless balanced by other faculties, indicative of violence of temper, inclining to cruelty and irreligion". J. Ruskin, The Unity of Art, pp.59-61. See note 33a above.
- What disturbed Ruskin about Idealism was that it allegedly led to the kind of absorption in the imagination which he saw as ultimately opposing the 'facts and forms' of nature. As a consequence, artistic form, in reflecting the 'doleful phantoms' of the inner world, engendered meaningless fragmentation of colour and flowings of line.
52. Glasgow School of Art Annual Report, 1885.
53. Op. cit.
54. Op. cit.

55. Op. cit.
56. Op. cit. In 1894, Quiz was remarking that Newbery knew, as well as anyone, "the limitations of . . . (South Kensington) as a factor in the art education of the country". 'Character Sketches', No. 52, Quiz, 6th. Dec., 1894.
57. F. Newbery, Art and Commerce, Lecture in Glasgow Corporation Galleries, 1896.
58. Glasgow School of Art Annual Report, 1899.
59. Op. cit.
60. Glasgow School of Art Annual Report, 1893.
61. Ibid., p.13.
62. Ibid., p.7.
63. Macdonald, p.364. See note 9 above.
64. Glasgow School of Art Annual Report, 1899.
- 64a. F. Newbery, lecture on 'Art and Commerce', in Glasgow Corporation Galleries, 1896.
65. Glasgow Herald, 14th. January, 1908.
66. Glasgow Evening News, May, 1895.
67. Dictionary of British Book Illustrators.
68. J. Pennell, 'A New Illustrator: Aubrey Beardsley', The Studio, Vol.1, No.1, p.17.
69. See for example G. Cinamon, 'Talwin Morris, Blackie and the Glasgow Style', The Private Library, Vol.10, No.1, Spring, 1987.
70. J. Stanley Little, 'Maurice Greiffenhagen and His Work', The Studio, Vol.9, 1897.
71. Glasgow Herald, 14th. January, 1908.
72. Ibid.
73. Glasgow Herald, date unknown, 'The Sloyd Association: Conference on Educational Handwork'.
74. Ibid.
75. The Studio, Vol.XIX, p.53.
76. Cutting from unknown newspaper in Glasgow School of Art Library.



77. The Studio, Vol.XIX, p.51.
78. Ibid., p.51.
79. Glasgow Evening News, Nov.16th., 1894. My emphasis.
80. Glasgow Herald, Nov.10th., 1894. My emphasis.
81. C. R. Mackintosh, Seenliness. See note 48 above. My emphasis.
82. The Studio, Vol. XIX, 1900, pp.48-56.
- 82a. F. Newbery, 'Art and Personality', Glasgow Herald, 25th. Dec., 1896.
- 82b. Ibid.
83. Glasgow School of Art Annual Report, 1899.
84. The Builder, August 2nd., 1845. My emphasis.
85. Cutting from unknown 1894 newspaper in Glasgow School of Art Library.
86. Ibid.
87. Little, p.239. See note 70 above.
88. Glasgow newspaper, 3rd. August, 1892, title unknown. Cutting in Glasgow School of Art Library.
89. Glasgow Herald, January, 1891.
90. Newspaper cutting in Newbery Scrapbook, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
91. I. Spencer, Walter Crane: His Work and Influence, Thesis No.4280, Glasgow University.
92. The Studio, Vol.26, No.114, 1902. My emphasis.
93. Ibid., p.252.
94. Ibid., pp.253-4.
- 94a. H. F. Lenning, The Art Nouveau, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1951, p.20.
95. K. Stierle, 'Erfahrung und Narrative Form', in Theorie der Geschichte, Vol.3, 'Theorie und Erzählung in der Geschichte', Munich, 1979, p.90.
96. W. Pater, The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, Mentor, 1959, p.97. Published 1873.

97. Ibid., p.158.
98. R. Schmutzler, Art Nouveau, Thames and Hudson, 1978, p.209.
99. E. Caird, Hegel, William Blackwood and Sons, 1883. The world was an organic unity, but this did not mean, Caird stressed, that the world as a 'whole' should be interpreted on the *analogy* of organisms such as the living body, plants or animals. Lacking thought or consciousness, such organisms did not represent a unity *for itself*. An ideal or self-determining principle found its final form and expression only in self-consciousness, where subject was unified with object.
100. Macdonald, p.177. See note 9 above.
101. K. Clark, 'A Note on Ruskin's Life', in Ruskin Today, Penguin, 1964, pp.11-12.
102. Ibid., p.12.
103. F. Newbery, 'How to Popularise Our Art Galleries and Museums', two articles written for the Glasgow Evening News, 4th. December, 1905.
104. Ibid.
105. F. Newbery, 'The Weft of Art in the Warp of City Life', Lecture to members of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Branch of the Teachers' Guild. Cutting from unknown newspaper in Newbery Scrapbook, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
106. The Studio, Vol.26, No.114, 1902, p.253.
107. Newbery, 1895. See note 103 above.
108. The Studio, Vol.XXVI, 1902, p.97.
- 108a. Mentioned in letters from Josef Olbrich to Claire Morawe, 10th. May, 1902 and 11th. May, 1902, Private Collection. Cited by R. J. Clark in 'Olbrich and Mackintosh', in P. Nuttgens (Ed.), Mackintosh and His Contemporaries in Europe and America, John Murray, 1988, p.106.
109. Glasgow Herald, 27th. February, 1902, 'Turin Decorative Art Exhibition'. Although both Traquair and Beveridge exhibited embroideries and needlework in the Scottish section at Turin, neither of them are mentioned in Glasgow School of Art



- Embroidery 1894-1920 by F. C. Macfarlane and E. F. Arthur, Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1980.
110. Ibid.
111. F. Newbery, 'The International Exhibition of Decorative Art at Turin: The English Section', The Studio, Vol.26, No.114, p.254.
112. 'Architecture Teaching at the Glasgow School of Art', Glasgow Property Circular, 6th. August, 1895.
113. The Studio, p.254. See note 111 above.
- 113a. W. Scholermann, 'Walter Crane', Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst, 1897, Vol.8, pp.81-2.
114. Glasgow Herald, 3rd. September, 1910.
115. Glasgow Herald, 20th. November, 1907.
116. Letter headed 'The Artless University' (a) Glasgow Herald, 18th. January, 1907,
117. Letter headed 'The Artless University (b)', Cutting from unknown newspaper circa 1907 in Glasgow School of Art Library.
118. Ibid.
119. 'Principal Caird on Art', cutting from unknown newspaper (November 1886) in Newbery Scrapbook, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
- 123a. Edward Caird had stressed in his Hegel that " . . . consciousness, though it may be primarily regarded as the subject of knowledge, is not simply opposed to the object, but necessarily includes it in itself" (Op. Cit. p.124), and that " . . . the world of intelligence and freedom cannot be different from the world of nature and necessity; it can only be the same world, seen in a new light, or

subjected to a further interpretation" (p.125).

123b. According to Bosanquet, whose History of Aesthetic (1892) was well received in Glasgow, both science and aesthetics are grounded in praxis:

" . . . just as in speaking generally of the real world we practically mean the world as known to science, so in speaking generally of the beautiful in the world we practically mean the beautiful as revealed by art. In both cases we rely upon the recorded perceptions of those who perceive best, both because they are the best perceptions and because they are recorded", B. Bosanquet, A History of Aesthetic, London, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1892, pp.3-4.

124. The Studio, Vol.XIX, 1900, p.53.

125. W. Pater, The Renaissance, p.158. See note 96 above.

125a. 'Principal Caird on Art'. See note 119 above.

126. C. R. Mackintosh, 'Seemliness'. See note 48 above.

127. Caird. See note 119 above.

128. C. R. Mackintosh, Untitled paper on Architecture, 1893, Hunterian Archive, Glasgow University.

128a. E. Caird, The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant, Glasgow, James Maclehose and Sons, 1889, p.410.

128b. Cited by N. Pevsner, Pioneers of Modern Design, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1949, p.9. Morris quotations from The Collected Works of William Morris, xxii, p.42, xxii, p.173, xxii, p.47 et. seq.

129. J. Caird. See note 119 above. My emphasis.

130. C. R. Mackintosh, 'Seemliness'. See note 48 above.

130a. P. Geddes, 'The Sociology of Autumn', The Evergreen: The Book of Autumn, 1895.

131. Letter from A. Drysdal, 123 Hospital Street, Glasgow, to the Glasgow Herald, 6th. April, 1891.

132. Architectural Review, Vol.9, 1901, p.243.

133. Burlington Magazine, XVI, January, 1910 (part 1), and February 1910 (part 2). Originally published in L'Occident, September, 1907. Emphasis in original.



134. Committee minute, 11th. January, 1892.
135. F. Newbery, lecture 'Art and the University', Glasgow Herald, 10th. May, 1907. My emphasis.
136. Glasgow Herald, 16th. December, 1909.
137. Ibid.
138. Ibid.
139. 'Universities and Art', cutting from unknown newspaper in Newbery Scrapbook, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
140. Ibid.
141. Ibid.
142. Glasgow School of Art Annual Report, December, 1885.
143. The Studio, p.255. See note 111 above.
144. Ibid., p.256.
145. Cutting from unknown newspaper (1894) in Glasgow School of Art Library. My emphasis.
146. Glasgow Herald, 13th. January, 1910.
147. Ibid. The term 'tricky' had been employed by Quiz on the occasion of its reviewing the Glasgow School of Art Club Exhibition, when it condemned the 'ghoul like' designs of the 'Misses Macdonald': "the landscapes were, for the most part, 'tricky', but here and there were evidences of honest endeavour". Quiz, 15th. Nov., 1894.
148. Quoted in G. Sutton, Artisan or Artist: A History of the Teaching of Art and Crafts in English Schools, London and New York, 1967, p.199.

## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER 6.

1. 'Glasgow East-End Industrial Exhibition', cutting from unknown newspaper, January, 1891, Glasgow School of Art Library. The Adam referred to here was undoubtedly George Adam who had a business in 'Wrought-Iron Ornamental Work' at 169 Finnieston Street. His home address was 69 Hyndland Street, hence him being referred to as 'of Partick'. Post Office Glasgow Directory, 1891-92.
2. W. Benjamin, 'Paris: The Capital of the Nineteenth Century', in Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism, translated by H. Zohn, New Left Books, 1973, p.159.
3. Cutting from unknown newspaper, Newbery Scrapbook (hereafter NS) Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
4. Ibid.
5. City Improvement Committee's Minutes, Committee on Parks Etc., 3rd. January, 1900. Strathclyde Regional Archive.
- 5a. C. R. Mackintosh, Literary Society Lecture, circa 1905, Hunterian Archive, University of Glasgow.
6. Ibid.
7. Illustrated Catalogue of MacFarlane and Co. Architectural Iron Work, Vols. I and II (from photographs), circa 1911. Illustrated Catalogue of MacFarlane and Co. Castings, 6th. edition, no date. Glasgow Room, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
7. See note 3 above.
8. 'East-End Exhibition: Arts and Crafts Section', cutting from unknown newspaper, NS, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
9. Ibid.
10. See note 2 above.
11. Ibid.



12. Reported in Helensburgh newspaper, 6th. September, 1882.
13. Glasgow Herald, 3rd. February, 1891.
14. Cutting from unknown newspaper NS, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
15. 'Art and Commerce', cutting from unspecified newspaper of 1896, NS.
16. See note 14 above.
17. Cutting from unknown newspaper, NS.
18. Op. cit., 27th. July, 1891.
19. The Builder, 1st. August, 1891.
20. The St. James Gazette, 28th. July, 1891.
21. Annual Meeting of Glasgow School of Art and Haldane Academy, 1882.
22. NS. See note 4 above.
23. Op. cit.
24. 'Art and Commerce', NS.
25. Annual Report, Session 1904-5.
26. Glasgow Evening News, 23rd. February, 1904.
27. Ibid.
28. Op. cit., 1905.
29. Daily Record, 21st. December, 1904.
30. Ibid.
31. Glasgow Herald, 9th. December, 1904.
- 31a. J. Clark, Special Education in the Fine Arts: A Comparative Sketch of American Education as shown at St. Louis, Authority of the School Board of Glasgow, 1905.
32. N. Pevsner, Pioneers of Modern Design from William Morris to Walter Gropius, New York, 1949, p.12.
33. Ibid., p. 12.
34. T. Howarth, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement, cited in Preface to 2nd. edition, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, pp.xxxviii/xxxix.

35. C. Schorske, Ein-de-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1980, p.325.
36. Werkbund Annual Meeting, 1914.
37. In Hoffmann's estate there are some amateur photographs, possibly taken by Warndorfer, showing details of a gatehouse by Mackintosh at Auchenbothie, Kilmacolm, 1901, and of the White House, Helensburgh, by Bailie Scott. See E. F. Sekler, Josef Hoffman, Princeton University Press, 1985.
38. T. Howarth, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Secessionist Movement in Architecture, Thesis No. 935, 1949, Glasgow University. Letter from Hoffmann dated 20th, December, 1947. Appendix, p.304. My emphasis.
- 38a. H. Muthesius, '*Die Ästhetische Ausbildung der Ingenieurbauten*', Zeitschrift des Vereins Deutscher Ingenieure, 53, No.31 (1909), p.1226.
39. J. Hoffmann and K. Moser, The Work-Programme of the Wiener Werkstätte, 1905.
40. E. Sekler, 'The Stoclet House by Josef Hoffmann', in D. Fraser et al (Eds.) Essays on the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkover, Pitman, 1967, p.243.
41. '*Otto Wagner, Historische Betrachtungen und Gegenwartsgedanken*', Der Architekt, XII, 1919, pp.1-9.
42. Introduction to W. J. Schweiger, Wiener Werkstätte: Design in Vienna 1903-1932, Thames and Hudson, London, 1984.
- 42a. Ibid., p.9.
43. Ibid., p.9. My emphasis.
44. K. Varnedoe, Vienna 1900: Art, Architecture and Design, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1986, p.98.
- 44a. Annual Meeting of Glasgow School of Art, 1895.
45. F. Newbery, 'Art in Relation to Technical Education', Evening Times, 12th. April, 1893.
46. Ibid.



47. Ibid.
48. F. Newbery, 'Art and Commerce', lecture in Glasgow Corporation Galleries, 1896.
49. Ibid.
50. Celebration of the Amalgamation of the Glasgow Institute of Architects and the Architectural Association, Glasgow Evening News, 15th. February, 1908.
51. 'Art and Commerce'. See note 48 above.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Cutting from unknown newspaper, NS.
57. Glasgow Evening News, May 1895.
58. Minutes of Committee, 20th. August, 1884.
59. Diploma Requirements as shown in Annual Report of 1904-5.
60. Glasgow Herald, 21st. December, 1909.
61. 'Glasgow East-End Industrial Exhibition'. See note 2 above.
62. Quiz, 11th. April, 1895.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Quiz, 10th. December, 1896.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. The Studio, July 1897, p.87.
69. Glasgow School of Art Annual Report, 1893-4.
70. 'Art and Commerce'. See note 48 above.
71. W. Crane, An Artist's Reminiscences, 1907.
72. Glasgow Herald, 2nd. November, 1911.

73. Glasgow Herald, 6th. June, 1912.
74. Ibid.
75. The Studio, Vol.XIX, 1900, p.51.
76. Madame, 6th. January, 1900.
77. The Scotsman, 19th. March, 1912. Works shown by Glasgow School of Art students at an Arts and Crafts exhibition at the end of 1911 included "studies in drawing, painting, modelling, architecture, and such crafts as embroidery, metal work, enamelling, wood carving, pottery, bookbinding and leather work" (Glasgow Herald, 23rd. December, 1911).
78. Property, November, 1904.
79. Howarth, Thesis, p.259. See note 38 above.
80. T. R. Davidson, Pen and Ink Notes at the Glasgow Exhibition, London, 1888, p.27.
81. M. Donnelly, Glasgow Stained Glass: A Preliminary Study, Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1981, p.18.
82. Cutting from unknown newspaper, NS. The account continues: "In the early Gothic the limitations of the material of glass compelled not only a treatment of lights as compared with the window as a whole, but caused even a sub-division of each light into smaller compartments. Modern science has, however, overcome all difficulties as to area and the larger pieces of pot metal now obtainable make the limitations far less felt and give the artist greater and freer opportunities for the display of line and colour".
83. G. Cinamon, 'Talwin Morris, Blackie and the Glasgow Style', The Private Library, 3rd. Series, Volume 10:1, Spring 1987, p.12.
84. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 31st. October, 1905.
85. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 21st. May, 1901.
86. Keppie, Henderson Archives.
87. Glasgow Evening News, 1899.



88. The Glasgow Style 1890-1920, Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1984, p.47.
89. Daily Record, 17th. May, 1902. My emphasis.
90. The Bailie, 3rd. July, 1901.
91. 'A Glasgow Artist and Designer', The Studio, Vol.XXXIII, 1904, p.222.
92. 'A Glasgow Designer: The Furniture of Mr. George Logan', The Studio, Vol.XXX, 1903, p.202.
93. Ibid., p.201.
94. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 30th. April, 1901.
95. Ibid. My emphasis.
96. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 20th. August, 1901.
97. Ibid.
98. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 20th. February, 1906, and 7th. August, 1906.
99. The Studio, Vol.1, September, 1893, p.14. My emphasis.
100. Ibid., p.17.
101. The Studio, Vol.XI, 1897, p.232.
102. Ibid., p.233.
103. Glasgow Herald, 27th. February, 1902.
104. R. Halliday, The Lost Pearls: A Review of the Art Nouveau Architecture of Mackintosh's Contemporaries at the Turn of the Century, B.A. Dissertation, Glasgow School of Art Library.
105. A. M. Young and A. M. Doak, Glasgow at a Glance: An Architectural Handbook, Collins, 1965, p.165.
106. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 4th. March, 1902.
107. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 16th. February, 1906.
- 107a. J. R. Kellett, Glasgow: A Concise History, Blond, 1967, p.22.
108. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 24th. September, 1901.

109. H. Kimura (Ed.), Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Process: Architecture, 1984, p.150.
110. City Improvement Committee's Minutes, 26th. September, 1901, Sub-Committee on Southern District Properties, Strathclyde Regional Archive.
111. Sub-Committee on Eastern District Properties, 7th. August, 1901 - payment £100.  
Sub-Committee on Northern District Properties, 8th. August, 1901 - payment £600.  
Strathclyde Regional Archive.
112. F. Wordsall, The Tenement: A Way of Life, Chambers, 1979, p.118.
113. Sub-Committee on Eastern District Properties, 10th. October, 1900. Strathclyde Regional Archive.
114. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 5th. November, 1901.
115. R. A. Cage (Ed.), The Working Class in Glasgow 1750-1914, Croom Helm, 1987, p.46.
116. Ibid., p.46.
117. Incorporation of Architects in Scotland: Quarterly Illustrated, No.67, 1947, p.30.  
Whitie was a member of the group of architects who founded the Royal Incorporation: "Mr. Whitie took a specially active part in the negotiations which led up to the unifying of the profession in Scotland, and, in fact, was the mover of the original motion at the joint meeting of representatives of the Chapters that the formation of the Incorporation should be proceeded with" (ibid.).
- 117a. Information supplied by Springburn Museum.
118. Quiz, 30th. June, 1898.
119. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 26th. November, 1901.
120. Ibid.
121. Introduction to Cage, p.xvii. See note 115 above.
122. The Bailie, 5th. June, 1901.
123. Minutes of Municipal Commission, pp.126-128. Strathclyde Regional Archive. My emphasis.
124. C. R. Mackintosh, Literary Society Lecture, circa 1905. Hunterian Archive.



125. Op. cit., p.269. See note 38 above.
126. Ibid., p.269.
127. D. Chapman-Houston, The Lamp of Memory, 1949, p.126.
128. 'A Home of Art', Glasgow Herald, 16th. December, 1909.
129. Minutes of Committee of Finance, August, 1901. Strathclyde Regional Archive.
130. The Scotsman, 21st. December, 1909.
131. Glasgow Evening Times, 21st. December, 1899.
- 131a. Edinburgh born Gibson-Carmichael, referred to as 'Overseas Administrator and Art Connoisseur' by the Dictionary of National Biography, was 11th. Baronet Baron Carmichael of Skirling. The eldest son of the reverend Sir William Henry Gibson-Carmichael, he was Trustee of the National Portrait Gallery (1904-1908), Trustee of the National Gallery (1906-1908), and Trustee of the Wallace Collection (1918-1926).
132. Cutting from unknown newspaper, Glasgow School of Art Library.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid.
135. Howarth, pp.72-73. See note 34 above.
136. Ibid., p.78.

## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER 7.

1. I. Zangwill, 'Without Prejudice', Pall Mall Magazine, January 1895, p.327.
2. T. Nairn, The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism, Second, Expanded Edition, NLB, 1981 (first published 1977). T. Nairn, 'Old Nationalism and New Nationalism', in G. Brown (Ed.), The Red Paper on Scotland, EUSPB, 1975.
3. 'Old Nationalism and New Nationalism', p.31.
4. Ibid., p.31. Emphasis in original.
5. Ibid., p.36.
6. 'Break-up', p.100.
7. Ibid., p.101.
8. Ibid., p.101.
9. P. Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, R. Nice (Trans.), Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986. First published in Paris in 1979. Preface to English Edition, p.xiii.
10. P. Geddes, 'The Sociology of Autumn', The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal, 1895, p.34.
11. P. Boardman, Patrick Geddes Maker of the Future, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1944, p.195. Boardman expressed the opinion that "Of Geddes's own contributions to his 'Northern Seasonal', it can unhesitatingly be said that they represent some of the best writing of his lifetime" (p.195).
12. P. Geddes, 'The Megalithic Builders', The Evergreen, Part IV, Winter, 1896-1897, p.149.
13. Zangwill, p.328. See note 1 above.
14. P. Geddes, 'The Sociology of Autumn', p.34. See note 10 above.
15. Op. Cit.



16. Cited by Boardman, p.272. See note 11 above.
17. R. Q. Gray, Religion, Culture and Social Class in Late Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Century Edinburgh, in G. Crossick (Ed.), 'The Lower Middle Class in Britain', Croom Helm, 1977.
18. Ibid p.150.
19. Ibid p.151.
20. Ibid p.149.
21. The Bailie, Jan. 5th., 1910, p.12.
22. Ibid, p.12.
23. The Bailie, Jan. 2nd., 1901.
24. The Bailie, Nov. 6th., 1901.
25. The Bailie, July 3rd., 1901.
26. The Bailie, May 29th., 1901.
27. A. Hauser, The Social History of Art, 'Naturalism, Impressionism, The Film Age', Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, pp.239-240.
28. Ibid, p.240.
29. T. J. Clark, The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers, Thames and Hudson, 1985, p.229.
30. ibid, p.230.
31. Quiz, Feb. 27th., 1896.
32. Quiz, Nov. 22nd., 1894.
33. The Bailie, June 12th., 1901.
34. 'Cityism', The Bailie, Feb. 6th., 1901.
35. The Bailie, 26th. Dec., 1900.
36. Ibid.
37. The Bailie, Jan. 2nd., 1901.
38. The Bailie, Feb. 6th., 1901.

39. The Bailie, Nov. 13th., 1901.
40. The Bailie, Feb. 6th., 1901.
41. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, Sept. 24th., 1901.
42. Ibid.
43. The Art Journal, 1901.
- 43a. By the following spring, the Glasgow Advertiser was making more explicit for the benefit of its middle class readership what the actual state-of-affairs implied:
- "It is unpleasant and unsatisfactory to state that the season has not been a successful one, nor, indeed, equal to its predecessor, which in turn was not as good as a well-wisher could have wished. It were futile to seek for the reason or reasons for the falling-off. The facts argue a distinct lack of interest, but what has contributed to the lack of interest opens up a wide field of argument . . . (our local painters) unconsciously follow each other rather than allow themselves - equally unconsciously - to be led by the men of light and leading, who have made or are making modern thought in the artistic world". (Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 29th. April, 1902).
44. The Bailie, Dec. 5th., 1901.
45. The Bailie, Dec. 22nd., 1909.
46. Quiz, Sept. 26th., 1895.
47. Quiz, Feb. 28th., 1895.
48. Quiz, Feb. 14th., 1895.
49. Quiz, May 9th., 1895. The Wilde trials (and conviction) on charges of homosexuality began at the Old Bailey on 3rd. April, 1895. Public interest was reflected in the court being filled to capacity.
50. Quiz, Feb. 6th., 1896.
51. Clark, p.8. See note 29 above.
52. Clark, pp.237-238. See note 29 above.
53. Quiz, June 13th., 1895.
54. Quiz, April 22nd., 1897.
55. The Studio, Vol. 21, 1901, p.262.
56. Glasgow Herald, 23rd. Jan. 1899.



57. P. Hankar, 'Exposition D'Art Applique, Mai 1895', L'Emulation, vol.XX, 1895.
58. Copied into Minutes of Committee, Glasgow School of Art, 5th. May 1897.
59. Saint Mungo, Nov. 11th., 1897.
60. Evening Times, Feb. 5th., 1895.
61. 'Glasgow School of Art: A Flourishing Institution', Glasgow Evening News, 22nd. May, 1895.
- 61a. 'The Sociology of Autumn', p.37. See note 5 above.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid., p.37.
64. P. Geddes, The Evergreen, Part IV, Winter 1896-7, p.155.
65. D. Frisby, Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin, Polity Press, 1985, p.82.
66. H. Muthesius, Introduction to Design for an Art Lover's House
67. D. Chapman-Houston, Dreamers in the Moon, Typescript in Mackintosh Archive, University of Glasgow. The studio was in the house at 6 Florentine Terrace (later Southpark Avenue).
68. Ibid.
69. 'A Memory of Mackintosh', Hunterian Archive, University of Glasgow.
70. North British Daily Mail, 9th. Nov. 1894.
71. Cited by S. Weintraub in Beardsley, Pelican, 1972, p.113.
72. Glasgow Herald, Nov. 10th., 1894.
73. Cutting from unknown newspaper in Newbery Scrapbook, Glasgow School of Art Library.
74. Glasgow Herald, 16th. Nov., 1894.
75. 'The New Woman in Art', letter from 'Ar Gossip', cutting from unknown newspaper in Newbery Scrapbook, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
76. E. King, The Womens' Suffrage Movement in Scotland, People's Palace, 1979.
77. The Bailie, Nov. 17th., 1909.

78. 'How to be a "New Woman"', Quiz, Sept. 13th., 1894.
79. Quiz, Nov. 15th., 1894.
80. Quiz, Feb 28th., 1895.
81. C. Ratcliff, 'Dandyism and Abstraction in a Universe Defined by Newton'. Art Forum International, December, 1988, p.84.
82. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, July 30th., 1901.
- 82a. These were: 'A Dream' and 'Mother and Child' (Margaret Macdonald), and 'The Dew' and 'Ysighlu' (MacNair).
83. T. Howarth, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952, pp.24-25.
84. Glasgow Evening News, Nov. 17th., 1894.
85. Op. cit., p.26.
86. Op. cit., p. 25. More recently Howarth has implied a Freudian interpretation of the work of the Macdonalds which draws attention to the kind of erotic content which Adorno welcomed in Art Nouveau:
- "The powerful sexual overtones in Margaret's craftwork and painting, and especially in that of her sister Frances, are not only obvious, but seem to be unique among women artists at the turn of the century; they deserve closer analysis than is possible here".
- 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Internal Reality of Buildings', in P. Nuttgens (Ed.) Mackintosh and his Contemporaries in Europe and America, John Murray, 1988, p.45.
87. Op. cit., p.26.
88. T. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984, p.29.
89. Ibid., p.30.
90. Ibid., p.31. Bram Dijkstra comments on the symbolism of sleep-as-death as employed by Frances MacDonald in her painting 'The Sleeping Princess' (which appeared in The Yellow Book, Vol. X, July, 1896, p.177):
- "The fairy tale of the sleeping beauty . . . inevitably came to be seen as symbolic



of woman in her virginal state of sleep - her state of suspended animation and, as it were, death-in-life. In late nineteenth-century art representations of the sleeping beauty proliferated. Often the artists would make it a point to show the 'deathlike' quality of the virgin's sleep. Frances MacDonald's 'The Sleeping Princess' could just as easily have been labelled 'Ophelia', since this princess seems to be floating in a watery grave rather than to be merely sleeping".

B. Dijkstra, Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle

Culture, Oxford University Press, 1986, pp.61-62,90.

91. Ibid., p.31.

92. Op. cit.

93. Op. cit.

94. Adorno, p.31. See note 87 above.

95. A. Defries, The Interpreter Geddes: The Man and his Gospel, George Routledge and Sons, 1927, pp.204-5.

96. Ibid., p.205.

97. Ibid., p.193.

98. Ibid., p.194.

99. Ibid., p.195.

100. Ibid., p.192.

101. Glasgow Herald, Tues. 22nd. Nov. 1861.

102. T. Armstrong, A Memoir 1832-1911, Glasgow School of Art Library.

103. C. R. Mackintosh, Seemliness, 1902, lecture notes in Hunterian Archive, University of Glasgow.

104. O. Wilde, 'The English Renaissance of Art', in D. Stanford (Ed.) Writing of the Nineties From Wilde to Beerbohm, Everyman, 1971, p.23.

105. Wilde to Coquelin, star of the Comedie Francaise, in Ibid., pxvii.

106. 'A Week With the Jim-Jammers', Saint Mungo, 2nd. Dec. 1897.

107. J. H. Muir (composite pseudonym for James Bone, Archibald Hamilton and Muirhead Bone), Glasgow in 1901, William Hodge, 1901, p.139.

108. Ibid., pp.139-140.
109. N. Pevsner, 'Sources of Art in the 20th. Century', The Listener, 8th. Dec., 1960.
110. Time, 16th. Feb., 1953. Author not specified.
111. The Builders' Journal, August, 1900.
112. F. Newbery, 'The Weft of Art in the Warp of City Life', 1902. Newspaper cutting in Glasgow School of Art Library.
113. 'How a Commercial City May be Beautified', Glasgow Herald, 1903.
114. A. N. Paterson, 'Domestic Architecture', lecture reproduced in Glasgow Property Circular, Dec. 3rd., 1895.
115. Ibid.
116. Glasgow Herald, 7th. April, 1904.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid. Shortly after this speech was delivered the Glasgow School of Architecture was set up. Classes were held conjointly in the School of Art and the Technical College, although the School of Architecture issued a separate calendar. In 1906 a Students' club called the 'Glasgow School of Architecture Club' was established in connection with the School, "the object being the advancement of its members in the profession of Architecture" (Annual Report, Session 1906-7). The Club had three classes of members, Honorary, Ordinary and Allied.
119. 'The Bounding Girl', Glasgow Evening News, Nov. 10th. 1900.
120. Letter to William Davidson, April 7th., 1933. Hunterian Archive.
121. Letter to William Davidson, March 31st., 1933. Hunterian Archive.
122. J. Meier-Graefe, Entwicklungsgeschichte der Modernen Kunst, Vol. II, Stuttgart, 1904-5, p.620.
123. Glasgow Herald, March 1888.
124. Cutting from unknown 1894 newspaper in Glasgow School of Art Library.



125. A. McGibbon, 'Medieval Architecture', lecture reproduced in Glasgow Evening,  
Circular, Oct. 30th., 1894.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid. It should be noted that Mackintosh's acceptance of the Idealist view expressed here, namely that architecture, being essentially a human cultural artefact, 'finds no prototype in physical nature', signified his rejection of the claims made about the relevance of nature symbolism by Lethaby, whose Architecture, Mysticism and Myth (1892) had clearly exerted a formative early influence upon Mackintosh's ideas. Something of Lethaby's appraisal of the kind of view represented by McGibbon can be gleaned from the former's assertion that "Nature was further the source of much of what is called architectural decoration in a way which is not recognised in the histories, *or is attributed to 'aesthetic design', whatever that may be*". W. R. Lethaby, Architecture, Nature and Magic, Duckworth, 1956, p.16. My emphasis.
132. Ibid.
133. A. McGibbon, 'The Glasgow International Exhibition, 1901', Part One, The Art  
Journal, 1901, p.129.
134. The General Manager of both the 1888 and 1901 Exhibitions was Henry Anthony Hedley, a native of South Africa, whose official connection with exhibitions began in 1883 when he was appointed Assistant General Superintendent of the London 'Fisheries' Exhibition. This was followed by the 'Healtheries' (1884) and the 'Inventions' (1885) exhibitions in which Hedley occupied the same post. He was manager of the Edinburgh Exhibition in 1886 (profits £15,000). See 'Men You Know',

- The Bailie, July 3rd., 1901.
135. L. F. Day, 'Decorative and Industrial Art at the Glasgow Exhibition', First Notice, The Art Journal, 1901, p.215.
136. Ibid., p.215.
137. McGibbon, p.130. See note 133 above.
138. P. Geddes, 'The Sociology of Autumn', p.30. See note 5 above.
139. Ibid., p.30.
140. P. Geddes, The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal, 'The Book of Autumn', 1895 (Prefatory Note).
141. I. Zangwill, 'Without Prejudice', Pall Mall Magazine, Jan. 1895.
142. The Evergreen, Part IV, Winter 1896-7, p.155 ('Envoy').
143. The Art Journal, p.130. See note 133 above.
144. Ibid., p.130.
145. Op. cit., Tues. March 12th., 1901.
146. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, May 28th., 1901.
147. Boardman, pp.225-6. See note 6 above.
148. Ibid., p.226. The latter quotation is by A. Picard, General of the Exposition.
149. The Bailie, May 8th., 1901.
150. Boardman, p.227. See note 11 above. Philip Mairet, in further describing the Glasgow experience, commented that "this reappearance of the International School was bound to be relatively an anti-climax. Little has been recorded of it, and after it we hear no more of the elaborately named International Association". P. Mairet, Pioneer of Sociology: The Life and Letters of Patrick Geddes, Lund Humphries, 1957, p.116.
151. The Bailie, Nov. 6th., 1901.
152. Boardman, p.222. See note 11 above.



153. The Art Journal. See note 135 above.
154. Ibid., p.215.
155. Glasgow Advertiser, May 21st., 1901.
156. Glasgow Advertiser, April 30th., 1901.
157. Glasgow Advertiser, July 30th., 1901. My emphasis.
158. Ibid.
159. Ibid.
160. Ibid.
161. S. T. Madsen, Sources of Art Nouveau, Translated by R. Christophersen, Da Capo Press, 1975/1980, p.274. First published in Oslo in 1956.
162. The Art Journal, p.132. See note 133 above.
163. Ibid., p.220. My emphasis.
164. Architectural Review, 'The Artistic Side of the Glasgow International Exhibition', Vol. 10, 1901.
165. The Bailie, Oct. 23rd., 1901.
166. Reported in The Bailie, 3rd. July, 1901.
167. The Art Journal, p.188. See note 133 above.
168. Cited by H. Lenning, The Art Nouveau, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1951, p.63.
169. Madsen, p.64. See note 161 above.
170. Cited by P. Jullian, The Triumph of Art Nouveau: Paris Exhibition 1900, Phaidon, 1974, p.100.
171. Ibid., p.100.
172. Op. cit., '*Bing's Art Nouveau auf der Welt-Ausstellung*', Paris 1900', Vol. VI, 1900, p.558.
173. K. E. Osthaus, 'Henry Van de Velde', Die Neue Baukunst, I, p.8.
174. Cited by Lenning, p.55. See note 168 above.

175. Op. cit. See note 157 above.
176. Architectural Review, Vol. 10, 1901, 'The Artistic Side of the Glasgow International Exhibition' (Part Two), 'Some Critical Observations on the Same Subject', p.54.
177. W. Gaunt, The Aesthetic Adventure, Pelican, 1957, p.255.
178. Architectural Review, p.54. See note 176 above.
179. Ibid., p.54.
180. 'Glasgow International Exhibition: Part One', The Studio, June, 1901.
181. The Bailie, 7th. August, 1901.
182. The Bailie, 21st. August, 1901.
183. Ibid. This whole issue had been controversial in Glasgow four years before the Exhibition. For example, an article in Quiz stated as a 'positive fact' that "the big consignment of beautiful letter-blotters, purses, stationery pads etc., all labelled in gold 'Made in Germany', which a month or two ago flooded the counters of certain city fancy goods emporiums, and were sold at astonishingly low prices 'to clear', were made in Germany expressly for the Russian trade; but, when the tariff fight with the muscovite was started, poor Hans was forced to clear for ready money and throw the goods away at not a half of their real value! May it not be the case with many other classes of goods?" (Quiz, 18th. March, 1897).
184. Fourth Notice, The Art Journal, p.302.
185. Ibid., p.302.
186. Ibid., p.220.
187. The Bailie, 20th. Feb., 1901.
188. The Bailie, 24th. April, 1901.
189. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular, 21st. May, 1901.
190. Third Notice, The Art Journal, p.277.
191. Ibid., p.277.
192. Ibid., p.277.
193. Ibid., p.277.



194. Second Notice, Ibid., p.240.
195. Ibid., p.242.
196. Ibid., p.242.
197. Ibid.,p.242.
198. L. F. Day, 'L'Art Nouveau', The Art Journal, October, 1900, p.295.
199. Madsen asserts that "Lewis Day was possibly one of the leading designers of the 1880's and 1890's, although he has no original contribution to make in his simple and rather traditional designs" (p.274).
200. See P. Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, Routledge, 1984.
201. Adorno, p.33. See note 87 above.
202. Ibid., p.33.
203. L. F. Day, Fourth Notice, The Art Journal, p.299.
204. Ibid., p.299.
205. J. Kinchin, 'The Wylie and Lohead Style', in 'Aspects of British Design 1870-1930', Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850-The Present, No.9, 1985, p.5.  
 In a review of exhibits at the eighth exhibition of the Vienna Secession in November 1900, the Neue Freie Presse referred critically to the work of the Scottish group in such a way as to bring together descriptively the elements of modernism, symbolistic imagery, and 'simplicity' that were apparent: "The foreign 'moderns' already debauch. Opulently they indulge in pretended simplicity . . . prehistoric magic images, hiding-boxes of the sorcerer, furniture for fetishes". Cited by E. F. Sekler in 'Mackintosh and Vienna', Architectural Review, CXLV, Dec. 1968, p.455.
206. Adorno, p.65. See note 87 above.
207. G. Donaldson, 'Gift of "New Art" Furniture for Circulation', The Magazine of Art, Vol. XXV, 1900, p.471.

## FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER 8.

1. F. Newbery, 'The Weft of Art in the Warp of City Life', The Glasgow Herald, 1902.
2. Ibid.
3. Glasgow Royal Institute of the Fine Arts Prizegiving, The Glasgow Herald, November, 1907.
4. Cutting from unknown newspaper circa 1905, Glasgow School of Art Library.
- 4a. According to Newbery, for example, "Today the conditions (of city formation) were totally changed, the railway now playing an important part in the making of cities". ('The Weft of Art in the Warp of City Life', 1902).
5. 'The Town Beautiful', Glasgow Herald, 23rd. December, 1909.
6. Op. Cit., 15th. January, 1901.
7. Op. Cit., 16th. April, 1901.
8. Glasgow Advertiser and Property Circular (GAPC), 15th. January, 1901.
9. GAPC, 29th. October, 1901.
10. GAPC, 26th. March, 1901.
11. The Bailie, 30th. October, 1901.
12. GAPC, 29th. October, 1901.
13. S. Checkland, 'Scottish Urban Life at the Turn of the Century', in C. J. Carter, Art, Design and the Quality of Life in Turn of the Century Scotland 1890-1910, Proceedings of Symposium Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee, 1985, p.11.
14. GAPC, 26th. November, 1901.
15. GAPC, 3rd. June, 1902.
16. The term 'Geddemaniacs' appeared in Quiz, 23rd. January, 1896.
17. 'Kailyairdism' or 'kailyardism' refers to a travestied, fantasized, snail-Scottish-town-mentality oriented sub-nationalism which was to a considerable extent created through the literature (for an English readership) of emigre Scots such as Barrie,



Cronin and Gibbon. Even the 'realist' Gibbon was published initially by Welwyn Garden City publishers, and his portrayal of the 'workers' movement' was far from the reality of contemporary forms of urban-based working class political organisation.

- 17a. Talwin Morris attempted to draw attention away from this aspect of the early work with his defensive comment on MacNair's pastel paintings that the "entire absence of any suggestion of the sensuous (the very term employed by Howarth in his description of MacNair's work) in his treatment of subjects passionate in motive, is pleasantly conspicuous". T. Morris, Concerning the Work of Margaret Macdonald, Frances Macdonald, Charles Mackintosh and Herbert MacNair, Unpublished Article circa 1897, in Kelvingrove Art Galleries, Glasgow.
18. Formal Opening of the Fine Art Exhibition in connection with the Helensburgh School of Art, reported in Helensburgh newspaper, 6th. September, 1882.
19. Paper read at the Church Congress in 1885. Cutting in Newbery Scrapbook, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
20. F. Newbery, 'The Weft of Art in the Warp of City Life'. See note 1 above.
21. Ibid.
22. F. Newbery, Lecture on 'The Principles of Ornament and Decoration' given in the Technical Institute, Dundee, circa 1896. Cutting from unknown newspaper, Newbery Scrapbook, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- 22a. The Glasgow Evening News on 25th. February 1913 presented a short article entitled 'Women and Their Work; Mrs. Fra H. Newbery' which demonstrated that the question of the Art School's role in catering to the kind of craft activities (embroidery, enamelling) perceived as being actually or potentially the preserve of working women had been carefully scrutinised in the early 1890's (Jessie Newbery's embroidery classes were begun in 1894):
- "It is largely owing to Mrs. Newbery's incentive that so many students of the Art School have found their metier in the making of patterns, having learned that it

is better to be a first-class designer than a mediocre dabbler in paint. In teaching, Mrs. Newbery showed the method to the earliest girl students of design, and she was also able to demonstrate by example that there was a very real outlet and demand for work of this class which came well within the sphere of the woman worker, and provided for her a congenial employment into which it was possible to throw her personality, and which would absorb her interest as well as providing a profitable means of existence".

23. R. Schmutzler, Art Nouveau, Thames and Hudson, 1978 (paperback edition), p.213.
24. 'Glasgow School of Art Exhibition of Posters', Glasgow Herald, 22nd. October, 1915.
25. Op. Cit., 7th. September, 1910: "Owing to the exodus of citizens from the city, the BAILIE hears that proprietors of houses inside the urban boundary are at their wits' end to get tenants". The previous month there had been considerable outrage expressed at the Treasurer's claim that "Glasgow is financially in a strong and healthy condition", with sardonic jokes about there being no need for "a big bazaar to gather means for the financial needs of the city", "a charity football match to clear off the municipal indebtedness", or "a jumble sale of old copies of the Town Council Minutes to provide a fund to pay St. Mungo's debts". The Bailie, 31st. August, 1910.
26. Cited by A. Gomme and D. Walker, Architecture of Glasgow, Lund Humphries, London, 1968, p.277.
27. R. Billcliffe, Mackintosh Furniture, Lutterworth Press, Cambridge, Cameron Books, London, 1984, p.198.
28. S. T. Madsen, Sources of Art Nouveau, Da Capo, New York, 1975 edition, p.432.
29. Concerning the Work of Margaret Macdonald, Frances Macdonald, Charles Mackintosh and Herbert MacNair. See note 17a above.



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2. Contemporary Writing (Books, Articles).
3. Secondary Literature (After the Period Studied).



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Mackintosh:

*(a) Lecture on Scottish Baronial Architecture (1891).*

*(b) Lecture on Elizabethan Architecture (early 1890's).*

*(c) Paper on Architecture (1893).*

*(d) Seemliness (1902).*

*(e) Lecture given to a Literary Society (circa 1905).*

*(f) Critique of Ruskin's 'Stones of Venice' (date unknown).*

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