

Rezazadeh-Khamnei, F. (1990). The administration of the arts in Great Britain, the United States of America and Italy. (Unpublished Doctoral thesis, City University London)



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The Administration of the Arts  
in  
Great Britain, The United States of America & Italy

FARIBA REZAZADEH-KHAMNEI

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Ph.D. in Arts Administration

to

THE CITY UNIVERSITY, LONDON  
Department of Arts Policy and Management

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## ABSTRACT

The following discourse takes three countries, each well known in its for its artistic treasury and arts, looks at the way each handles the administration of its arts, and tries to draw lines of similitude as well as disparity between each and the other two. Reference has been made to as many works of research as available to the writer, but a considerable amount of field work has also been undertaken to find facts and examples at first hand.

In the case of each country, specific attention has been paid — in the area of supporting, maintaining and providing for the arts — to the public sector with its various tentacles and the private sector in its different forms and with its different motives. This has been done in such a manner as to make an overall comparison possible and, where applicable, to show where one country could benefit from a practice prevalent in another or how one country's meat could turn out to be another's poison.

The ultimate purpose behind the study is not, however, merely to document statistical facts and figures or to look at the business of administering the arts as a rigid set of rules, regulations or even requirements, but to use the facts and figures obtained in the study and the practical applications observed in the three countries studied to investigate the nature of the quandary in which many seem to find the arts, and to examine the possibility of yet another attempt at resolving it.

History is for others to write after the fact; any one generation's contribution to it can at best be the notation of instances and a description of influences brought to bear upon them. The present work is not trying even to do that. To the writer, the arts are a world unto themselves and even though they have to be made to face economic reality and suffer administrative discipline, this should be done in such a manner as not to curb the artist himself; for as Keynes said, the true artist 'walks where the breath of the spirit blows him: he cannot be told his direction.' It is with that attitude that the writer looks at the subject of arts administration and tries to assess its possibilities, and impossibilities.

## Declaration

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PART ONE

**Introduction**

## CHAPTER ONE

### Overview: On Art and the Arts

To the species *Homo sapiens*, art has been staple since time immemorial and probably precedes the dawn of language itself. It seems reasonable to surmise that what we would today term the "administration" of this art has also been practised, in a way, from almost the beginning of art itself, or we would today have nothing left of the art created during the greater part of man's existence. Yet, though humankind has come to terms with many aspects of existence and provided means for many human requirements, the species seems to be singularly perplexed and wanting in stratagem and means when it comes to the arts and their administration even today. For one thing, as in most things close to human emotions, humankind insists on ebullating about them rather than constructively thinking. For another, it refuses to come down to earth and look for concrete, practical ways of facing and solving what he considers to be 'the problem of the arts'.

The average person, of course, is only minimally concerned about the question. To him (or her), art is an unobtrusive but constant part of daily life. She or he spends probably more time arranging and rearranging the family home and surroundings, choosing clothes or a car, making himself or herself look more presentable, and looking at things that interest him or her, than in working. All that, in a very direct way, is a reflection of his/her artistic aspirations and love for art and the arts. People do not consciously think of it in that manner, though.

On the other hand, there are those who have accepted the role of champion or protagonist or defender where the arts are concerned, who have made the arts their 'business'. These are the well-wishers who keep harping on the 'problem' string, and it is between this group and its sparring partners in the public sector that the problem of the arts remains unsolved. This is at least partially due to the fact that the topic of art and the arts has been used by these two sides for promotional and propagandist purposes and with ulterior motives in mind. In fact, other than in purely academic circles, there has been little serious attention paid (at least during our time) to the arts as such and providing for their smoother progress.

To say that the arts are very intertwined with human emotions would appear to be stating the obvious, yet very peculiar looks seem to be exchanged all round if one states the equally obvious fact that being kneaded with the emotions, the arts are a good instrument for moving people and are more often than not used for that purpose. That fact has in all probability contributed more to the confusion which besets the arts and their administration than any other single factor.

Most arguments concerning the arts, their handling and their welfare are presented in this emotionally charged and emotionally ruled setting and if attempts are made at addressing the topic from a logical platform, the source of the effort is accused of having no 'feeling' for the arts. That may be true in one sense, but if the arts are ever to be given the consideration and fair treatment they deserve, it will have to be from a logical platform and by people well in

control of their emotions that this consideration and fair treatment emanates. Neither sympathy nor empathy is going to be of much value here.

The word 'art' is neither definitive, exclusive nor constant. In fact, for all practical intents and purposes, it should not exist. In many languages it actually does not. Even some source-books in the West — including the Oxford Companion to Art — categorically refuse to include it, either in the singular or plural, amongst words which they consider as bona fide. Where the word is used, it is either approached without any reference to its meaning and definition (taking it for granted that the reader will know what is being addressed) or given a definition of sorts for the limited purpose of the work in hand. When this is tried, a spiralling cascade of examples and a listing of items generally accepted to be 'art' appear in place of a definition. This does not meet with any objection on the part of the recipient because it has been ingrained in him that there is no solid, acceptable definition for 'art' or 'the arts' as there is for 'an orange' or 'geometric shapes' and that hence, anything provided is better than nothing.

The first reference to the word 'art' (at least as far as the central European languages are concerned) is in the Latin base 'ar-': to put together. From it develops the Latin word 'ars' which means craftsmanship. And that is the sense in which it first appears in the English language.

Man's concept of art has been more drastically redefined through the centuries than probably most others, but this process of redefinition has found few



languages more accommodating of its purpose than English. In pre-eighteenth century English the word 'art' referred to almost any skill and certainly to any skill which brought pleasure. By the beginning of the 18th century, the concept of aestheticism had crept into it. The 19th century found it indicating something much more particular: something to which one had to be trained. Artists were no longer ordinary people, but rather professional beings whose work could be understood and appreciated only by those who had themselves undergone a certain education. That shift is clearly documented among other writers and historians by Raymond Williams who also indicates that words like 'aesthetic' and 'artistic' had established themselves in legitimate usage by this time.

Now, at the portals of the 21st century, something strange has taken place: on the one hand, the belief that recognizing and appreciating art requires initiation has evaporated and on the other, the word 'art' has lost most of its concrete sense and has come to stand for an almost ethereal concept and quality. It has acquired a judgmental and evaluative dimension which has in time come to be manipulated by governments and arts champions alike and which has given rise to a host of questions: questions such as whether any body of people is legitimately entitled to bestow on something the privilege of being considered as 'art' or deny it that privilege; whether if any body of people is so entitled, that body is the government, the artist himself, the arts dealer, or the arts theoretician. Throughout this evolution in the meaning of the word, however, there has been little improvement in the exactitude with which it delimits and describes that to which it refers. Consequently, though there is a general notion

of what areas of creative activity the word covers, the question still remains as to whether everything that falls within those limits can be considered art. That dichotomy adds yet another source of confusion for anyone trying to understand and study the subject.

From an academic point of view, there are a series of questions even more fundamental than the foregoing. Is it, for example, at all necessary to define art? The ancient Greek did not even have a word for it and yet they produced some of the world's greatest art — or at least what is today considered to be that. If it is necessary to define art, then who is to provide the definition? Artists? Art critics? So-called 'art experts'? Governments or bodies appointed by them? Academics? It would seem that the most authoritative and logical source would be public opinion — if there is any such thing as independent public opinion. The only reliable way the public could express an opinion in a case of this nature would be through its pocketbooks. This may sound like a re-iteration of a Thatcherite 'free market' slogan but it should not be frowned upon simply on that score for it can more legitimately be frowned upon because it would play some very nasty tricks on haut art, on the heavier, more serious (if one may use the adjective) aspect of the arts, because the greatest proportion of such a public vote would go to the lighter side of entertainment. There is nothing wrong with that, of course, except for the fact that it will, in time, phase out more permanent art.

If, on the other hand, art is not to be defined — and there are those who seriously advocate that it should not — then how is that to be recognized which needs to be looked after, supported and provided with opportunities? Are public

funds simply to be distributed among all and sundry, whoever may approach and ask for them? And if this path is chosen, will it not lead to more harm than good? The questions are endless. Is the only option left to the researcher to take it for granted — as many have done in the past — that there is something called 'art' or 'the arts' and that it needs to be looked after and that since nobody knows what the 'something' is, it becomes the area of government intervention?

For the purposes of this study, three countries have been chosen: Italy, the United States of America and Great Britain (sensu stricto — i.e. excluding Northern Ireland). In all the three countries chosen, attitudes towards what is considered to be 'the problem of the arts' are more or less the same. That is not surprising in so far as attitudes towards most things of whose real nature man is doubtful emanate from the same source and are therefore alike. Many psychologists believe that we fall back upon our primal reactions in things which affect us deeply and with which we cannot cope. Thus, to most of the problems which beset the Homo sapiens, most people everywhere react in almost the same way, whether the problem faced is education, the arts, health, or environment. Strangely enough, these are the very problems which have become worse as time has passed. The present writer suspects that it is not the complexity of the problems themselves which has caused that deadlock but rather the inadequate nature of the devices chosen for their resolution. She has tried, as best she can, to put her case in what follows.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Summary of Previous Research

When work on this thesis was started some ten years ago, arts administration was a relatively new academic field. There had, of course, been many specialized topic studies undertaken on specific aspects of the subject in hand, but it would still be true to say that the actual systematic study of the way in which the arts were administered had not been firmly established as an academic discipline. There was already a wealth of books on the subject of arts administration, but these were mainly by people who had exceptional insight and powers of observation or who were personally talented or involved in the arts and who had the foresight to see that there was dire need for arts administration to be given academic legitimacy and formal standing. There were also a number of books written by academicians all over the world (a great many of them not available to one, unfortunately, because of linguistic barriers) which tried to argue the case for an academic rallying-point in the area of arts administration and to create a platform within the academic world from which a more responsible and rational assessment of the problems and needs of the arts could be made and more realistic and equitable plans and policies proposed.

There were works written about the arts and their administration in each of the three countries under study separately, such as Baldry's *The Case for the Arts* (1981) published in England and Levine's *The Culture Barons* (1976) published in the United States. There were works covering one area in more than one

country, such as Davidson Schuster's 'Supporting the Arts: An International Comparative Study' (1985) and Cummings and Katz' *The Patron State* (1987).

Some of these works covered the general area of concern of the arts and their administration or the arts and their economics or the arts and the state; others, like Bouuaert's 'Taxation of cultural Foundations and Patronage of the Arts in the Member States of the EEC' (1975) limited themselves to a narrower vista.

The writer found a wealth of information in sources other than books, such as the Public Studies Institute's Cultural Trends publications, annual reports from various organizations such as the Gulbenkian Foundation, and statistics published by various public and private institutions.

Among the books which especially fired the imagination of (and inspired) this writer were *The Economics of the Arts* (1976) edited by Mark Blaug, John Pick's *Arts Administration* (1980), and Cummings & Katz' *The Patron State* (1987).

It was in *The Economics of the Arts* that the writer first had to face the reality that the arts, like everything else, are subject to economic laws. In the essays of which the book was composed, the various writers had searchingly discussed various aspects of public subsidies to and public funding of the arts. With some of their views one could identify. Where one could not, one found ample reasoning for opposing arguments.

In John Pick's book, the writer became familiar with the rationale behind arts administration and the shortcomings which beset public sector handling of the arts.

Banfield introduced the writer not only to the American practices in arts administration but also the American understanding of the arts and attitudes towards them.

The quantity of material being published on the arts, their administration, their handling, and their economics has increased noticeably during the years it has taken to compile the present work and in this, the City University and its expanding Department of Arts Policy and Management has had a definite role. A considerable amount of attention has been generated in academic circles over the last few years and a number of authoritative treatises have been published in this respect (Banfield's *Democratic Muse*, Baldry's *Case for the Arts*, Collingwood's *The Principles of Art*, Cummings and Katz' *Patron State*, Fear's *Who Should Fund the Arts*, Appleyard's *The Culture Club*, and the many books of John Pick, to mention a few) to some of which we shall refer in due course. A great deal more research has to be undertaken, however, if a dent is to be made in the armour of persistent attitudes which have evolved over the centuries and which only succeed in derailing the progress the arts so deserve to make.

Other works have been undertaken and accomplished in other areas which have had equal importance for the arts, their study and their administration. These books, though not directly related to the study of the arts, have given those

involved in such studies new outlooks on peripheral considerations which bear upon the subject of art, the arts and their handling. It would be stating the obvious to say that it would be impossible to discuss art support without keeping economic realities in mind, and yet great endeavour seems to be made to keep every mention of the science of economics out of any discussion concerning the arts. There has been extensive writing on economics in general and the economics of the arts in particular. Baumol and Bowen's *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma*, Blaug's *The Economics of the Arts*, Friedman's *Free to Choose* and *Price Theory*, Ginrich's *Business and the Arts* are but a few examples.

In the area of management and administration, too, there has been a great quantity of writing published which anybody serious in the study of arts administration could hardly do without. Bradley and Wilkie's *The Concept of Organization*, Brown's *The Administrative Process in Britain* and Chagy's *The State of the Arts and Corporate Support* are amongst the many works the writer has found helpful in her work.

The present work departs from existing writing on the subject in so far as it does not limit itself either to one country or to any one limited aspect of arts administration. It does not concentrate on the funding of the arts, for example. It does not limit itself to the description of the public and private aspects of arts administration. It does not look at the economics of the arts in isolation from the destiny envisaged for the arts themselves. It takes three major countries (namely Italy, the United States of America and Great Britain) each of great significance in its own way in the arts and their management, examines the

various aspects of the social, political and economic interactions which come to bear upon the arts and then tries to draw lines of comparison and discord between each country and the other two. A central concern throughout the study has been the basic question of the 'problem of the arts' and the nature of this perceived 'problem' and the thesis draws upon the comparisons and contrasts identified to arrive at possible suggestions for their resolution.



## Objectives of the Present Study

This work sets itself the task of discovering whether a meaningful comparison (as far as the arts are concerned) is possible in social, economic and administrative terms between three countries of vastly differing cultural, historical and traditional backgrounds (namely, Italy, the United States of America and Great Britain) and, where this is possible, to make such a comparison. On the basis of this comparison and the common areas of understanding and practice which may exist among the three countries, the study hopes to arrive at definitions of certain concepts and terms involving the arts and their administration on the one hand and economic and social realities on the other which are generally acceptable yet practically precise, in order to prepare the ground for a re-assessment of the real nature of the problems (if any) affecting the arts and their administration and to clear the way for suggestions as to their resolution. In all this, the work primarily uses the visual arts as its model and as an example, though it also bears in mind and touches upon the arts in general where possible and necessary, including the complex problem of trying to identify and define the terms 'art' and 'the arts'.

Different though national traditions, national philosophies and national objectives are as regards culture and the arts, it is more than probable that more or less the same experiences have been undergone and more or less the same experiments undertaken on almost parallel lines by different peoples, especially over the last

hundred years. This can be observed from the fact that there are constant calls for new steps, new methodologies, and new policies in the arts in one country in apparent ignorance of (or disregard for) the outcome of similar steps, methodologies and policies undertaken and pursued in others. It is, therefore, also part of the objective of this study to compare such policies and methodologies as far as possible in the three countries under discussion and to assess their consequences.

The general uncertainty about the meaning and substance of art and the differences of interpretation that exist between different societies make it extremely difficult to arrive at an overall understanding as regards what, exactly, is being discussed, and what is being compared with what. Not only is there a difference of opinion as to what is art and what is not between every person and the next — a lover of classical music and a pop fan may each consider the other's music mere noise — but there are differences of notion from one country to another. In the United States art has always meant something very practical and immediate, and it has always been very closely associated with economic and commercial life. A glance at the *New Yorker* or the *New York Times* will show how very much more the term 'art' is synonymous with commercial activity — activity which may be beneficial in one way or another but is commercial nonetheless. To Italians, art is a much more mythical, romantic and emotionally significant thing. They have a much more deeply-rooted, a much older Renaissance notion of what art is.

All this — the fact that the Italians have continued to adhere to their more traditional notion of the arts, that in Britain the connotations of the word have

changed so markedly over time and that in the United States the term has its own evaluation — leads to a basic quandary whenever a comparison is undertaken between one country and another because it can at times turn out to be rather like comparing apples to oranges.

The same predicament exists when dealing with the concepts of arts policies and administration. The concept of a policy, particularly when it is used in the context of the arts and involves the public sector, is a complicated one and means different things to different groups in each of the countries studied. The general attitude in the United States is, overall, that the arts have nothing to do with the State or the government and that even if these came to give the arts any funds, they should not have any policies in respect of them in return. The British notion of a policy is much closer to politics. Here, when there is talk of a policy what is more often than not being referred to is a political attitude. The Italians have yet another understanding of the word: to them the word policy means a dubious set of plans and a good deal of intentions.

Administration is perhaps an easier concept with which to deal, though here again different countries have different notions of it. The Italians, rather like the French, siphon administration off into a separate activity. To them, administration as a function can co-exist with another more technical function on parallel lines. There can be such a person as a 'pure' administrator, so to speak, who does nothing but administer, leaving the art function to those who know about art. To Italians, administration is a skill in itself. To the British, by contrast, one suspects it is not. There is a distrust here of the notion of a separate administration, an administrative function divorced from an

understanding of the arts. The British attitude tends to be that an administrator of the arts has to be a person or a body very much involved in the artistic activities themselves, that arts administration is not a separate, tagged-on function which merely takes care of the bureaucratic side of things. The bureaucratic function is there, of course, and it has to be taken into account, but the art administrator is primarily expected to start with and from the arts in career terms. To Americans the word administration has a totally different significance from either of the above, and they are not worried about it or too seriously concerned with it. To them administration is the backbone of every human endeavour: whoever undertakes to accomplish anything, single handedly or in collaboration with others, must have a groundwork of administration. Thus, to Americans and to a lesser degree to Italians, administration is benign: to the British it is malignant.

Because 'militant' administration (to coin a phrase) is a function brought to bear upon the arts by governments, it is easy to forget that the word 'administration' and the concept behind it have, overall, a totally different and much less belligerent meaning. Administration is that aspect of management which deals with the practical running of organizations. It is a discipline more generated from within than imposed from without. In fact it is normally only imposed from without if and when the internal mechanism providing it has failed. It has to be there because without it there would be too much wastage of effort and resources for an organization to survive. It is the price man has to pay if he wants to succeed in any form of organized enterprise, profit making or

not. It is not always pleasant but it does not have to be abrasive if it is properly ingrained and does not require extraneous enforcement.

Each of the countries studied has its own complicated traditions in administration as it has in arts. In Britain the administration of the arts has, at least since the Second World War, been carried out through what is known as the arm's length principle. In that phrase is accommodated all the existing attitudes towards the relationship between the arts and the administration inevitably related to them. The use of the phrase primarily tries to indicate that arts administrators are essentially always one step away from the government which provides them with the funds they need, even though it may be that government which appoints them. The aim is to prove that because they are one stage removed, they are on the side of the arts, they start with the arts. When too many doubts creep into that accommodating conviction (as they have been doing of late) objections abound from all quarters as they did with regard to the Arts Council during Mrs Thatcher's term of government when it was felt, rightly or wrongly, that the Arts Council had gone over to the Italian or French model and had closed the traditionally accepted 'arms-length' gap which had existed between it and the government: it was now thinking more about administration than the arts and, under the circumstances, more about politics than administration. That does not, of course, mean that the French or the Italian model is wrong or inferior. It just means that it is not the British model, does not emanate from British traditions, and fails to meet the expectations and answer the needs of this country. It merely states the obvious fact that to each

country that is best (or even just good) which best fits in with the needs and expectations of the people of that particular country.

Political and social attitudes, considerations and values have their own bearing upon the arts and hence the work of studying them. The twentieth century is widely considered to be the age of social and political awakening on a global scale. As such, there are few areas of thought and behaviour today not in some way and to some extent influenced by social values and political beliefs which present themselves as opinions. It is hence not far fetched to think that what is presented in the form of logical conviction can be to a great extent influenced by social and political disposition. On the other hand, anyone dealing with the arts also has to bear political considerations in mind, both in relations with those funding the arts and with the arts world itself.

If the twentieth century is an age of socio-political awakening, it is also an era of economic mesmerization. The moralism which governed nineteenth century Western society gave way, some time between the 1920's and the present, to a new influence called economics which now pervades every aspect of human existence including not only the encouragement, maintenance and administration of the arts but even artistic creativity itself. Economics is a very complicated and uncertain discipline. As such, it is one of the sciences which is more open to poaching than most others. The assumption, rife in most societies and shared by most individuals, that economics is anybody's game is a natural but dangerous one for it seems to give all and sundry licence to assess correlations on false grounds and arrive at unwarranted conclusions.

There are, for example, otherwise very well-informed writers on the arts who do not seem very certain of the distinction between the economic term 'the public sector' and the general concept of 'the public' and so often take the one to be the same as the other where in reality the exact opposite is true. Thus, we may have an otherwise excellent essay on the arts in which 'public support for the arts' is taken for 'the public's support of the arts' and where both are mistaken for 'private support of the arts'. On those false premisses are then built views and theories, in many cases, in the defence or denunciation of attitudes or policies towards and in the arts, quoting the discipline of economics as witness.

The work of comparison, as undertaken here, is thus rendered extremely difficult and hazardous, the more so because there is the added problem of the arts/administration dichotomy. This thesis tries to look neither at the arts as what administration has to be brought to bear upon nor at administration as the necessary evil that besets the arts in this age of mechanical packaging and handling but rather to find a link between the two and to show that there can be administration with a soul and art with a hold on reality. It tries to bridge the arts/business gap and define the nature of the administrative responsibility needed to bring the two together.

To accomplish this, the work takes three vastly different countries, compares their diverse cultural heritages and existing conditions and endeavours to show how in many respects and many ways each one's administration of the arts is not as far removed from that of the others as might appear at first sight.

However, the study also keeps in mind that as the term 'art' is a judgmental one

and the concept of administration open to interpretation, the similarity one observes here may be, to a great extent, more in the usage of terms than in the substance of what is being spoken about and the evenness of handling.

In other words, the work tries to be as wary of the rampant dangers of the subject as prudence dictates and yet as bold in its search for the facts of the case as the task in hand demands. It also endeavours to find a middle-ground between the cultural/artistic aspect of the study on the one hand and the science of management on the other. In trying to do this, it ventures into the world of business — as there is a distinct and growing relationship between business enterprises and artistic activities — and here looks at the various incentives, such as tax exemption, devised to encourage the private sector (particularly the corporate body) to give its financial support to the arts and artistic activities. As an extension of this, the roles of the public and the private sectors in the administration of the arts are also considered and the amount of interference assessed that results from them. Responsibilities are defined as far as possible in the case of each country and, where available, facts and figures reflected to substantiate what has been said.

To facilitate comparisons, every endeavour has been made to analyse the arts structure and operations in each of the three countries on the same basis. Each of the three sections thus begins with an overall discussion of what place the arts hold within the society discussed, how they are generally looked upon by the people and the government, and how they are structured within the social framework. Then, there is a chapter on the roles of the private and public sectors in the administration of the arts, what facilities have been provided by



the government to encourage assistance to the arts, and how legal, economic and administrative regulations and requirements facilitate or impede artistic activities and the functioning of the arts. There is one exception to this in so far as there is an additional chapter included in the Italian study. This is a reasonably full treatment of the Vatican State as the seat of the Holy See because of the Church's substantial role both in the history and present administration of the arts in Italy. This has been undertaken in a separate chapter merely because there is no similar consideration (at least of such extent and import) in the other two countries under study. It may be argued that in so far as the Church is probably the most influential single factor in the arts and culture of Western civilization overall, there should be similar sections in the other two Parts covering the other two countries. It is true that Churches do exist and do influence, to a greater or lesser degree, the arts in the other two countries involved, but the Roman Catholic Church is the oldest and the most organized area of religious influence in Christianity and has the widest network. The Roman Catholic Church has also had the greatest influence on the arts (at least in Italy) and since it has its seat in Vatican City in the heart of Rome, the writer feels it deserves a chapter to itself.

A further section has been devoted to Tourism at the end of the chapter on the Structure of Arts Administration for each of the three countries covered and the question may arise as to why tourism should thus be given a pride of place over all the other economic sectors. Many arts administrators see a close inter-relation between the arts in any country and tourism. Whether this is assumed or factually interpreted is difficult to ascertain. Believing that such an inter-

relationship does exist, many in the arts and tourism sectors especially in England and Italy believe that it is the arts, the cultural artifacts and the artistic heritage of a country, which attract the tourist. There is a certain amount of truth in that hypothesis, of course, but it would be unrealistic to ignore the important part played in tourism by the weather, accessibility of location, type of food, prices in general and other less obvious factors which cannot all be given due consideration in a work of this nature and scope.

In dealing with the concept of tourism, the writer has taken the original (and narrower) view of the term: that which deals with mainly international travel undertaken for pleasure and exploration and which is not for only one day or night or for a specific non-exploratory purpose. The more contemporary (and inflated) concept of tourism, used for example by the English Tourist Board, which includes almost any type of travel for any length of time and any purpose (including one-night visits to friends and relatives and business trips with only business in mind) in tourist statistics can hardly be said to comply with the description given.

Any parallels drawn between countries as far as tourism is concerned are again relative and have to be handled with great caution because, as with the arts, tourism does not have the same significance, scope or place in the three countries studied in each of which it has a different connotation. Italy has had an enormously long tradition in tourism which, in a way, has developed out of the age-old custom of pilgrimage and which is, therefore, intrinsically bound up with the Church and goes back to hundreds of years before the word 'tourism' was coined. Britain, too, has a tradition of international tourism, but it is a

tradition which has not left a favourable impression on the average mind and which has been rather ill-fated in so far as the tourist industry has had a net negative balance over the last decade. The United States, on the other hand, has a limited though growing tradition of international tourism relative to its size and large population. This is understandable not only in so far as the age of the country is concerned but also the nature of its social base. Ever since the discovery of America, multitudes have been going to what is now the United States not to see it as tourists but to stay. Britain and Italy's tourist has been America's settler. This has not only left its impression on the minds of the people who go to the United States but also, in a more detrimental way, on the minds of the U.S. authorities who see in every visitor the threat of an immigrant.

Economically, too, tourism means something different to each of the three countries under discussion. Legal, fiscal and administrative structures are distinctive in each country and tourism fits into the overall economic structure in different manners. Here again, figures derived from tourism must be viewed very carefully and cannot be used as direct input into the rest of the arts picture at random and as received.

Besides all that, there are the countries themselves. Italy is a natural tourist resort. It is the birthplace of western Europe as we know it; it is truly an island in the sun; it is flanked on either side by one of the world's most beautiful seas; and it is populated by some of the most out-going and convivial people in the world. Britain is only partly a natural tourist destination. Although it is scenically very beautiful in places, it is not blessed with too palatable a climate. On the other hand, though her people are not the most sociable and outwardly

the most warm-hearted one can encounter, the world at large seems to find them intriguing and quaint. The United States, despite the fact that it has some of the greatest tourist attractions in the world, is rather un-touristic in as much as it is far too far, far too vast and far too difficult to get into for the rest of the world. However, it has a massive tourist movement within itself and a thriving convention industry. As already stated, however, this writer does not subscribe to that definition of tourism because the convention industry, though it does use the arts and the services of the artists in various ways, does not use them in the same way and to the same extent as tourism. Here, motivations are altogether different from those of the tourist proper.

In the fulfilment of the undertaking it has set itself, the thesis has first and foremost been confronted, like all work of its kind, with the fundamental uncertainty in the two concepts it tries to tackle: the absence of generally accepted, precise and irrefutable definitions for the terms 'art', 'the arts' and 'administration'. It has then had to face the further problem that whereas any concept may be reasonably well understood on a contractual basis by those involved in and dealing with it, it tends to be exclusive of concepts of a different nature and belonging to a different mental discipline. Thus, where administrators may generally understand each other and know what they are talking about amongst themselves in their own subject, they may not necessarily be fortunate to the same extent when they want to accommodate the concept of art within the discipline of administration. The same could be

said to hold true in the instance of artists trying to relate to the meaning,  
mechanisms and principles of administration.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

### Research Methods

It is an important part of this study that each of the three countries chosen for scrutiny be discussed in some detail in order to:

- a) identify and analyse all relevant previous research and publications
- b) cover on site observations, discussions and analysis in each
- c) describe the areas and aspects of the arts and their administration in each country that are to be included in the ultimate comparison,
- d) present the facts and figures from which conclusions may later be drawn, and
- e) show the analogous and homologous terminologies, attitudes, outlooks and evaluations which create the uncertainty of terms and therefore understanding in the arts and their administration.

The descriptions cannot, needless to say, be full because it would take a dissertation as long as history itself to give a full account of how it is, for example, that there are so many works of art in the churches or how each of the three countries under discussion has come to have a type of music quite distinct from the others. Consequently, for practical reasons the study only touches upon certain key points in comparatively recent history and, where appropriate, provides grounds for possible comparisons.

Facts and figures were fairly easily available, even at the time work was started on the thesis, in the case of Britain and the United States. The same could not be said about Italy, however, where for reasons difficult to pinpoint (except in the context of the culture and society involved) it proved almost impossible to acquire any relevant printed material such as studies, papers, brochures or Annual Reports reflecting facts and figures about the workings of the art world.

Despite every assistance from the Italian Cultural Institute in London, no amount of correspondence and telephone contact could dislodge even a morsel of information from the authorities in Rome.

Even before discovering this fact for herself, however, the writer had felt that facts and figures alone would not suffice the purpose in her mind and that first hand experience of the art world and the mechanisms underlying it in each of the three countries chosen would have more significance for the work than any amount of statistics. The stone-walling she received at the hands of the Italian authorities drove that point even further home and made a personal visit to Italy inevitable. Thus, in 1978 the writer spent four weeks in Florence on the first of several trips with the express purpose of gathering information.

Of the four weeks, the first two were spent in visiting every gallery, museum and historic monument in the city at random. This highlighted the fact that the major art venues in the city were the Uffizi Gallery, the Palazzo Vecchio and the Palattina Gallery, centres to which everybody who came to the city was directed as 'musts'. There were other centres of great interest, such as the Great Cathedral, the Santa Maria Novella and the San Marco Church, of course,

which also received a great number of visitors but these, having the added element of religious appeal attached to them, were relinquished by the writer in favour of the Uffizi, Vecchio and Pallatina which were just centres for the arts, places where rulers and art lovers — such as the Medici — had lived and which were related more directly and singularly with the secular history and cultural life of the city itself rather than with the extraneous factor of religion.

Deciding upon what was the most relevant area to look for information and actually finding the information were two different things, however. Italian officialdom proved to be even less forthcoming at first hand than from afar and the writer's attempts at acquiring documented information were thwarted.

Back in London, once again letters and telephone calls were resorted to, this time not with the intent of acquiring the necessary information but of at least pre-arranging a few appointments over a second trip. These attempts proved to be as futile as the previous. Of a pile of letters to the Ministry of Cultural Property and Heritage in Rome and the Uffizi Gallery and Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, not one was graced with an answer of any kind. Thus in May 1980 a second visit was undertaken, this time more with the intent of gathering information off the streets, so to speak. A questionnaire had been designed and duplicated in London and it was hoped that visitors to the arts centres and people in the street would prove more helpful than their official counterparts. The survey based on this questionnaire was carried out but not used in the thesis for technical reasons.



One piece of information gleaned during the course of this second visit was that the refusal of authorities to see and talk to one was not so much because they did not have the time or the inclination but rather because they were hardly ever there. It was also discovered that there is a clear distinction between the state-run arts institutions and those in the private sector. Reference will be made to this again in Part Two.

It only remains to be said that for the reasons given here, almost all the information for what appears about Italy in Part Two and a good proportion of what is reflected in Part Three about the United States was acquired during the course of several trips to those countries between the years 1978 and 1986. On these trips, the writer tried to keep an open and inquisitive mind with respect to the different aspects of the arts and their administration in the two countries and to discover as much about the practical, day to day handling of the arts as possible in order to give substance to the information given out by the authorities. To this end, she spent a good amount of time at the Piazza del Duomo, the Piazza della Signoria, the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, the Sagrestia Nuova the Santa Maria Novella, the Uffizi and Palattina Galleries, the Museum of San Marco and the Bardini Museum in Florence, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. More detailed reference is made to these within the context of the country involved.

The work has not been undertaken for the benefit of any of the countries under discussion, however, nor any of the governments in those countries; nor is it an altruistic and disinterested journey into truth. The purpose in mind has simply

been to take one more conscious and conscientious step towards the process, so well served by many others, of establishing the subject in hand as an area of academic interest and concern and perhaps to raise some questions to which answers might be contributed by others.

PART TWO

**Italy**

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Overview

If one accepts the general concept of a Western culture and art, Italy has probably had a greater measure of influence in creating that concept than most other countries.

Idolatry and, since the advent of monotheism, the quasi-worship of symbols seem to be integral parts of the biological structure of man. A discussion in detail of this trend of thinking on which a good deal of work has been undertaken can hardly be justified (or even possible) here. However, there is ample evidence around to justify at least a suspicion of this nature, and the arts have always been a good area in which to find such evidence. This idolatry or symbol-worship pervades not only man's history but also his various cultures and undertakings, where it also shows itself in various shades and forms and in various disguises. Man first started by making monumental replicas of himself, then of his gods, then of his kings and later of the graves of each of these. The generations which followed made a point of preserving these. Initially this urge to preserve, as archaeological and anthropological studies indicate, was most probably part of man's idolatry, itself based on the biological urge for survival. Later, a sense of aesthetics developed and assumed control. Over the last century or two, that itself has been superseded by a sense of the preservation of things historical and cultural.

It was through Rome and Italy that the aesthetic/artistic aspects of this concern for monuments and monumental art came to pervade Europe. This may appear on the surface to be contraindicative of the fact that there is more involvement in the West European mind with Greek art than Roman or Italian, an assumed fact which would make Greek influence appear to be predominant — after all, the Parthenon has been there for almost as long as eternal Rome itself.

However, what is overlooked is the fact that influential though Greek art has been, there was little direct knowledge or experience of it in mainland Europe until well into the eighteenth century, whereas the Roman influence has been there, live, almost ever since the beginning of Western civilization itself. What is more, it is not only in the arts that Rome has influenced the rest of Europe but also in administration, whose concept and initial practice are also Roman. This does not necessarily mean that Italy is ahead of other countries in its practice of administration — the Industrial Revolution had its birth in Britain and yet Britain is by no means the most advanced industrialized country in the world today — but rather that administration has an older history in Italy and a stronger hold on Italians.

Italy has not only been a country pre-eminent in the arts for several hundred years, but is one of the leading nations of the world in the preservation and promotion of the arts today. However, Italy is so vast a treasury of artistic things that a preliminary study such as this could in no way claim to do anything but serve as an initial step in the study of arts administration in that country.

As has already been indicated, most of what appears in this section is the result of first-hand experience by the writer over the course of several trips to Italy and

has mainly benefited from discussions with academicians and personalities involved with the arts.

One of the things the writer found during these visits was that there was a very clear distinction in Italy between the state-run arts institutions and those run by the private sector.

The world of the public sector galleries and museums showed itself to be one of almost pathological fear as far as releasing any documents or reports and revealing any information was concerned. The system seemed to protect itself in a cocoon of officialdom sealed with bureaucratic red tape. Everything needed official sanction over an official seal. It was as if people in charge and all those around them were terrified of being indicted on counts of divulging national secrets and wanted to pass the buck up the line to higher authority. This paranoia seemed to work itself down even to the level of the gallery attendant and the doorman.

All this was in stark contrast with privately run arts institutions which were cooperative, trusting and full of a spirit of bon homie. The same difference was evident in the administration and daily running of the institutions on the two sides of the divide. The Church, on the other hand, which is the third side of the arts triangle in Italy, had its own attitudes and forms again which were distinct from the other two.

The writer spent a good deal of time on the study of the private sector in the arts in Italy and here, there were any number of sources. Several art dealers and gallery owners were good enough to give the writer the benefit of their

experience. One such person was Luisa Becherucci, Director of the Galleria Masini,<sup>(1)</sup> who was very informed about the mechanisms of the art market and was good enough to introduce the writer to others.

Public sector officialdom was, in contrast, quite penurious, as already stated. Losing all hope in Florence, the writer undertook a trip to Rome in 1980 to see whether any contact could be made with various Ministries and any information at a national level acquired. The answer on both scores was a resounding negative for if public sector co-operation had proved itself to be unlikely at the regional level, it was a downright impossibility at the national.

Despite this lack of co-operation and hence paucity of information, however, what follows tries to give an overall view of how major public galleries, museums and art institutions are run in a country which enjoys the reputation of being one of the most important centres of art and culture in Europe. The structure of these public galleries and museums, the effect of government policies on them and public sector ways and means in promoting artistic events and endeavours will be touched upon and the whole will be followed by a look at the private aspect of artistic activity in Italy.

The Church is the third of the influences which rule the destiny of the arts in Italy, and it has been given a separate chapter unto itself.

In today's world, the study of almost any aspect of the life of a country would be incomplete without a reference to that country's tourism. Italy is a prime

example, especially where one is discussing the arts. The section will therefore take a brief look at this country's tourist trade which is amongst the busiest and the most prolific in the world, which centres around the artistic treasures of the country, and which forms one of the most important sources of income for the Italian government. This is particularly important as tourism is the great invisible export of Italy's which more than compensates for the annual trade deficit and a good part of which in turn goes back into the arts.

The trips to Italy were not entirely the result of the fact that information was not forthcoming in any other manner. Early in the project the writer had decided that it would be beneficial not to depend entirely upon documented facts and figures but also to go to each of the other two countries involved in the study and observe at first hand how things ran. Part of this process of observation was to undertake and execute a personal survey in each of the other two countries. In the case of Italy, an initial search suggested the city of Florence for its long history, its artistic heritage and its present position as one of the eminent centres of art in the world. The personal survey was undertaken and completed in Florence, but had to be excluded from this work because it was not considered representative enough.



Public Support for the Arts and Culture  
Financial Estimates

TABLE 1

Country	Year	Nav'l Gov't Expenditure	Reg'l Gov't Expenditure	Local Gov't Expenditure	Total Direct Public Exp.	Indirect Estimate of Tax Exp.	Total Public Expenditure
GREAT BRITAIN (million pounds)	1983-84	All expenditure 256 (33%)	Support for for RAAs included in other Gov't levels 174 (49%)	520 (67%)	776	15 (?)	791
ITALY (billion lire)	1983-84	All expenditure 1,461 (68%)	200 (9%)	500-600 (?) (23%)	2,161	very small	2,161 +
UNITED STATES (million dollars)	1983-84	All expenditure 266 (38%)	136 ** (19%)	300 (43%)	702	2,356****	3,058

Notes: (?) Guess  
 \* Not possible to separate U.S. equivalents.  
 \*\* Includes only appropriations to State Arts Agencies.  
 \*\*\* Includes arts and humanities for individual and foundation donations.

Source: J. Mark Davidson Schuster, Supporting the Arts: An International Comparative Study

Table 2  
 Per Capita Public Support for the Arts in Great Britain, Italy and the USA in 1983/84  
 (U.S. dollars, rounded)

Country	Per Capita Expenditure	
Great Britain	\$ 10.00	Includes \$0.40 tax expenditure.
Italy	\$ 14.00	Based on a guess for local expenditure (excluding 'Heritage').
United States	\$ 13.00	Including estimate of tax expenditure which is high because available data are based on a broader definition of arts and humanities.
	\$ 3.00	Direct Central Government support.

Source: J. Mark Davidson Schuster, Supporting the Arts: An International Comparative Study

## CHAPTER SIX

# THE STRUCTURE OF ARTS ADMINISTRATION IN ITALY

### *6.1 GENERAL SURVEY*

The Italian government spent 2,161 billion lire on arts in the 1983-84 fiscal year (Table 1) which meant an annual per capita expenditure of \$14 (US). During the same period, per capita arts spending in Great Britain was \$10 and that in the United States \$13 (Table 2). However impressive that may or may not be, the fact remains that a country which is itself one large museum needs boundless resources to maintain the vast treasury of art it houses. That would, it seems fair to say, be beyond the capacity of any government.

Italy has come a long way, economically speaking, since its Unification in 1861 and particularly since the end of World War II. In 1987 it became the world's fifth economic power, behind the United States, Japan, Germany and France but ahead of Britain. It has also, however, inherited the world's vastest (and in most cases oldest) treasury of arts and monuments, neglected for centuries and desperately in need of renovation and protection. Considering all that, it has not done badly at all. However, it would be unrealistic to expect a government — any government no matter how rich, dedicated or industrious — to be able to do all that single-handedly.

Whereas Italy, like any other country, has its public and private sectors in the arts and whereas these two sectors, like everywhere else, interact with each

other, the long arm of government transcends the distinction probably more than in many other places and this is not always beneficial as it tends to confuse issues and introduce customary government red-tape into the private sector, thus slowing the pace of activity.

Generally speaking, the Italian government's role in the structure of the arts world is seen by most of the informed people to whom the writer has spoken as being inhibitive. Officialdom, many think, participates little and interferes much, stepping in with rules and regulations wherever it can. Privately owned galleries are required to have Chamber of Commerce licences for the sale of works of art and police licences for display. Art dealers and gallery managers are held responsible for the authenticity of what they sell and there are numerous municipal, insurance and trade requirements to be met. Italy is not, needless to say, the only country in which such requirements are imposed but there are more regulations to observe and more restrictions to bear in mind than in the other two countries under study and the acquisition of the required permits, etc., involves a greater amount of red-tape. All this dampens enthusiasm and discourages industriousness.

The Italian government seems to be equally all thumbs where the arts are concerned. For one thing, like governments everywhere, it is more concerned about things being seen to be done rather than their actually getting done. For another, it's main business is politics, which makes the arts dependent upon politicians. According to Professor Dogo of the University of Padua,

" Where the government ventures into the sponsorship of an artistic event, the picture tends to be chaotic. This happens to be the case with such

undertakings as the Biennale of Venice, the Treinniale of Milan and the Quadrenniale of Rome."<sup>(2)</sup>

The main reason Professor Dogo gives for this chaos is the fact that the persons put in ultimate charge of most government-sponsored art events are politicians who are trying to arrange and manage affairs through remote control. What is worse is that not only do they not understand and know art, they do not think art either. That, the Professor finds understandable for politicians are, after all, elected and paid to think politics and run political platforms and not the arts.

Professor Dogo's point seems to be particularly true where the event happens to be an exhibition to do with things 'cultural'. Local and municipal authorities have very little say in affairs of this nature since most things to do with culture come under the authority of Regional Superintendents of Fine Arts and these, in turn, come under the Ministry of Culture and Environmental Heritage.

Exhibitions can be financed by municipal authorities but only if and when they have been sanctioned by the various Municipal Aldermen concerned. The acquisition of such approval is not often easy, nor based on rational prerequisites. Knowing the right people seems to be a major factor and political considerations are paramount.

Problems of this nature are not peculiar to Italy, of course. In almost all sophisticated societies (Britain and the United States included, as shall be seen) one of the dilemmas facing the arts is that any assistance from governments is to a greater or lesser degree conditional upon a certain amount of 'say' in the affairs of the arts by those governments, and though this is not unnatural, it is

not either pleasant or beneficial to the arts. In the case of Italy, perhaps the amount of this 'say' is more than in the other two countries studied.

Those involved in the arts in the private sector in Italy are not, however, as suspicious and critical of the government and its stand vis a vis the arts as their counterparts in Britain. The Italians, as already indicated, are mainly of the school of thought which maintains that management and the arts are two separate disciplines and that the administration of the arts is a co-operation between the two disciplines, a co-operation in which the two sides do not necessarily have to merge or even necessarily to understand each other. Thus, as far as the private sector and the public function are concerned, the arts are another one of the areas wherein the two have to co-exist as best they can. This co-existence has not always been a comfortable one. There have been instances where the co-operation between the government and the private sector have led to public scandal. An example of this is the 1985 Giacimenti Culturali project which has so far cost the government £500 million with very little to show for the expenditure.<sup>(3)</sup>

As in every other sector of the economy, the arts in Italy as everywhere else also have to function within a dual system as far as their funding is concerned. Neither government (the public sector) funding nor funding by businesses and the general public (the private sector) is anything new, since one goes back to the beginning of government — irrespective of its type — and the other to the beginning of human society itself. Organized, planned and programmed funding on the scales now prevalent is, however, new in both areas.

## 6.2 THE PUBLIC SECTOR

In the case of Italy, the balance between public and private funding of the so-called 'cultural' or 'traditional' arts is grossly in favour of the public sector: 86.4% as compared to 14.6% in 1981 (Table 3) and almost 100% as against nil in 1985 at least in the case of selected venues (Table 4); whereas, in the 'popular' arts it is the opposite: 1% as against 99% in 1981 (Table 3). The cultural heritage, which includes museums and libraries, receive more than two and a half times the funds that the performing arts get (Table 3). National government expenditure on the arts was almost three times that of local government expenditure and more than seven times that of regional governments (Table 1). In 1985, the central government withdrew its financial support in these proportions from local artistic and cultural initiatives so that in recent years local authorities are estimated to spend several times more, proportionately speaking, than the central government appropriates from its revenues to the arts.

(Figures of actual government expenditure for the arts for five sample years are given in Table 5 to include a sense of proportion. Latest references to the Policy Studies Institute in London and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Monuments and Tourism and Entertainment in Italy have failed to uncover any later figures.)

The central (or national) government plays its own part in administering and funding the arts and culture through three main bodies: the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Monuments, the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and the Office of the Director General for Information, Publishing and Artistic and

Public and private spending on the arts in Italy 1981

'000 million lire

Activity	Central government expenditure		Private expenditure			Total	%	Total	%
	expenditure	%	Household expenditure	Advertising	Total				
<u>'Traditional' arts</u>									
<u>Cultural heritage</u>									
(museums, monuments and excavations, libraries, archives)	518	98.7	7	-	7	1.3	525	100	
Performing arts (music and theatre)	198	62.7	118	-	118	37.3	316	100	
Foreign relations	81				81		81		
Sub-total	797	86.4	125	-	125	14.6	922	100	
<u>'Arts industries'</u>									
Press, publishing, information	105	19.1	3,565	880	4,445	80.9	4,550	100	
Radio and television	11	0.8	718	575	1,293	99.2	1,304	100	
Cinema	23	4.6	449	25	474	95.4	497	100	
Audio-visual equipment and other cultural goods	-	-	7,950	-	7,950	-	7,950	-	
Sub-total	139	1.0	12,682	1,480	14,162	99.0	14,301	100	
<u>Other forms of entertainment and recreation activities</u>									
(sports, juke boxes, events)	-	-	607	-	607	100	607	100	
<u>Total</u>	<u>936</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>13,414</u>	<u>1,480</u>	<u>14,894</u>	<u>94.1</u>	<u>15,830</u>	<u>100</u>	

TABLE 3.  
SOURCE: Yearbook of Cultural Statistics, General Report on the Italian economy.



TABLE 4

Italy

**Public and Private Arts Support**  
(comparative Data January 1985)

Figures are in '000 Lire

	La Fenice		Teatro Stabile di Roma		Orchestra Reg. Emilia-Romagna		Raccolte Civiche Milanesi	
Total Income	23,588,149	100%	7,600,000	100%	5,818,181	100%	800,000	100%
<u>Sources</u>								
Nat Gov't	18,784,000	80%	1,270,000	17%	1,600,000	28%		0%
Other Gov't	400,000	2%	0	0%	900,000	15%	40,000	5%
Local/ Municipal	3,250,000	14%	4,620,000	61%	700,000	12%	760,000	95%
Adm. Fees	1,054,149	4%	1,710,000	23%	2,618,181	45%	0	0%
Individuals, Foundations & Business	100,000	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
All other Income	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

All the Italian organizations cited above are non-profit institutions except for the Raccolte Civiche Milanesi which is a city agency.

SOURCE: Unit of Cultural Assessment/ City University

TABLE 5

Italy

Actual State Expenditure for the Arts\*

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	Nominal	Real
1970	59,886,544	307,373,675
1975	100,856,869	302,187,350
1980	387,466,971	535,091,886
1981	400,914,205	466,423,586
1982	488,221,362	488,221,362

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\* In millions of lire.

Source: Milton C. Cummings, Jr.; Richard S. Katz, The Patron State: Government and the Arts in Europe, North America and Japan.

Scientific Property which oversees the other two. To the two Ministries is allocated about 80% of the government's budget for the arts.

The Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Monuments which was created in 1975 to take over most of the responsibilities previously exercised by the Ministry of Education in the area of culture and the arts, now bears the sole responsibility for historical edifices, antiques, the fine arts and the safeguard of the cultural heritage of the land. It also handles the academic aspect of the arts, establishes and supervises libraries and record libraries and provides information on cultural activities. It has a core of four administrative bureaus:

- the Central Office for the environment, architecture, archeology, the arts, and history
- the Central Office for archives
- the Central Office for books and cultural institutes
- the General Directorate for administration, personnel and research.

The Ministry further has four technical adjuncts:

- the Central Institute for cataloguing & documentation
- the Central Institute for bibliographic information
- the Central Institute for book preservation
- the Central Institute for restorations.

According to the Museums Journal:

"The Ministry's budget, though difficult to ascertain with accuracy, remains the lowest of all government Departments — between 0.3 and 0.8 per cent. of government spending."<sup>(4)</sup>

The Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, created in 1959, consists of two General Directorates: that of general affairs, tourism, and sports and that dealing with entertainment. The General Directorate for Entertainment is responsible for the promotion of music, the theatre, the cinema and performing arts in general. In the carrying out of this responsibility, it provides part of the operating costs of the respective institutions. The Ministry allocates about 90% of its budget to artistic and cultural organizations that have the status of public institutions, these being in Italian terms institutions under the supervision of local authorities (such as municipalities) and appearing on government lists as eligible for private sector sponsorship in return for concessions from the government. Unlike Britain, however, in Italy the government takes a direct hand in the affairs of the arts institutions it supports, at least as far as their spending is concerned. In certain cases, it may even want to appoint their directors (as in the case of some of the major opera houses) in return for the money it places at their disposal. (Of the total amount of 800 billion lire available to the Ministry of Tourism & Entertainment in 1986, half went to thirteen major opera houses.) It should be mentioned, however, that the Italian government has, of late, been increasingly co-operating with the private sector and does not act entirely on its own in every cultural activity or project as it used to. Also, that the account given here of government handling is, per force, simplified and cannot cover every instance.

Each of the two Ministries has an advisory body which acts as a buffer between it and the local authorities. In the case of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, the body is called the National Council for the Cultural Heritage and in the case of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, the National Council for the Performing Arts. The Councils consist of representatives from the regions (of which there are twenty) and other publicly appointed figures as well as independent experts in various fields: eighteen university professors whose fields of study include such diverse areas as architecture, history of art, science and religion. Among the responsibilities of the Councils is the distribution of funds among regional and local authorities. There are also bodies called National Committees acting under the supervision of the regions. Each of these consists of five Subcommittees (Culture, History, Archeology, Libraries and Fine Arts) and each Subcommittee is made up of eight members.

In the late 'sixties, the central government was of the opinion that the cultural development of the land and the restoration of the vast cultural heritage required the sharing of responsibility — made possible only through devolution — among various levels of government hierarchy. As Senator Spitella, former Undersecretary to the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, said in an address to the Council of Europe:

Law has assigned the responsibility of the local cultural heritage and the decentralization of the performing and visual arts to the regions. Also active and up-to-date conservation of the cultural heritage calls for the distribution of funds by local government."<sup>(5)</sup>

To this end, the regions were given a measure of autonomy, as far as the arts were concerned, in 1972.

All the twenty Regioni of the Republic of Italy have their own elected governments which benefit from some legislative autonomy. Five (viz Valle d'Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardegna and Sicilia) have further, special autonomy on ethnic and historical grounds. Each Regione has a statute governing its political organs and the relationship of each to the others. It is these statutes that govern the manner in which the Regione functions within itself. The general electoral system, however, remains under State Law.

Besides the Regioni, the Italian Constitution provides for other administrative entities with independent political direction. These are essentially the Comuni and the Provincie, but other local entities may exist.

The administrative responsibilities of the local entities cover a wide range and there is an increasing tendency towards delegating to local levels all matters that are not of national importance.

The particular attributes of the Provincia are few and not of any great importance. By contrast, the functions and powers of the Comune are expanding to cover almost all matters of immediate civic importance between the citizen and the administration. The obligatory duties of the Comune cover a vast range of activities and to these are then added the optional undertakings which permit, within the limits of local finance, the support of activities such as the theatre, music and art.

So far as the arts and culture are concerned, regional governments act as channels between the central government and local administrations. Thus, local governments respond to the needs of their respective regions while bearing in

mind the overall cultural policies of the central government. Every Regione has an Assessor who supervises most or in certain instances all of its cultural and artistic affairs.

The relationship between the Regioni and local governments on the one hand and the central government on the other is subject to changes in the national political scene. The Museums Journal provides an example:

"While the Christian Democrats ran the government in Rome, and the communists ran the city of Bologna, there was virtually no contact between the two. When Craxi's Socialists formed a coalition government in Rome, Bologna's Socialist deputy mayor found his 'entree', and relationships between ministries and local authority department improved."<sup>(6)</sup>

The local entities — or authorities — more or less duplicate the duties of the two Ministries, where the arts are concerned, on a smaller scale but have their own urban and territorial planning control as well and are responsible for the supervision and safeguard of regional wealth and the care of the cultural environment. In addition to national funding, the regional funding of the arts has its own place and its own part to play. Table 6 gives figures for 1981 as a sample year.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage deals with the area under its influence through a number of agencies which form its 'peripheral' structure as against the central administration already mentioned. Its archaeological, artistic, environmental, architectural and archival interests are served by one such agency called the Superintendencies, of which there are in all sixty six: twenty five for Antiquities, fifteen for Galleries, sixteen for Monuments and ten for Monuments and Galleries. The Superintendencies are directly answerable to the Central Office

Italy

Regional Expenditure on the Arts and Culture  
(Billion Lire)

Activity	Expenditure 1981	Percent
Libraries and Archives	25.7	14%
Museums and Monuments	68.3	37%
Events & Performing Arts	67.9	36%
Cultural Centres	3.6	2%
Cultural Premises	8.8	5%
Press & Book Publishing	4.3	2%
Permanent Education	7.9	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>186.5</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source : Carla Bodo, "Financing the Arts and Culture in Italy," in John Myerscough (ed.), Funding the Arts in Europe (London: The Policy Studies Institute, October 1984).

**TABLE 6**



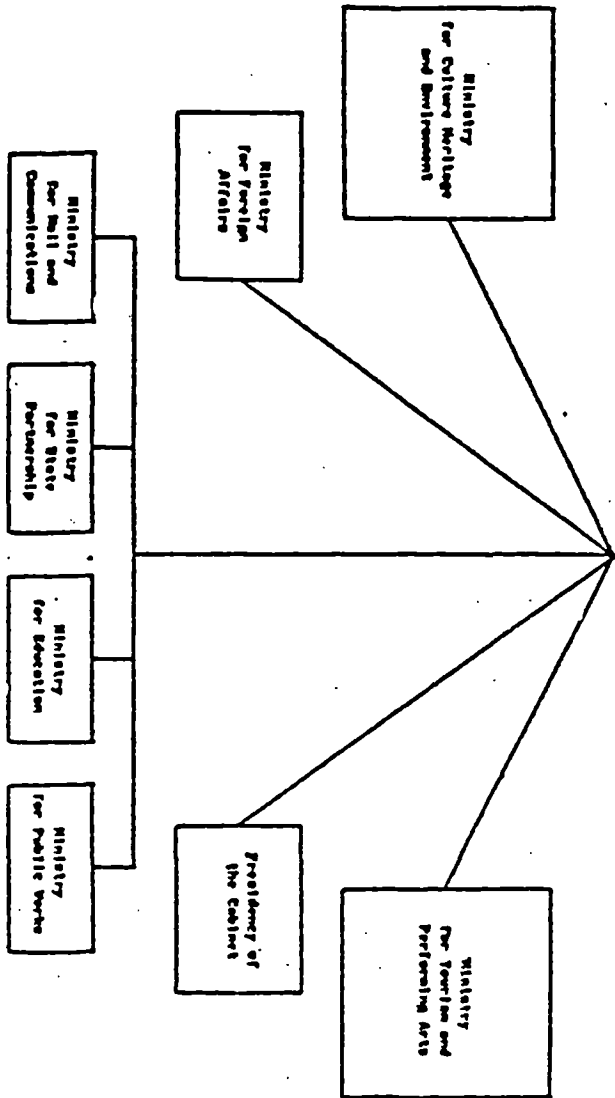
for the environment, architecture, archaeology, the arts and history. They have, on the other hand, overall control over decisions taken by local authorities in any one of the areas concerned. The relationship between the Superintendencies and the areas they serve is extremely complicated in so far as one administrative area of the country may have more than one Superintendency while there may be two or three areas which share one. The efficiency and efficacy of the Superintendencies also vary, some being of great assistance in accelerating the passage of decisions through the inevitable chain of committees and others not so conscientious or keen.

The network of Central and Regional governments, state and provincial administrations, public and semi-official institutions, commissions and committees which are in one way or another influential in and responsible for the world of the arts in Italy is so wide and convoluted and work in so complicated a pattern of parallel and contradictory functions that it is practically impossible to make complete sense of it all and the above is, per force, a much simplified account of a limited aspect of it. The arts administration in practice in the country is, to say the least, multi-layered, multi-faceted and pluralistic and, as such, unknown in its detailed functioning to even many of the innumerable people involved in it. *Figure 1 is a simplified chart of the State administration responsible for culture in Italy.*

The Government of Italy is not ungenerous in its subsidies to art organizations and, according to Professor Andreas, formerly Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in London, pays 80% of the total budget of major public galleries and museums of which there are many. Its interest in the various arts is not uniform

Figure I

STATE ADMINISTRATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR CULTURE IN ITALY



Source: MANUEL EUROPEEN DES AFFAIRES CULTURELLES 1988

and even-handed, however, so that the visual arts suffer in various parts of the country and are still largely dependent on Rome. Every year, the Directors of each State art centre propose the centre's annual budget to the Ministry which discusses and approves (or amends) it. If supplementary funds are requested by the Directors, the proposal is sent to the Court of Audit which is a higher body than the Ministry in matters of finance. Directors of state museums and galleries have the freedom to purchase works of art for their centres but should be prepared and able to justify their decisions to the authorities of the Ministry.<sup>(7)</sup>

The marketing of the arts is a more dearly guarded secret than any other information concerning the arts and is part of the duties of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, concerning whose annual income the writer again failed to get any documented information. Italy's income from tourism is, however, amongst the highest in the world.

Unlike those in the United States, Italian public museums do not normally have the facilities to provide students, visitors and those interested with any technical or artistic information. There is, needless to say, the odd course run by prominent art galleries such as the Uffizi in Florence and one or two in Rome, but financial and legal limitations do not encourage the proliferation of these. To quote Philip Write in *The Museums Journal*:

"Educational activity in museums is haphazard, and is usually bracketed with temporary exhibitions (both coming under the heading of *attività didattica* or educational activities)."<sup>(8)</sup>

(Some universities do, of course, provide lectures, seminars and short-term courses for this purpose. The Università Internazionale di Firenze runs a one-year full-time course in curatorship. Artistic events and the task of announcing and advertising them are the joint responsibility of public art centres and the Ministry of Tourism & Entertainment. Art centres are independent where the promotion of events is concerned through pamphlets, posters, brochures and advertisement in newspapers and magazines. Thus, what agreement or understanding governs the joint responsibility is not quite clear.

Radio and television play major roles in the promotion of artistic activities. According to Prof. Dogo, a sum of approximately 350,000 million lire was spent on the public radio and television networks in 1978. A good part of this must have gone into the promotion of the arts, as the Italian state radio and television networks usually foot the bill for the production of certain programmes about or covering artistic events, particularly the main ones such as the Venice Biennale though this, functioning under the name of 'La Biennale di Venezia' as an Autonomous Agency since 1973, has acquired legal status under public law. Sometimes, however, the expenses of such programmes are shared with the organizers of the events.

There are three state television channels (RAI Uno, RAI Due and RAI Tre) and now almost innumerable private ones in Italy and each city has its own television station. Major cities may have more than one. Milan, with twenty five channels, is currently the richest in this respect.

Major public museums and galleries often work with galleries and museums in other parts of the world in the setting up of artistic events. The exhibition

covering one of the prominent Italian families of the Renaissance, the Gonzagas, organized by the Victoria and Albert museum in 1981 with the co-operation of Bank Cariplo (Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde), was one example of such co-operation. Expenses incurred by events of this kind are usually a matter to be arranged between the governments involved in the project and the private sector element involved in promoting the event. (For the particular exhibition just referred to, the Victoria and Albert undertook to pay most of the expenses involved.)

What has been said — mainly based on conversations and discussions with well-informed people — may give the impression that the public sector or the state does not do much (or at least does not do enough) for the arts in Italy.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. Whatever shortcomings there may be in what the public sector does and however what it does may fall short of the optimal and of the expectations of those interested in the arts, what is at the end of the day done towards the maintenance of the arts in Italy is done mainly by the public sector either directly or through the provision of financial incentives which serve as a primer for the private sector to step in. The vast scope of the artistic heritage and the artistic activity in Italy should itself be taken to bear witness to the tremendous amount of work the state does, despite all criticism.

### *6.3 THE PRIVATE SECTOR*

At the other end of the artistic see-saw is the world of the individual artist, the private gallery, the potential buyer of works of art, and the mechanism which

brings the three together. The writer's personal observations in Italy indicate that all involved in this triangle are in effect left to their own devices, means and trepidations. Burdened by official requirements and denied official guidance and help, they have to find each other, come together, and make a day of it. Here, the Government shows very little interest except to see that its demands are met and its regulations observed. The organization of the one-man exposition (or of collective exhibitions, for that matter) is the responsibility of the private gallery and its manager. In this sink-or-swim endeavour, private galleries across Italy have, in time, created a network of communication and mutual co-operation from which everyone benefits all round. They collect and distribute information, maintain contact, exchange services, distribute catalogues and monographs and generally try to be of assistance to one another and to the public at large. (They are even becoming prominent investors in London commercial galleries.) They are, each and everyone, independent of the government and arrange their own exhibitions and expositions with art dealers and individual artists. They come together under the umbrella of the Italian Art Dealers' Association which tries to protect the interests of the trade.

Private patronage of the arts has been a prominent part of the Italian art scene for centuries. The role once fulfilled by the Church and prominent families like the Medici in the patronage of the arts was taken over by commercial banks and private corporations which became more involved after 1985 when the central government announced that it would, if at all, pay only up to one third of the expenses of any cultural or artistic initiative on the part of local authorities.

Patronage is a long-standing tradition in Italy. It seems to have had its origins in the encouragement provided by the Church in the 13th century for religious and

secular purposes. The trend continued not only in the Church but also in prominent families. By the 16th and 17th centuries, according to the Museums Journal:

"...residences of several patrons such as the Borghese, Ludovisi, Barberini, Chigi and Pamphili became home to extensive collections some of which survive today."<sup>(9)</sup>

Today, private foundations, commercial banks and private firms are the major sources of patronage for the arts.

Long-standing banking houses and some of the Savings Banks patronize the arts and cultural institutions. This tradition is so well-established, however, that in the case of the Savings Banks it has been made compulsory in Italian Law, which stipulates that they allocate 30% of their profits to cultural activities and causes. Allocations and contributions of this kind normally go towards restoration work on buildings marked as part of the cultural heritage of the land or the restoration of historical buildings normally housing the banks themselves — in the latter case provided that at least parts of the building are open to the public for viewing. These banks can also use their donative budgets in the publication of art books or books on the arts for the consumption of their clients and staff. Public and private commercial banks are not similarly obliged, though traditionally they too carry their share of the load. Unlike corporations, which handle some or all administrative duties involved in the sponsoring of a project, banks do not interfere or want to interfere in the step-by-step running of projects and only choose and finance projects offered by local authorities or other government institutions.

Italy's two oldest banking institutions, both founded in the first half of the 16th century, are good examples of the traditional role the banking system (itself an Italian concept) has played in the arts over the centuries. The San Paolo Banking Company of Turin, which is now looked upon more as a public establishment than a private company, has been involved in a number of restoration programmes the most important of which has been the restoration and transformation of the Turin Egyptian Museum, one of the most important museums on Egyptology in the world. The Turin Savings Bank, along with the other 92 savings banks and providential funds in the country have, besides the compulsory 30% of their net profits they have to allocate to charities as already pointed out, have been involved in various projects such as the Verdi Festival of Milan, exhibitions in various places, restoration work as in the Medici Chapel in Florence, annual contributions to theatres, publication of books on the arts and related subjects and even purchase of works of art. These, however, are not the only banks or funds involved in this type of activity. Private banks, old and new, are also involved.

Though the Government does not provide direct aid to the arts in the private sector, its general policy towards the arts is partially based on indirect financial assistance through various means such as tax incentives for individuals, charitable organizations and corporations that give financial aid to the arts in the form of gifts, donations or sponsorships. As Ignatius Claeys Bouuaert says, "Italy is among the countries that now have clearly recognizable charitable deduction provisions in their income tax laws."<sup>(10)</sup> To this we shall return in the section on Tax Exemption.



Sponsorship of cultural activities and the arts, on the other hand, has almost always been traditionally the function of "corporate houses", a function which has now been taken over by their modern equivalents, firms and corporations. The tradition has of late found an ally in a market force called advertising which today masquerades as art sponsorship. This is done mainly through the medium of the press, radios or television stations. The mechanisms involved are more or less the same.

Works of art (particularly the Italian variety) are in great demand both nationally and internationally. Any firm answering an aspect of that demand through launching or helping to launch artistic exhibitions, events or whatever, creates a favourable image for itself in the eyes of the grateful public and its own art-loving clientele and hence a favourable image for its services or products. Olivetti, the world-famous Italian manufacturer of computers, calculators and mechanical, electronic and computerized typewriters is particularly active in this field, a very good example of which is the restoration of Leonardo da Vinci's 'The Last Supper' in the Sta Maria delle Grazie in Milan in 1978. Assitalia, the enormous insurance firm which finances some of the most important music festivals (the Nilla Medicis and Spotella) and art exhibitions in Italy, and Montedison, the large private holding company, are other important sponsors of this type.

Sponsorship of the arts — that is, where businesses support the arts in return for certain concessions such as the free advertising of their names and the acknowledgement of their contribution — is a relatively new concept in Italy, but is growing.

Art sponsorship has been going through a period of rapid growth in Italy over the last twenty years. Figures available (though perhaps not entirely reliable) show that from 217.5 million Ecus in 1981, private sponsorship of the arts had risen to 652.5 million Ecus. During the same period, private sponsorship of the arts in Britain had risen from 10 million Ecus to 40 million, a higher rate of growth but far below Italy in absolute amounts.<sup>(11)</sup> It is virtually impossible to assess the actual number of firms which are involved in sponsorship, but at an approximation, they would stand between 100 and 1000 in the case of Italy and Great Britain as against 25000 in the United States. If the number of firms practising sponsorship could be taken to be more or less the same in Britain and Italy, the figures already quoted could be taken as being indicative of the fact that the amount of money spent on the arts by the average Italian firm is more than ten times spent by its British counterpart.

The co-operation between the public and the private sectors in recent years can be seen in the so-called *Giacimenti Culturali* project launched in 1986 (unfinished to date) to catalogue the national patrimony, in which the private sector's share was equal to £560 million as against the approximate £380 million earmarked by the government.

Foundations are also an important part of the private sector which contribute to the arts. Although the first private foundations emerged after World War II, they have by now well established themselves as integral parts of the world of arts in Italy. A Law passed in 1976 — to which reference will later be made — recognizes their independence so long as their aims are strictly philanthropic, educational or scientific. Among the most notable foundations of this sort are

the Giorgino Cini Foundation of Venice whose main objective is tackling the immediate problems of the arts in Venice, the Adriano Olivetti Foundation which concentrates its activities in the human sciences, the Carlo Maurilio Lerici Foundation which is mainly involved with archaeological research, the Allesandro Manzoni Foundation for the protection of the cultural heritage and the Napoli Novantanove Foundation (Naples 99).

There are three main types of private foundations:

- Those that are founded by big corporations or banks to fulfil their philanthropic aspirations, receive their funds from the corporations themselves and have separate and independent Boards of Directors usually made up of artists, historians and scientists. A good example is the Pirelli Foundation set up by the San Paolo Banking Company already discussed.
- Those (like the Agnelli Foundation established by Fiat) set up by families owning the totality or majority of the shares of a corporation
- Those established by individual entrepreneurs or in memory of a deceased member of a family (like Naples 99) which usually carry out their cultural and scientific activities with the help of sponsors they in turn find for their projects and thus themselves act as intermediary bodies between the government and other private sponsors.

Apart from the initial capital that may come from the family fortune or a legacy left to them, foundations provide for their budget either from donations by individuals or contributions from corporations for whom they in return provide

publicity and who write down the sums they have provided to 'operational expenses' deductible from their pre-tax incomes.

Besides private foundations established by corporations or banks, there are other institutions founded and funded by private firms only to assist them with their philanthropic undertakings. Among these are the Association of Italian Savings Banks and the Association of Italian Banks whose main responsibility is to prepare artistic and arts books for member banks, their staff and their clients. There are also smaller organizations created by big firms to help them choose the right cultural projects to sponsor.

#### ***6.4 TAX EXEMPTION***

The Italian Government if nothing else has to contend with at least one herculean task: that of looking after what is probably the vastest and richest of cultural and artistic heritages in the world. That in itself would seem sufficient to beggar even the richest nation in the world, which Italy is definitely not. Art and culture is not, however, only a thing to be inherited and, in Italy as everywhere else, is an ever-regenerating function of the present as well as the past. This in turn imposes its own conditions and dictates its own demands. Thus a government — that of Italy in the present instance — has the dual task of tending to what has been left to the nation by its predecessors while at the same time catering for posterity by encouraging and promoting contemporary trends. In the case of this particular country, there is also the vital question of tourism to be kept in mind and catered to. It is therefore understandable that in

the fulfillment of this labour of love the government, in Italy as in most Western countries nowadays, should turn to the public for a helping hand. Fortunately, the same forces (one spiritual one involving the prestige of the nation and one secular one rooted in the desire for gains) which drive governments also motivate the private sector.

Patronage of the arts is nothing new in Italy or to the Italians, its roots going back to isolated instances such as that of Gaius Maecenas two thousand years ago. In fact, there are few names as prominent in the annals of history as that of the Medici when it comes to patronizing the arts. As the Medici were prominent financiers and bankers, it is even to date tradition among bankers in Italy, as pointed out, to patronize the arts and other cultural causes. Modern man has, however, lost most of that dreamy look in his eye and has through time become more and more a worshipper of Mammon and will do little for any other god. So, though he will abide by old traditions and values, he needs some manner of persuasion to do so. That persuasion the government provides in the form of certain concessions to those who give financial assistance to the arts and to things cultural in general.

In Italy, giving to cultural causes is one of the very few categories of financial contributions eligible for some (and in a few cases total) tax exemption. The law on the subject is not very clear but seems to indicate that there are two types of activity which are eligible for sponsorship: cultural events such as the theatre, the opera, art exhibitions, etc., and conservation and restoration projects involving the cultural heritage. From all accounts, the government has

a long list of arts and cultural institutions to which any contributions made are partly or wholly tax-exempted. These institutions can be owned by the State itself (e.g. a monument of historic importance) or by private non-profit organizations (e.g. various Foundations).

Despite the rather tight control maintained by the government and the local authorities on what sections and areas can benefit from the contributions of the private sector, major firms seem to have a wide variety of choices when it comes to the making of donations or the granting of sponsorships or patronages. Their contributions can be in the form of sharing or even accepting the whole of the cost of some restoration work launched by the government or a foundation, taking part in or independently executing a cultural project like a music festival, financing art exhibitions, or organizing national and international conferences on the various aspects of culture or the arts.

The total amount that private firms spend on arts and culture in Italy far exceeds that of most other European countries and is "eight to ten times higher than in France or the United Kingdom."<sup>(12)</sup> What is more, it is growing at a rapid pace, as already stated in the section on the Private Sector.

If a firm makes donations to a charitable organization without reaping the benefit in return of publicity, then the law is very clear on the issue of how much tax relief it can claim: for any donations made to non-profit institutions active in the field of entertainment (opera, cinema, theatre, dance, etc.) it can claim full tax deduction for either up to a maximum of 2% of the company's declared net income or 5% of total salaries paid to the firm's employees for the

year in which the contribution was made. If, however, the donation is towards a cultural purpose (e.g. restoration of historic monuments, works of art, public institutions or cultural or scientific exhibitions) there is no ceiling for the amount of tax exemption allowed. The government does, however, exert a certain amount of control over such donations: it stipulates that the property to which the donation is made must be among those approved and listed, or if the funds are to be used for any kind of work on any other property, that prior approval of the government is obtained. In addition to this, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Monuments has to issue a post-facto confirmation that the sum involved was in fact used, in toto, for the purpose claimed and during the period envisaged.

The above are conditions and provisions stipulated with regard to donations generally known as patronage — contributions made to charitable causes.

As already mentioned (section on the Private Sector) sponsorship is another form of art support exercised by a great many corporate bodies. Large firms allocate large sums of money to approved projects or the launching of independent schemes and projects that have the prior approval of the government. They also co-finance various restoration projects and international exhibitions. In order to benefit from any concessions from the government, such firms are required to provide tax authorities with proof as regards their operating costs and with invoices as regards the work done. Once the authorities are satisfied with the documents, the sums involved are included in the overall costs of the firm under the heading of 'Public Relations' prior to the

calculation of tax and hence before profits are declared. The expenses borne are deductible during the same fiscal year or over three years.

Tax exemption for the various types of sponsorship can be summarized as:

- "a. Expenses incurred by entities or individuals who are obliged to maintain or restore art works belonging to Italy's artistic patrimony.
- b. Cash donations to the State or institutions which carry out studies or research of cultural or artistic value for the purchase, maintenance or restoration of works having artistic interest.
- c. Funds granted to organized expositions or fairs which have cultural interest and provide material for research on cultural matters provided prior approval is obtained from the relevant committee of the National Council for cultural and environmental goods."<sup>(13)</sup>

Apart from the publicity that such firms may enjoy through the sponsorship of cultural events, the government (through its Office of the Director General for Information, Publishing and Literary, Artistic and Scientific Property at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers) may additionally support them by commissioning the media to give extra coverage to the event. This in a way 'loads' the publicity aspect, thus encouraging sponsorship as a policy. Projects that can enjoy such patronization on the part of the government are subject to certain conditions:

- they have to be joint efforts between public cultural institutions and private sponsors, as indicated in the section on the Private Sector
- firms sponsoring such projects have to commit themselves to continuous financial support of the project or event they have adopted for a certain minimum period, usually a number of years.



When it comes to philanthropic activities, banks can duplicate what corporations do, and in return they too benefit from the publicity engendered and improve their public image.

In 1967 the Italian Parliament passed a law (already referred to) which not only recognized the independence of foundations but also rendered all foundations involved in non-profit, philanthropic and scientific undertakings exempt from taxes. What is more, all contributions and donations made to them are subject to tax exemption as well.

Contributions by individuals are also a part of what forms the financial life-line of artistic and cultural institutions but are of only marginal importance when compared with corporations and foundations. What is more, the same tax provisions apply to them, according to laws passed in 1982 and 1985: they are limited in such tax-deductible donations to 2% of their incomes and may not derive any publicity benefits on the side.

Everything considered, the tax-exemption stratagem seems to be an effective instrument in the funding of the arts. Like any other strategy, it of course has its positive and negative points both for the government and the private sector, for the giver as well as the taker. As far as the government is concerned, the advantages are obvious. The country has one of the richest of cultural and artistic heritages in the world for which the government has, ultimately, the sole responsibility. The fulfillment of this responsibility is a herculean undertaking both as far as costs are concerned and in the practical handling of the vast

numbers of projects and coverage of areas. Any devolution to the private sector is not only cost-effective but also an escape from traditionally long-winded government red tape. What is more, it is a weight off the government's shoulders. By encouraging private foundations to support philanthropic projects the government indirectly reduces unemployment (foundations are free to employ hands for specific projects where the government is normally not) and benefits from peripheral advantages such as the training of youth through short-term assignments and of course the obvious financial, social and hence political advantages.

The scheme is not, however, entirely advantageous as far as the government is concerned. The very control the government has to exercise over the philanthropic activities of the private sector can, in a way, be considered to be a disadvantage, for through it the government is indirectly buying back at least part of the responsibility it was trying to shed when it invited the private sector in. For governments, prone as they are to red tape confusion, the implementation of restrictions on other bodies (as on the private sector in this case) can mean an even further spiralling bout of fumbling and red tape. (In practice, Ministries and other government agencies such as the local authorities are bogged down in work related to such control and it takes an average of two years for an application for sponsorship to do the round of the official maze.)

Another disadvantage is embodied in the fact that the private sector is not assisting the arts out of purely altruistic motives: in doing so it is looking after its own interests in the form of the tax exemptions it receives. The tax-exemption the private sector receives is money the government forgoes. Thus,

the government is funding the arts itself again, in a roundabout way. In the case of Italy, there is the added disadvantage for the government that no ceiling has been envisaged for the deductions on corporate sponsorship. The law merely says such deductions should be within reasonable limits, and 'reasonable' is a very unreasonable watermark.

As far as private-sector contributors to and supporters of the arts are concerned, there are again both advantages and disadvantages in existing tax exemption practices. The major advantages, viz. the amounts added to net incomes and the publicity value received, have already been discussed. Over and above these, the government chooses (on a regular basis) some of the projects sponsored by large corporations for special coverage by the media, including the State-owned television network which operates three channels. There are also latent advantages for corporations that sponsor scientific projects which, being considered of ultimate benefit to science and hence human society, are in effect looked upon with the same benevolent eye as welfare and charitable institutions and enjoy tax exemption. Besides, the corporations opting for this area of work see to it that they sponsor scientific projects whose activities tend to benefit their own lots somewhere along the line.

The main disadvantage for private-sector contributors is that they have to bear the burden of government red tape and officialdom every time they want to venture into any philanthropic work and that they have to jump a number of hurdles before they are even accepted and allowed to do so.

Important as tax incentives are in encouraging assistance to the arts, the rate of tax imposed on the public's purchase of art objects and use of artistic facilities and events (or, to be exact, the tax not imposed on them) is, in all probability, even more important. The less governments tax the production and distribution of books, films and music and the staging of concerts and plays, the more people will find it within their means to buy the products and go to the performances or screenings. (Whether this is actually so, whether lower prices either through government subsidy or price control mechanisms is at all instrumental to any notable degree in bringing more custom to the arts, has proved to be a dubious or at best very controversial premiss which has been dealt with elsewhere in this thesis) This has a dual effect: it generates more money within the art industries and amongst the artists, and it inculcates the "arts habit" so to speak: the inner drive to participate in the arts even if you are only a member of the audience. The forming of that art habit will do more for the welfare of a country's arts than any tax exemption governments may give, despite the fact that Italy is one of the fairer countries in this respect. (Table 1).

The Italian government's financial assistance to the private sector of the arts, though limited compared to that of the United States, for example, is thus not as scant as it might initially appear to be for it has hidden corners that are not openly obvious to the hurried eye.

At the other extreme of the private sector, on the other hand, the individual has, in a way, been left holding the short end of the stick in so far as he cannot

sponsor artistic or cultural events or projects independently. This should be obvious by now in the light of what has been said about tax exemption laws in Italy. All he can do is to make his meagre donation under the category of 'patronage', which restricts him to a maximum of 2% of his income if he wants full tax exemption. Private donation to philanthropic (and hence artistic or cultural) causes has therefore been limited to a traditional role which is very marginal in the total picture of the overall private-sector contribution.

## *6.5 TOURISM*

Tourism is a well-established industry in Italy and the most successful area of the country's economy. It comprises over two hundred and fifty thousand companies which, among them, employ a million people. It runs forty two thousand hotels with a total of over five and a half million rooms. And it has, amongst other things, ninety thousand restaurants, a hundred and twenty thousand bars and over six thousand five hundred night clubs.<sup>(14)</sup> The extent of the accommodation it offered in 1982 was larger than that provided by France and Spain put together. In fact tourism is of such expanse and importance to Italy that it was given its own Ministry in 1959.

One of the Departments of the Ministry of Tourism is called the National Authority for Italian Tourism (ENIT) and it is this body to which the responsibility of promoting and marketing the arts has been delegated. ENIT, it is said, provides those interested with publications, information, materials and various facilities needed for the promotion of artistic activities throughout the country.

There seems to be a good deal of co-operation and collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism on the one hand and museums and art galleries on the other.

Through ENIT, the Ministry of Tourism also provides educational programmes for students. These programmes include competitions, study tours and visits, publications and various facilities for the young. Under this scheme, ENIT also provides information about artistic events and programmes to teachers who, in turn, inform their students. (All this, however, seems to stop at the level of tourism as a consumption commodity, for when the writer asked for facts and figures concerning the turnover, intake and expenditure of the Authority and the Ministry she was politely but firmly stonewalled.)

Founded in 1919, the Authority (also known as the Italian Tourist Office) mounts campaigns to attract foreign visitors to Italy and it accomplishes this through the conduct of market surveys and regular consultation with its representatives all over the world which reflect themselves in articles, films, television programmes, exhibitions and direct advertising world-wide.

Besides being one of the major money-making industries, tourism also generates a considerable number of jobs. Published figures show that while the levels of employment in areas such as manufacturing and agriculture dropped dramatically between 1970 and 1980, jobs in the tourist industry increased in number by about 13%.<sup>(15)</sup> They also show that the gross product in that industry rose by an astonishing 506.8% over the period.

The number of foreign tourists who came to Italy in 1978 was just over 15.25 million. By 1983 that number had risen to just under 18.5 million and brought Italy the enviable total of 13.721 thousand million lire (Figure 2). Of the 15.5 million visitors, almost 1.25 million were from Britain and over 2.7 million from the United States. That places tourism in the position of a thriving industry which plays a decisive role in raising Italy's Gross National Product and stabilizing its balance of payments. Yet all this, cost the Italian Government a mere 0.3% of its entire foreign exchange earnings in the year 1983 and was registered as only 0.5% of its total expenditure.<sup>(16)</sup>

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# THE VATICAN

In so far as the Vatican is a sovereign state independent of mainland Italy and in so far as this sovereign state is probably the world's largest and most important treasury of art, it deserves in every way to be treated on its own and separately from Italy proper. However, the fact that the Vatican is being treated separately does not mean that the writer has failed to see and appreciate the interdependent nature of the two political entities. The Vatican is as much Italy as Italy itself, and when it comes to Italian art, the Vatican is, if possible, even more Italy than Italy itself. For the Vatican has had (and still has) unfathomable influence not only on the Italian people but also on Italian art.

The Roman Catholic Church has, through the greater part of the history of Christianity, been the emotional, spiritual and even political heart of Italy. The political dismemberment of the Italian peninsula after the collapse of the Roman Empire gave regional traditions and local schools of art the opportunity to flower and assert themselves. Still, there has always been a certain homology in Italian art which can be traced back to the 11th and 12th centuries, the Romanesque and the flourishing of the Gothic style of the 13th century. This homologous nature is probably more than anything else due to the influence of religion. Right up to the 15th century, Italian art (whatever the regional background, whichever the school) revolved around religion; and it was this affinity for



religion which formed the unified closeness between the arts (architecture, painting, sculpture, music) and the pulse of the country.

With the triumph of the papacy over the Roman Empire in the 13th century, religion prevailed itself even more vigorously, so that even the secular art of the Renaissance, with its cult of cherishing the human body, was so far influenced as to make allowances for religious morality, as we can see in Michelangelo's Pieta in St. Peter's and his David in Florence.

At least one reason behind the undeniable influence of the Christian faith on Italian arts is the fact that the Church, particularly after the 10th century, was the main patron of these arts, the source of icons or holy images and motifs used in them, and the main influence in Christian architecture.

The patronage of the arts by the Church during the middle ages is too broad and intricate a subject to be detailed in this work. Suffice it to say that the effect of the vast financial support provided by the Church was to a great extent instrumental in veering artistic talent towards religious expression, thus tilting the balance towards dominance of religious themes.

After the Great Schism in the early 15th century, the papacy found itself lacking in grace and public acceptability and, in order to enhance its prestige, undertook on the one hand a more humanistic role and on the other a more worldly one, collecting and commissioning works of art for the sake of art itself. Many of the great Florentine artists who were studying and researching in Rome were commissioned to do artistic projects for the Church. The Vatican library decorated by Raphael and the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel painted by

Michelangelo were done in this vein and are witness to this glamourization of the Church.

Every force, however, creates a counter-force and this period of humanistic interest in the Church inevitably sowed the seeds of a reactionary wave which, for the next two hundred years, dampened the artistic fervour of the Renaissance.

The 18th century saw a classical revival which once again made Italy the centre of interest. Obviously, the papacy was not going to be left out of it all and so we see a renewed period of artistic interest in the Vatican which placed the popes among the major excavators and collectors of the time. The result was that the Vatican collections became so vast as to require the construction, over a period of about two hundred years, of a great complex of museums to house the enormous treasures of the Church. Various paintings, sculptures and works of art accumulated by the popes since the beginning of the 15th century far and wide in the papal palaces were collected and brought to the Vatican and were officially declared indivisible in 1871, so that the Vatican museums and collections are today among the largest and most important in the world.

But for a formal treaty between the Pope and the Italian Government in 1929 (the Concordat recognizing Vatican City as an independent State within Italy) there is nothing to set the Vatican apart from Rome and Italy. As an independent State, it does not overtly interfere in anything to do with Italy as a sovereign state. As a moral, cultural and religious force, it rules the hearts and minds of the majority of the Italian people and thus sways the whole structure

of Italy. Patrick Smith, former BBC correspondent in Rome, puts this in another manner in his book 'Desk in Rome':

"After 1870 and the unification of Italy, the Pope, as is well known, called himself 'the prisoner of the Vatican'. Few would deny, even today, that apart from his religious authority, he wields political and social influence far beyond the confines of his small kingdom. Many Italians still like to regard him as the indirect monarch of their country. Certainly, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church makes itself felt in many fields: in finance, in politics, in education and in all forms of entertainment, to mention but a few." (17)

Most Italians agree that the hold of the Roman Catholic Church is not as strong, especially on the younger generation, as it was before World War II. Be that as it may, the impression the writer received during her visits to Italy between the years 1978 and 1991, was one of tremendous influence wielded by the Vatican.

How does this country within a country administer its larger-than-life treasury of art? The running of an art centre as vast and as richly endowed as St. Peter's alone is, obviously, no mean task. Add to this the fact that there are other treasuries within Vatican City and that the Holy See has extraterritoriality (and hence jurisdiction) over twelve churches and palaces within the city of Rome alone and moral, financial and administrative sway over the whole of the vast network of Catholicism all across the world, and one will see that it takes no mean administrative organization and prowess to ensure the smooth running of the system.

Unfortunately, what was said in the Introduction about the difficulties of acquiring reliable and authoritative information in Italy holds doubly true for the Vatican. Over and above the national Italian disrespect for facts and figures and

shying away from anything but the business of life practical, the institution of the Church adds an element of secrecy and mystery to the whole picture peculiar to itself. Consequently, not only does one not come by any tangible information as regards the Vatican's handling of its art treasures, one is even made to feel guilty at having shown any interest , leave alone persevering.

Whether or not there are any guidelines for the administration of the arts within the Vatican and the Catholic Church, the writer could never establish.

Nonetheless, the vast network functions and it functions well. Perhaps the management of the arts has become part of the daily business of living to the Italians. Perhaps there exists a special intelligence factor in one Italian gene which provides the Italians with a genius for looking after and managing their endless treasury of arts without even trying. Perhaps the Vatican, being a State unto itself, runs its own museums and art treasuries through direct funding or even through the labour of love.

## PART TWO

# NOTES

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**PART THREE**

**The United States of America**

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Overview

" It is a subject that to every American ought to be of surpassing interest; for, whether he beholds the Hudson mingling waters with the Atlantic, explores the central wilds of this continent, or stands on the margin of the distant Oregon, he is still in the midst of American scenery — it is his own land; its beauty, its magnificence, its sublimity — all are his; and how undeserving of such a birthright, if he can turn towards it an unobserving eye, an unaffected heart."

Thomas Cole<sup>(1)</sup>

The above quotation, though from a reasonably recent American artist of repute moved by national pride, could very well have been the swelling of an Inca, Aztec or even a Mayan heart many centuries ago. For the New World is only new to the Old World: to its own native people, it must have been ageless, endless and boundless. The Mayan peasant, going about his work in the fields of Central America a thousand years before the birth of Christ, must have been as awe-stricken with the vastness of his universe and its incomparable beauty as Thomas Cole was in the 19th century — and as proud of his cultural and artistic heritage.

America is unique if in nothing else at least in that it is for all intents and purposes the only member of the world community with a reincarnation within historical memory. Every part of the old world must have been 'discovered' by man at some time, but those discoveries are lost in the mist of time, and must have been comparatively less significant since they were discoveries not of

thriving cultures but of masses of land. The nearest thing to the discovery of America is perhaps that of Australia, and yet even that is vastly different. America was a total world which had been going its own way, living its own life, nurturing its own cultures and civilization along parallel lines with the world which discovered it. It was not discovered to the main body of the existing world in its infancy but in its old age. As such, it is today the end result of a fusion of two fully grown, fully mature worlds.

On the face of it, it may be true that American art is more pronouncedly influenced by European examples, but if it does not reflect a good deal of the influence of pre-Columbian art, it cannot really be considered to be American but rather the off-shoot of European art produced in America and by Europeans born in America.

When Columbus opened up the New World to Europeans, he found a continent which had everything. It is true that most of the things it had did not make sense or mean very much to the European explorer, but in their own right they were the tools of a fully developed culture or group of cultures in a fully developed civilization. The fact that that civilization had been fledging on separate and parallel lines to that of the Old World did not in any way detract from it or cast the shadow of a doubt on its authenticity or its achievements. Part of the culture and civilization the white man discovered in the New World was an artistic heritage not only of amazing originality but also amazing beauty. It was anything but primitive, anything but banal, anything but superficial and amateurish. Every sign and shape in it had its own meaning and its own



significance. And for material, it drew upon the imagination of free-roaming races in the almost endless expanse of magnificent landscape that was America. It was to this rich tradition that the European newcomer had to bond himself, in art as in everything else.

Apart from the tradition of native America, however, the general shape of American art seen today is also rooted in the later settlers who came to the New World (especially the British and the Spanish) and, through them, the rest of Europe. American art, as the term is used today, is therefore a blend of all this; or rather was until the 18th century. With American independence came the development of tastes and thoughts in local schools of which we find examples in the work of Ralph Earl. It was the continuation of these schools which, in time, gave American art its own distinct character and individual style. Although it is extremely difficult — if not impossible — to trace the absolute beginnings of this individuality, it could safely be said that it had achieved prominence by the end of the eighteenth century.

By mid-nineteenth century, during the period following the war of 1812, the assertive, confident and chauvinistic spirit of the time, expressed in the work of people like Cole with a quotation from whom this Chapter started, can be seen as the first steps towards a conscious separation of identities between American art and that of Europe. By the second half of the nineteenth century, American artists were in a heated conflict between a national approach toward their work and the dominance the imported French Impressionism was trying to exercise. It was at this time that John Durand reviewed the place of American art in history in perhaps more realistic terms:

" What America needs is a public gallery (like the Kensington Museum in London) where the works of American artists can be seen by themselves, separate from all other schools and taken for what they are. But it is not my purpose to enforce a special consideration of the American arts. It is sufficient to state to those who have not arrived at a proper appreciation of it, that if the country possesses able men of marked capacity in other directions, it has equal right to be proud of a Stuart, a Vanderlyn and a Cole among the artists."<sup>(2)</sup>

It was advocations of this nature that led to a gradual refinement of American art, a refinement which, in turn, went through a process of burnishing at the hands of the Great Depression when artists were affected by the economic and political fluctuations and frustrations of the time and developed their own identities as 'American' artists. And it was this 'American' artist in whom came together the primary American (i.e. red Indian), secondary American (i.e. the white pioneers and black American) and later European to form the contemporary treasury of American art today.

There have been many books and articles written about American art and its history, among them 'The First Score for American Painting and Sculpture' by Wendell D. Garrett (1973) and 'The Pop Culture in America' by David Manning White (1969). Apart from that, most books written about art as a whole have also allocated a section to American art. Historicism, however, seems to dominate most accounts at the cost of a present-day assessment of the administrative aspects of the arts and the social setting, work patterns, public attitudes and economic trends and means which have made the world of the arts what it is today in the United States. What there is in this respect can be found mainly in the form of statistics, facts and figures in reports (annual and otherwise) and documents. What follows here tries to pull these facts and

figures together to form a bridge between the arts and the nature of the administrative responsibilities which facilitate and encourage not only their availability to the public but also their on-going existence.

## THE STRUCTURE OF ARTS ADMINISTRATION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### *9.1 GENERAL SURVEY*

The point has to be made, first and foremost, that arts administration as exercised by the government cannot be spoken of in the same context and with the same weight in the case of the United States of America as it is in the case of the other two countries involved in this dissertation. For one thing, the concept of administration is not the clandestine influence to Americans that it is to Europeans, particularly the British. For another, the arts have so little to do with government (and government with the arts) in the United States that what little the government has to do in the way of administering the arts is hardly noticeable. The country is a truly capitalistic democracy and it is not, unlike many European societies of the same nature, ashamed of being seen to be so. Thus, the arts are their own masters, must look after their own interests as everything else, and have their own in-built administrative function.

In America there is little (compared with Italy and even Britain) of historic heritage and, with the exception of a small number of highbrows in New York and the nouveaux riches in California, very few who subscribe to the mainly European distinction between popular and 'high' arts. The arts are just another market force: they achieve their equilibrium in their inter-action with other

market forces and have to survive on their own merit and entrepreneurial capacity. Thus they mainly depend upon and provide for themselves.

It would be wrong to think that there is no public sector interest in or support for the arts, of course. This public sector support and interest is, however, limited to the two narrow extremities of the normal curve: to what there is of the so-called cultural arts at one extreme and the burgeoning fringe of experimental art at the other. At the same time, what interest there is on the part of the public sector, is local to each state of the Union for the simple reason that the United States Constitution specially asserts that barring a strictly limited number of instances in which the nation as a whole is involved, the business of each state is for the people of that state to decide upon and tend to.

The Smithsonian Institution and one or two others excepted, widespread and serious public sector interest in the arts only dates back in the United States to the Great Depression of the 1930's, of which, more than anything else, it is also the direct result.

Initial interest in the arts on the part of the U.S. government was witness to a series of half-hearted starts and stops. This does not mean that there were no instances of successful forays into the subsidizing of the arts. (The Smithsonian Institution, now one of the great success stories of government interest in the arts, was chartered by the U.S. Congress as long ago as 1846). These instances were, however, the exceptions to the rule. What is more, public sector support for the arts was, until recently, indirect and episodic.

There is no Arts Ministry in the United States. Until 1965 there did not exist even a public arts agency on a nationwide scale. There had been a National Commission on Fine Arts created in 1910 to advise President Taft on matters concerning the arts but this had no other status than an advisory one and that only when asked for advice. In 1933, President Roosevelt's New Deal gave birth to a Section of Fine Arts in the Treasury Department with the express mission of exposing the public to 'good' art, and in 1934 a Federal Art Project within the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In practice, however, both these were assigned the more mundane task of merely creating petty employment for petty artists and acting as relief organizations in the teeth of the devouring poverty which followed the 1929 crash of Wall Street. The two bodies shared strictly the same function and though both may have done something to benefit the hungry artists of the time, neither accomplished anything to benefit the arts in the long term.

Although many at the time (including those involved in the two bodies mentioned) were of the opinion that the government was now behind the arts as a matter of principle and permanently, when Representative Sirovich of New York tabled a proposal in Congress in 1938 calling for a cabinet-level Department of Science, Arts and Literature and two Representatives from Washington and Florida sponsored a bill to absorb the WPA's arts functions into a Bureau of Fine Arts, the division on the issues was so pronounced that President Roosevelt himself had, in the end, to withhold support from all proposed arts legislation at the time and later. As Richard McKinzie later wrote:

" The American government and the American people never decided whether the support of the arts were a legitimate and desirable function of government or not." (3)

During this period, most efforts on the part of the organizations created by the government to assist artists and the arts were limited to employing the artists and, having employed them, to assigning them to work in state-owned institutions as painters or sculptors to embellish various centres. The Great Depression did, however, play a reasonably important part in the arts in America: it brought artists together to organize communities and unions of their own, embark upon the application of their abilities toward what came later to be called 'practical art', and to get this recognized by the WPA. In the meantime, the WPA itself had established around a hundred Community Art Centres throughout the country at which travelling expositions and art classes formed the centre of each communities social activity. In time, each Community Art Center developed its own local and resident art classes and galleries.

In 1965 when the Act was passed establishing the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, the United States was for the first time accepting some formal responsibility for culture and the arts. Signing the National Foundation on the Art and the Humanities into law on 29th September 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson said:

" It is in the neighbourhoods of each community that a nation's art is born. In countless American towns there live thousands of obscure and unknown talents. What this bill really does is to make fresher the winds of the arts in this great land of ours. The arts and the humanities belong to the people for it is, after all, the people who create them." (4)

Despite the rhetoric however , there was little to justify the swelling in the President's heart, for with its allocated budget of \$2.5 million for the following year, the Foundation could barely support an orchestra, let alone fund a cultural policy.<sup>(5)</sup> While this brave new knight was being armoured to champion the cause of the arts on its meagre means, the Ford Foundation alone was spending almost four times that amount on the arts a year. Nonetheless:

" NEA's appearance upon the scene was an important event. To those who helped bring the bill to passage, its signing marked the end of a long and difficult road: with skill and patience they had prevailed; they were the Davids who, with nothing but a slingshot, had slain a Goliath — or so it seemed to them and their allies.

It had indeed taken ten years of listening to scores of witnesses and of reading (or not reading) thousands of pages of argument. In retrospect, however, it is clear that from the beginning there was never any doubt that something very much like the NEA would eventually be created. The fundamental fact was that some people stood to gain much from the passage of such an act, whereas no one stood to lose (even if Congress were to appropriate lavishly for support of the arts, the cost to the average taxpayer would be no more than a dollar or two a year."<sup>(6)</sup>

Between Roosevelt and Johnson almost every U.S. President had either paid lip-service to the ideal of the arts or actually tried to accomplish something for them. None had succeeded, however. John F. Kennedy had issued an executive order in 1963 creating an Arts Commission, but was himself assassinated on the very day he had planned to announce the appointment of a Chairman to it and so to launch its career. Whether the Arts Commission would have had any better a fate than all the other bodies conceived for the furtherance of the arts is dubious.

In the meantime, during the years all this activity was being fruitlessly undertaken by succeeding Administrations, the arts themselves were doing quite



nicely in the United States, thanks to a free market and some friends in the private sector.

## 9.2 THE PUBLIC SECTOR

In *Pop Culture in America*, Howard Taubman (1971) says:

"In the United States there is no direct federal assistance for artistic institutions".<sup>(7)</sup>

On first reading, that statement sounds more ominous than it actually is. It is somehow interpreted as that the U.S. government or public sector does not make any sort of contribution to the arts. In point of fact, that is not what it says. What it does say is that the federal government does not, in its assisting the arts, come face to face with the recipient of the assistance it provides. That is partly the result of the mechanism through which assistance is given, partly because of the fact that in the United States, it is the state government which is responsible for whatever is happening -artistic or otherwise- within the society and not the federal government. One fact remains, however : as already mentioned, in the arts as in everything else the United States has a truly capitalistic attitude (and practice) based on firm belief in the omnipotence of market forces and the supremacy of the individual will. It thus sees the government's role fundamentally as a manipulative and not a contributory one. Overall, the public sector has a much less direct and dominant part to play in the arts not only in comparison with Britain and Italy, but even in comparison with the private sector in the United States itself. The total contribution the federal government makes to the arts is a paltry 10% at best. However, this

assistance is much more effective than meets the eye in so far as it is used as bait to pull in much larger sums from local municipal and, in turn, private sources. It is, besides, supplemented by a hidden segment (called tax forbearance by the Americans) which is that portion of income the government foregoes when it grants tax incentives to the private sector against donations and contributions to the arts. (The concept of tax exemption on charitable givings was first introduced in 1917 as a result of a campaign drive by John D. Rockefeller) This, to a certain extent, compensates for the meagerness of direct funding, as will be demonstrated in the section on Tax Exemption later in this chapter.

Financial assistance is, however, only one aspect of involvement in the arts. Another almost equally important consideration is a coherent arts policy and a smoothly running administrative system in the arts, and here, Charles C. Mark (1969) says:

"The United States cultural policy is diverse, many faceted, and laborious to operate. Responsibility is rested in various sectors of society and co-ordination is not concentrated at any single place. In this basic concept, the United States is not unlike many other nations; it is unique only in the degree of its divergence and its conscious attention to the diffusion of responsibility."<sup>(8)</sup>

Recent history in arts administration in the United States starts in 1965, as already indicated, with the creation of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities as an independent agency of the Executive Branch of the federal government in order to formulate policies, programmes and procedures and to review types and levels of financial assistance and, if need be, recommend changes. The Foundation is what the Americans call a "legislative

umbrella concept", which means that it has no administrative or functional identity separate from its component parts. It is, in other words, a holding company for two related but separate agencies : the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Foundation's link with the National Endowment for the Arts is through the National Council on the Arts, an advisory body, created almost a year prior to the National Foundation itself, which mainly concerns itself with matters of policy and procedure. The Council comprises twenty six members who are appointed by the President of the United States, with the approval of the Senate, from amongst people 'widely recognized for their knowledge, expertise or profound interest in the arts' and is headed by the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Thus the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities is, in effect, more a concept than a body. The entity which does the work is, in the case of the arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, which is America's pre-eminent public patron. As Mulcahy (1980) puts it:

" The National Endowment for the Arts, while but one of the arts agencies of the federal government, is the paramount actor in cultural policy-making. No other public arts agency enjoys its prestige in the arts world or exercises comparable influence on cultural institutions. Though not a cabinet department, the NEA as an independent agency reports directly to the President and enjoys considerable political prestige."<sup>(9)</sup>

The Chairman of the NEA is appointed for a period of four years by the President of the United States and is confirmed by the Senate. He is answerable to the National Council on the Arts ( already mentioned) whose members are

appointed for six years each but in a staggered fashion so that there are always a good proportion of old members on the Council at any one time.

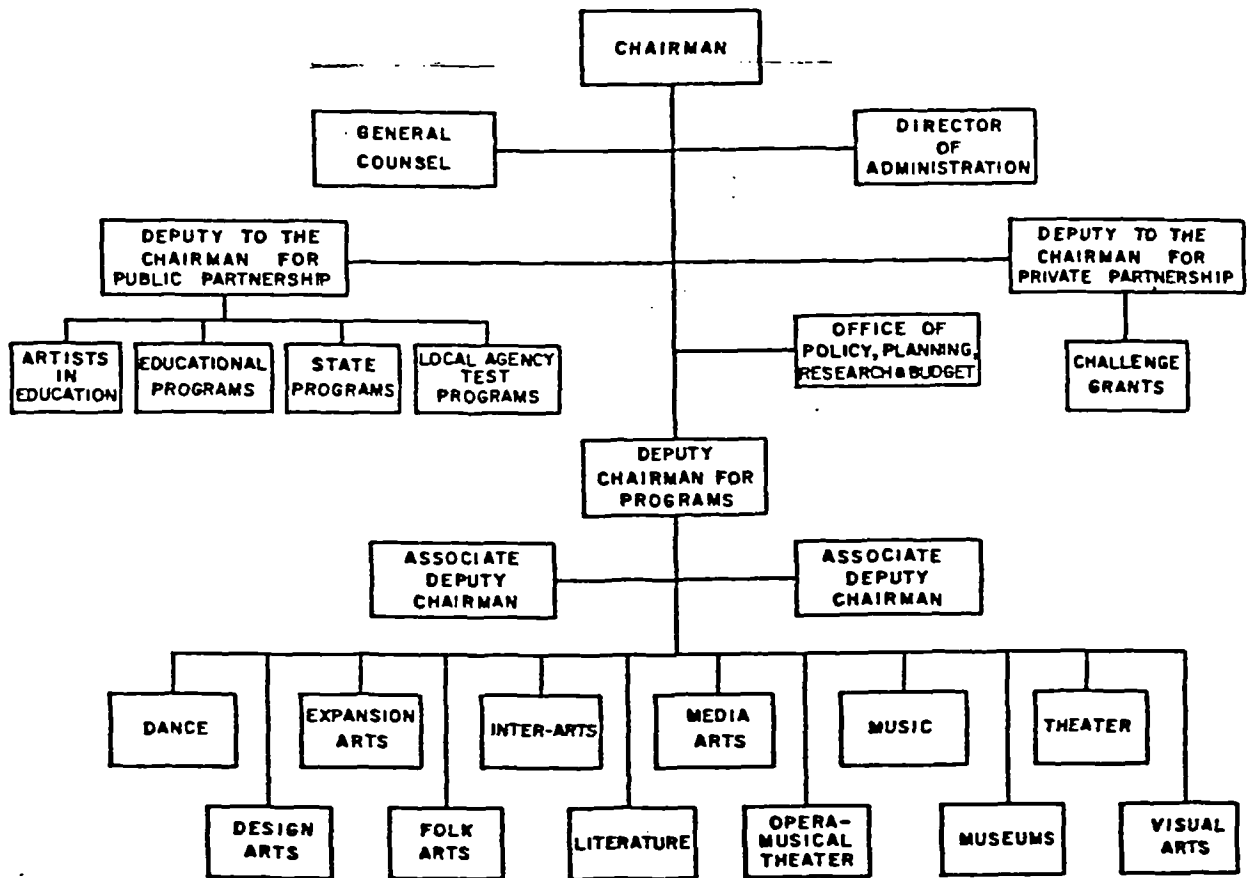
Within the Endowment, the Chairman is at liberty to appoint his own subordinates. What makes the NEA what it is are the different programme areas. These are the real structural blocks of the Endowment and it is the staff and advisory panels and experts in these blocks who, to all intents and purposes, determine what the Endowment does (Figure 1). Each of the Programme Area has its own budget allocated to it from which it makes funds available in the form of grants (Table 1).

The NEA is an independent agency of the federal government whose purpose, as adopted by the National Council on the Arts in June, 1978, is

"... the fostering of professional excellence of the arts in America, to nurture and sustain them, and equally to help create a climate in which they may flourish so they may be experienced and enjoyed by the widest possible public."<sup>(10)</sup>

NEA is not only responsible for the distribution of federal grants to both public organizations such as different museums (Table 2) but also provides funds for private artistic and cultural projects and organizations that receive its official stamp of approval.

The National Endowment for the Arts structure is repeated at state level by state arts agencies which are funded partly by state governments and partly by the NEA. They are not in any direct manner related to the NEA and eighteen of them actually existed before the National Foundation and hence the National Endowment came into existence. Of these eighteen agencies only the New



Administrative organization of the National Endowment of the Arts.  
 Source: Adapted from the NEA Staff Directory, October 1983; updated, September 1984.

FIGURE 1

Table 1

## National Endowment for the Arts: allocations of appropriated funds by programme(a)

\$ thousands

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Dance	9,117	9,003	8,964	9,124	9,152	9,514
Design arts	4,410	4,37	3,914	4,341	4,276	4,014
Expansion arts	6,852	6,954	6,638	6,728	6,670	6,389
Folk arts	2,999	3,128	3,053	2,998	3,129	3,135
Inter-arts	4,260	4,346	4,144	4,044	4,248	4,540
Literature	4,446	5,125	4,722	5,028	5,033	5,061
Media arts	9,369	10,112	12,151	12,910	12,923	13,014
Museums	12,290	11,885	11,636	11,572	12,674	12,399
Music	15,069	15,311	14,543	15,193	15,503	15,624
Opera/musical theatre	6,050	5,953	5,792	6,157	6,242	6,519
Theatre	10,698	10,641	10,185	10,764	10,690	10,733
Visual arts	6,553	6,201	5,732	6,224	5,977	6,110
Arts in education	5,197	5,537	5,187	5,394	5,550	5,654
Local agencies(b)	2,000	2,256	2,204	2,255	2,360	2,607
State agencies	24,452	24,372	23,779	24,592	24,907	25,547
Advancement	2,458	2,244	1,494	1,856	1,589	1,320
Challenge	21,000	20,580	19,577	20,000	19,670	18,470
Administration(c)	15,004	15,642	14,822	16,100	17,140	18,440
<b>Total appropriations</b>	<b>162,223</b>	<b>163,660</b>	<b>158,537</b>	<b>165,281</b>	<b>167,731</b>	<b>169,090</b>

Source: Policy Studies Institute

- (a) Final allocations of current financial year appropriated funds. Excludes gift funds and transfers from other agencies.
- (b) 1984 was the first year local arts agencies received specific funding from the NEA.
- (c) Includes expenditure on the Office of Policy Planning and Research and regional representatives.

Table 2

Appropriations for the arts and museums within federal  
cultural programmes, 1987(a)

	\$ millions
	Revenue expenditure
<b>Museums and galleries</b>	
Smithsonian Institution(b)	189.0
National Gallery of Art	35.4
Institute of Museum Services	21.3
National Endowment for the Humanities(c)	11.7
<b>Total museum expenditure</b>	<b>257.4</b>
<b>Arts support</b>	
National Endowment for the Arts	152.3
Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts	4.8
National Capital Region Arts and Cultural Affairs Programme	4.0
Commission of Fine Arts	0.5
<b>Total arts support</b>	<b>161.6</b>
<b>Total relevant federal expenditure</b>	<b>419.0</b>

Source: Cultural Trends 1990:5 c Policy Studies Institute

- (a) Actual outturns.
- (b) Excludes expenditure on repair and restoration of buildings and construction, and all expenditure on the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars.
- (c) National Endowment for the Humanities grants awarded in the Museums and Historical Organisations programme and challenge grants to museums.

York State Arts Council was effectively active. Once the NEA came into being, the arts agencies quickly multiplied in number to cover all the states of the Union. This sudden proliferation was due to the fact that the NEA would make federal funds available to states only on condition that they had a state arts agency to claim and administer the funds. To each state without an arts agency, the NEA was legislatively capable also of providing a single basic grant of \$50,000 for the creation of one.

The funds at the disposal of these state arts agencies vary from state to state because they receive support from the NEA as well as their own state government and private non-governmental sources (Tables 3 & 4). At one end of the scales stands the New York State Arts Council which, during the first few years of the NEA's life, had more to spend than the NEA itself and whose operating budget has consistently exceeded \$35 million in recent years. At the other end there are those which, like Nevada, have under \$100,000 a year.

The structures of the state arts agencies and their modes of operation are as diverse as the funds they have at their disposal, though they work on more or less the same lines as the NEA itself. They are all (with the exception of the Vermont Arts Council which is a private non-profit body) agencies of the state government.

According to the 1979 Annual Report of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities:

"The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965 provides that every year the Endowment make at least twenty per cent of its program funds available to the State Art Agencies to carry out the purpose of the Endowment".<sup>(11)</sup>



As already explained, part of the funds available to the state arts agencies comes from the state itself. This state funding has increased dramatically since the early 1980's (Table 3), so that even the Endowment itself stipulates in its 1980 Annual Report that:

" While Endowment funding clearly plays a significant role, direct appropriations from state legislatures, which added up to 98.6 million dollars in 1980, have become the backbone of state arts support."<sup>(12)</sup>

In the same year, the Wall Street Journal said, in an article:

" Municipalities across America, it would seem, are fairly seething with cultural activity these days. From macrame to pottery and from music to drama, city halls are stepping up their support of the arts."<sup>(13)</sup>

In practice, the link between the NEA and the state arts agencies is effected via the Office of the Federal-State Partnership, through which support is provided to the arts agencies under six headings:

◆ BASIC STATE AGENCY GRANTS : The 1965 Act which resulted in the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities stipulated that the National Endowment for the Arts make at least 20% of its Program Funds (more detail on this later) available to the state arts agencies. In 1967 this block grant amounted to a mere \$50,000 in the case of each state. By 1976 the amount had increased to \$205,000. Before these block grants are given and received, each state arts agency has to present the Endowment with a detailed plan as to how the money is to be used.

◆ PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT : Grants under this heading are primarily to enable state arts agencies to hire additional staff. The grants are normally for

**Table 3**  
**State arts agencies: legislative appropriations**

\$ millions and indices

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Legislative appropriations	161.4	195.6	216.1	242.8	268.3	285.1
Index at constant prices	100	119	127	137	145	-

Source: Cultural Trends 1990:5 Policy Studies Institute

**Table 4**  
**Income of state arts agencies by type, 1989**

\$ millions and percentages

	\$ million	Percentage of total income
<b>State</b>		
Legislative appropriations	232.5	76
Line items	34.5	11
Tax check-offs	0.1	-
Other state	1.3	-
Lottery funds	0.6	-
<b>Federal</b>		
NEA: Basic State Grant	20.5	7
Other	6.3	2
<b>Other</b>		
Foundations	0.9	-
Corporate donations	0.3	-
Individual donations	0.1	-
Per cent for art	1.0	-
Other income	6.1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>304.2</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Cultural Trends 1990: 5 c Policy Studies Institute

periods of up to two years and are extended beyond that only in exceptional cases.

◆ **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** : In order to encourage further devolution, the Endowment provides assistance under this heading for any feasible scheme or programme aimed at developing agencies on the community level. Grants under this heading can also be used for conferences and workshops launched for the edification of communities and groups across the state.

◆ **REGIONAL PROGRAMMES** : Whereas artistic activity is more often than not anchored to specific and usually small areas, the planning and programming of the arts is normally better handled as a result of wider co-operation. Realizing in time that there are areas of activity in the arts which are more efficiently and profitably undertaken at an inter-state level, the state arts agencies have collaborated with one another to create regional arts groups, of which there are now eight. The Endowment encourages these regional groups and supports them through the state arts agencies with funds made available under this heading.

◆ **SERVICES TO THE FIELDS** : Grants under this category are provided for

- National Service Organizations
- Internships
- Regional Co-ordination
- Regional and National Meetings
- Staff Travel
- Technical Assistance

Through the above, a variety of purposes are served such as assistance to non-government organizations providing services to the state arts agencies, provision of on-the-job training in arts administration, assignment of coordinators to different areas to inform them of possibilities and opportunities, extension of facilities for professionals and staff to go on fact-finding trips, etc.

◆ GENERAL PROGRAMMES : Any projects or proposals which are not given coverage by the previous five headings can be presented to the Federal-State Partnership office under this caption. (A good example here is of the state of Hawaii which was awarded a grant in 1980 to cover the costs of a tour by the Polynesian Voyaging Society to take a replica of an ancient canoe on a voyage through the islands.)

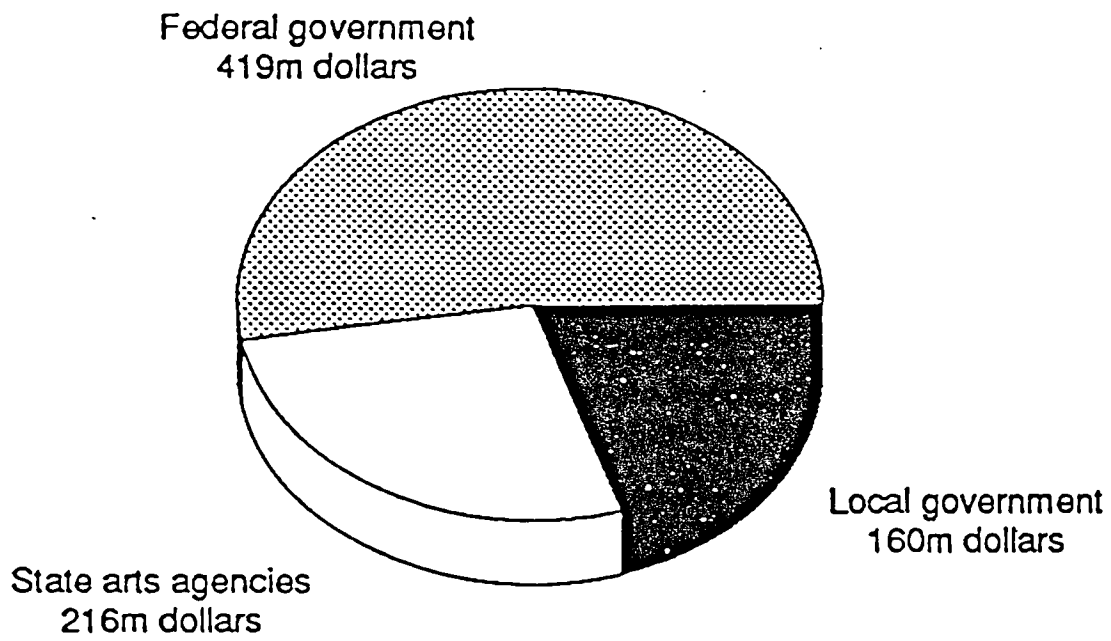
Besides the state arts agencies, there are the local arts agencies linked to municipal or county governments. Their activities vary from touring, expositions, exhibitions, and educational projects to lending support to individual artists and major artistic and cultural institutions. There are some 650 local art agencies in the United States with a total budget of \$500 million of which the local government has contributed \$160 million. (Table 5).

The NEA basically provides three types of financial assistance:

— Fellowship awards to individual artists: these are known as 'non-matching', i.e., they are straight awards without conditions being attached as to the provision of other funds from other sources.

Table 5

United States: estimated expenditure on the arts and museums,  
by level of government, 1987



Source: Policy Studies Institute.

– Organizational grants : these are mainly provided from funds made available to the departments or Programs and are 'matching', i.e., for every one dollar granted by the Endowment, the recipient has to produce one dollar acquired from non-federal sources. They can, however, be provided from the Treasury Fund or the Challenge Grant funds (later discussed) in which case the matching will have to be three-to-one.

– Grants to state arts agencies : these, as already discussed, are the funds made available to the arts agencies at state level and again come mainly from the 20% block grant which the NEA has to provide by law from its program funds.

Funds for the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities (and hence its two Endowments) are allocated by the federal government and the Congress under three headings:

– programme funds : This, in fact, is the bulk of the Endowment's regular budget. It is the sum total of what is assigned to the twelve departments or Programs already listed.

– treasury funds : The Treasury Fund is a separate budget granted every year by Congress along with the Endowment's regular budget. Money from this Fund can only be released when and if a private donor undertakes to pay the Endowment grantee an equal amount. The recipient himself must then provide, from non-federal sources, an amount equivalent to the sum of the monies received from the Fund on the one hand and the private donor on the other.

— challenge grants : The Challenge Grant funds (again to be matched three-to-one) are, on the other hand, part of the Endowment's regular budget but under a different department. This scheme has been mainly devised to enable arts institutions to embark upon fund-raising campaigns, since every Endowment dollar in a Challenge Grant must be matched by at least three dollars in new or increased contributions from private donors. Recipients are encouraged to use the Challenge Grants they receive in projects that strengthen their basic financial structures.

This method of making funds available to the arts may, at first glance, portray the U.S. public sector as an official, modern-day Shylock making deals against pounds of flesh. In practice, however, it is an effective way of assisting and encouraging the arts without interfering in them. This manner of handling affairs is typical of the American system. To the outsider, it may strongly resemble apathy, disinterest and uninvolvedness. In practice, it works.

While public sector funding of the arts is mainly through the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities with its two Endowments and their state, regional and local agencies, these are not the only institutions which receive direct support from the government. The Smithsonian Institution, which receives more federal funds than the NEA itself, has existed for over a century, and there are others such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Gallery of Art, the Historic Preservation Fund, the Institute of Museum Services and the Commission of Fine Arts parts of whose budgets go to the arts in various ways. In addition, the General Services Administration itself commissions works of art with which to decorate federal buildings; and the

United States Information Agency has funds available to it to support international cultural and educational exchanges.

Legislatively, the National Endowment for the Arts was created to act as catalyst and an agent within the arts environment : a catalyst to assist the coming together of the artist as producer and the public as patron and consumer, an agent in providing opportunities for both and encouraging the mutual involvement of all (the artist, the public, organized endeavours and the public sector) in what constitutes the world of the arts.

The Endowment's Annual Report for 1980 claimed that

"The Council and the Endowment have translated their broad mission into three basic goals:

1. Availability of the Arts: To promote broad dissemination of cultural resources of the highest quality;
2. Cultural Resources Development: To assist our cultural institutions to provide greater public service and to improve artistic and administrative standards;
3. Advance of Our Cultural Legacy: To support creativity among our most gifted artists, encourage the preservation of our cultural heritage and enhance the quality of life of our nation."<sup>(14)</sup>

In practice, however, the federal role (through the offices of the Endowments) is merely to respond to the needs of the arts world, and not to direct, support or enthuse the creative efforts of individual artists or to interfere with them.

The 'mission' to which the Annual Report refers is fulfilled, according to the Endowment for the Arts, through the provision of:



a) financial assistance (in the form of grants) to public and private non-profit organizations (the word 'organizations' sometimes being stretched to include individuals if they are 'exceptionally talented'), and

b) technical assistance, research facilities, dissemination of information and even managerial backing for artists and the arts.

The functioning of the NEA itself is, as a mechanism, perhaps not as smooth as it could be. There are many loopholes in the concept and the structure. When practical shortfalls are added to these, they make the end result a far cry from what the NEA's charter has ideologically tried to envisage. The panels which constitute the main body of the organization are chosen by the Chairman. The Chairman also has the right of veto on decisions taken by the panels. There are in excess of a thousand grant applications a year to be seen to. The panelists, being consultants from outside the NEA itself, cannot be called upon at any odd time. Thus, though all the material they have to work upon is prepared and distributed to them in advance, they have, on average, less than two weeks a year to hand in their evaluations. Lack of involvement and the pressures of time make in-depth examination of the applications improbable if not totally impossible. It becomes increasingly tempting to opt for the 'acceptable' area of work and the 'known' artist since scarcity of time makes the taking of 'safe' decisions imperative.

There are other criticisms aimed at the NEA as well. Nonetheless, in comparison with previous steps taken or attempted on the part of the U.S. government with regard to matters concerning the arts and culture, it seems

that the creation of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, and through it the two Endowments, has been the most positive move so far.

### ***9.3 THE PRIVATE SECTOR***

In the United States, the private sector rules supreme. That is much more than to say that the United States has a market economy: it is the fundamental concept of the U.S. democracy.

In the US democracy it is the individual who dictates his terms in almost everything, who has the right of way, who implements his will. Consequently, everything caters to and is at the beck and call of the individual. The individual has to pay for that privilege, of course, but he does not mind doing so. This is, in practice, as true of the arts as of everything else.

In Western Europe, more often than not, though private donations are one source of financial aid for the arts, it is primarily state or government financing which keeps the arts going. It is in this that the fundamental difference between Europe and the United States demonstrates itself; for in the United States, it is private sector support which unquestionably keeps the arts solvent and which conspicuously dwarfs government assistance.

According to the American Association of Fund Raising Councils, in 1981 total donation to charitable organizations by individuals, corporations and foundations reached a record high of \$53.6 billion, showing an increase of 12.3% over the previous year. Of the total contributed, individuals gave \$44.5 billion, a healthy

83%. Considering the 8.9% rate of inflation registered in 1981, this shows an increase, in real terms, of 3.4 % in financial assistance received from the private sector. Of that sum of \$ 53.6 billion, cultural and artistic institutions received \$3.35 billion, an increase of 13.2 % over the \$2.96 billion in 1980.

This is recognized by the U.S. Congress where it says:

"Private support for the arts has always represented over ninety per cent of all support for the arts. That is this country's tradition."<sup>(15)</sup>

The latest figures available, show the trend to be ascending. According to Jean-Michel Tobelem in *Musees et Culture*, private philanthropic contributions totalled \$104.5 billion in 1988. Of this total amount, \$6.82 billion went to cultural, artistic and humanitarian causes. As in 1981, by far the greatest part of these contributions came from individuals (83% in 1988).<sup>(16)</sup> Overall, donation to charitable organizations, as seen from these figures, shows an increase of almost 95% over a period of seven years.

In the above context, the term 'private support' stands for personal giving.

(A word of explanation may not be amiss here. In economic terminology, 'the private sector' includes all that has nothing to do with governments and state administrations. It is thus mainly composed of three parts: individuals, foundations and corporations. It all becomes rather complicated, however, when it is remembered that in the United States individuals can 'incorporate' themselves, so that there is an individual who, as far as the law is concerned, is a 'corporation' and would be referred to as John Smith, Incorporated. The lines

of differentiation between this type of corporate body and the true individual as normally recognized are too technical to discuss here.)

◆ **INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS** : Individual patronage of the arts is either in the form of lending or giving works of art, or in the allocation of financial assistance. This assistance can be in the form of grants and guarantees provided for artists through mutual agreement with non-profit corporations and foundations. Patronage should be considered as including the amount of money paid for membership fees to art centres and museums, though the total annual amount of such membership is not much.

The fact that on average individuals (as individuals) cannot afford to give anything near as much as foundations and corporate bodies makes the figures given here rather surprising. Despite these surprising figures, individual donations are not bandied about or the subject of discussion. This is because, as already hinted, individual instances of personal giving are not impressive. On average they seldom exceed three digit sums. Three digit sums do not make headlines. It is the incidence of the instances which makes the total so vast. On the other hand individuals, though they receive a measure of tax relief in lieu of their donations, do not donate for the express purpose of returns, either financial or reputational, as corporations mainly do.

◆ **ASSISTANCE FROM FOUNDATIONS** : The first foundations were established by the United States Senate between the years 1910 and 1914, and one of the main reasons for their establishment — at least according to Faye

Levine in *The Culture Barons* (1976)<sup>(17)</sup> — was to set up financial havens in the form of tax-exempt institutions. Today, however, the term 'foundation' is used primarily to imply organizations founded by individuals, groups of individuals or corporate bodies in order to fulfil humanitarian functions.

According to Charles C. Mark in *A Study of Cultural Policy in the United States* (1969), there were around twenty three thousand foundations functioning in the United States, mainly private but including a percentage of public ones, by the late 'sixties. A study by the National Endowment for the Arts showed at the time, however, that of these only about one thousand five hundred ever provided grants of any substance to the arts. In all, the annual contributions of those foundations which did lend a hand amounted to approximately \$2.2 billion in 1979. This figure had risen to 6 billion by 1988.<sup>(18)</sup>

Although it is the government, as already indicated, which subsidizes the arts as a matter of routine, this subsidy covers only basic, standing expenses.

Additional projects are sponsored by private sources in which the private foundations play an important role. Virgil Cantini, Professor of Arts at the Pittsburgh University — with whom the writer had the opportunity to talk during a study trip to Pittsburgh in January, 1980 — believes that if it were not for the financial assistance of three major foundations in the State of Pennsylvania, namely Mellon, Scafe and Carnegie, none of the artistic institutions in the area could survive on the support provided by the local and federal governments.<sup>(19)</sup>

The very first private foundations were almost all created by families (the Rockefeller Foundation: 1913; the Ford Foundation: 1936) who, as in the case

of the old aristocracies and the gentry in Europe, considered it their duty to support humanitarian causes and who thought they were expected to be seen fulfilling that duty. The next generation of such foundations were established, again by distinguished families, for reasons which now included non-philanthropic ones such as benefitting from tax exemptions. This was mainly in the 1940's and 1950's.

In the last two decades, laws on family foundations have been revised and to a great extent tightened, so that gifts of money to one's own foundation are now prohibited and all grants made have to be reported and accounted for to Inland Revenue. At the same time, the staff and board members of private foundations are strictly checked to see that they are not serving as halfway houses to returning family fortunes or used for purposes of nepotism. Gradually the intention behind the establishment and maintenance of private foundations is thus once again returning to the more or less philanthropic.

Another shortfall in family foundations has always been the narrow base of their operations. Where independent foundations and large corporations extend their support to as wide a range of activities and institutions as possible, family foundations more often than not limit their giving to specific targets which somehow serve the interests of the founding members.

*Despite these shortcomings, there is little doubt as regards the importance of the financial assistance provided by the foundations in the world of the arts.* The private and individualistic nature of the foundations creates certain probably unavoidable problems, however. Funding for short-term programmes

seems to be typical of the contributions of private foundations, which are conservative by nature. Another inherent problem seems to be the exercise of individual judgement in so far as private foundations try to impose their own will over projects and tend to balk from participation in large projects initiated by others. Nonetheless, a glance at the financial records of almost any art centre will indicate the vital role private foundations play in artistic activities.

◆ THE CORPORATE BODY AND THE ARTS : Corporations, like foundations, are notable sources of financial assistance to the arts in America. The April 1982 Congressional Quarterly confirmed this by pointing out that corporate support was running neck and neck with that of foundations and that it was likely to be leading the way in future. According to the American Association of Fund Raising Councils' 1982 Report, overall corporate assistance increased by \$3 billion in 1981. Business Committee on the Arts, an organization formed in the 1950's as a result of lobbying by David Rockefeller and the former Secretary of the Treasury, C. Douglas Dillon and consisting of over a hundred national corporate leaders, reported on the other hand that according to a poll conducted by it in 1981, a number of American corporations intended to increase their overall philanthropic contributions in 1982. This assistance was to be in the form of carrying out independent art projects, contributing to larger art programmes undertaken by artistic institution, or allocating financial gifts to the Endowment for the Arts and local governments. A good example was that of the Johnson Corporation buying over three hundred paintings by living artists and exhibiting the collection round the world before presenting the lot to the Federal Government. The Exxon Corporation's contributions to the

Tutankhamen exhibition (considered as a great success in the history of American artistic events) was another example as acknowledged by the Metropolitan Museum of Art :

"The cost of developing and organizing the exhibition and packing and shipping the original exhibition are being funded by the Exxon Corporation patronage, the National Endowment for Humanities and the Robert Wood Johnson Jr. Charitable Trust".<sup>(20)</sup>

These figures have been ascending constantly since the 1960's and had reached \$4.5 billion in 1988.<sup>(21)</sup>

In the United States, official recognition was given corporate philanthropy with legislation passed in 1935 which allowed corporations to deduct up to 5% of their profits — prior to taxation — for donations to charitable causes. Until then, it had actually been forbidden by law to make any such donations.

The 1935 legislation was reasonably well accepted, many corporations joining the effort to support the arts. It was not until 1953 that it had its baptism of fire. In that year, one of the shareholders of one such corporation took his Board of Directors to court because it had made a gift of \$1500 to Princeton University. His suit was turned down by the court and the 1935 legislation came finally to be accepted as a reality. Today, in excess of 30% of all American corporations participate in some manner of formal philanthropic activity. Those who make maximum use of the law are not many, however, and the national average barely exceeds 1%.



Corporate donations are undertaken either directly through administrative provisions within corporations or via special foundations created separately to do the work. If the support is through the former, it is more in the shape of technical or managerial assistance to arts groups; if it is handled by foundations, it is usually in cash.

There is ample room for corporate philanthropy to expand, for at the moment, almost 50% of all that is given is given by a mere 1% of the total corporate population. This is because, due to reasons too complicated to discuss here, it is not worth the small corporations' while, either in financial terms or in terms of public relation value received, to undertake such contributions.

What has been thus far considered is philanthropic giving or patronage.

Sponsorship is another legitimate and prevalent form of art support, mainly by corporations. It has to be borne in mind, however, that contrary to popular assumption, sponsorship is not exercised in the United States on as extensive a basis as patronage.

As Table 6 indicates, both the number of corporations participating in this form of giving and the amounts given have consistently fallen since 1985.

#### *9.4 TAX EXEMPTION*

According to the United States Congress:

"Private support through tax incentives is the mainstream of all support for the arts and represents over ninety per cent of all support for them."<sup>(22)</sup>

**Table 6**  
**Corporate giving to culture and the arts**

	1984	1985	1986	1987
Companies responding	415	436	370	325
Gifts to culture and art (\$ millions)	155	188	199	179
Gifts to all sectors (\$ millions)	1,444	1,695	1,674	1,658

Source: Linda Cardillo Platzler, Maureen Nevin Duffy, The Conference Board Survey of Corporate Contributions, 1989 Edition, Research Report No. 924, 1989

Though tax relief in lieu of donations to the charities has been exercised in all the three countries under study, it is in the United States that it has come to be utilized to its fullest and as an integral part of indirect funding. It is the pioneering spirit in the United States in this area which draws the main line of distinction between that country and the rest of the Western world even today.

Charitable institutions were themselves made tax exempt by the Tariff Act of 1913 and only four years later, the Revenue Act of 1917 (lobbied by John D. Rockefeller, as already mentioned) ruled that charitable contributions by individuals or corporations were also to enjoy this exemption. Since there are tax exempt organizations other than charities, it would perhaps help to quote here the precise meaning of the word 'charities' as understood by U.S. law:

*"Corporations and any community chest, fund, or foundation, organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary or educational purposes, or to foster national or international amateur sports competition (but only if no part of its activities involve the provision of athletic facilities or equipment), or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals, no part of the earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual, no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation... and which does not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office."*(23)

The motivation for the U.S. government's acceptance and implementation of tax exemption as a means of supporting charities is based on national idiosyncrasies and must emanate from socioeconomic and cultural factors too complicated to discuss here. They are, however, also based on the psychological fact that human beings are more likely to help others if in the process they would also be helping themselves. (Boswell quotes Dr Johnson as saying that the act of pure

benevolence is an impossibility for the finite human being whose every act is mingled with vanity and self-interest.) This was well illustrated by a study carried out in 1971 by Harvard University for the Filer Commission in which it was indicated that 26% of the total charity (circa. \$17 billion) given in 1970 would not have materialized had there not been a tax deduction mechanism.<sup>(24)</sup> The study also indicated that this short-fall would have been even more pronounced (anything up to 75%) in the case of monies received from those in the income bracket of \$100,000 to \$500,0000 per annum and that this would have meant more losses for the arts than anything else since it is from that income group that the main contributions to the arts come.

By 1915 the proportion of Americans living in urban areas had risen to about 40 per cent. The main causes of this drift to the cities and towns were the increasing attraction of urban life and the steady decline in the need for agricultural labour brought about by mechanized farming. The effects were concomitantly positive and negative. The migration afforded an escape for large numbers of people from the isolation and primitiveness of rural and peasant life and the tyranny of the weather. At the same time, however, it was for many the onset of a kind of slavery to employers, more often than not powerful factory owners. Besides, being pawns in a vast system did little to inspire the efforts of the newcomers and thus left them only with the long-term prospects of a mere living wage. To this was soon added the threat of unemployment brought about by overproduction. All the while, there was also being created a new industrial bourgeoisie composed of the owners of factories, mines and railroads alongside the old middle-class of merchants, bankers and lawyers.

Under these circumstances, the emergence of some socialistic ideas and consequently the rise and expansion of trade-unionism was inevitable. The need for a greater deal of social awareness was felt by the administration and this resulted, among other things, in the introduction of income tax which would require the rich to return a certain proportion of their income to the government and enable it to undertake social programmes. Once the idea of taxing incomes for social purposes was hit upon and implemented, the converse mechanism of negative taxation, i.e. the granting of tax exemptions, suggested itself and, in time, came to be used for the indirect funding of charitable institutions and those involved with the propagation of the arts. This was the purpose of the 1917 Revenue Act which made it possible for those giving to charities to benefit not only morally but also financially by their action. The idea of 'matching', where the government makes its own payments dependent upon sums received from non-government sources was a refinement which followed later. In time, the policy of indirect financial assistance for the arts through tax incentives has come to be one of the most important instruments of art administration in the United States. According to Mark Davidson Schuster:

"In the United States, taxes forgone through various arts-related tax incentives provide three times the amount of direct aid to the arts from all levels of government."<sup>(25)</sup>

Tax exemption as an umbrella concept covers four groups of beneficiaries: non-profit organizations recognized by the government as charities (already defined above), private foundations, corporations and individual donors to charitable causes.

U.S. Treasury regulations accept as charitable organizations all public museums, symphony orchestras, non-profit dancing schools and other similar institutions.

Private foundations are also tax-exempt as far as they spend their income on philanthropic causes, pay for the buildings that house such causes, or foot the bill for the maintenance of these buildings.

What corporations get in return for their contributions is mainly the tax concessions they receive, though the chance to make themselves known and build their public image also plays a part.

Individual contributions usually take the shape of patronage or the donation of gifts in the form of cash or works of art either given or lent to art institutions. The average individual does not receive much in return for his contribution, for the amount he can contribute can neither mean much in terms of tax concessions nor normally put him into a lower tax bracket. He does, however, enjoy a certain amount of self-satisfaction and, of course, the recognition of the institution to which he contributes. The same does not hold true for individuals in the higher income brackets, however, and this is one of the areas of contention within the United States itself. Whether the discord is legitimate and of substance or not will be dealt with later.

The individual wanting to donate to the charities, whether he is of the low-income group or the high, faces as much of a dilemma in the United States as the person in search of a realistically-priced article of clothing. As much salesmanship and hype surrounds the institutions receiving charity (whether they are in the domain of religion or that of the social services) as the ones selling commodities. If the individual is not careful, he may find himself more out of pocket at the end of the day than he has bargained for. All institutions

accepting charity are not entitled to provide tax deductions, all contributions do not fall within the limits of the exemption regulations, and all gifts and bequests are not tax deductible.

Charities are exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code. If for some reason the institution to which the individual donates cannot be included under that Code, it has every legitimate right to receive contributions, but the contributor will not receive tax relief in lieu of what he has paid.

The amount of tax exemption granted any philanthropic contributions in any one year is the product of the total contributions made during that year and the percentage at which the donor is taxed, this itself depending on the tax bracket into which he falls. There is a ceiling on the amount of such exemptions, of course, but this ceiling is higher than in most European countries. The limits have been designed in such a manner, however, as to ensure that the taxpayer is not able to escape taxes altogether as a result of an act of charity.

Corporations are exempt for up to ( but no more than) 5% of their taxable income for their charitable contributions. The limit applies whatever the type of organization to which donations are made.

Individuals have more leeway. In their case, there are three percentage levels applicable:

- up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any one year for donations to public charities and certain private foundations

- up to 30% of their adjusted gross income in any one year for gifts of certain types of capital-gain property to public charities and certain private foundations
- up to 20% of their adjusted gross income in any one year for donations to all other private foundations.

These deductions are available only to those individuals who itemize their deductions. Those who do not are restricted to a standard deduction called the 'zero bracket amount' which is around \$5,000 per year for a married couple or \$4,000 for an individual. Only those individuals can 'itemize' their deductions who pay more than the zero bracket amount in charity . This leaves little incentive for those who fall within the zero bracket to make contributions to charitable causes because they are limited to the standard amount whether they do or not. This is yet another shaft in the quiver of those who are wary of large amounts being contributed to the arts by the well-to-do.

'Charitable purpose' in the eyes of current Treasury Regulations is comprised of:

- relief of the poor, distressed or underprivileged
- advancement of religion
- advancement of education and science
- erection or maintenance of public buildings, monuments or works
- lessening of the burdens of government
- promotion of social welfare by organizations designed to accomplish any of the above purposes, lessen neighbourhood tensions, eliminate prejudice and discrimination, defend human and civil rights secured by law, or combat community deterioration and juvenile delinquency.<sup>(26)</sup>



It is under 'advancement of education and science' (item three above) that the arts normally fall. The Inland Revenue Service recognizes a variety of arts organizations as charitable under this heading, including museums and symphony orchestras; non-profit organizations created to sponsor free public art exhibitions; non-profit dancing schools; non-profit organizations providing facilities for the production of non-commercial television programmes; non-profit organizations sponsoring film and jazz festivals, music workshops and public concerts; non-commercial radio and television stations; and non-profit repertory theatre.

Inland Revenue does not allow deductions for services (as opposed to property) contributed. Taxpayers who do donate their services to a charitable institution may, however, claim tax relief on incidental expenses such as travelling to and from the institution and out-of-pocket expenses not reimbursed.

If any material benefit is derived from the contribution of property to a charitable cause or institution, the taxpayer is entitled to tax relief on only that part of his contribution to which there has accumulated no such benefit.

For the purposes of the IRS, the value of any donated property is the fair market price of that property at the time a gift is being made of it. (In American parlance 'property' refers to any asset or possession other than money and is here used to include items such as paintings, objets d'art, manuscripts, etc. Treasury Regulations define the term 'fair market price as ' the price at which the property would change hands between a willing buyer and a willing seller,

neither being under any compulsion to buy or sell and both having reasonable knowledge of relevant facts.<sup>(27)</sup>

Excess contributions (in case of individuals, amounts contributed in excess of the 50% and 30% limits envisaged and in the case of corporations, the 5%) may be carried over to any one of the five years following the year in which the contribution had been made, provided new contributions during that year fall short of the limits allowed.

Though different states have different rules as regards exemptions from property tax, non-profit organizations are, on the whole, not taxed on their real estate holdings.

This system of support for the arts through tax exemption has advantages and disadvantages both for the government and the donor, and what is an advantage to the government can sometimes be a disadvantage to the donor, vice versa. The main advantages for the government are that the system:

- provides a more efficient way of supporting the arts by eliminating bureaucratic hurdles
- is more economical in so far as it bypasses the procedure of having to draw on general tax revenues to make direct cash payments to recipient institutions and
- relieves the government from budgeting for the arts on their own and having to manage the spending of that budget.

The major disadvantages for the government, on the other hand are that:

- it has little control over the direction art propagation in general and the arts in particular will take and is restricted in its say to areas it funds itself through its agencies
- it can never forecast the amount it will be required to contribute to the arts in any fiscal year because what it does contribute is dependent upon the amount donated by the private sector and this varies from year to year.

In short, although on the face of it the direct contribution of the US Government to the arts amounts to a mere 10% of the total contributions made, the indirect contribution (viz. the amount of tax forgone by the government vis a vis contributions made by the private sector) should also be looked upon as part of the contribution the government makes to the arts. Taking into consideration the fact that this covers private donations, the donation of works of art to museums as gifts, sponsorships, patronage, etc., and almost total tax exemption on the capital gained on them, it altogether makes a handsome lot.<sup>(28)</sup>

For the private donor, too, the exercise of tax exemption on charitable donations has its advantages and disadvantages, though here the picture is rather more complicated. Tax incentives do not treat all donors alike in so far as their levels depend on the income bracket into which the donors fall. At the very top, the donor in the 50% tax bracket receives 50 dollars' worth of exemption for every

one hundred he donates to a charitable institution, whereas the tax payer in a 14% bracket gets only 14 dollars on his donation of a hundred. This has given rise to criticisms against a system under which the wealthy tax payer forgoes nothing by donating to charities but the poorer (or at least less better off) person is seriously out of pocket if he does. Perhaps the argument does not, on its own merit, provide grounds for criticism, but some observers have made the point that at the end of the day it is the wealthy who, through their affordably generous contributions, bring greater influence to bear upon artistic institutions under the system. Besides, they argue, the system fails to create a balance between donations to charities favoured by the wealthy and those falling outside the scope of such favour, the latter being chronically starved. Whether the acceptance of this argument and a consequent change in the methodology that gives rise to it would ultimately be to the advantage of the arts is highly questionable as will be seen in the Conclusion.

The policy of tax incentives is perhaps most advantageous to corporations which, through sponsoring artistic events and art institutions, not only enjoy the benefits of tax exemption but also benefit from the publicity such sponsorship affords them. The revenue 'lost' through such sponsorship is in fact money spent on the general advancement of the company image with potential clients, customers and the public at large. It can also help to promote a specific product or line of products.

Bearing all the foregoing in mind, the question may be legitimately asked as to whether the policy of indirect funding for the arts as practised in the United States has been an overall success?

While it is almost impossible, at least for the purposes of the present discussion, to assess the overall pros and cons of the system and its cultural effects and consequences, there is no doubt that the strategy has had a degree of success, all round, for the government, the art institutions, and the private sector. It could not have possibly survived all these years otherwise. However, there are voices of dissent as regards the effects the policy has had on all concerned. Direct government support for the arts in 1985 was a mere \$3 per head, whereas indirect per capita support was \$13.<sup>(29)</sup> The difference is substantial and there are those who believe that as private support by far exceeds that of the government, it becomes virtually impossible for the government to have and to implement a definite cultural policy of any sort.

In other words, the fate of arts institutions is very much in the hands of the donors and their tastes and preferences. What is more, those institutions that need support the least will more often than not be the ones that receive it the most. Whether all this is 'good' or 'bad' is a matter of taste more than logical deduction. Answering it depends on finding answers to a score of other more complicated questions such as 'Good for whom, over what timescape and to which end?' If the fate of the arts institutions is ill served when in the hands of the private donor, is it any better served in the hands of the government? If the answer to that is negative, then whose hands should it be in? Those who maintain it should be in the hands of the artists themselves are laying

themselves open to a barrage of criticism, the very least being that they are not being realistic.

## *9.5 TOURISM*

In 1984, over 4,500,000 people from all over the world visited the United States of America.<sup>(30)</sup> No spending figures were found for this year, but in 1983, total income from tourism in the United States amounted to an astounding \$14,000,000,000 — a sum which would dwarf the total budget of over 50% of the governments in the world (Figure 2). The tax revenues alone generated by this sum (i.e. the monies received by local, state and federal government in the form of taxes imposed on it) amounted to \$1,656,000 according to the U.S. Department of Commerce (Table 7).

In 1984, overseas visitors to Britain totalled almost 12.5 million and to Italy, over 19.25 million, confirming what has already been said about the United States not being proportionately such a large target for tourism. The gap becomes even more pronounced when one or two facts are taken into consideration. Given the fact that the United States is many times the size of either of the other two countries (almost 40 times the size of the UK and 32 times that of Italy, in fact) and that it has a population at least four times that of either,<sup>(31)</sup> it becomes rather meaningless for tourism figures to be compared on a one-to-one basis. If tourism were taken to be a function of space, the United States would have to have had 480 million visitors (as against the 4.5 million) to break even with Britain. Were tourism to be considered as a function

# FOREIGN VISITOR SPENDING IN THE UNITED STATES BY CATEGORY, 1983

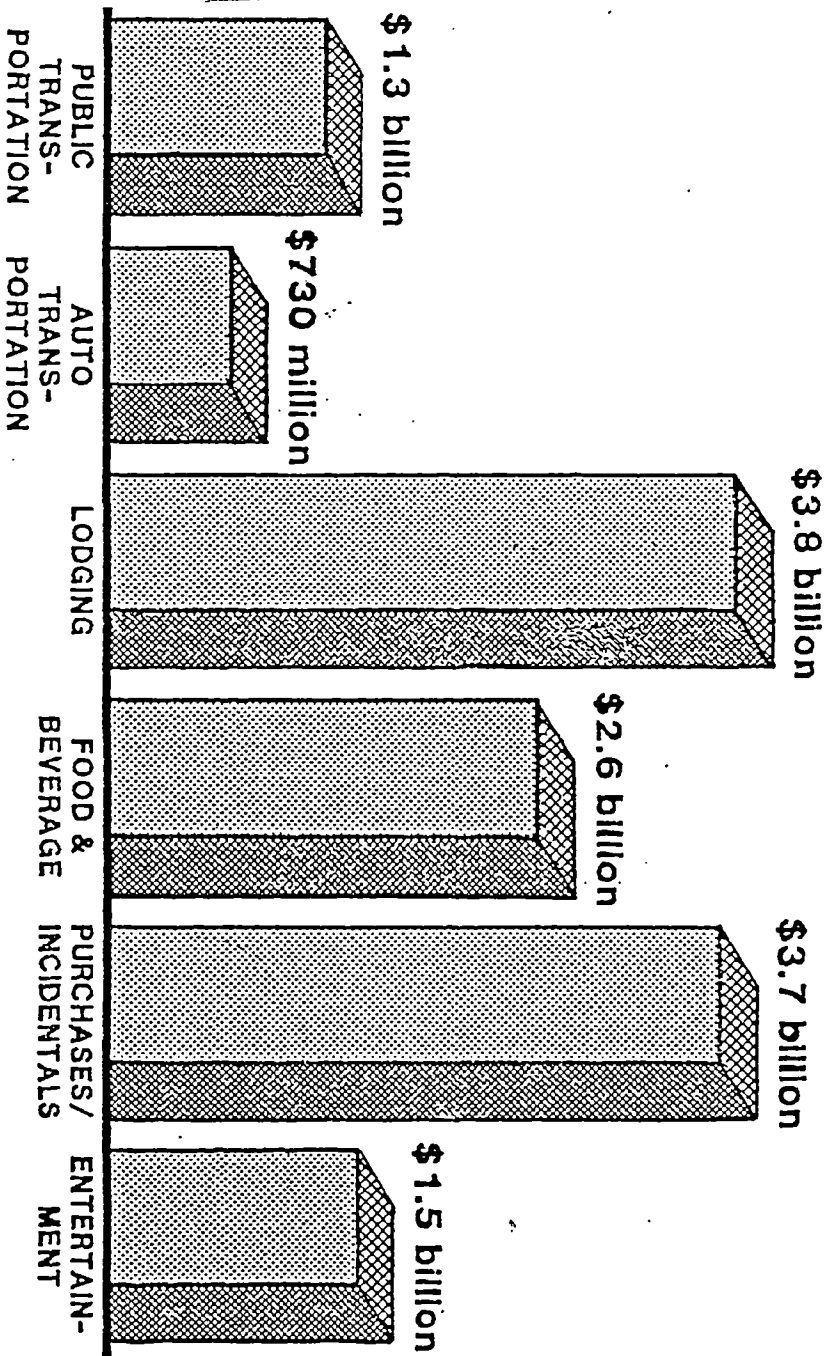


FIGURE 2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Travel & Tourism

# IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM ON THE U.S. ECONOMY - 1983

## Tax Revenues Generated by Foreign Visitor Spending

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<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 1,656 Million ( 12.6¢/\$ 1 Receipts)</b>
<b>Federal:</b>	<b>\$ 854 Million ( 6.5¢/\$ 1 Receipts)</b>
<b>State:</b>	<b>\$ 599 Million ( 4.6¢/\$ 1 Receipts)</b>
<b>Local:</b>	<b>\$ 203 Million ( 1.5¢/\$ 1 Receipts)</b>

TABLE 7

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Travel and Tourism



of population, that figure would have to be at least 48 million. The figures for tourist earnings would show a similar shortfall compared with Britain's. Figures would be similarly unfavourable if compared with those of Italy. Another point which proves this argument is the fact that in 1984, where 2,747,274 Americans visited Italy and 2,764,000 Britain, only 218,379 Italians and 972,574 Britons went to the United States.<sup>(32)</sup>

The United States is a vast country with an amazingly vast economy and larger-than-life figures are commonplace occurrences. It would perhaps be more realistic to speak in terms of percentages than concrete figures, when comparisons are being made, to create a more understandable picture. That, however, is not practical mainly for reasons already mentioned in the Introduction concerning the difficulties which exist in cross-referencing of figures. One other difficulty — at least as far as this study is concerned — is the fact that more than any other place in the world, the United States is a country of rapid change. Change generates new data for research, so that if a fairly representative picture were to be given of the American scene, an unproportionate amount of time and space would have to be given to this section of the work. One year (in this instance 1983) and the figures relevant to it will therefore be taken for the purpose of illustrating the points raised.

The 14 billion dollars spent by foreign visitors to the United States is not, of course, evenly spread over all the fifty states which form the federal whole. Two states, Florida and California, account for 19% of the total amount each: Florida receiving \$2.65 billion and California another \$2.63 billion. Washington, D.C., on the other hand, accounted for a mere 2% or \$0.29 billion (Table 8).

TABLE 8

## 1983 INTERNATIONAL TOURISM RECEIPTS TOP 10 STATES

FLORIDA	\$	\$2.65 BILLION (19% OF TOTAL)
CALIFORNIA	\$	\$2.63 BILLION (19%)
NEW YORK	\$	\$1.57 BILLION (11%)
HAWAII	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$	\$1.17 BILLION (9%)
TEXAS	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$	\$1.11 BILLION (8%)
ARIZONA	\$\$\$\$\$	\$ .35 BILLION (3%)
NEVADA	\$\$\$	\$ .31 BILLION (2%)
WASHINGTON, D.C.	\$\$\$	\$ .29 BILLION (2%)
MASSACHUSETTS	\$\$\$	\$ .27 BILLION (2%)
ILLINOIS	\$\$\$	\$ .23 BILLION (2%)

SOURCE: US Department of Travel & Tourism

The country is not only vast, it is diverse in its scenery, its people and what there is on offer and therefore draws visitors of different interests and means to its diverse areas. The sums spent and the revenues generated by them are, however, not to be scorned at. This would better fall into a perspective if it were also noted that in the year 1983 total international expenditure on tourism was \$96,200 million. (Figure 3)

Fascinating though the statistics are, it is very often a mistake to judge the overall value of anything, including tourism, only in terms of the amount of money it generates. For one thing, taking into consideration the fact that the United States of America covers an area in excess of nine thousand million square kilometers and is home to a population now in excess of 230 million, the tourism revenue is not so great. For another, monetary return is only one — and not a very significant one at that — of the functions tourism, as any other sector within any economy, fulfils. There are other things it does. It creates jobs, for example. It also opens the doors of one human society to others. To a great majority of the population of the world, the only first-hand experience they will ever have of the rest of the people they share their planet with is through the unknown visitor who lands amongst them.

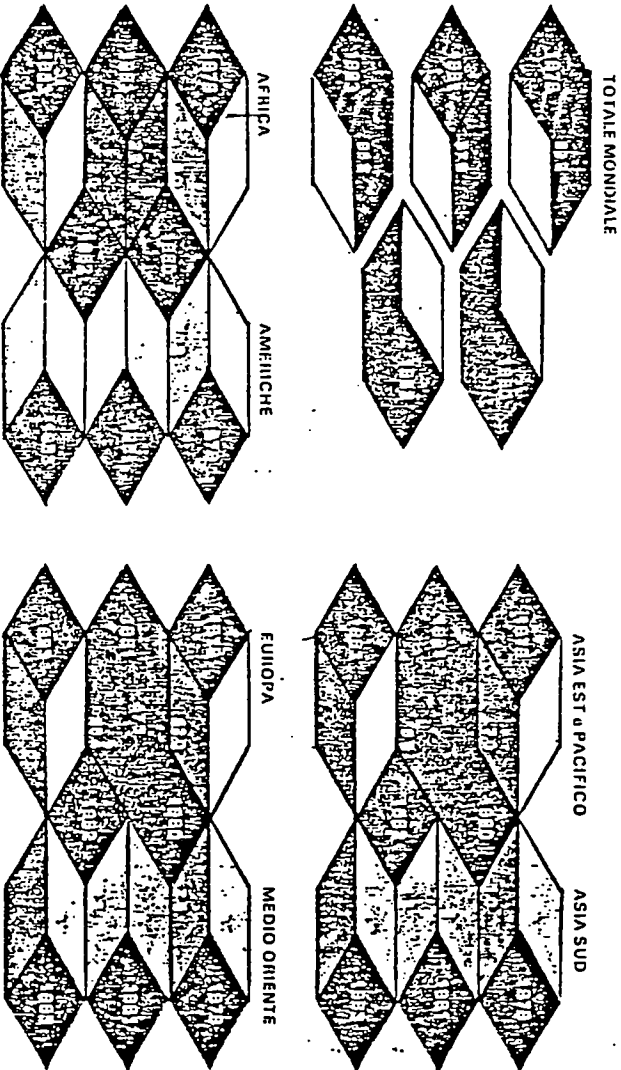
Another area of significance is that which tourism has in its relevance to the arts in both the guest and the host countries. A great deal more of research needs to be done in this area and documented facts and figures are hard to acquire, at least in the United States. Ample statistical information is available on tourism and about the arts, but very little on the relationship between the two or the effect of one on the other. The American love for itemized

**FIGURE 3**

**SPSE PER IL TURISMO INTERNAZIONALE ANNI 1979-1983 (in miliardi di dollari U.S.A.)**

DEPENSES POUR LE TOURISME INTERNATIONAL ANNEES 1979-1983 (en milliards de dollars U.S.A.)  
 INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EXPENDITURE 1979-1983 (US \$ '000,000)  
 AUSGABEN FÜR DEN INTERNATIONALEN FREIZEITVERKEHR IN DEN JAHREN 1979 BIS 1983 (in Milliarden US-Dollar ausgedrückt)  
 GASTOS PARA EL TURISMO INTERNACIONAL AÑOS 1979-1983 (en billones de dólares E. U. U.)

1979	82,2	+26,5%
1980	95,3	+15,9%
1981	97,9	+2,7%
1982	94,3	-3,7%
1983 *	96,2	+2,0%



Fonte: U.M.I.  
 (\*) Stima...

SOURCE: Italian Tourist Office

information provides detailed figures on the economic significance, the economic impact, the economic volume, even the economic future of tourism in the U.S.A. but little else. The more significant museums and art galleries can provide one with figures on the numbers of foreign visitors to their institutions, but from there on it is the researcher's province to find other figures from other individual sources, put them all together and arrive at national statistics. That, however, is a physical impossibility considering the vastness of the country and the turnover involved.

The U.S. Department of Commerce does a meticulous job of estimating the amounts spent by foreign visitors on various amenities such as public transport, lodging, food, entertainment, etc. It cannot give the researcher any idea, however, as to what the shares of different types of entertainment were in the total sum spent under the overall heading of 'Entertainment'. The structure of federal, state and local government in the United States is such that it renders the compilation of such statistics very difficult, besides which the whole issue remains open to the question as to whether it is the responsibility of any department or area in government to undertake such research or collect such statistics.

Finally, the greater proportion of the tourist industry in the United States is formed by a rising phenomenon called the Conference Trade. This, in a manner of speaking, is the combination of the conventional, Thomas Cook type of package tour and the professional convention. The idea itself is neither new nor American: it was in fact Thomas Cook who struck upon the concept and founded an empire on the idea.<sup>(33)</sup> In American hands, however, it has acquired

unprecedented dimension and come to be refined to an art now being exported  
abroad.

## PART THREE

# NOTES

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7. D. M. White, Pop Culture in America (New York: New York Times, 1971)
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26. Treasury Regulation 1.501(C)(3)-1(d)(2)
27. Treasury Regulation 1.170A-1(C)(2)
28. The tax-payer owning works of art that have greatly appreciated since first bought, is liable for a capital gains tax on the increased price should he sell them to a private party. However, if the work is donated to a charitable organization, the whole market value of the gift becomes tax deductible for

- the donor. If the donor is a high-bracket tax payer this would put him ahead of where he would have been had he sold the work and kept the proceeds.
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PART FOUR  
**Great Britain**

## CHAPTER TEN

# Overview

Britain does not have a single, laid-down system for its art administration; but then, it does not have a constitution or a coded legislation either, and yet it would not be exaggerative to say that it is one of the most smoothly running socio-legal systems in the world.

Britain's is a legacy of apprenticeships. Even today, a glance at the British system of education will show that a good many of the disciplines considered to be academic subjects by the rest of the world are in Britain still treated as practical trades to be acquired through apprenticeship. Accountancy is a good example. It is not surprising, therefore, to see the vast network of things artistic run, in this land of undercurrents, without there being any apparent system to direct them or rules to govern them. (There is, of course, a certain amount of cumulative legislation and a considerable amount of tradition which bears upon the creation, location, presentation and protection of artistic things: legislation which is not always beneficial to the arts and which is perhaps only comparable to that of Italy and is in stark contrast with the United States. These do not, however, negate the overall reality stated.)

The arm's length principle which governs the interaction between controllers of public funds and the direct provider of the arts, in effect asserts the conviction that as in the days of old each guild, through its complicated apprenticeship system, knows or rather feels what to do and how and when to do it and that

the Guild Master (in the case of the arts, the Arts Council) is there to coordinate efforts with a nod of the head or the raising of an eyebrow here and there. The system works (sometimes perhaps even better than some of the well-defined and sophisticated mechanisms created elsewhere) but is wasteful when carried to excess.

The British have a deep-rooted aversion for the concept of administration, which they find antithetic to their 'closed club' mentality and the guild tradition which has ruled most aspects of their social and economic existence most of the time. The arms length principle is thus the mechanism which separates the decision-making process from the actual practice of running the arts. It is not called a policy, for policy is another word of which the British are suspicious.

In his essay 'Tradition, Change, and Crisis in Great Britain' (1987) F.F. Ridley says much the same, talking about the Arts Council:

"It is a firm principle (stated in the government's White Paper on the arts of 1965, for example) that the Arts Council retains full freedom to allocate the money made available to it... The Council may spend the grant voted by Parliament almost entirely as it thinks fit, regardless of the estimates upon which it based its original request and the fact that these may have influenced the total agreed. This underlines the principle that Ministers and civil servants should not intervene directly in its activities. Behind-the-scenes 'discussions' and 'influence' are another matter, but so far as is known they never amount to irresistible pressure. Ministers resist all parliamentary and public pressures to intervene officially (such criticism is usually sparked off by an activity which appears morally distasteful, politically biased, or simply ridiculous to the layman, but is marginal to the main thrust of the Council's subsidies). As a result, they will not take parliamentary responsibility for the way the grant is spent and will not answer questions about individual cases except, perhaps, to pass on information obtained from the Council itself. Since cultural policy in the British system tends to be made through such allocative decisions, this effectively means that the government opts out of the substance of cultural policy. When public outcry forced the Minister to inquire about the impact of a Council decision in 1982 to withdraw its subsidy from a number of organizations in order to make its own ends meet, he was careful to add: 'In no way would I wish to intervene in the

individual decisions made by the Arts Council within the total sum available to it nor the strategy which lay behind them.' Of course, Ministers may influence the broad direction taken by the Arts Council through the appointment of its members. Moreover, since it depends on the good will of the Minister and his civil servants for negotiations about the size of its annual grant, there is further scope for influence. In a period of financial cuts, as at present, this becomes more important: the government may threaten to subsidize certain activities directly (the national companies, for example) if the Arts Council does not allocate a sufficient proportion of its grant (in government eyes) to them, cutting the Council's grant pro rata. Since this process takes place outside the framework of democratic responsibility through a Minister to Parliament, the Arts Council effectively is 'irresponsible'. The traditional argument is that this is necessary to protect the freedom of the arts but some now think that 'democratization' of one sort or another is necessary. The secrecy which surrounds such informal contacts is typically British. Private discussions take the place of defined powers, formal procedures, and recorded decisions. This has something to do with the limited role of law in the structure of British administration. There is little belief that the relations between government and other bodies are improved by formalizing their interaction or that organizations work better if their internal procedures are regulated. This makes it hard to trace the influence of Ministers, civil servants, Council members, staff, and other notables in the arts world. It is doubly difficult because of the network of personal relations between the people concerned. The chairman of the Arts Council, for example, invariably has contacts in high places. The chairmen of the great national theatre and opera companies are members of the same network. One critic refers to 'the incestuous world of opera house politics'. Ties of class (including the old school ties of Eton), family and business connections, overlapping committee membership, shared experience around Whitehall, and the circuit of London social life link many of the decision-makers in the arts. Matters can be discussed at opening nights, at dinners, in clubs, or by 'old-boy' telephone calls. This is also part of the British tradition. Some left wing observers therefore conclude that whatever the apparent independence of the Arts Council, it forms part of a ruling elite and has the values of that class, so that there is no need to direct it because it goes along accepted paths anyway."<sup>(1)</sup>

In what follows, an endeavour has been made to paint a picture, understandable to the non-expert, of how the arts are administered in Great Britain despite all nomenclature, and of who does what to make the non-system work.

## THE STRUCTURE OF ARTS ADMINISTRATION IN GREAT BRITAIN

### 11.1 GENERAL SURVEY

Britain has always been arguably the most suitable haven for new ideas and experimental undertakings. Examples are legion, from socialism to psychoanalysis to kindergartens to new adventures in music. The tremendous effort which has gone into the realization of Britain's present standing in the arts emanates from that fact and has resulted in Britain's proving to be one of the best sanctuaries the arts have found. It is in the institution of being British (with its peculiar and quaint system of apprenticeships and guilds) that this love of providing opportunities and protection is somehow rooted, and it is that which makes this perhaps not very artistic nation the guardians of one of the world's most important centres for the arts.

The drive towards the achievement of this prestigious standing in the preservation of the arts has been going on for well over a hundred years, impeded for only a few years by two wars and then the local and national planners, according to Lord Cecil. Considering the fact that whatever else man needs to live by must, perforce, take second place to the bread in his basket, what has been achieved in Britain is highly commendable.

As regards the relative position of its public and private sectors in the arts, Britain lies somewhere between Italy and the United States. It is not as public-

sector orientated as Italy, yet not as private-sector inclined as the United States. It does not like to see the government having a hand or a say in the arts, yet it wants the arts to be provided for by the government. It does not hope for the general public to support the arts too much, yet it expects the arts somehow to survive through the good will of individuals. In short, where the Italians unflinchingly demand that their governments see to the needs of the arts and where the Americans look at the arts as just another sector of the economy, subject to economic principles and no different from any other human endeavour that has to eke itself out an existence, the British have no definite end in mind nor means to achieve it as far as the arts are concerned.

In Great Britain, government assistance to the arts falls below that of Italy's and private patronage and serious business sponsorship below that of the United States'. In Italy, the arts and their destiny are primarily the concern of the government even though (because of cultural reasons and as a result of tax exemptions) the private sector is also magnanimous. In the United States, on the other hand, the arts are the domain of the private sector, even though the government's support of them is generous and they are themselves economically buoyant. In Britain, the arts seem to be somebody else's child abandoned on the national doorstep. The most vociferous advocates of the arts want the government's money for them but not the government's interference, the government wants to have the final say in them but is not willing to pay a penny more for the privilege than it absolutely has to, and the arts cannot make a living for themselves in the marketplace because they consider having to comply with economic realities like everyone else an insult.

## 11.2 THE PUBLIC SECTOR

In *The Work of Art*, Peter Rodgers describes the art scene in Britain as follows:

"... a glittering array of 2,000 museums and galleries, with changing displays and programmes of research and education, together with 1,000 venues and performing arts organizations providing over 100,000 concerts, plays, dance and opera performances a year — and all partly or mainly publicly funded."<sup>(2)</sup>

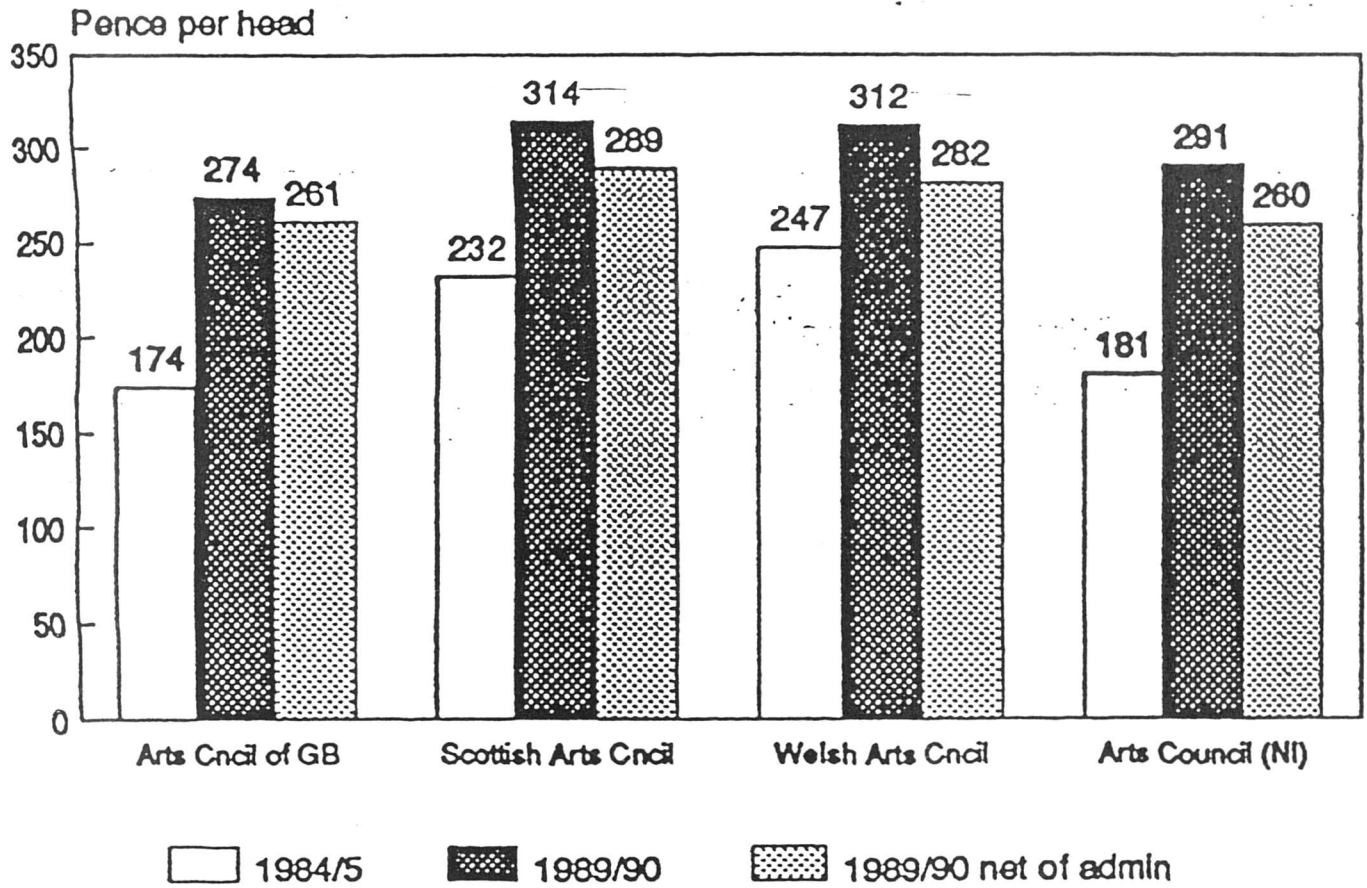
Even allowing for over-enthusiasm on the part of the writer, both as far as the glowing account is concerned and the part played by the public sector, it has to be admitted that there is notable support for the arts in Britain from government quarters, even though the amount may not be anywhere near what is required.

Overall, public support for the arts in Britain falls behind both the other two countries studied. Per capita spending on the arts in 1983 of only \$10 (Table 2 in Chapter Six) is indicative of this fact. (Other countries listed in the same year were: the Federal Republic of Germany: \$27; France: \$32; the Netherlands: \$29; Sweden: \$35. This makes Britain's public sector expenditure the lowest of the lot.) In the fiscal year 1989/90, the same figure stood at £8.32 (circa. \$14) as reported by the Policy Studies Institute (Figure 1).

Aggregate figures with any degree of reliability are virtually impossible to obtain, especially when there are three countries concerned. Each country defines the arts (at least for budgetary purposes) very differently from the other two. In each country the distinction between art and leisure falls at a different place. Besides all that, patterns of funding differ. (As an example, Table 1 in Chapter Six shows that direct national expenditure in the fiscal year 1983-84 in the

Figure 1

The four Arts Councils: per capita expenditure, 1984/5 and 1989/90(a)



Source: Policy Studies Institute

(a) Expenditure figures adjusted to exclude spending on crafts, film and capital.



United States was only 38% of that in Great Britain. Yet in the same period, total public expenditure on the arts in the U.S. was twice that in Britain.)

Public sector support in Britain has its own arcane system and complicated mechanism, all (not unlike Italy) rather difficult to understand. There is little doubt, however, that given national expectations and the limited extent of participation and support on the part of the private sector, it is vital to the very existence of the arts.

There are, of course, shortcomings in the structure and methodology of public sector support for the arts. However, that is not exclusive to Britain. As a result of the inevitable changes through which the society has gone in the last decade, many of the sound and valuable ideas that once worked seem to have lost (or to be losing) their effect. Obviously the system has not always been as inadequate as it seems to be today (except for the fundamental flaw which renders any government control of creative things inadvisable). Every system is created to fit the needs of a particular situation and is fully effective only when applied to that situation. Situations change, however, and systems usually do not, particularly if they are bureaucratic.

Overt government intervention in the arts in Britain started in mid-18th century with the acquisition by the government (through funds from a national lottery and not the government) of the Hans Sloane Collection in 1753, a move which led to the eventual establishment of the British Museum. By the 19th century, government support of the arts had expanded widely enough for it to be diverted into two channels: direct support of the visual arts through the funding of

national museums and galleries, and indirect contribution (mainly to the performing arts) through the allocation of funds to local authorities. (It was this second channel, the administration of the funds given to local authorities, which formed the roots of what is now known as the arm's length principle.) Local authorities were also given power to levy rates, funds from which were to be used for artistic and cultural purposes. The 1845 Act for Encouraging the Establishment of Museums in Large Town and the supplemental Act of 1850 allowed councils in towns with populations of more than 10,000 to establish museums subject to the approval of two thirds of the people of each respective town.<sup>(3)</sup>

In 1926, the British Broadcasting Corporation was formed under Royal Charter and became one of the most important venues for the arts. In the Charter of the Corporation, all decision-making in the area of programming was delegated to an independent Board of Governors. However, as the Board of Governors itself was appointed by the government, it was no secret that government interests were well represented. The BBC started to employ artists, form its own orchestras, throw together its own teams of entertainers, and commission works of art from various artists in all art areas.

With World War II came the need for more entertainment, both for the armed forces and for the people at large. To fulfil this need, several arts organizations were created with financial support from the government (this time indirectly routed through the armed forces) the first of which was the Entertainment National Service Association (ENSA) which, by 1944, had spread its domain of artistic activities so far as to become an almost international institution by

organizing roving groups of artists to perform concerts, variety shows and plays for the members of the armed forces stationed half across the world. According to John Pick, during its life-span:

"ENSA cost £14 million to run, played to more than 500 million people and, during the war, four out of five professional performers had worked for it at some time."<sup>(4)</sup>

There were other organizations formed alongside and on the same lines as ENSA. The Mobile Entertainments for Southern Areas (MESA) under the directorship of Charles Smith of the Brighton Theatre Royal, Stars in Battledress directed by Basil Brown, and an adult version of the Boy Scouts' The Gang Show (supported by the RAF and directed by Ralph Reader, himself formerly a singer and dancer) were three of the organizations whose main aim was to entertain the troops and a war-stricken nation rather than promote and propagate the arts or support amateur work. Though these vanished when the war ended, the need for venues to look after the arts and institutions not merely for the purpose of providing entertainment was felt strongly and this led to the formation of certain agencies, among them the Army Bureau of Current Affairs Unit (ABCA) and the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA). The first of these two was, as its name hints, a forum for open discussion on current affairs and issues but was introduced each time with a dramatized version of a contemporary issue (never lasting more than three quarters of an hour) which set the scene for the discussion that followed. CEMA, on the other hand, which was formed through the joint financial efforts of the American-based Pilgrim Trust and the British government and had the

support of amateur arts as one of its priorities, was a much more serious effort and gained significance in the world of British culture and arts as time passed. It began by concentrating its activity on filling the gap left where the BBC had in a way failed: the promotion and support of amateur art. Those good intentions did not last long, however, for CEMA soon changed its tactics and began to concentrate only on professional arts or what was considered 'proper' art in the Victorian sense. Soon, it had changed from the active, lively concern born of a need to a very conservative body which symbolized the closed-circuit art of a small but exclusive handful. In the process, it had also taken on the airs of a panel qualified to judge who should be assisted and who not, and thus set itself up as a standard-bearer, dismissing all else as insignificant and amateurish. This tradition was to continue even after CEMA itself had ceased to be. It was from what had remained of CEMA that the main recipient of the funds today provided by the Office of Arts and Libraries, namely the Arts Council of Great Britain, was born in 1945, inheriting the 'arm's length policy', the 'populism vs elitism argument' et al.

The most comprehensive account that the writer has come across of the public sector structure of arts administration in Britain is that presented by Professor Patrick Boylan. In this account, Professor Boylan places the Office of Arts and Libraries and the Office of the Minister for the Civil Service at the top of the hierarchy dealing with the arts in the public sector. This is headed by the Minister for the Arts whom Professor Boylan describes as:

"Nominally the deputy to the Lord President of the Privy Council for Cabinet responsibility purposes in relation to the Arts, and deputy to the Prime Minister as Minister for the Civil Service, (i.e. the central

government administration). (The Prime Minister as First Lord of the Treasury is the official minister for the Civil Service, but delegates most of the work and responsibility to the Minister for the Arts — probably the major part of whose time is taken up with these duties: certainly one former Minister said that he could only spend two days a week on his Arts responsibilities.) N.B. The Minister for the Arts is not a member of the Cabinet, and is mainly responsible for certain limited aspects of the national cultural services in England (*sensu stricto*) i.e. excluding Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, though some parts of the country's international relations in the cultural field, especially with the European Community are handled by the English Art Minister as well."<sup>(5)</sup>

The Minister for the Arts is responsible for the British, Victoria and Albert, Natural History, Imperial War, and National Maritime museums, National Museum of Science & Technology, National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside and the National, Tate and National Portrait galleries, the British Library, the Arts Council, the Museums & Galleries Commission, the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Museums Training Institute.

The Office of Arts and Libraries under the Minister for the Arts allocates funds to various areas of activity involved with the arts. The bulk of the money goes to the use of the Minister and his Office of Arts & Libraries. The Office of Arts & Libraries then allocates certain sums to various areas of activity involved with the arts. The bulk of the money goes to the Arts Council of Great Britain, the Museums & Galleries Commission, the British Film Institute and the Crafts Council. Table 1 indicates the Office of Arts and Libraries expenditure for the years 1984/90.

The Minister for the Arts and his Office of Arts and Libraries are not, however, the government's only mechanism for supporting the arts. The Ministry for the Environment has the Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission, the National

**Table 1**  
**Office of Arts and Libraries: expenditure on museums, galleries,  
the arts, heritage and libraries**

£ thousands

	1984/5	1985/6	1986/7	1987/8	1988/9	1989/90
<b>Museums and galleries</b>						
British Museum	12,771	13,096	13,345	13,938	23,562	24,692
British Museum (Natural History)	na	na	na	na	21,732	21,680
Science Museum(s)	8,483	8,954	9,171	9,589	16,039	16,709
Imperial War Museum	4,100	4,445	4,497	4,727	12,781	10,524
National Gallery	6,992	6,571	6,771	7,017	11,238	12,477
National Maritime Museum	4,275	4,218	4,462	4,677	7,905	9,190
National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside	na	na	10,145	9,414	10,220	10,851
National Portrait Gallery	1,866	1,777	1,814	1,899	5,232	3,816
Tate Gallery	5,594	5,644	5,782	6,497	11,351	12,047
Victoria and Albert(a)	11,340	10,670	11,023	11,680	21,069	21,767
Wallace Collection	822	876	906	939	1,470	1,626
Property Services Agency(b)	25,557	30,132	27,681	27,302	na	na
Other museums(c)	1,483	1,589	3,575	3,868	4,524	4,666
Museums and Galleries Commission(d)	2,913	4,196	5,962	6,233	6,481	6,854
<b>Total museums and galleries</b>	<b>86,196</b>	<b>92,168</b>	<b>105,134</b>	<b>107,780</b>	<b>153,604</b>	<b>156,899</b>
<b>Arts support</b>						
Arts Council of Great Britain	100,000	105,072	135,600	139,300	152,411	155,500
British Film Institute	7,710	8,160	9,738	10,040	11,300	11,900
National Film and TV School	990	1,120	1,100	1,127	1,600	1,700
Crafts Council	1,777	1,880	1,925	2,022	2,250	2,350
Public Lending Right	2,000	2,750	2,750	2,750	3,500	3,500
Sponsorship(e)	na	1,300	1,780	1,982	2,647	3,364
South Bank Theatre Board	541	76	1	17	-	4
<b>Total arts</b>	<b>113,018</b>	<b>120,358</b>	<b>152,894</b>	<b>157,238</b>	<b>173,708</b>	<b>178,318</b>
<b>Heritage</b>						
National Heritage Memorial Fund	4,000	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Acceptance in lieu	1,987	1,380	1,948	7,627	5,720	10,514
British Library(f)	46,850	48,254	49,800	51,000	75,475	95,036
Property Services Agency(b)	3,704	6,582	11,243	21,817	na	na
Other(g)	1,146	1,311	986	961	2,442	2,446
<b>Total(h)</b>	<b>256,901</b>	<b>271,553</b>	<b>323,505</b>	<b>347,923</b>	<b>412,449</b>	<b>444,713</b>

Source: Policy Studies Institute

- (a) Up to 1984/5, purchase grants to local museums were administered by the Victoria and Albert and Science Museums, and included as part of their grant-in-aid. As from 1985/6, funds for local museum purchases were administered through the Museums and Galleries Commission.
- (b) Includes capital and maintenance expenditure.
- (c) The Museum of London, Sir John Soane's Museum, and, following the abolition of the metropolitan county councils in 1986, the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry.
- (d) The increase in Museum and Galleries Commission grant-in-aid in 1985/6 partially reflects the Commission's expanded responsibilities for the administration of local museum purchase funds.
- (e) Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme and, as from 1987/8, the Arts Marketing Scheme.
- (f) The substantial increase in British Library expenditure after 1988/9 reflects the transfer of responsibility for spending on the St. Pancras project from Property Services Agency to the OAL.

Heritage Memorial Fund, the Royal Palaces & Parks Authority for England, and the Museum Training Institute. (The latter, according to Professor Boylan, is primarily the responsibility of the Minister for the Arts but the Ministry for the Environment also provides certain functions of it with grants.

The Department of Trade and Industry looks after the Design Council and the Design Centre, and the Design Museum.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is responsible for the Commonwealth Institute (which permanently houses ethnic and national interests and artistic and cultural activities) the Overseas Development Administration (which handles most overseas cultural relations) and the British Council (which is a network of cultural exchanges, overseas exhibitions a bursary for studies and travel). There are also other Ministries (such as Education & Science) and institutions which in one way or another give assistance to the arts, but their activities are so broad that they cannot be considered as bona fide arts institutions or institutions responsible for the arts. This work will however limit itself to the mainline mechanism for the sake of brevity and sanity.

The Arts Council, from its share of the parliamentary grants, passes funds on to the Welsh and Scottish Arts Councils (which are in effect Committees of the ACGB itself), the so-called 'national companies' (e.g. the English National Opera, the Royal Opera and Ballet, the Royal National Theatre, and the Royal Shakespeare Company) and about two hundred other organizations. Besides these organizations, it also supports, to various degrees, activities in the fields of drama, music, art and film, dance, literature, and a few others. (Table 2)

Table 2

## Arts Council of Great Britain: expenditure in England by main budgetary headings

£ thousands

	1984/5	1985/6	1986/7	1987/8	1988/9	1989/90
Regional arts associations	12,338	15,963	24,639	27,619	29,154	30,287
National companies:						
Drama	12,292	12,347	13,008	13,008	13,244	13,506
Opera(a)	13,335	14,119	14,049	13,327	13,410	13,357
Dance(a)	4,955	5,390	4,948	5,837	6,672	7,578
Other music (inc opera)	8,906	8,389	10,598	10,756	11,271	11,851
Other dance	3,061	3,592	4,268	4,409	4,731	4,729
Other drama	12,411	11,752	14,099	13,559	14,323	15,563
Touring	3,958	3,884	7,227	7,189	7,729	8,694
Art (inc art film)	3,555	3,372	4,512	2,530 (c)	2,997	3,378
Literature	787	488	495	514	529 (c)	629
Arts centres and community projects	1,243	1,083	1,750	923	660	642
Education and training(b)	736	735	1,062	1,106	1,124	1,420
Incentive Funding Scheme	na	na	na	79	2,134	3,151
International Initiatives	na	na	na	na	357	649
Housing the Arts	1,146	834	661	1,310	-	-
South Bank(c)	na	381	8,758	10,792	10,411	10,600
Operating costs(d)	4,099	4,241	4,595	4,826	5,460	5,972
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,837</b>	<b>86,570</b>	<b>114,669</b>	<b>117,784</b>	<b>124,206(e)</b>	<b>132,007</b>

Source: Policy Studies Institute

- (a) For the years up to 1986/7 the Royal Opera House grant is divided 60/40 between opera and dance. After 1987/8 the grant was identified separately.
- (b) Including publications, and as from 1978/8 equal opportunities, marketing initiatives reports and surveys.
- (c) In April 1986 the South Bank became responsible as landlords for the South Bank estate and took over direct management of the three purpose-built concert halls - the Royal Festival Hall, the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Purcell Room. From April 1987 the South Bank also took on responsibility for the Hayward Gallery, the Arts Council touring exhibition service and the Arts Council Collection. In April 1988, the South Bank became responsible for the Arts Council's Poetry Library.
- (d) Administration of subsidies and services, operational costs and depreciation.
- (e) Excludes £2,411 million towards the Royal Opera House Development Trust.



#### ◆ THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

Created out of the ashes of CEMA (its first Secretary General was Mary Glasgow who had been the last Director of CEMA) in 1946,<sup>(6)</sup> the Arts Council of Great Britain soon established itself as a useful instrument for the government and a welcome but questionable source of assistance for the arts. The changes and modifications through which it has gone over the years are mainly of historical interest and outside the scope of this report. As it is now, it consists of a Chairman and nineteen members appointed for a term of five years. It has two subsidiary Committees called the Scottish Arts Council and the Welsh Arts Council the appointments for which are made by the main Council but subject to the approval of the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales respectively. As with the Office of Arts & Libraries, the main Council's work is limited to England itself and for this, it has a Finance & Policy (England) Committee and a system of Advisory Panels each covering one specific area of the arts. The Scottish and Welsh Councils each has, as will be seen in due course, its own host of similar Panels and Committees.

The objectives of the Arts Council of Great Britain were initially more or less the same as those of CEMA's, namely to protect, support and promote the arts. Lord Keynes, the first Chairman of the Council, regarded these functions limited to what he called the 'best' in the arts<sup>(7)</sup> and the Council's second Secretary General, W. E. Williams, described as the "few but roses"<sup>(8)</sup>, apparently a reference to the handful of art institutions with a 'serious' line of work. In his essay 'The Standards of Excellence and Popular Arts' Ian Anderson reflects upon this elitist attitude towards the arts:

" There persists in our society a clear distinction between the so-called heritage and popular arts. The heritage or high arts are those art forms which have become established as worthy of being supported and preserved by the state through one means or another... They are seen to symbolize in some way the national moral good, setting standards of respectability, refining sensibilities and broadening the mind... By the same token, the so-called popular arts are slightly immoral, coarse, of low taste and largely devoid of artistic merit."<sup>(9)</sup>

John Pick quotes W.E. Williams as having said:

"The Arts Council believes that the first claim upon its attention and assistance is that of maintaining in London and larger cities effective power-houses of opera, music and drama, for unless these quality institutions can be maintained, the arts are bound to mediocrity."<sup>(10)</sup>

In 1965 Jennie Lee, Minister for the Arts in the Wilson government, presented a White Paper to Parliament proposing changes in the policies of the Arts Council so that the Council would pay more attention to community arts and to amateur activities.<sup>(11)</sup> In the wake of this, the Council received a new Royal Charter in 1967 which set it the following aims:

- a. to improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts and
- b. to increase the accessibility of the arts to the public.<sup>(12)</sup>

The 1965 White Paper referred to had also provided for more attention to be paid to the arts in the regions, for more money to be channelled into local authorities so that they could better support community and ethnic arts, and for a committee to review the standards and sets of values which were used within the Arts Council when deciding on who should receive grants and to what extent. Besides all this, the Paper had also made provisions for measures to improve the Regional Arts Associations and the local authorities.

In practice, the paper had little to offer in the area of its contention. It had been worded in keeping with the new spirit of adventure and clean-sweeping fashionable at the time but had little of any real value and practical efficacy to offer. 'The arts' continued, in practice, to be what fell within the definition Keynes had provided for them and the Arts Council continued to provide for them in more or less the same spirit and with more or less the same areas of preference in mind as Williams had stipulated.

This does not mean that there were no changes or improvements, of course. What it does show is that the claims of the 1965 'Policy for the Arts' White Paper were mainly just claims and that through the years, whichever the government and whatever the fashion prevailing, the Arts Council more or less continued along the same course it had set itself in the beginning. And with the passage of time, as John Pick points out

"...the Arts Council's credibility with the arts world shrank to invisibility."<sup>(13)</sup>

This trend of being ahead with words and behind with deeds continued through the decades under various Ministers and administrations, the only real differences being the angle of attack. In the Arts Council policy review document of 1984 'The Glory of the Garden', Sir William Rees-Mogg, Chairman of the Council, wrote:

"We of the Arts Council are greatly concerned to decentralize and disperse the dramatic and musical and artistic life of this country, to build up provincial centres and to promote corporate life in these matters in every town and county."<sup>(14)</sup>

Despite that, the Council still allocates more than 21.7% of its £156.6 million of funds to only four big national companies in the capital: the Royal Opera, the English National Opera, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre.<sup>(15)</sup>

There has been, over the years, a good deal of criticism directed at the Arts Council not only in its handling of the arts but also over the question of its relationship with the government. The Arts Council's answer in its own defence can perhaps be best seen in the following quotation from its Annual Report for 1978-79 in which it touches upon its own fragile position:

"Independence can degenerate into real irresponsibility; responsibility can degenerate into political subservience. We in Britain have kept the balance for over thirty years, but it can only be kept right by the continuing good sense of both the Government and the Arts Council."<sup>(16)</sup>

There are many similarities between the aims and purposes of the Arts Council of Great Britain and the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States, but their relative positions and the manner in which they function are vastly different. The Arts Council follows the British tradition and is a quango (Quasi-Autonomous National Governmental Organization) and acts as the main channel of government aid to the arts, while the NEA in the United States is a fully fledged government agency. In Britain, the principle of abstinence from direct intervention has been considered as governing the relationship between the government and the Arts Council, and it may have so done at some stage and in some cases. There are, however, a number of authorities who consider this to be without substance. In his book *Vile Jelly*, John Pick says:

"Thus, as the Arts Council moved stealthily from being a responsive body to acting as if it were actually responsible for the state of the national culture, it canonized as 'art' each year just enough activities to use up its funds. The size of the government grant thus determined each year in advance just how much excellent drama, how much excellent painting and how much excellent music there would be. As the size of the Arts Council's grant was, from the first, politically determined, so, by the Arts Council's definition, was the amount of excellence in art each year likewise politically determined."<sup>(17)</sup>

The difference here with the United States is that in the USA the NEA directly and uninhibitedly receives its instructions from the government and in a manner equally direct and uninhibited instructs those who benefit from its support.

Thus, unlike the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States which goes so far as to give direct patronage to even isolated projects and individual artists, the Arts Council of Great Britain is calculatedly and strictly indirect in its contacts with artists and arts projects.

(In 1988, however, the Arts Council started its own scheme called Incentive Funding Scheme, which, like that of the NEA, provides challenge or matching grants to those of its clients who succeed in acquiring sums of money in sponsorship from the private sector).

#### ◆ THE SCOTTISH AND WELSH ARTS COUNCILS

As already pointed out, the Scottish and Welsh Arts Councils are, in a way, adjuncts of the Arts Council of Great Britain from which they get the bulk of their funds.

Both Councils are, in a manner of speaking, scaled-down replicas of the parent Council (the ACGB) and work on very much the same lines despite the fact that they are different in scope and often emphasize different priorities. Thus,

the Scottish and Welsh Councils also work with a number of Committees and Advisory Panels and through a number of outlets, though the latter are (at least to the uninitiated outsider) very low-profile, in accord with the all-important 'arm's length' lore.

There are, of course, points of difference between the two adjunct Councils and the ACGB and between each of the two adjunct Councils and the other.

Scotland and Wales are both smaller entities than England. They are also in more of a straitened position economically. In the case of Scotland, the Council has no Regional Arts Associations with which to work and share responsibility.

This is not true of the Welsh Council which has three Regional Associations.

They also differ in their priorities, from the Arts Council of Great Britain on the one hand and from each other on the other. (Table 3) Scotland has in the past been more involved with giving support to the country's historic art heritage since this is the prime instigator of much-appreciated tourist spending. Wales, on the other hand, has always taken particular pride in its conscientious support of amateur work, one good example being its support of amateur music through the Welsh Amateur Music Federation. This is a trend which Scotland has adopted over the recent past, promoting the living arts and more and more providing for the much-advertised Edinburgh Festival, for which Scotland was rewarded when Glasgow chosen as Europe's City of Culture in 1990.

#### ◆ REGIONAL ARTS ASSOCIATIONS

(Certain modifications have taken place in the status and structure of Regional Arts Associations in 1991. As work on this thesis was done prior to that date, there are no references to these changes here.)

Table 3

## Welsh Arts Council: expenditure by main budgetary headings

£ thousands

	1984/5	1985/6	1986/7	1987/8	1988/9	1989/90
Regional arts associations	519	590	702	730	823	846
Opera	1,565	1,597	1,645	1,688	1,756	1,791
Music	691	711	743	775	879	865
Dance	185	217	224	230	284	299
Drama	1,648	1,698	1,808	1,841	1,983	2,044
Art	504	549	525	515	622	624
Literature	574	540	573	606	664	685
Crafts	68	70	74	81	90	85
Arts centres and projects(a)	407	350	349	455	428	503
Festivals	126	134	135	122	127	129
Film	86	87	91	103	102	99
Oriel bookshop and gallery	192	200	198	200	225	325
Housing the Arts	109	115	165	40	-	-
Operating costs	576	654	733	765	807	873
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,253</b>	<b>7,500</b>	<b>7,965</b>	<b>8,154</b>	<b>8,791</b>	<b>9,170</b>

Source: Policy Studies Institute

- (a) Includes funding under the headings 'regional' (excluding grants to the regional arts associations including those for the Joint Touring Scheme introduced in 1986/7) and until 1984/5, 'multi-media'.
- (b) Includes grant-in-aid to marketing organisations previously allocated under 'drama'.

In economics there is a conventional piece of wisdom which maintains that supply creates its own demand. The supply of entertainment produced by governments all over the world during World War II via the armed forces resulted in an immense increase in demand after the war for entertainment of one kind or another. In Britain, it was at least partly in answer to this increased demand that the Arts Council was set up in 1946, followed ten years later by the Regional Arts Associations which served further to decentralize the management and funding of the arts and helped to recognize and assess the artistic needs of war-stricken regions.

The first Regional Arts Association came into existence, in a manner of speaking, as a result of the good offices, in default, of the Arts Council of Great Britain which had been closing the offices in the regions of CEMA which it had inherited. In the South West of England a group of organizations and individuals got together in 1956 to form a union to protect their interests. When in 1959 the Gulbenkian Foundation made their efforts viable by providing them with a five year grant of £8,000 it firmly placed the first Regional Arts Association on solid ground.<sup>(18)</sup> This was followed by other Arts Associations in other parts of England, this time through the joint efforts of the Gulbenkian Foundation, the local authorities and the Arts Council of Great Britain which had grasped their significance and realized their valuable service.

Today, there are twelve Regional Arts Associations in England and a further three in Wales, as follows:

1. Eastern Arts Association
2. East Midlands Arts Association



3. Greater London Arts Association
4. Lincolnshire & Humberside Arts Association
5. Merseyside Arts Association
6. Northern Arts
7. North West Arts
8. South East Arts Association
9. Southern Arts Association
10. South West Arts
11. West Midlands Arts
12. Yorkshire Arts Association
13. West Wales Association for the Arts
14. South East Wales Arts Association
15. South West Arts (Wales)

Today, though Regional Arts Associations benefit from the financial support of other national bodies (e.g. the British Film Institute and the Crafts Council, private Foundations, industries and local authorities) the bulk of their budget comes in the form of grants from the Arts Council of Great Britain which allocates around 10% of its grant funds to them, thus providing them with approximately 70% of their funds.<sup>(19)</sup> (Figure 2)

The Regional Arts Associations are non-statutory bodies and are registered as charitable organizations, though most have become limited companies. Since they have each come into existence in response to the artistic needs of their respective areas, their activities are in many ways different from one another.

One may decide to boost amateur activities in its area, another to concentrate on professional opera. However, when it comes to the allocation of grants, they all follow more or less the same system of decision-making as the Arts Council. Their managing body is, in effect, a committee made up of delegate members from the various panels which make up the Association, one or two representatives from the constituent membership and representatives from the local authorities of the region.

In theory, the Regional Arts Associations are independent bodies. Their relationship with their local authorities and their parent Arts Council is somewhat similar to that of the Office of Arts and Libraries with the Central Government. Yet, the mere fact that representatives of local authorities often comprise almost 50% of their executive bodies and that their activities are closely supervised by the relevant Arts Councils, places them in a rather vulnerable position.

" Whenever a Regional Arts Association takes responsibility for a client, the Council requires to be satisfied that it has both the means of supporting it and the staffing and advisory expertise to assess it. Even then the Council keeps an eye on devolved clients, both directly and through its assessment of the work of the Association concerned."(20)

Despite the rather high-handed manner with which these Arts Associations are treated and the 'secondary citizen' status they receive, it is through their co-operation and collaboration with the other two elements, viz. the Arts Council and the local authorities, that they are able to operate effectively at a certain level in the foggy regions of arm's length functionality. It would be to everybody's advantage all round if the Arts Councils and the local authorities

awakened to this fact and gave the Regional Arts Associations the moral support they need and deserve.

#### ◆ LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local authorities play a significant role in running museums and promoting artistic activities in Britain. The Local Authorities & Museums Report prepared by the Museums and Galleries Commission puts the number of museum run by local authorities at about 800 <sup>(21)</sup> whereas the 1991 Audit Commission report on local authority museums estimates their number at around 650.<sup>(22)</sup>

The local authorities derive their powers in running their museums from the 1845 Act titled An Act for Encouraging of the Establishment of Museums in Large Towns. (A similar set of powers were given to Scottish local authorities in 1887 under the Public Libraries (Consolidation) Act.)

The Local Government Act of 1948 gave the local authorities the power to use part of the tax levied on the tax-payer for funding the arts in their areas. This resulted in the construction and creation of regional theatres and music halls and the coming into existence of local festivals. Many were the artistic institutions during this period and many the art companies which were helped by these local authorities to survive and continue to function. As already pointed out, the local authorities were originally mainly involved in the encouragement of local education and they still have a major role in this as well, but that aspect of their work is of no major interest here and for the purpose of this dissertation except where it comes to education in the arts.

It should be noted that these powers and other responsibilities based on the Public Libraries & Museums Act of 1964 given to local authorities in connection with museums and galleries are all non-statutory and, therefore, do not oblige local authorities to spend or devote a specific amount of their revenues to running museums and galleries. Despite this, local authority funding and handling of museum and gallery affairs have been noteworthy. For example:

*"In England and Wales, approximately 75% of local authorities incur expenditure on museums while in Scotland 70% of local authorities at Island and District level run professionally-staffed museum services, many of which also provide support in kind and/or cash to independent museums in their area."*(23)

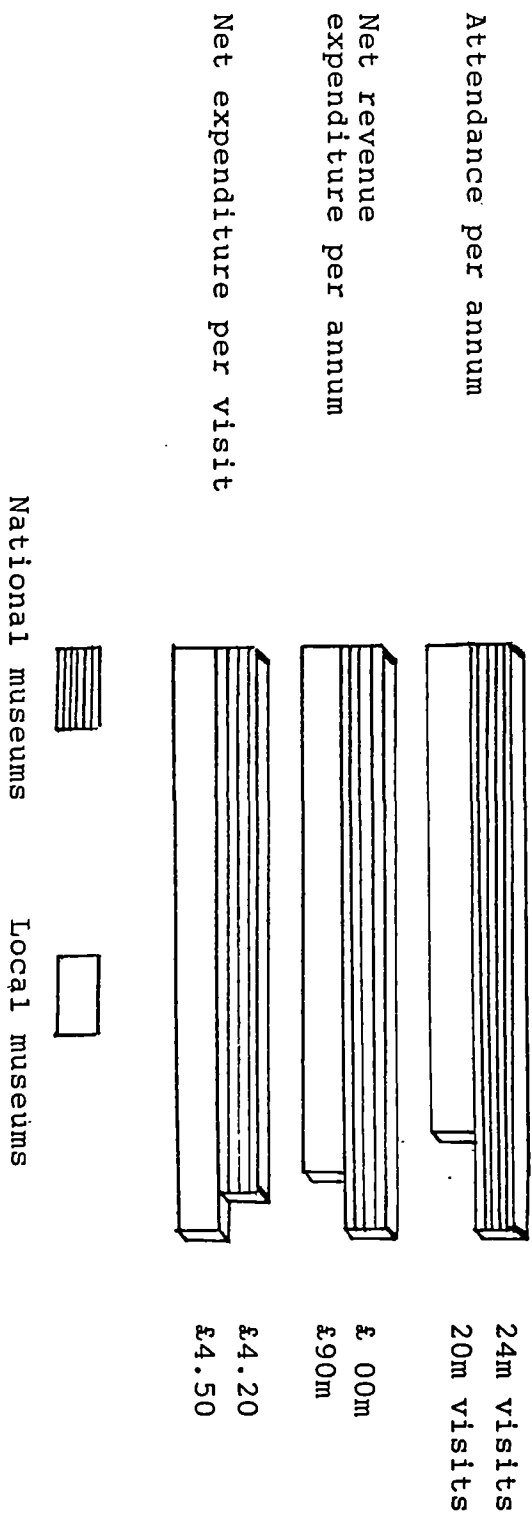
There are significant regional differences in the number and function of local authority museums and galleries in Britain. For example, a third of all the museums in England and Wales are in London and the South East while the overall number in the North West and the East and West Midland are said to be below average.

The objectives for local authority support of local museums are not very clear and are rather ill documented, but conserving the heritage, support for education, providing leisure opportunities, attracting tourism, creating jobs and therefore boosting the local economy are the most obvious ones.

Local authority museums, obviously, recover the bulk of their expenses from their respective local authorities. However, it is estimated that about 13% of their annual gross costs are recovered from admission fees, restaurants and coffee shops, gift shops and the sale of publications. (Figure 3)

Britain:  
Local Authority and National Museums

Figure 3



Source: AUDIT Commission 1991

Each local authority is made up of a number of councillors and a variety of departments, committees and panels each responsible for its own special field, e.g. housing, roads, education, arts, etc. The political composition of the local authorities is, however, a rather volatile one in so far as local authority members, unlike members of the Arts Council top management who are appointed by central government, are elected directly by the people. Consequently, political fervour often takes its toll on the kind of art a particular authority supports. On the whole, though, it can be said that a balance is kept all round and in the long run.

#### ◆ OTHER INDEPENDENT BODIES

Other than the Arts Council of Great Britain, the Office of Arts and Libraries provides funds (in the form of grants) to three other institutions: the British Film Institute, the Crafts Council and the Museums and Galleries Commission. These bodies, though not perhaps as wide-ranging in their activities and as diversely occupied, do their share of the work in maintaining and promoting the arts.

*The British Film Institute:* This was established in 1933 and is one of the oldest institutions which owe a good deal to indirect subvention by the government.

Its aims are, according to its revised Memorandum of Association, to:

- encourage the development of the art film
- promote its use as a record of contemporary life and manners

- foster study and appreciation of it from these points of view
- foster the study and appreciation of films for television and television programmes generally and
- encourage the best use of television.<sup>(24)</sup>

The Institute tries to achieve these ends by diversely supporting film-making as an artistic activity. (It may be true that the designation of films as artistic or non-artistic is a dangerous thing to do, but for the purposes of practicality things very often have to be labelled and docketed in this manner in order to accomplish aims.) This support comes in the form of services and the awarding of grants and the provision of guarantees to independent organizations such as the Regional Arts Associations in the area of their film and television activities. The Institute has a Film Production Board through which it even finances independent film productions.

The direct services referred to include the financing (and housing) of the National Film Archive, the managing of the National Film Theatre and the running of a fairly well organized information service. The Institute is also marginally involved in educational work (which even includes the funding of university lectureships in film studies), a bit of publishing and a fair amount of research. All this is done through the Information and Documentation, Educational Advisory Service, Editorial Department, Film Availability Services, Regional Department and the Production Board already mentioned.

Unlike the Arts Council, the BFI is in a position to generate funds and to help its own annual budget. These funds come from the Institute's hiring services, its affiliated National Film Theatre and the production of widespread material of interest to the public and the market.

*The Crafts Council:* At the opposite end of the time-scale from the British Film Institute is the latest extension of the 'arm' in the arm's length game, the Crafts Council. Created in 1971 as the Crafts Advisory Committee, it immediately raised a number of ministerial eyebrows because its establishment wedged the crafts away from their traditional lair, the Board of Trade, and staked a claim for them in the domain of the Minister for the Arts. The dichotomous nature of the Crafts Council which ultimately evolved out of the Committee may some day also be one of the causes of its demise. The other cause would probably be inherent in the need that created the Committee in the first place: the aim to transform over time the crafts from what could be called a small industry serving an economic necessity to the status of an artistic or cultural by-product.

As it stands, the Crafts Council gives grants to young — and sometimes old — craftspeople for their education (or training or apprenticeship) and, later, moral and financial support in their work until they can stand on their own feet.

The Welsh Crafts Council is funded by the Crafts Council, the Welsh Development Agency (which is responsible for economic development in Wales) and the Development Board for Rural Wales. Besides, there is a commercial business and trade organization called the Wales Crafts Council Limited which receives almost all of its income from public sources.



In Scotland, the crafts are looked after by the Scottish Development Agency and the Highlands and Islands Development Board. Neither of these bodies has specific budgets for the crafts, but they do provide financial support for training, development and marketing for the crafts and those involved in them.

### *11.3 THE PRIVATE SECTOR*

People as individuals have, in one way or another, supported the arts ever since the cave paintings of primitive man. Thus, the concept of patronage on an individual basis is almost as old as art itself. It is this long-standing tradition which, in time, develops into corporate patronage and then sponsorship (at a later stage and to a smaller extent). Therefore, what is new is the interest shown by the private sector (as against the private individual) on today's scale. This, along with the explosion of mass production, is a comparatively recent (post Industrial Revolution and in the case of sponsorship, post World War II) phenomenon. Public sector (or government) support of the arts is, compared to private support, a much later arrival.

In Britain, patronage of the arts has a long history. The ground-work for corporate sponsorship, however, was laid through the founding of the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts (ABSA) in 1976 of which the founding members were a small group of business executives. Altruistic though the core of their intentions may have been, they were by no means put off by the fact that through supporting the arts they were furthering the interests of

their companies by way of the publicity the venture brought them and the burnishing their corporate image received.

ABSA soon developed into an organization for the promotion of business sponsorship for the arts and worked out a streamlined system which

- encouraged companies to sponsor the arts or artistic institutions and convinced them how this could be of benefit to their own business
- rendered arts institutions receptive of the idea of such sponsorships
- brought government thinking round to providing the means necessary for the two sides to this equation to come together through changes in the tax laws to encourage and facilitate corporate giving and sponsorship.<sup>(25)</sup>

In time, ABSA membership increased to a hundred and thirty. All registered companies in Britain are eligible to join and by joining announce their willingness to sponsor an artistic event. Arts institutions can, on their part, apply for sponsorship from member companies and ABSA then acts as a go-between to find common grounds for the two sides to meet upon and work out a mutually acceptable formula for cooperation. The deal to be struck is, in very basic and crude terms, one of money for publicity and a 'good deal' is considered to be one in which all parties concerned are satisfied that their interests and needs have been met.

Up to 1975, arts institutions were more than happy, of course, to receive contributions from firms and businesses in the form of gifts or donations, but such contributions did not bring any returns as far as the donating parties were

concerned. They were purely charitable acts, mainly aimed at the more emotionally-charged establishments such as medical and educational research institutions and things to do with children and the charities in general. In all this, the arts were the last things that came to mind.

With the establishment of ABSA and the appeal it found, the government decided to encourage the trend by setting up (in 1984) the Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme (BSIS). What the Scheme does is more or less what the Matching Grant of the National Endowment does for the Arts in the United States, with one major difference: here, the sponsoring firm takes the initiative where in the United States it is the Endowment which sets the ball rolling. Once a business sponsor has stepped in with an offer, the BSIS contributes an equal amount. This, however, only takes place the first time a company uses the sponsorship scheme. If the company has already sponsored an artistic event or project, the BSIS contribution falls to one pound against every three the company allocates to the work. Also, there is a ceiling of £25,000 imposed on any one project as far as BSIS contributions are concerned.<sup>(26)</sup>

When it comes to the funding of the arts, the private sector in Great Britain can be divided into three areas: businesses and business firms, foundations or non-profit organizations, and individuals. Of these, the first is by far the most important and provides the bulk of the nongovernment support that the arts receive.

#### ◆ THE CORPORATE BODY AND THE ARTS

Business support of the arts is in the form of patronage or sponsorship. The former provides the arts with the main body of funds contributed by the corporate body.

One of the stumbling blocks as far as corporate giving to the arts was concerned was the imposition of the deed of covenant law which governed charitable giving. This was fortunately superseded by 'Gift Aid' in 1990 under which the idea of single cash donations by taxpayers or resident UK companies was put into practice.

In corporate support of the charities and the arts, patronage figures are for some reason not easily available. Sponsorship figures, on the other hand, show that during the 1980's sponsorship of the arts increased "from under £10 million in 1980 to over £30 million today (1990)".<sup>(27)</sup> Tentative figures for 1991 put this figure at £35 million.<sup>(28)</sup>

It may safely be said that since after the war, as the arts have come into their own as genuine areas and forms of human endeavour rather than being treated as a monopoly of the elite, the increased demand for the various art forms has meant far more money being spent on them than ever before. On the other hand, with the present government's policy as regards the funding of the arts and with business coming into its own, artists and arts institutions have settled down to the idea of accepting financial assistance from the business world. Thus, over the past two decades business sponsorship of the arts has become an accepted way of life.

In spite of that, Britain is nowhere near the United States in this respect and probably never will be. The market-place is not looked upon in Britain as the venue where the arts can develop safely and freely. A great deal of suspicion fogs the whole issue. In Britain, as everywhere else, it is felt that he who pays the piper calls the tune, and the Boardrooms of the city in London are not considered, either by the arts institutions and public opinion or by the government, to be the ideal place for decisions concerning the arts to be made. The fear exists that what companies want in return for their support is not spiritual satisfaction but the sight and sound of their names being linked with the event or institution they sponsor. What they want is:

"... surefire success which, high quality or not, means riding the white line rather than beating a path... and it does not look as though any arts organization will be too purist about all that." (29)

It is believed that companies would prefer to sponsor major, well-established institutions such as the Royal Opera and the London Symphony Orchestra rather than less known entities (following exactly the funding decisions of the Arts Council) not because they consider the major London companies to be greater artistic institutions but because the lesser-known and more local companies would not have the same prestige and advertising value for them. How the gain to the sponsoring company (if there is any gain) detracts from the assistance rendered the arts is a mystery.

As an example, British Olivetti some years ago sponsored the exhibition of The Horses of San Marco at the Royal Academy. The exhibition was attended by over 110,000 people who obviously enjoyed it. The exhibition also received

extensive coverage in Britain's national press. Olivetti had proposed the idea of the exhibition to the Royal Academy as part of an international tour, had arranged the shipment of all the exhibits and organized the exhibition itself. It may, in return, have benefitted from the public relations exercise, though how its gain could in the least nullify the obvious relish of all the thousands who enjoyed the exhibition is not known. Nobody took the trouble to ask those thousands whether they would rather have not been given the opportunity of the exhibition than allow Olivetti the benefit of being related to it, but the chances are that if anybody had, the answer would have been in the negative.

Companies cannot be relied upon to be unbiased, disinterested decision-makers where it comes to supporting the arts. The four major national companies (the Royal Opera House, etc.) receive the bulk of the financial support provided by business sponsorship.<sup>(30)</sup> It is only natural that businesses should pay more of their attention to such institutions because being associated with them has prestige value. Are governments, behind the arcane self-protection of the arm's length principle, any the less biased ?

At the end of the day, what public opinion orchestrated by arts 'professionals' would like to see is an arrangement whereby the government gives the arts (in effect meaning the arts professionals) all they demand and does not ask any questions or stipulate any conditions whatsoever in return. That would perhaps be ideal, except for the fact that it too closely resembles another improbability: that of eating your cake and having it too. Those campaigning for 'the arts' (and it is part of the problem that they are not quite sure what the term covers) would like more backing everywhere, especially in the area of experimental work

and more support all round, particularly in organizations more in need. What is more, they want it all without any strings attached, anything to answer for or anything to pay in return. In effect, what they have in mind is a system where business concerns, out of the goodness of their hearts, pay substantial sums of money on a regular basis and where the government supplements those sums with equally large sums of its own so that they - the arts professionals - can spend it all as they see fit, without being in any way answerable or indebted to anybody. Sir Peter Hall, Director of the National Theatre from 1973 to 1988, indicated this very bluntly when, addressing the 6th Session of the International Conference on the Structure of Arts Funding (London, March 1987) and aiming his remarks specially at interventionist forces, political parties and sponsors from the world of business, he said:

" Now, can I just tell you, as a practitioner, I do not need you to come and assess what I am doing. It is bloody obvious if I'm failing. Every newspaper, every television, every radio critic in the land is trumpeting it. Everybody is going on about it and there is nobody in my theatre. I do not need you to sit there and say, 'you do know, don't you, that your play wasn't a success'. What you can say is, 'you've lost so much money and you've made such a mess and look at what they're saying about you, that we wish you to be replaced.' That I will accept. But I will not have you telling me, as an artist, what I ought to have done instead. That is not your job. That is mine. And it is stupid, all this minutiae of assessment and it comes, actually, out of a refusal of understanding that the arts are very publicly accountable already."<sup>(31)</sup>

The concept of somebody subsidizing the arts without any questions asked and any conditions attached is a very convenient one and would be extremely palatable to the arts and the arts professionals if it could be implemented. What remains to be done is to find a way to realize it in terms of the real world which somehow tends to be obstinate in its persistence to abide by practicalities. What the arts and arts professionals are secretly hoping is probably that the

public in general will put its hands in its pockets and pay for the arts at the price they stipulate. Unfortunately this has, in a way, been tried and has failed.

Socially minded and socialistically inclined Labour which has always been the most vociferous advocate of the so-called arm's length principle, admitting that the trade unions could be potential sources of support for the arts, did try (in the 1960's) to do something in this direction through Resolution 42 on the basis of which "Centre 42" was established. But no enthusiasm (other than verbal) was shown and the Centre itself was dissolved for want of support and funds a few years later.<sup>(32)</sup>

A great expansion in private donation under deed of covenant or other tax-efficient systems could be another solution to the problem of the arts.

Unfortunately, patronage (which is the umbrella under which such donation is made) is not the more common form of support indulged in by businesses in Britain, though it is the predominant one in the USA. And since business is where the money is, that creates problems. Where there are donations, they are more often than not inconsistent and irregular.

Not all business firms favour sponsorship over the more traditional covenanted patronage, however. One of the major banks, Lloyds

"... believes its £30,000 annual donation to the National Youth Orchestra helps attract young customers. Lloyds does no sports sponsorship, but spends £250,000 a year on the arts -- a sizeable sum compared with its total budget for direct advertising of only £1,000,000."<sup>(33)</sup>

Unfortunately again, good as this is it is conditioned by self-interest, as seen from the text.



Sponsorship as a form of subsidizing the arts is with us to stay and it is growing. In Britain it has a good deal of room to expand, and it will.

"... Evidence suggests that it already represents a substantial injection of money into the arts ... and there is a need to draw attention to the potential offered by the arts for business sponsorship."<sup>(34)</sup>

#### ◆ ASSISTANCE FROM FOUNDATIONS

The second of the three contributing areas in the private sector are the charitable foundations of which the number are far fewer in Britain than in the USA and from which the total amount of financial support afforded the arts is not all that considerable. The impact, however, is. This is mainly because support from Foundations meets at least some of the ideal conditions (so far as the arts are concerned) which were mentioned under the previous heading. As non-profit institutions, the Foundations do not look for any return on the funds they provide. This gives both the donor and the recipient a great amount of freedom. The freedom enjoyed by the recipient is obvious. On the other hand, the fact that there are no ulterior motives involved means that the Foundation concerned can direct its funds wherever it feels they are most needed. In other words, whereas with business sponsorship the ultimate factor to be taken into consideration is the sponsoring business's interests, with donations it is more often than not the interest of the recipient that is taken into consideration. This, of course, creates fierce competition for charitable foundation funds among different areas of charitable activity (health, welfare, education, the environment, etc.) with the arts forming only a small part of the total. However, it gives foundations more scope to direct their support at such institutions,

groups or individuals in the arts who, for one reason or another, cannot benefit from other sources.

A good example of such charitable institutions is the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, UK, whose policies with regard to philanthropic support have had considerable effect in Britain. A slightly more detailed look at the Foundation may give one a general concept of how these institutions work.

The Gulbenkian Foundation was founded after the death in 1956 of Calouste Gulbenkian, the well-known art collector and entrepreneur. It has (other than its headquarters in Portugal) only one branch which is in Britain. Its budget, though limited, is well planned and allocated so that its resources cover its three main programmes of Arts, Education and Social Welfare. On the Arts front, Gulbenkian support was as follows during the last two years:

1989	£402,557
1990	£445,921.49 <sup>(35)</sup>

Gulbenkian priorities vary according to the shifting needs of society and the foundation's own budget and its declared priorities which are set by the Headquarters in Portugal and which change from time to time. In general, though, the Foundation has in recent years concentrated on community arts, ethnic arts and the needs of individual artists, mainly providing initial costs for a project to get off the ground or supporting a project to the point either of self-sufficiency or recognition by other supporters.

The Foundation played a decisive role in the creation of Regional Arts Associations during 1959 and has since liaised with the Arts Council, other Trusts and Foundations, and local bodies in supporting them. Over the years, the Foundation has also given support to individual artists through award schemes and grants, and provided much-needed means (such as hostel accommodation and practice facilities) for music students.

An important aspect of the work of independent foundations such as Gulbenkian is their very freedom to support the kinds of artistic activities considered either too experimental or too far out of the established norms of public taste by the Arts Council and the public sector in general. As Peter Brinson of the Gulbenkian Foundation has put it:

"The first matter, I think, is the concept of free money. The Arts Council's money is already committed virtually before the Minister for the Arts announces how much it is going to be. So there is very little left over, we estimate probably not more than about £1,000,000, to go towards the new things, the unexpected, the fringe, to help the individual artists and so on. Therefore if people are unsuccessful with the Arts Council, they can turn to the foundations and find alternative funding."<sup>(36)</sup>

All in all, though the financial contributions of foundations in Britain do not attain the heights reached by their American counterparts, their role as independent philanthropists supporting the arts is equally vital because they more often than not tend to the needs of those who are the most in need of assistance because they cannot approach the Arts Council, businesses, and other conventional channels. Besides, arts institutions often launch projects too big to be supported from one source alone and in cases of this nature, foundations join

efforts with the Arts Council, local authorities, and the business community to assist the project off the ground.

#### ◆ THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Individuals also have their part to play in the support of the arts, of course, but in Britain this role has until the present been greatly hampered by cumbersome regulations governing charitable giving.

The long-established 'deed of covenant' regulations, still in force for all forms of private giving (especially of smaller regular amounts) required that those intending to contribute to charitable causes commit themselves to a continuing donation of a specified sum each year for a minimum of seven (later reduced to four) years, with deduction of income tax (which is then re-claimed by the charity after the end of the tax year).

It was claimed that the long-term legal commitment deed of covenant requirements had strong curbing effects on charitable donations in the corporate world as well as among individuals. However that might have been, it was claimed that prospects for such donations could be greatly improved. The Education, Science and Arts Committee of the House of Commons recognized this when it said:

"All the advantages in terms of plural funding which spring from corporate support for the arts are even more compelling in their application to individual support. Yet the Committee believe that donations from private individuals are a source of arts funding which hitherto has hardly been tapped in this country."<sup>(37)</sup>

This was indicative of the state of affairs, as far as individuals were concerned, until now.

The 1990 Finance Act introduced, under its Section 25, in addition to long-term commitments by deed of covenant, a new Gift Aid Scheme which allows single gifts to be made by individuals to charitable organizations. What the Finance Act 1990 and its 'Gift Aid' will do to alleviate the inconveniences created by the Deed of Covenant remains to be seen: many believe that the minimum one-off payment under Gift Aid (£600) for tax deductability is too high.

The scene is totally different on this score in the United States of America, where the bulk of art support, as already discussed in Chapter Nine, comes from individual donations, thanks to the much simpler and far more generous system of tax deductability.

Another *modus operandi* (which has been in effect for some time but has recently gathered momentum) is the participation of individuals in art production.

The Society of Westend Theatre (SWET) is a vital part of performing arts support in Britain. According to Professor Anthony Field, himself a producer within the Society, potential investors (commonly called the 'theatre Angels') are contacted in the planning stages of the production of plays and asked whether they would want to invest in the forthcoming play. The play in this case is treated as an incorporated business venture with shares to be purchased at prices which vary in accordance with the prospects of the venture, as in any

commercial undertaking. According to law, the 'invitation pack' includes information about the play and the producer(s) staging it, an economic projection of expenses and income, and estimates on returns. Returns are distributed among buyers of shares after expenses have been met.

In Great Britain, as in the other two countries studied, subsidiary sources do exist, of course, but they remain subsidiary. One-off donations, memberships, etc., do bring in a certain amount of money, but these monies are negligible. In the case of public arts institutions, these gifts, etc., even have to be handed over to the government.

#### *11.4 TAX EXEMPTION*

Historically, tax incentives for charitable donations in Britain have been provided through a complex system generally known as a 'deed of covenant', a system of tax relief on charitable contributions via a system shared, of all West European countries, only among Britain, Ireland and Denmark.

The Addington Act of 1803 which created the groundwork for the British income tax system also stipulated that if the income or a part of the income of one tax-payer was transferred to another, this constituted part of the income of the recipient and would be taxed as such and at the recipient's rate.<sup>(38)</sup> In order to make this rather cumbersome legislation fully implementable, it was ruled that all such transfer of income to charitable institutions be made under a

contract (or covenant) on a regular annual basis for no less a period than seven years.<sup>(39)</sup> Under this system, the donor would undertake to transfer a certain amount out of his income to the recipient each year and not have to worry about who taxes what, where and when. This, of course, was in 1803.

Today, the requirement has somewhat changed as have the circumstances. For one thing, the British tax collection procedure is now mainly based on PAYE (Pay As You Earn), which means that whatever tax is collectable from the recipient of any money is deducted by the employer at source. Under the deed of covenant system this means that the donation the charity receives has already been taxed at the donor's end; which in turn means that the charity -which is tax exempt- has to reclaim the amount deducted in taxes at the donor's end from Inland Revenue.) Latterly, in order to encourage giving to charities, the minimum period of the covenant was reduced by Parliament to four years. In other words, as it stands today the 'deed of covenant' is on the surface a relatively convenient device: the charity receives an agreed sum which has already been taxed and all it has to do is to reclaim the amount deducted in taxes from Inland Revenue. In practice, however, the whole exercise is much more complicated as everything is that has to do with taxes. That aspect of the problem has little to do with the subject in hand. What is of importance to this discussion is the fact that the system leaves a great deal to be desired when it comes to tax exemption acting as an incentive for private donors to charities or to the arts.

There is no limit imposed on the amounts donated under deeds of covenant however, the only proviso being that once a covenant has been entered upon, the contributions continue to be paid, as agreed, for the period stipulated.

On 1st October, 1990, new legislation introduced what has come to be known as 'Gift Aid'. This is, in effect, a removal of some of the shortcomings of the Deed of Covenant by the 1990 Finance Act. A brief account of the mechanism of Gift Aid has already been given under the sub-chapter The Private Sector above.

The two advantages that the protagonists of Section 25 of the Finance Act 1990 claim for the Gift Aid scheme are that it is far simpler than regulations governing Deed of Covenant giving and that it encourages charitable donation. Both points may prove to be more dubious when considered at closer range. The scheme is simpler in its application only because the donation it covers is made out of income on which Income Tax at the basic rate (25% at the time this is being written) has already been charged. Whether it encourages charitable donation noticeably in excess of previous legislation is also a dubious point.

In the pamphlet 'A Guide to Gift Aid', Michael Norton writes:

" The fact that under Gift Aid the donor is not required to make a forward commitment to make further donations in future years is a distinct advantage over Deed of Covenant giving, which should eventually encourage greater levels of charitable giving."<sup>(40)</sup>

The fact that under Gift Aid the donor is not required to make a forward commitment to make further donations in future years could be as much a



distinct disadvantage as an advantage. The economic concept of liquidity preference is one reason why it could: it is always easier and more palatable to pay what you have to in instalments than as a lumpsum. Besides, the person who donates obviously derives some satisfaction from what he or she is doing. That satisfaction does not depend so much upon the volume of the donation as upon its incidence. Thus, there are probably as many reasons why the Gift Aid scheme should inhibit donation as encourage it.

In effect, it may be discovered in time that there is no real direct incentive in the scheme at all, at least not so far as tax relief is concerned. Having ultimately paid less tax to the government may be a gain when looked upon in the light of logic and reason, it hardly seems to mean the same thing in terms of the way one feels. Gift Aid comes out of income already taxed. It is, in other words, a net payment. Thus, there is no tax relief and hence no tax incentive in it. In fact, if it is paid out of untaxed income, it could be taxed at the higher rate of 33.3%, which makes it a disadvantage. If there is any benefit to the donor in using Gift Aid it is in fact the vicarious one of knowing that the receiving charity will in effect be getting 25% more than you are paying.

The new scheme will, of course, leave an impression in time. If the present minimum of £600 is lowered, the scheme may tap new sources and raise the overall amount of individual giving. Whether the raise is a significant one has to be seen. In the meantime, the individual voice will remain insignificant (compared to the corporate body's) in the overall charitable chorus. What has been said here can more or less be applied to Gift Aid for Companies, the corporate counterpart in the 1990 Finance Act.

## 11.5 TOURISM

The arts in Britain are a £10 billion a year industry, bring in a great deal of money through tourists, and cost the central government a mere 0.24% of its total expenditure per year.<sup>(41)</sup>

In its 1977-78 Overseas Visitors Survey the British Tourist Authority stipulated a rather significant fact: that as many as two thirds of the overseas visitors to Britain over the year had put down the availability of the various arts facilities as an important factor in their decision to come to Britain:

"BTA has from the outset recognized that Britain's heritage, in all its various forms, is a principal attraction which annually draws over twelve million visitors to Britain from all parts of the world." <sup>(42)</sup>

Similar assessments for the year 1985/86 indicate that this trend is ongoing.<sup>(43)</sup>

In 1982, overseas tourists spent over £2.5 billion (at constant 1980 prices) in England. By 1984 that figure had risen to almost £3 billion (Table 4 and Figures 4 and 5) and by 1989 to nearly £18 billion.<sup>(44)</sup> Though all these sums were not directly spent on and in connection with the arts, two facts should be borne in mind:

- a. that wherever and however they were spent, they came to be spent in Britain, in the first place, as a result of the fact that the tourists who dug their hands into their pockets had chosen to come here and that they had done so to a very great extent on account of the arts and
- b. that though exact figures are not available, a good proportion of those sums did, in fact, go directly to the arts.

TABLE 4.

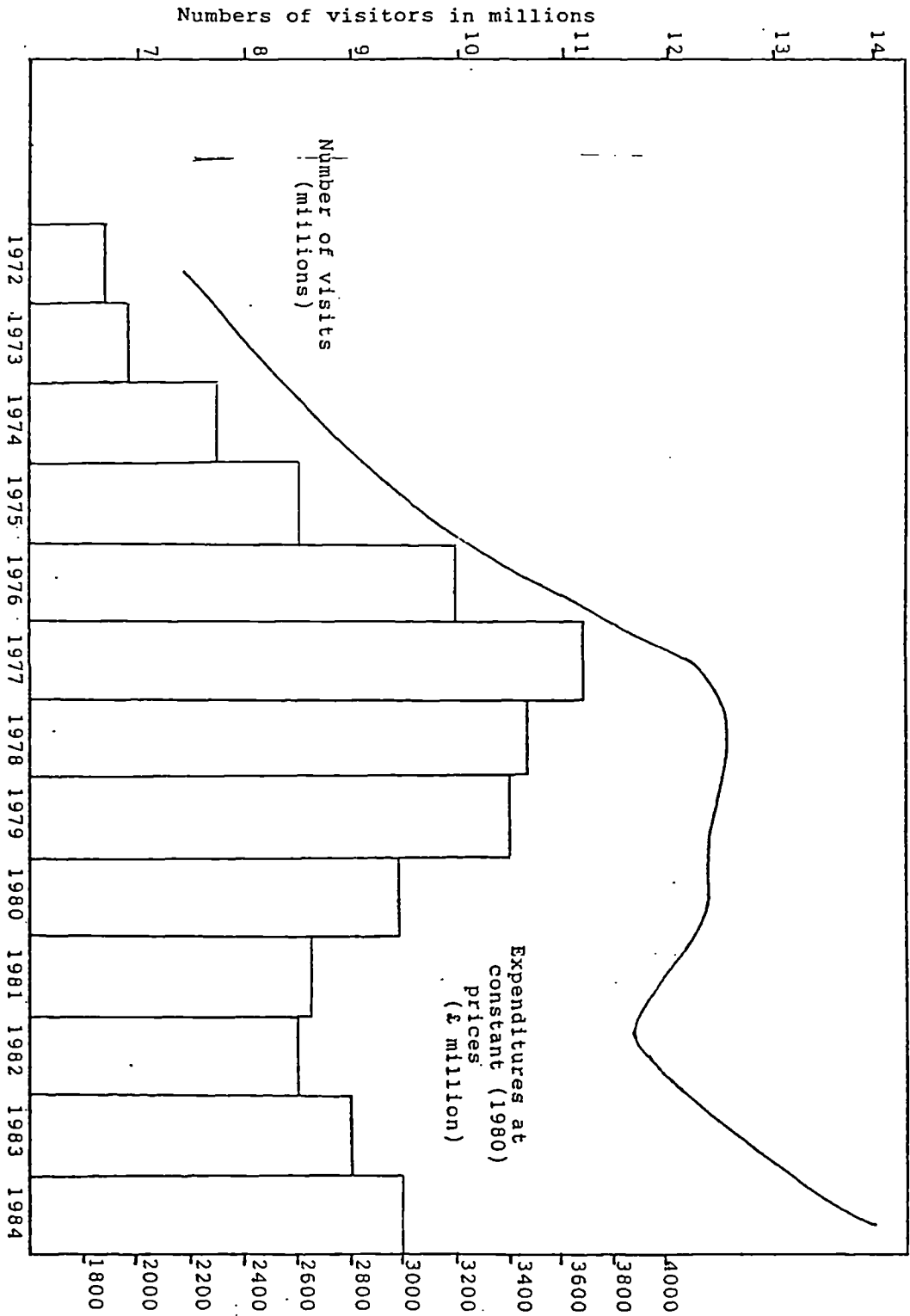
OVERSEAS VISITORS TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

Year	Number of visitors (1000s)	Expenditure (£ millions)	Expenditure at const. 1980 prices (£ millions)
1981	11452	2970	2628
1982	11636	3168	2566
1983	12464	3650	2787
1984	13712	4169	2980
BRITONS TRAVELLING ABROAD			
1981	19046	3272	2931
1982	20611	3640	2901
1983	20099	4047	2978
1984	22009	4617	3067

(Source: British Tourist Authority)

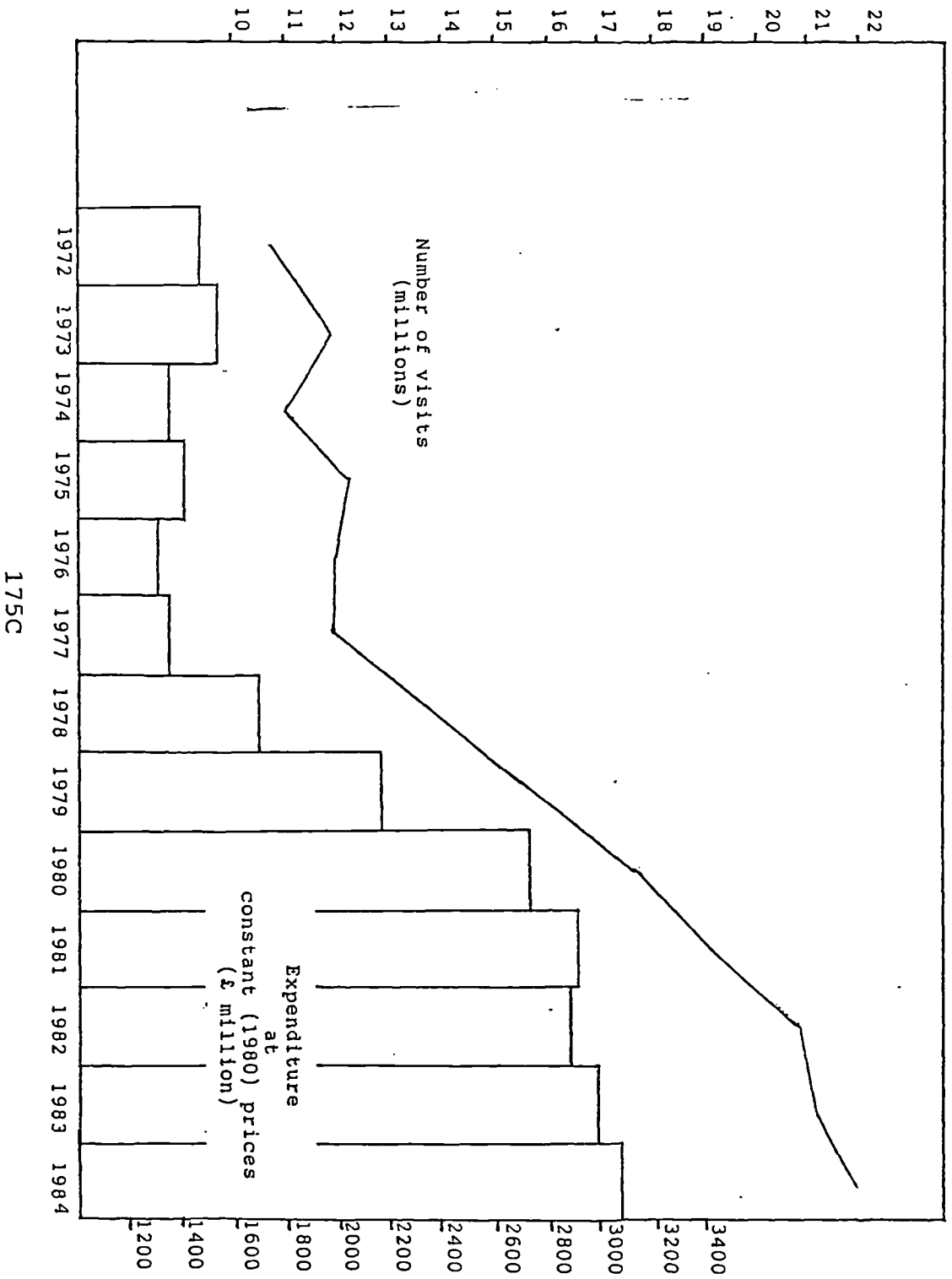
175A

FIGURE 4  
NUMBER OF OVERSEAS VISITORS TO THE UK & THEIR EXPENDITURE AT CONSTANT (1980) PRICES



Number of Visits Abroad by UK Residents & their Expenditure  
at constant (1980) prices

FIGURE 5



[The British Tourist Authority only gives the amount spent in 1989 on entertainment, which stand at £802 million or 5% of total tourist spending.<sup>(45)</sup>]

Net income from tourism is an entirely separate question. In the year 1982, while visitors from other countries brought just over £2.5 billion of their money to Britain, Britons spent £2.9 billion abroad, and that figure had risen to 3.1 billion by 1984 when Britain's earnings from tourism amounted to £2.98 billion. Thus, net figures from tourism may be in the negative, as they were until 1985 for Britain. This does not, however, negate the value of tourism to an economy for the simple fact that probably around 22 million Britons would have gone abroad in 1984 even if just over 13.5 million foreign visitors had not come to Britain (Figures 6 and 7). No recent figures could be traced in this respect.

It is rather obvious that events such as the Edinburgh Festival or the Henry Wood Promenades would have their effect on drawing people. If one were to go and see another country, one would choose the country in which one knew of something worth seeing. If one had the possibility and the means to go to only one place, the chances are one would choose to go to Italy for its rich historical heritage or Russia mainly to see the Bolshoi Ballet or to visit the Hermitage rather to than Arizona or Alaska. This can be seen in the fact, for example, that each year, even for the three short weeks the Festival takes place, Edinburgh turns into a cauldron of activity and the local economy perks up as never during the rest of the year, generating economic values variously estimated at between £10 million and £50 million and, as the Edinburgh Festival Director John Drummond said in 1981, "...there are very few parts of the economy of the city that are not actually touched by the Festival."<sup>(46)</sup> How

FIGURE 6

(Source: The Financial Times)

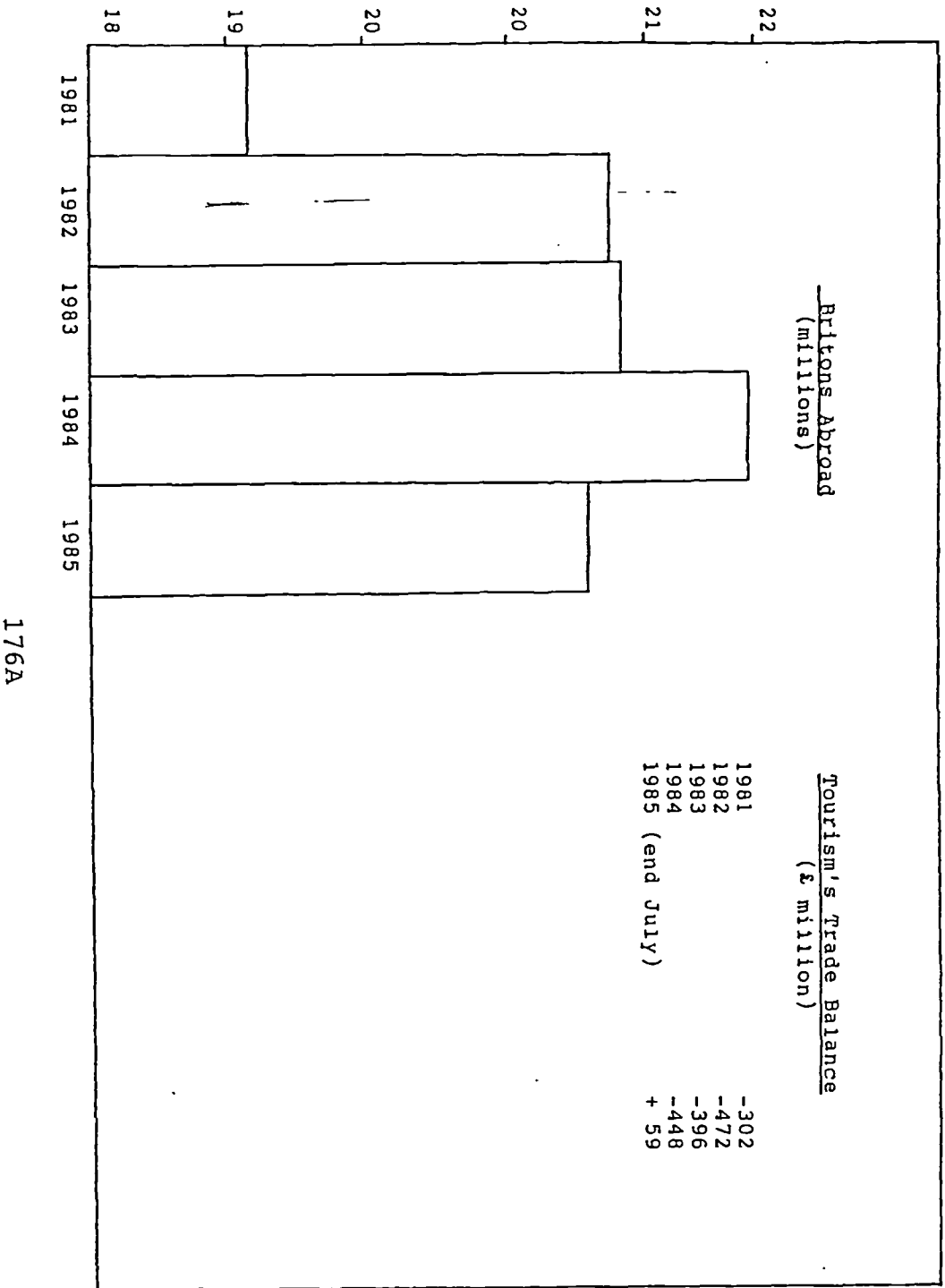
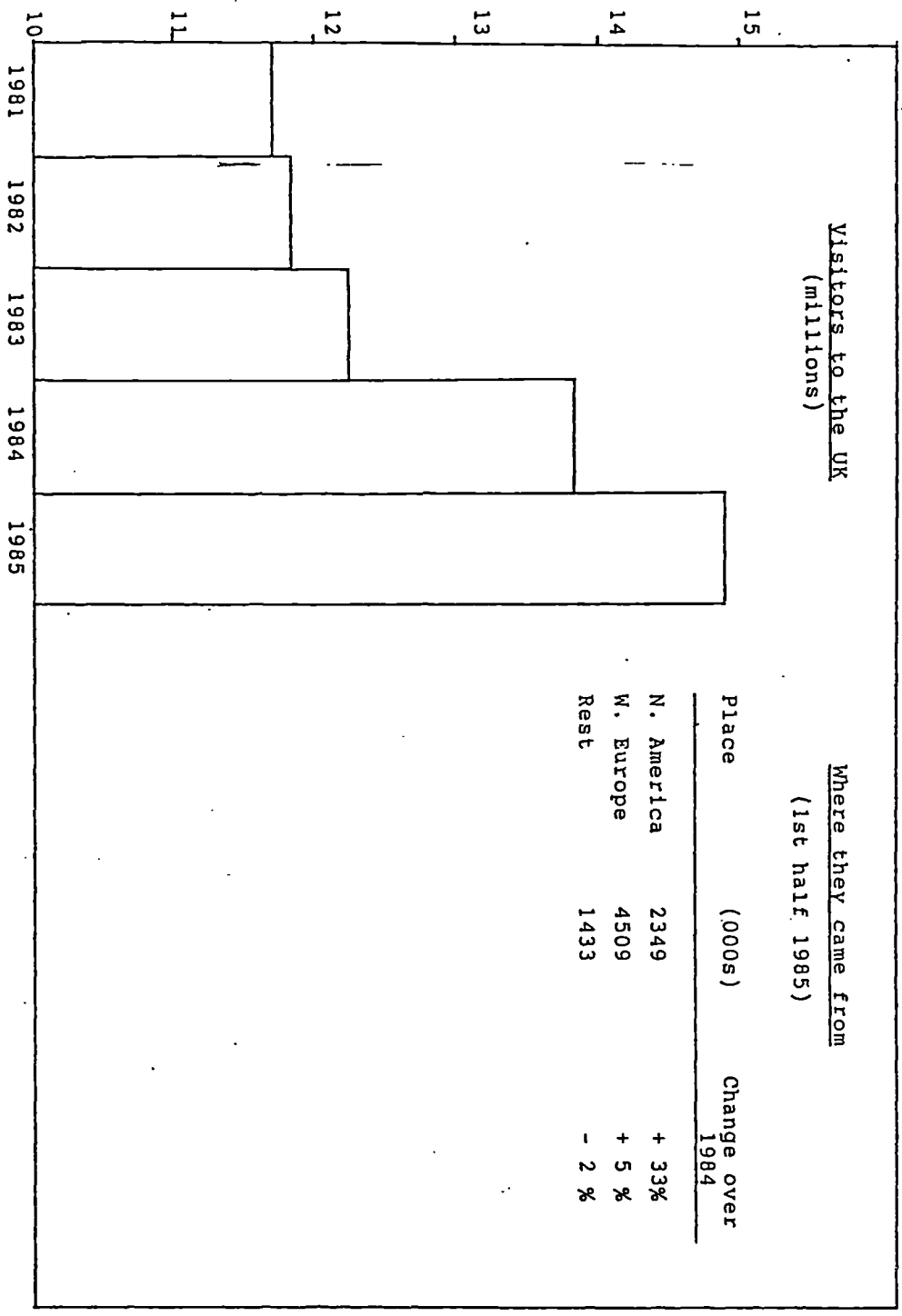


FIGURE 7  
 (Source: The Financial Times)





many tens of million pounds would Scotland have to spend every year on advertising or other forms of promotion to give Edinburgh that reputation which in turn brings in those tens of millions of pounds a year ? And the same is true of the Royal Shakespeare Company or the London Symphony Orchestra or even of The Mousetrap, in its own way and on its own smaller scale, still showing in London.

"...Arts grants should be regarded as investment, intended to maximize Britain's share of the world's largest growth industry, which will yield substantial positive returns to this country " says the Education, Science and Arts Committee in its 1981-82 Report. When talking about the Arts Council of Great Britain, mention was made of the specific importance of this country's cultural heritage in attracting tourists. That fact cannot be emphasized enough, and what the Committee says in its Eighth Report just goes to underscore it.

It is short-sighted to look at the arts as merely a money-guzzling trapdoor. Individual instances apart, if a proper and wide-ranging enough balance sheet were prepared of the workings of the arts in Britain with the proper multipliers taken into consideration, it would show positive by quite a margin. Thus, by further investing in the arts as the Committee recommends, governments would not only provide for the expansion of one of the more worthwhile aspects of life and safeguard the future of an invaluable heritage but would also regenerate more wealth for the country. It should also be pointed out here, however, that government investment in the arts is not merely the money that governments directly inject into the artistic arm, but also (and as time and trends go on, more increasingly) the possibilities and incentives they provide for the private sector

to do so. This, in its own way, is no less and takes no less ingenious an amount of planning and execution than direct budgeting for and funding of the arts.

PART FOUR  
Notes

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**PART FIVE**

**The Nature of the Arts and the Problem of Managing  
Them**

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Overview

Through the main body of this thesis the investigation has been into the modes and methods of administration as it is variously understood and applied to the arts in three countries: Italy and Great Britain in the Old World, both well-known for their traditions in the arts, and the United States of America in the New World, admired for its dynamism and its freshness of outlook and attitude. In the investigation every attempt has been made to keep perspectives as wide as possible while restricting the study to a single purview in order to make comparisons more practical and meaningful and the drawing of at least some conclusions possible. This does not mean, of course, that exact comparisons and absolute conclusions are possible even at this pass; only that a scrutiny of the main body of the work may give indications at this stage as to where tentative deductions may be made and where further research is still needed to render even that possible.

The comparisons referred to have not been concatenated under a separate heading for the simple reason that any comparison is more easily comprehensible when undertaken within the context of its substance and in the heat of the discussion relevant to it. Relegating such comparisons to a later occasion almost invariably gives rise to the need for referring back to the original context to refresh the memory, and this is inconvenient under the best of conditions.

The information provided by the main body of the thesis has provided the opportunity for a look at some basic, and sometimes misconstrued, concepts in the three main areas to which the thesis dedicates itself (namely art, the arts, and administration) and one or two other considerations which inevitably arise from them.

During the years it took the present work to be compiled, every other word the writer read or heard tried to convince her that the arts were in dire trouble, that the dilemma they faced was directly and almost singularly related to a lack of funding, that this funding had to be provided by governments who generally refused to fulfill their obligations in this respect, and that something drastic needed to be done about all this.

Three years in the field, trying to understand the mechanisms of arts administration in three different countries and cultures, raised a great many doubts in the writer's mind as regarded the validity of that attitude. A great deal of time was spent in talking to people inside the arts and arts administration and outside, and the writer read almost anything she could lay hands on which might even remotely relate to the subject. The more she read and talked to people of various callings and expertise, the more she became convinced that the problem was far more involved and complex of nature than to be simplified into a single cause-and-effect relationship. There were far too many arguments and living instances which called for totally different conclusions and interpretations. In the end, the writer was fairly well convinced that the arts were not the orphans they were generally made out to be and that the science of arts administration should bring itself to accept and prove that to

be the case, and to open new fronts in trying to find ways of assisting the arts to support themselves.

In what follows, the writer tries to use the information gained from the close study of the three countries chosen not only to make further comparisons of fundamental attitudes but also to use the information gathered to address some of the discrepancies which, in her mind and experience, exist in those attitudes and the conclusions derived from them. To do that, she will have to re-establish certain ground rules for her arguments.

The tendency exists, wherever a subject of discussion rises above daily conversation, for simile, metaphor and other devices of speech to invade the discourse and obscure meaning. If the topic is contributed to by a large enough group, this verbal camouflage is called jargon. Whatever the name, the result is that preciseness of meaning is lost and confusion entails. The subject of art, being of universal interest and open to universal participation, is particularly prone to this malady. In the case of the study in hand, if what has general circulation in the three countries under consideration were to be taken as valid and verifiable information, two distinctly opposed lines of argument would be arrived at which would chart the general (though not exact) direction of popular thinking where the arts and their administration is concerned. The two lines of argument would be:

1) that taken by the functionaries of the public sector and their aficionados, and



2) that followed by those opposing them and supposedly championing the arts.

If looked at from the first group's point of view, the argument would run more or less on the following lines:

- that whatever is done in and for the arts should be left to governments, because it is the government in each country which ultimately takes the initiative, directly or indirectly, in the preservation and propagation of the arts and the general direction they take,
- that the arts can only be trusted to be safe and sound in the hands of governments, and that it is therefore governments which should be left alone to get on with the business of looking after the task,
- that governments not only know exactly what they are doing as far as the arts are concerned but also exactly how they are doing it and what results are being achieved, and finally,
- that whoever says anything to the contrary or questions the veracity and reliability of these assumptions is a philistine, a heretic or a nihilist, and should be ostracized.

The opposite group — namely the anti-government protagonists of the arts — present the same lines of argument, only in reverse:

- that the arts should be wholly freed from all government influence and interference;

- that they should be protected from a middle-agent (the government) which knows little about how they work and which wants to use them, like everything else in its path, as a means towards its own end of remaining in power;
- that it is only the artists themselves and the public who know what is needed concerning the arts, and finally,
- that whoever proposes government intervention in the arts is anti-democratic and a Stalinist, and wants to introduce some sort of cultural thought-police.

A more serious and painstaking scrutiny would reveal that the situation is not as clearly cut as either party believes and that neither party has given enough thought to what it proclaims.

Governments are not the arts; it is not an a priori fact that without the intervention of the government in each country the arts would have perished long ago, nor that the survival of the arts bears witness to the diligence of governments and their good will. Every endeavour is made to create an impression of this kind, but this is primarily because facts and figures from the private sector are neither as readily and widely available nor as persistently publicized as those from the public sector. What governments lack in conscientious care and meticulous execution they compensate for in detailed record keeping and the production of statistics. The private sector is too busy going its own way and 'doing its own thing' (as the Americans say) to collect, produce and put out statistics.

The arguments that the arts are safe and sound in the hands of governments and that governments are doing all they can for the arts are both highly questionable tenets. There is no definitive yardstick with which to measure safety and soundness, and there is wide-spread criticism in all three countries as regards the manner in which the arts are being dealt with by the respective governments.

The proposition that governments know exactly what they are doing as far as the arts are concerned *could only be considered with any seriousness if it were accompanied by a statement from the governments involved to the effect that they are treating the knowledge as restricted information; for the arts themselves do not, as recipients, appear to have any idea as to what, overall, is being done for them. Besides, the results being achieved more often than not tend to give the lie to the claim.*

Political jargon is virtually the same in all the three countries under discussion: the impression created is therefore that though the governments concerned have each a different understanding of and attitude towards the arts, each government is doing more or less the same things in more or less the same ways. Thus, in each country the government — or at least the government arts agencies — *wants (or want) to give the impression that public-sector efforts have been central in giving purpose and direction to artistic activity, giving structure to artistic foundations and functions, and giving substance to the ideal of making the arts available to more and more people. These propositions may not all be untrue, but neither are they entirely true; or all the truth, for that matter. Governments have always been past masters at giving 'saleability'*

value to what they undertake and accomplish and this gives credibility, in the eyes of the uninformed or only partly informed public at any rate, to government claims in respect of the arts. The impression created also owes a great debt of gratitude to the language of propaganda, used by governments as the public-sector equivalent of advertising, which has in the last two decades of the twentieth century been refined into a singularly potent international code of semiotics.

A third impression generated is that, in all three countries, whatever participation there is in the arts by individuals and the private sectors is due to initiatives launched by the governments, and that it is because of government encouragement, planning and incentive schemes that individuals and the private sectors are taking so much interest in the arts and their future. There is a certain amount of truth in this, but not half as much as governments want to believe.

In their book *Industrial Support for the Arts*, John Pick and Malcolm Anderton argue that as far as Britain is concerned, there was proportionately speaking more support from individuals and the private sector in mid-19th century than there is today. They forcibly argue that government intervention in the fate of the arts has served to inhibit not enhance public interest and participation, and that even today, there is more financial support for the arts from individuals and the private sector than from governments.<sup>(1)</sup>

More or less the same arguments have been put forward in the case of the United States with the exception that nobody takes the public sector's role in

the support of the arts at all seriously there, not even the government. As Hugh Southern, Deputy Chairman of Programmes, the National Endowment for the Arts, put it:

"American reliance on voluntarism and private initiative to discharge many public responsibilities, coupled with a scepticism and a mistrust of government and the centralization of government power, are characteristic of American society in an array of different public policy areas."<sup>(2)</sup>

In Italy the situation may not be as blatantly obvious, for the share of responsibility and financing that Italian governments have undertaken has been traditionally more, but complaints are more or less the same as in the other two countries.

Though there is a good deal of validity to the foregoing arguments, a cautionary note might help to create a balance.

We have elsewhere indicated that government intervention in the arts is a comparatively recent phenomenon if we think of governments in their present form. For one thing, the contemporary understanding of the concept of government is itself not all that old. In the case of the United States of America, the concept of government as we know it today is at best only two hundred years old for the obvious reasons that the country itself is not much older. Current concepts of federal (or even state) government have only emerged in that country in the 20th century. In the case of Italy, though there may have been some form of government for some centuries, it can not very well be equated with central 'government' as we think of it today, which was created at unification in the 19th century. Britain is the only one of the three

countries under discussion in which there has been a government in more or less the contemporary sense for an extended period of time, though arguably only from the 19th century reforms in terms of a representative parliamentary democracy, and even mid to late 19th century in the case of significant public support for national and local museums, and only since the Second World War in the case of substantial support for the performing arts. Thus, it would not take much support from the public (in centuries past) to push private support of the arts above that provided by governments.

A second point to bear in mind is that there was, until reasonably recently, an element within what can be termed the private sector which does not (or almost does not) exist any more: the element of a social elite. Princes and thanes, the squirearchy, and the gentry, if not extinct are severely restricted; the nobility, even if there in name, is not there in function. These would all be considered as individuals and a part of the private sector, had the term been invented then. As mentioned elsewhere in this work, it is mainly the function previously undertaken by these groups which has now become the lot of governments. If we were, for example, to include ruler-princes within the definition government then, the share played by the true 'public' at the time would be drastically curtailed and would fall well below what it is today.

Individual philanthropic giving in Britain had its source in the British aristocracy. In America where ever more extravagant philanthropic gestures are currently the rage among the wealthy, the practice is in effect a replication of eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain. None of this should, the writer thinks, legitimately be included in what is today called the private sector and its support of the arts.

All this goes, in a way, to show that the arguments presented by the opposite camp (i.e. the 'arts for the artists and the general public' campaign) are not as lucid or as benign as they appear at first either. What is more, what the campaigner here advocates, if looked at closely, seems to be that governments should provide the funds (however much demanded) to support the arts (whatever he, the campaigner, considers as being 'the arts') without asking any questions and having any say.

The impression left in the mind by all this is that:

- a) the arguments presented are often at cross purposes, and
- b) there are other areas to delve into and other considerations to bear in mind if sense is to be made of the real factors involved in what is, rightly or wrongly, looked upon as the 'dilemma of the arts'.

In what follows, the writer tries to answer the questions that arise in her own mind where purposes cross each other in arguments and to look at some of the other areas and considerations relevant to the discussion in hand. To be able to do this, she will have to give a short glimpse of the background of art support and arts administration, compare certain basic concepts as understood in the three countries studied, and lay the ghost of a few myths.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### **A Look at the Background to Art Support**

As already mentioned, there is no reason to believe that a manner of administration and support did not come into existence soon after art (and it must have been visual art, for man had as yet not developed any speech to boast of) itself.

Permanence is an invention of the human mind and is not shared by other animals. It is only the Homo sapiens that gives a fourth dimension to situations or things. The only trace of longitude that animals — even the highest on the evolutionary ladder — show is crudely programmed into their biogenetic structure in the form of survival mechanisms. In man, the idea of permanence is a much more sophisticated emotion which owes a great deal to the fact that man is the only being that creates what he directly and immediately does not need for survival. And what man creates, he wants to keep.

It is in that desire to keep things that man's drive for continuation probably takes shape, and it is (at least partly) the planned, technically implemented mechanism of providing for continuity in things that we call administration.

#### *13.1 EARLY HISTORY*

The early, undocumented history of the support and management of art (and later the arts) can only be surmised by proxy through physical relics of pre-



historic man. Barring indirect references in the works of the odd Greek and Persian writer/historian, there is little — at least as far as the writer knows — to paint a reasonably cohesive picture. Our first source of documented information — or at least documented information that has survived — is the Church.

It was the institution of the Church and those related to it that proved to be the nursery of the sciences when these were most in need of nurturing during the Dark Ages. As with the sciences, so with the arts which, until the 17th century, found their strongest support in the Church. From the end of the Middle Ages when Europe began to organize itself into more or less definite boundaries, roughly three forms of social order began to emerge: the absolutist states such as France and Austria, the mercantilist states such as the Netherlands and England, and embryo federated states such as Italy and Germany — associated or adjacent groups of independent small states moving towards unification in the 19th century, lying somewhere between the other two in terms of social organization.

The first group were Catholic and had the advantage of stronger church backing; the second turned to Protestantism at the Reformation and, because of their more liberal attitudes, became the scene of more rapid socioeconomic development; the third group had a more mottled character and development and inherited some of the benefits as well as some of the disadvantages of each of the other two. This can be seen in the distinctive characteristics which separate area from area and city from city in this region even to date.

One of the peculiarities of this last group of countries, at least as far as the arts were concerned, was that because they had no established unifying agent as the other two groups, they continued old traditions of individual patronage in the arts from local princes, town councils or other dominant local influences.

Somehow, however, what they seemed to lack as a result of this want of a less individual style of influence, they seem to have made up for in enthusiasm and national drive: there are few examples of anything having been done for the arts at a national level in the other countries on the scale undertaken in Italy by individuals such as Gaius Maecenas, Lorenzo de' Medici or even Benito Mussolini in his own misguided, warped way.

### *13.2 NINETEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER*

When centralized government did finally arrive in Italy in the third quarter of the 19th century, it took over this role vis a vis the arts which individual princes had until then had. Despite all that, were private-sector statistics available, it would not be surprising if the public's share of the support for the arts were at least equal to the government's even in that country.

More or less the same had been happening in other countries as governments had taken shape. Thus, what had primarily been the concern of ordinary individuals and had later passed into the hands of select dignitaries, well-wishers and art lovers, was ultimately relegated to governments. The arts were not the only examples of this type of relegation. Certain concerns were considered so vital and so all-embracing that they had to be entrusted to an impersonal, central authority, and the list is still growing.

Whether governments have been successful in providing sufficiently for the arts is not the concern of this work. Whether they should be the only source of such provision and, more importantly, whether the arts should look upon them as such, is. To that we shall return in later chapters.

A close look at national figures also indicates that governments spend a good proportion of the funds they set aside for the arts on the bureaucratic systems they have created to handle art support programmes rather than on the arts themselves.

### *13.3 GOVERNMENTS AND THE ARTS*

In effect, a somewhat strange contradiction seems to exist in the relationship between the governments in the three countries studied and the arts: though in an overall manner, policy making in all three countries seems to reflect broad general trends and common patterns, the specific arts policies ultimately pursued seem to show a great amount of diversity.

One area in which all three governments seem to behave on more or less similar lines is that they tend to use their direct and indirect support of the arts more to constrain than to facilitate. This is can be seen more in Great Britain and Italy than in the United States, not because government policies are better formulated in the United States but rather because, compared with the other two countries, government intervention is less, overall, in the USA. The constraints referred to mainly take the form of accumulated and still accumulating legislation involving every aspect of the arts, public or private, but

especially the licensing of premises and performances. These regulations were originally drawn up and implemented for purposes of censorship but are now maintained on grounds of public safety.

The existence of this legislation becomes somewhat more understandable when one looks at the death toll in places of entertainment — probably third highest non-natural cause of premature death among young people after road accidents and work-place accidents, fourth in US cities where homicide probably overtakes it. Nonetheless, there is little justification for the voluminous code of legislation (particularly in Italy) for the tamer side of artistic activity. And if the three countries under study are similar in anything as far as the arts are concerned, that similarity lies mainly in this negative aspect of their influence.

In all three countries, governments have for long been paying lip-service to the idea that the arts belong to everyone and should no longer remain the province of a particular, privileged group. They do, of course, try to make the arts available to wider segments of the population, but that is, perhaps understandably, only after other interests and purposes have been served. First and foremost, they have to consider their own survival. This survival — at least in democratic countries — depends to a great extent upon the degree of overall satisfaction (or at least appearance of satisfaction) they give populations. Populations want everything at the same time, but show different types and intensities of response to things they do not receive. Hence, governments have a very thin line to tread when it comes to meeting demands and expectations, because every one of the demands they meet is at the cost of another they cannot. That is as true in the area of the arts as in any of the endless (and

perhaps unfair) demands made on them. On the other hand, governments are neither artists nor art lovers. They handle the arts in the same way and with the same methodology as they handle road construction or waste disposal. This does not, in the main, apply to the executives and functionaries they appoint in the area of the arts, but it is more or less true (and understandable) in the case of the professional politicians and government officials, and it does not help the arts.

## **A Look at Some Fundamental Contradictions**

It may be generally deduced from what has been said so far not only that there is little agreement among various factions involved in the complex world of the arts but also that there is little consistency in the lines of argument presented. More often than not, things being equated are grossly divergent in nature; discourses are emotional, emotive, contradictory and wanting in logic; deductions are based on flawed premisses; and comparisons are irrelevant. What is more, in many cases and at most times, the battles raging have nothing at all to do with the arts themselves but are simply assertions of personal opinions and preferences or declarations in defence of formulated dogma.

The major areas of difference seem to be the following:

### ***14.1 THE 'HIGH ART VERSUS POPULAR ART' CONTROVERSY***

This is, on the one hand, the indignant declaration on the part of a group of highbrows that there is 'noble' art and 'ignominious', that decent art is to be desired and promoted while coarse art is to be subdued and disowned, that proper art should be instilled and inculcated in everyone for the benefit of his soul while cheap art is banished and forbidden, and finally that the masses do not know what real art is and never will.

Michael Hammet puts this very well when he says:

"We say that there is 'good' and 'bad' theatre; that there is theatre that is 'art' and theatre that is 'entertainment'; and sometimes we refer to theatre that is 'subsidized' and theatre that is not. Usage is sometimes confused when actors maintain that what they offer is entertainment when they secretly hope that what they do will be recognized as art, or when managers of subsidized theatres assert that they intend to follow a 'commercial' policy."<sup>(3)</sup>

There is, on the other hand, the taking up of the challenge by so-called intellectuals on behalf of the man in the street (who himself could not care less) to the effect that the masses are perfectly capable of enjoying the same things as the elite and do not frequent art venues only because governments, in collusion with that elite, have priced them out of their reach and that, what is more, there is nothing wrong with popular arts anyway.

The alleged 'defender of the decent arts' maintains that public taste is unrefined and that what the average man considers to be art is coarse and degrading junk. (High arts "...are seen to symbolize in some way the national moral good, setting standards of respectability and moral well-being, refining sensibilities and broadening the mind; the simple corollary being, of course, that those who understand and enjoy the high arts are themselves invested with a respectability and high moral standing..." says Ian Anderson in *The Popular Arts*, City University). He then goes on to place the onus of the fact that the 'high' arts are in low demand on the shoulders of the unrefined plebeian who will not partake in them. The intellectual, on the other hand, while accepting that the high arts are in low demand, lays the fault on the doorstep of the government which refuses to pay the plebeian to go to the Royal Ballet (or to La Scala or the Metropolitan Opera) to see the latest manifestations of 'serious' art.

To begin with, what the proponent of the high arts is gallantly defending is not the artistic value of a work of art (or works of art in general) but its cultural and snob values. It is highly questionable whether any of the works now so religiously revered and defended held the same place in people's sentiments at the time they were created. Conversely, if Michelangelo Buonarroti were to come to life again today and create a 'Goliath' under a pseudonym (say John Smith), chances are that the said champion of the arts would not defend the work as bravely and as wholeheartedly as he does 'David' with the halo of the artist's real name hanging over it. There is nothing wrong with championing culture, of course, as long as it is not done under illusory pretexts. In this particular instance, it more often than not is. Besides all of which, the point conveniently neglected is that boundaries between the so-called high arts and the popular are extremely fluid and change with great rapidity. Shakespeare's plays were popular art when they were written, as was a good deal of Mozart's music. In our own lifetime, we have been witness to many changes in tastes in historic as well as modern fine arts over the past 25-30 years.

Secondly, in defending the high arts, the proponent is either referring to old arts preserved or new arts in the tradition of old, or both. Old arts preserved are limited not only in quantity but also in accessibility. Moreover, they are not being added to. As such, the opportunity is seldom afforded the individual of seeing any of them more than once in a lifetime. Repetition and regurgitation is not to be confused with addition: a Shakespeare play, wonderful work of art though it is, is one play and repeat performances of it do not make it any more. If the same person goes, over the years, to several productions of, for example,



Richard III, it is more often than not as much for the actor or the actors as for the play itself; and even then it takes a genius of the calibre of Laurence Olivier to produce an example with so new an eye as to make the repeated experience really enjoyable. If, on the other hand, it is new arts in the tradition of the old, there is so little of originality and art and so much of prevarication and duplicity there that one hesitates.

Thirdly, it would be untrue to say the economically less favoured classes or the educationally less developed segments of society are inherently unable to appreciate 'proper' music, 'genuine' paintings, or 'serious' opera and are alienated from them, as audience studies seem to demonstrate. What the proponent of the higher arts resents is, when analysed, that the ordinary man does not make it his business to enjoy these to the exclusion of pop music, cartoons and musicals. If confronted with the question "But who really does?" the disciple of the true arts would in all probability find himself wanting for an answer. For the fact of the matter is that nobody does. There is, of course, the odd monomaniac who would go into a fit if the radio were playing the Top Ten, but that is the very rare exception. No matter how serious one is about 'serious music', there would have to be something fundamental lacking in him if he did not, at least occasionally, enjoy some of the other genres of music. It is very doubtful that even the very people who persistently preach the gospel of the high arts adhere to them to the exclusion of all else.

Fourthly, whereas Western man has, as we approach the end of the twentieth century, accepted that the view of the majority is the only path to relative reality and follows that principle in the making of laws and electing of

governments, his democratic attitude does not seem to extend to matters of art: here the minority's views are sacrosanct and the majority's heresy. It is a part of the class distinction conflict that the rich and supposedly more cultured should look down their noses at the common man and dismiss his values as unworthy of consideration.

Finally, even if it can be proved that the so called high arts are conducive to the creation of better societies and even if it can be demonstrated that a liking for and habit of such arts can be inculcated, it still remains open to argument whether the arts themselves are the best medium for this type of education. By trying to make the arts ever more accessible, those bent upon popularizing them are, whether they know it or not, relying upon the economic premiss that supply creates its own demand. What they seem to be unaware of is the proviso to the premiss: that it can only do so if there is an innate need for that which is being supplied. The need for art is, as this study has tried to argue, innate in us all, but the need for any particular type of art is not. The means through which the need for art is met in various people is neither uniform nor subject to any logical or rational principle. Hence the premiss of supply creating its own demand is highly suspect in this case unless a great amount of preparation (and that almost from the moment of birth) has been undertaken.

The fact of the matter is that whereas the so-called 'serious arts' should of course be available to those who appreciate them and whereas there should be provisions made in the educational policies and programmes of every society for these serious arts to become part of the boundless sea of experience which goes into the making of the mature human being, the individual should be left to

his own devices when it comes to choosing what fulfils his need for the artistic yearning. Thus, the real, living, contemporary arts should be given their due recognition as legitimate undertakings and should be left to go their own way and make their own mark. Trying to sell yesterday's art over and over again to ever-increasing generations of uninterested and unwilling people can be an extremely frustrating and expensive pastime resources for which can be more usefully utilized.

#### *14.2 THE 'GOOD ARTS VERSUS BAD ARTS' STRIFE*

In each country there seems to be a group (fortunately small) of people who seem to have set themselves up as judge and jury to the arts and consider it their moral duty to rule upon the acceptability or not of every item as 'true' art. They do not belong to any one class or profession, but generally believe that there is such a thing, in its own right, as art and that it has palpable, measurable standards by which what is produced either abides or which it disregards. Since standards differ from one faction to another even within the group itself, there is constant clash of opinions as to what is good art and what is not. These are also the people who speak of the 'rise and progress' of art, the 'development and stagnation' of art, et cetera, as if there has primordially been an established ideal towards which the arts (or even more meaninglessly, art itself) should have progressed.

On the other hand, there is in the opinion of many, no such specific thing as art. The ancient Greeks were all of this opinion and therefore had no word for art in

their vocabulary. There is, as the science of psychology points out, an area of emotional need in man which is fulfilled in a very special, complicated manner by the way certain things are, the way they happen, or the way they are done. How and through what process this fulfilment takes place is unknown. That does not, however, make any difference to the reality of the need or its fulfilment. (Man does not yet exactly know the nature of electricity or light, but that does not negate the existence of light and electricity nor stop man from using them.) What is more, art does not rise or progress because it has nothing to rise or progress with and nothing to rise and progress towards. If anything, it evolves; or rather as man's need evolves with man himself, it finds its fulfilment in different things at different times. This does not negate the idea of longevity and transcendence already suggested as integral parts of the arts. On the contrary, it sheds some light on the feeling which masquerades in the guise of the 'high art, low art' controversy.

Evolution is a long-drawn process. This means that though the need for the arts metamorphoses, it does so at a pace too slow even for historical memory. Thus while the feeling is shifting its emphasis, it is not noticeably altering in shape or nature. That which only appeals to its short-term interests is left behind and lost in time while that which answers the essence of its need transcends and remains. That is why there is in reality little substance to the fear expressed by many art enthusiasts that if the so-called low or popular arts are left to their own devices and if people are not educated to proper art, the low arts will one day push out and replace high art. Gresham's Law to which they are referring does not (or rather cannot be interpreted to) apply here, for what Gresham

says is in reality that if bad money floods the market, people will take the opportunity to withdraw their good money (of which they know the value) to keep safe for another day. In the same manner, if poor (or temporary) art tries to take the market over, purer (or permanent) art will be withdrawn to be safely kept for the future.

On the other hand, art is only art if it answers the artistic need (if it fulfils the poetic sentiment) in man. If it does and to the extent it does, it is art and all art is good; if it does not, it cannot be considered as art, good or bad.

### ***14.3 THE 'GOVERNMENT VERSUS THE ARTS' WRANGLE***

*Simplified, this is a battle of wits between governments, who claim they are doing everything possible for the arts, and those supposedly championing the arts, who maintain that they are not and who consequently demand that the arts be set free from government influence and interference. At the same time, however, many of those campaigning for the arts demand that governments take full responsibility for the arts by suggesting that they increase their funding of the arts and get on with properly promoting them in every way. According to them, governments have vested interest in the arts and want to keep reputable artistic institutions dependent upon themselves. Almost immediately, however, they contradict what they have said by accusing the governments of not being at all interested in the arts and of trying to force these institutions to go private and earn their own keep. Thus, for every push for governments to stop manipulating the arts through funding there are two shoves, mainly from the*

same sources, for governments to increase their subsidies to the arts. A good example of this confusion was reflected in a dispatch written by Catherine Utley, BBC World Service British Affairs Correspondent, on 1st June, 1990, where the writer said:

" A classic example of why (government) investment is so urgently needed is highlighted by the case of one of Britain's most popular stage musicals, Phantom of the Opera. The master-mind of the Phantom of the Opera is the British composer and musical entrepreneur, Andrew Lloyd-Webber. He wanted to make the film version of this British musical in Britain. But it seems that the costs are too high and the producers are now thinking of taking the film to Eastern Europe. There studios — anxious for hard currency — are undercutting their British counterparts. It's cases like this which drive those involved with the British film industry near to despair. The Oscar-winning producer, David Putnam, responsible for films such as The Killing Fields and Chariots of Fire blames the lack of government subsidy."<sup>(4)</sup>

The writer of the dispatch and the Oscar-winning producer were apparently not familiar enough with economic concepts to see the flaw in their line of argument. It did not occur to either to ask why the government should invest in a film being made by a man who has gained ten times the cost of the film from the stage version of the musical and who is one of the richest people in Britain. What is more, they did not seem to know that the high cost of production, as indeed the high cost of everything in Britain, has little to do with government subsidy and that no amount of government subsidy is going to cure one of the chronic ailments that has beset this country's economy for decades; in fact, that it is to a great extent because of the over-subsidizing of such ventures that Britain is one of the most expensive countries in the world and has to have its films and most other things done by others elsewhere.

There is little doubt that governments have a great deal to be criticized for in their ways and their areas of undertaking, but not in the uninformed manner of this example. There is little sense in many of the arguments presented in criticism of governments because the bulk of such criticism seems to emanate from the need to blame someone for the failure of the arts — or at least what many see as the failure of the arts — and since the picture is not clear enough as a whole for anyone specific to be blamed, governments become the target. This not only does not help the arts but becomes detrimental to their interests because it waylays the legitimate criticism that could be raised.

Governments themselves are no less confused over whether they have a role in the arts or not, whether they ought to have a policy or a range of policies vis-a-vis the arts or not, and whether they want to remain involved in the arts or not. There was a time when the answer to all these questions was a resounding 'No' at least in Britain. Today, things are not as simple as that because governments have learnt the value (in terms of votes) of election-time promises and the expediency of conveniently forgetting those promises (in order to concentrate their energies and funds in more immediately profitable projects) once they are in power. In the mid-nineteenth century Lord Melbourne, Prime Minister, is quoted as having said: "God help the government that meddles with art." In the run-up to the 1979 general elections in Britain, the Conservative Party began its pamphlet 'The Arts — The Way Forward' with the words "Any government, whatever its political hue, should take some active steps to encourage the arts." Not a revolutionary leap forward but a far cry from Lord Melbourne. The pamphlet further expressed the hope that the decisions of the

Tory Conference (of which it was the discussion record) established the fact that the Tories took "keen, active and committed interest in the future of the arts in Britain" and that they were "the arts' best friend". Less than a year later, the ensuing Tory government cut arts expenditure by nearly five million pounds.

Besides the governments' not knowing their own minds and their own stand on the question of the arts, there is the confusion created by cross-party propaganda which serves to fuel the controversy. In the BBC dispatch to which reference was made earlier, the writer at one stage says:

"The Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, has invited about twenty leading figures in the British film business to a meeting later this month to seek ways of rescuing the industry from decline. But for the opposition Labour Party, which has launched its own plan to boost investment in British films, Mrs Thatcher's intervention is long overdue."<sup>(5)</sup>

The programme then brings in an actuality of Mark Fisher, Labour's media and arts spokesman who says:

"I think it's amazing that it's taken her (Mrs Thatcher) this long to realize that we have a British film industry and that it is on its knees because of lack of interest from this government. But I welcome her late conversion. I hope that we're going to get more than just words from her; that we're actually going to get investment and real enthusiasm from the government."<sup>(6)</sup>

Whoever is going to benefit from this propagandist exchange, it is not going to be the arts. Whereas there is truth in what the opposition spokesman says, there is also intentional and blatant ignoring of the fact that the British film industry was in exactly the same quandary during the time of the Labour government; that it was 'on its knees because of lack of interest' from that



government as it is from this; that the conversion was late even then and comprised nothing more than 'just words' and that it was the Conservative spokesman in opposition at that stage who expressed exactly the same sentiments the Labour spokesman is expressing now.

There is little substantive difference between one government and the next, between one party and the other. The nature of the beast is the same: it is always after the same thing and always uses the same tactics to acquire it, because these tactics have passed the test of time. Where a gesture is made, it is political hay-making and propaganda and not the result of any interest or conviction. If one party or one government favours the handling of the arts by the public sector and the other prefers the arts out in the marketplace it is not due to any consideration for the arts but because one stands, ideologically, for centralism and the other for devolution. In practice, though both ideologies have used the arts for their own propaganda purposes, neither has ever done anything momentous for the arts themselves; for while politically motivated organizations have always pretended to lend support to the arts, there are few instances of their having actually initiated anything. The case of libraries in the 19th and early 20th centuries is a good example. Yet another example is the advent and ascent of the cinema in which it fell upon Alfred Wareing and his League of Audiences to press the government for support in the face of the sweeping success the newly born industry was showing. This was then followed by the precipitation of the next step, in a roundabout way, through advancing technology and the outbreak of war.

In the chapter on the Growth of Public Patronage in *The Case for the Arts*,

Harold Baldry says:

"The development of public support for the arts in Britain was a process of growth, not the result of deliberate policy. Policy is normally something planned, consciously devised by the mind; but for the arts as for many other aspects of life in this country, there was for many years no planned policy among those who held the purse strings, even though tentative steps towards public funding had begun. No political party, whether in power or in opposition, formulated a blueprint or drew up a list of principles for the future of the arts, or even conceived the possibility of doing so."<sup>(7)</sup>

Thus, all that the arts in Britain have received from anybody all round, be it Conservative or Labour governments or governments-to-be, political parties, trade unions, benefactors or the public has been lip-service rather than concrete assistance. Post-war history is full of the examples of this. In their own fashion, the other two countries involved have not been vastly different either, despite the fact that their systems of government and concepts of politics are totally dissimilar.

All that, of course, is if we maintain that the arts are and should be dependent upon extraneous support, which is one of the things this work tries to argue against.

#### ***14.4 THE 'PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE' DICHOTOMY***

There are those who maintain that the arts should, like the armed forces or National Health, be entirely funded by governments ("It seems obvious that only by enlightened government action [financial takeover] at the municipal, State,

and National levels can the gap between the inevitable needs and present resources be appreciably narrowed". Address by John D. Rockefeller III, US Senate Sub-Committee for the Arts, 1963) and those who would prefer them to be wholly supported by the private sector and the general public ("The state subsidy system bestows the title of composer, painter or poet upon those whom it subsidizes, and plainly some state arts bureaucrats do not think that the absence of listeners, watchers or readers seriously tarnishes their judgement". John Pick in *Vile Jelly*, 1991, p 90). However, the former want governments only to provide the funds — as much of it as the arts demand — but otherwise have no say in the matter, and the latter argue that the private sector should supply the necessary finances but leave the supervision of the arts to governments. It is difficult to discern through which process of rational deduction each group has arrived at its conclusions and how each justifies the contradictory nature of its argument. The arguments themselves are, however, presented in all the traditions of polemics and with great conviction. Baldry, for example, maintains in his otherwise perfectly logical book that

"The arts are an area where he who pays the piper should not call the tune. The world is too full of examples of what can happen if he does."<sup>(8)</sup>

However, he neither provides his reader with any of those examples nor with one good reason why the arts should be any different, in the eyes of economic principles, from anything else. It seems to escape him in his idealism that the calling of the tune by the person who pays the piper is not just a proverbial witticism but an economic reality which works on the same principles and with

the same relentlessness as natural selection in evolution and which we cannot re-interpret as our needs and moods dictate.

The terms 'support' and 'patronage' themselves are deceptive ones as used in these arguments. In their introductory essay to *The Patron State* Cummings and Katz write:

" In feudal Europe, there was no real distinction between the Prince as sovereign, or between a duke or baron as lord (and therefore governor), and the same individual as a person. In particular, in financial terms there was not yet a distinction drawn at any level. In addition, where the local feudal lord was a bishop or an abbot, no clear lines were drawn among the institution of the church, the institution of the state, and the person of the incumbent. Nonetheless, all of these feudal governors were supported at least in part by levies which we would clearly recognize as taxes ostensibly raised for the public good. So when a prince or a bishop commissioned a painting, employed a court composer or Kapelmeister, or built a theatre, he was engaged in what can only be called government patronage of the arts."<sup>(9)</sup>

A peculiar interpretation of patronage, but if Cummings and Katz have an understanding of the term not commonly contributed to, they do not anywhere discuss and justify it. What is more, they are not the only writers on the arts who confuse two essentially separate functions one with the other.

A definite distinction should be made between using the arts and supporting or patronizing them. When Julius II commissioned Michelangelo to make him a tomb and later to work on the Sistine Chapel, was he supporting the arts or trying to create edifices to his own memory and to the glory of his own reign? (He is supposed to have said to Michelangelo, "When I am being judged I shall throw your work into the balance against my sins. Perhaps it will shorten my

term in purgatory." If there is any substance in that, was he not using the artist and his art as a bribe towards his own salvation?) On the other hand, if Pope Julius is to be taken as being only patronizing the arts, then could it be equally said that when Hideto Kobayashi recently purchased Van Gogh's 'Portrait of Dr Gachet' for a king's ransom, he was making an even more magnanimous contribution to the arts? Or was he merely acquiring something on which he knew he could make a good deal of money? Even if Mr Kobayashi had purchased 'Dr Gachet' to present to a national gallery where it could be seen for evermore by generations of viewers, could he still be said to have embarked upon an instance of arts patronage? Or would he at best be remembered as someone who had assisted in furthering Western culture and preserving Western heritage? The two are not really the same.

What a patron of the arts does is primarily and intentionally aimed at benefiting the arts. It is very open to question as to how making a gift to an art gallery of a painting by a dead artist (no matter how good the painting or how great the artist) does that. Yet another question to be borne in mind is whether the man who purchases a work of art is patronizing the arts. There is little doubt that if artists can sell their products, they will be in a position, not only financially but also psychologically, to produce further works. In this manner the arts will doubtlessly benefit. However, there is a great difference between that and arts patronage. When the average person buys a statuette or a gramophone record or a painted vase, it would be simplistic to say he is doing so because he wants to support the arts. The chances are that nothing of the kind has crossed his mind; that what he really has in mind is to make his own living-room a more

pleasant place in which to sit. Though the lines of demarcation have become very faint in these areas as a result of the constant confusing of concepts and issues, they still exist and should be reinstated.

Another question worth asking is whether patrons should be supporting the arts or the artists. The distinction may not be obvious as long as supporting the artist results in the production of art. But what if it does not?

General feeling — even if unexpressed — seems to be that artists are a breed apart from the rest of humanity and hence have to be pampered and looked after. One would hesitate to question the wisdom of that feeling if the example in mind were a Raphael or a Haydn. Artists of that stature equal eternity and are hence supreme examples of the fulfilment of the survival wish in humanity; because of that, may be they are a breed apart. But as Cummings and Katz themselves say:

" For every Mozart, Schiller or Caravaggio, there were countless other composers, poets, and painters receiving state largess who, if technically competent, still created nothing of transcendent value."<sup>(10)</sup>

Are these non-artists also part of the 'breed apart' to be unquestioningly revered? Can the arts establishment afford to squander its resources in this manner? No other economic sector can, not even the best established and the richest. What is more, as bad money drives good out of a market according to Gresham's law, so non-aptitude can overbear aptitude in the arts: if it becomes common understanding that the arts pay for non-productivity, it would be most

strange if half the inepts and inefficados of the world did not make their way into the arts. According to Cummings and Katz, many already have.

Cummings and Katz continue:

" Even when true geniuses were the beneficiaries of princely or ecclesiastical commissions, the works actually commissioned may have been pedestrian, produced to appeal to the patron's taste, while giving the artist the financial freedom to experiment and create to satisfy himself."<sup>(11)</sup>

Is the purpose of support in the arts to give the artist the opportunity to satisfy himself? If it is, the arts are the only field of human endeavour in which a person not only receives satisfaction but is also and expressly paid for it. In every other field man has to pay for that privilege. In rare cases, he enjoys producing something which is of value to others; but here, he is not getting paid to enjoy himself but rather for what the payer finds of value to himself. The freedom to experiment is of course a very necessary part of the arts, but it has to be provided for under systematic and practical arrangements. The arts are not the only domain of activity which depend upon research. They should learn from other disciplines how to carry out such experimentation as to optimize returns from it.

Finally, there is the argument between those who look farther afield to results and each arrive at different conclusions. Those who are in favour of government control in the arts maintain that relinquishing the arts to the public will mean the death of what is best in the arts while if the arts are in government hands, governments will see to it that worthwhile 'high' arts are taken care of and propagated. Their opponents, on the other hand, maintain

that if people can choose the government they want there is no reason why they should not be able (and allowed) to choose the kind of arts they want. Their line of argument is that since it is the people who live with the arts, it is they who shape the arts. It is nations, according to them, who create and keep alive cultures, not governments. In the hands of governments, the arts would stagnate. Besides, they question government expertise in matters of morality, social values, culture and the arts and do not consider governments in a position to have a say in these quarters.

There is validity in both views but only to a limited extent. The basic flaw in the whole argument is that the question to ask is not who is better equipped and suited to care for the arts nor which arts are worth looking after and saving and which not, but rather whether the arts should be left to remain in a position where they need to be looked after in principle.

#### ***14.5 THE 'LANGUAGE VERSUS MEANING' DISCORD***

There is a trend in linguistic contortionism which adds to the confusion reigning in the arts controversy and renders the hope for a solution more unobtainable than ever.

Language is at best symbolic of intention. Whatever crosses the mind and passes the lips is a mere approximation of reality and has to be delivered and accepted with that general understanding. Man has known that from pre-speech existence. In the last two or three decades, however, it has become fashionable in the English language, particularly as it is used in Britain, to



verbalize at every turn of phrase what has always been part and parcel of human expression everywhere: the fact that what is being said is only an approximation, that it is mainly symbolic, and that it is the speakers opinion. The almost universal adherence to this unnecessary repetition serves to indicate that the mechanism we call speech has broken down and that because people can no longer accept the fiduciary nature of language, all speech has become a travesty of meaning. In his brilliant book *The Closing of the American Mind*, Allan Bloom, talking of the students he teaches at American universities, says:

"The relativity of truth is not a theoretical insight but a moral postulate, the condition of a free society, or so they see it... The danger they have been taught to fear from absolutism is not error but intolerance. Relativism is necessary to openness; and this is the virtue, the only virtue, which all primary education for more than fifty years has dedicated itself to inculcating."<sup>(12)</sup>

This fear of absolutism and advocacy of relativism is nothing new. In fact it is one of the first premisses of the concept of democracy and civilized behaviour as taught by ancient philosophers from Socrates onwards. It has, however, never achieved the rigid dogmatism of the present. Today, 'Thou shalt not be absolute in thy expression' seems to be the only commandment of 20th century morality. Thus, from the dogma of 'the absolute expression' contemporary man has cast himself (to misquote Wilde) the statue of the dogma of 'the absolute non-expression'.

The result of all this is that whenever there is an exchange taking place of thoughts and ideas, the better-educated American or Briton insists on punctuating every nuance with an assertion of its inverse meaning. The intention behind this is to protect the speaker or writer from accusations of

being dogmatic in his ideas and rigid in his understanding, but the effect is to render all meaningful exchange impossible. Through this device, parties to a conversation or discussion ascertain that nothing of any significance or consequence is embarked upon and that everything is left unsettled for another day. Thus, as if it is not enough that people do not each understand what the other is saying anyway, as if meaning and sense is not confused beyond recognition by irrational arguments, as if controversy itself is not sufficient breeding-ground for paralogism and sophistry, contemporary man has added to it all the curse of circling around concepts ad nauseam and never arriving anywhere or at anything.

Somewhere and at some time, parties to the discussion of seminal issues will have to accept that they all know (and concede to the fact) that language is not definitive; that human concepts (including those in the so-called sciences) are only relative and very tentative; that it is with the understanding and acceptance of these premisses that dialogues and discussions are undertaken; that it therefore serves no purpose whatsoever to keep repeating the already accepted premisses at every turn; and ultimately that it is preferential to say or do something and risk being occasionally wrong than not to do or say anything at all.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### **A Look at Some Misconceptions**

Chapter Fourteen touched upon some of the major areas of misunderstanding and discord in which those involved with the arts find themselves locked. If the arts are ever to get anywhere, the first step should be to look at these in the light of cold reason, make some sense of what the real issues are, try to establish the basic facts, and come to a measure of agreement as to what is the least impossible course to take.

The one certainty is that things are as they are. The arts have come to be branded (and have themselves somehow accepted the fate of being) objects of pity and charitable intentions; governments have taken partial or total charge of the arts in a half-hearted manner and, despite everything and everyone and for very practical reasons, are going to hold on and continue in the existing mode and manner; everybody pays lip-service to the arts but only to make the most of the occasion for personal gains; and in the meantime nothing concrete is being done by anybody for the arts, least of all by the arts themselves because they have been conditioned to sit and wait for others to do things for them.

Any attempt at fundamental changes to this system (if changes are to be made) will have to be presented not only with a more unified front but also within the framework of a more solid and irrefutable case. Arguments currently presented are not even consistent, let alone convincing. There is, of course, a

case for the arts; but if that case is to have a practical chance it will have to be far more calculatedly, dispassionately and rationally argued. This is one battleground in which idealism will not win the day. Polemics is not going to put the arts on their road to salvation.

A dispassionate re-assessment of the whole situation in which the arts find themselves today is the first important step. After this has been accomplished, a majority view will have to be arrived at, among those who have taken it upon themselves to represent 'public interest' in the arts and their destiny, as to whether the arts need governments or not and what alternatives and possibilities they (the arts) have if they cut themselves free. If and when such a consensus is reached, a practical and practicable proposal or series of proposals will have to be tabled to cover the implementation of that consensus of will. If governments are found to have a place and role in the arts (or in certain aspects of the arts), what is that place and role, how and by whom is it to be ascertained and approved and how is it to be maintained and carried out? If they are found, on the other hand, not to have a place and role, not only will transitional steps have to be envisaged for the disentanglement of the arts from the institution and function of government but plans of action suggested to place them, through a series of stages, on a non-governmental but viable footing with clear, well-defined and rational goals and practical long term prospects.

In what follows an attempt is made to raise some of the questions involved.

Primarily, there are certain concepts (and the relationships among them) which have to be considered anew. The most fundamental of these are the arts themselves, economics as related to the arts, and government.

### 15.1 AS FAR AS THE ARTS ARE CONCERNED

◆ There are almost as many views about the nature and definition of art as there have been minds brought to bear upon the subject. The definitions given range from the sublime to the ridiculous. In his book *Twigs for an Eagle's Nest*, Michael Straight, Deputy Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States during Richard Nixon's Presidency, recounts the example of one applicant for a grant who had given the following account of what he intended to do with his grant money:

" I will rent a ground level studio with high ceilings and a cement floor, adjacent to a lush meadow. And to this place I will bring Pigme, a full-grown sow (whom I have known since her ninth day), two female rabbits (who know each other and me), a buck (stranger), two ring-necked doves (strangers), a woolly monkey, Georgina (who knows me slightly).... We will all move together. I will also bring those things necessary for a comfortable survival, including food and materials to use for building and maintaining nests. All of us will contribute to the creation, maintenance and change of such an environment. Once settled, we may discover that there are others who would like to join us even if just for a short time (birds, mice, people, etc.). I will record our activities so that those unable to visit and experience our situation directly will know something of what it is like. This will best be done by using portable video equipment.

Sometimes, we will leave our place and go together to another, to bring others with us. For these events, we will need a vehicle, preferably a motorbike with a large sidecar. Perhaps this communal way of life will be quite difficult. However, the educational value, for all of us will be extraordinary."<sup>(13)</sup>

There are a great number of people who join the author of the project in considering that as 'art'. In fact there are many who maintain that anything

anyone does is 'art'. On the other side there are those who believe that virtually nothing undertaken in the twentieth century deserves to be categorized as art. Without any involvement in the semantics of the case, the authors of these extremities must be brought closer to each other for the sake of sanity and the arts and made to meet in a middle ground. They must be made to see that they will only be perpetuating the quarrel and leaving the arts out in the cold if they do not. One must be shown that if everything were to be considered as art then there would be nothing that could be singled out as art and hence nothing to support or fight for; the other that if nothing before Tintoretto and after Turner were to be admitted as art the arts would come to be considered a passing fancy not worth worrying about, for there is a definite relationship between longevity and the arts. Rough boundaries will then have to be conceived and proposed for what is and what is not to be considered art for practical purposes, i.e. for the purpose of ascertaining what is to be cherished and what needs to be encouraged. In doing this it will have to be borne in mind that the demarcation is not being undertaken as a ruling on the ultimate concept of 'art' but rather as a rough rule of thumb to distinguish that area of the arts which are serious enough and long-lasting enough to merit and require communal attention and concern from the rest. This narrowing down is essential, because if the arts were to be taken in their multifarious guises and meanings, even a superficial study on the lines being proposed would require means beyond the capabilities of any institution or concourse of institutions in the world.

◆ Prior to all else, it must be recognized that the arts, as they are referred to in this discussion — and in most other discussions of this kind unless otherwise

indicated — do not include the personal and the private. There is an endless amount of artistic activity in progress in the world all the time which is never seen, never heard of and never even suspected. This is particularly true of Great Britain because the British are particularly jealous of their privacy even when it comes to their communal activities, and communality is an essential part of art. There is no possible way of including this aspect of the arts in any study. In a study of this nature there is no need for it either, for when the arts are referred to in a context such as this, it is the public and not the private arts and artistry which is under consideration.

◆ It is not as impossible to arrive at a tentative consensus of opinion with regard to the meaning of art in its practical, day to day sense as is generally believed because the most strongly felt differences are normally in the ideological stands taken on the issues involved and in these, no point of agreement can be reached because no party is willing to give any quarter to the other. In trying to arrive at a consensus, though a look at the theoretical concepts of art might prove to be useful, it is the concrete, practical aspect, the 'art as object' aspect which is of essence.

In *The Case for the Arts* Harold Baldry says:

" ... 'art' is not the name of a permanent, definable entity, like 'triangle' or the number ten, but a term whose meaning has varied in the past and will vary in the future. It is a word variously used by different generations to describe constantly changing phenomena."<sup>(14)</sup>

That is tantamount to saying the word 'horse' is not a permanent, definable entity because the little, squat animal that was first discovered in Turkmenistan

over ten thousand years ago bears little similitude to the tall, handsome creature one now sees at Ascot and because the animal of which it stands representative has been used for different purposes during human history.

Art may not be easily definable but permanent it certainly is. History is indicative of the fact that art originates in man's instinct for survival and that it is the counterpart or alter-ego to work. Where work provides for the physical survival of the individual, art is the incorporeal survival-wish of the species. It serves the same instinctual purpose as pro-creation; for it was in art, from the beginning of his history, that man sought not only to preserve his own image and leave his own mark but also to perpetuate his way of life. Contemporary psychology accepts art in this light. In *On Jung*, Anthony Stevens says:

" While conducting us through the life cycle, the Self causes us to experience the images, ideas, symbols and emotions that human beings have always experienced since our species began and wherever on this planet we have taken up our abode. That is why art, when it expresses archetypal reality, moves us wherever and whenever it is or was created. It speaks to the universal principles of human existence: it transcends nation, race and creed." (15)

Art is primordial and ageless because it is part of the unconscious and the unconscious, quite contrary to what Kenneth Clark says in his essay 'The Blot and the Diagram' in *Moments of Vision*, is not easily exhausted.<sup>(16)</sup> The unconscious is not only the source of all human energy but also the genetically-transmitted and hence the only permanent part of man. Thus, it is not art or its meaning that changes in time but rather man's interpretation and representation of the single but by no means simple need. As life has become more complicated, new guises have had to be conjectured for the nameless, faceless drive which is more fundamental to the essence of existence than life itself. As



life goes on becoming more complicated, yet other guises will be concocted. It is, at any time, the better examples, the more elegantly expressed allegory, the more apt metaphor in this genre which is considered representative and which we call 'art'. It is this art, when it also has transcendent value, which needs communal concern.

◆ However art is defined and whatever it is taken to represent, universal consensus has it that it (or in practical terms, as much of it as possible) should be encouraged and preserved. The suggested functions of encouragement and preservation do not, however, apply to the same phenomenon, process or product, whichever the particular instance of the arts being referred to falls within. The encouragement factor is intended for and applies to the future, the preservation factor to the past. The encouragement is aimed at prospective arts and artists, the preservation at art already produced, tested by time and earmarked for posterity. This may appear to be a statement of the obvious; yet this obvious fact is often forgotten or ignored in practical dealings with the arts almost in all the three countries studied. No heed is paid to the fact that the two factors, being separate, should be dealt with separately and not banded together.

Preservation as advocated in most contexts is in relation to that segment of the arts which has passed the test of time, has become part of a nation's cultural heritage, and is hence the responsibility of the government. The preservation of all else is the responsibility of the individual and he can exercise it or not as he pleases. What is more, he will not take it kindly if he is instructed in it in any way. Encouragement, on the other hand, is applicable to the non-national, non-

heritage aspect and area of the arts now in the process of being attempted. The fact is again often ignored that encouragement is in effect a manner of interference, well-intentioned but interference nonetheless. Care has to be exercised, therefore, in its application.

As heritage — which has no market and hence no effective value except for the moral and emotional one — the arts have come in time to prove a financial liability which has to be sustained. This cannot be expected of the public at large because the public has no unity of purpose and identity. It therefore has to be relinquished to the state. All other arts are in effect commodities and as such should have no problem in looking after themselves. There is a grey area where the arts fit into neither of the foregoing categories; that is, they are neither heritage to be preserved nor commodity to be self-sustaining and viable. This grey area is made up partly of experimental art and partly of unsuccessful art, that is art which wants to pretend it is art but is not accepted as such. It is neither the concern nor the intention of this thesis to enter into the argument about 'legitimate' versus 'fake' art. The fact remains, however, that as in any other field of human undertaking, there are some in the world of the arts who were either not cut out to be artists or who march to the sound of a drum so distant from anybody else's that nobody can identify with them. And whatever else the arts are not about, they definitely are about identification. Man does not identify with art consciously of course; nor does he realize that he has identified with a work of art when he has. There is, however, an instant of elation he feels when a work of art touches him, a moment of melting when for a fleeting stroke of time, life and creation seem to make sense and he feels he

has arrived. That is all the identification needed. It does not depend on any one factor or set of factors; it needs no explanation and seeks none; it is open neither to analysis nor interpretation; it is what is usually referred to as 'aesthetic sensation' or what Edgar Allan Poe calls 'the poetic sentiment' where he says:

" We have still a thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. This thirst belongs to the immortality of Man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is no mere appreciation of Beauty before us, but a wild effort to reach the Beauty above."<sup>(17)</sup>

Whatever name is given it, if something can create that feeling in a reasonable number of hearts, it has acquired acceptance as a work of art. If a work has this quality, it will find all the support in the world because it will appeal to the unconscious in us and the unconscious is common territory to all mankind across the continents and across the centuries. If it does not, it has to be left to its own fate because good intentions aside, the arts are included in the overall economic problem and no amount of wishful thinking or verbal argument is going to alter that fact. The second concept which needs to be considered, therefore, is that of economics where it becomes contiguous with the arts.

## ***15.2 AS FAR AS THE ECONOMICS OF ARTS MANAGEMENT IS CONCERNED***

◆ Whichever of the endless definitions of art is accepted, the general understanding of art as reflected in the term 'the arts' is inevitably related to the economic concept of added value. This does not mean that a work of art has necessarily to be acquired or enjoyed through the payment of money but rather

that every work of art has a value added potential and is marketable. The fact that a great deal of artistic activity goes on without any money changing hands does not invalidate the foregoing premisses, in the same way that the vast amounts of unpaid labour on the part of hundreds of millions of housewives across the world cannot be ruled out as an economic factor of production by the mere fact that it is most often not paid for. (The argument presented here does not in any way negate the spirituality of art and works of art and the contribution they make to the quality of life in human societies. It merely points out that human labour goes into the arts and human labour is a factor of production and hence value-tagged.)

Payment is merely a recognition, in terms of prices as measured in monetary units, of value. Ultimately, the price of anything is equal to the value of that thing. Value is the amount or number of other things willingly forgone for anything. The value of the chocolate bar eaten is the cigarette refused, because ultimately there is nobody rich enough in the world to be able to afford both the chocolate and the cigarette, nobody wealthy enough not to have to make the choice, nobody who can afford all the things he wants all the time. Thus, everything is inevitably attained at the cost of something else. This is where the natural selection analogy of economic function (referred to elsewhere) comes into play: since every choice made on the basis of individual values is at the cost of something else, if one person consistently buys a bar of chocolate a day instead of a packet of cigarettes, there will be one packet of cigarettes less sold a day and hence one less produced. If this pattern of behaviour becomes universal, there will be no more cigarettes manufactured.

◆ Due partly to their ethereal nature and partly to the aura they have acquired over time, the arts have come to be distanced from economic realities so that today, they have to a great extent (and for reasons not at all clear) come to believe themselves outside the periphery of all economic consideration. The spirit of things artistic is somehow alien to the temporality of economic reality and this has given rise to the unfounded idea that the arts are somehow immune from economic influences. Religious attitude towards wealth, with all its implications, has rendered not only all things material but also their concept undesirable. What is forgotten in all this is that economics is not about money and material things which, though highly sought after by all and sundry, are in the company of others referred to with disdain, but rather the discipline which applies itself to the question of human needs and expectations and their fulfilment. In so far as the arts are part of those needs, they are part of the economic discussion and subject to economic principles.

In *Moments of Vision*, Kenneth Clark says:

"...the values of art are not of a kind that can be measured. We cannot measure the amount of satisfaction which we derive from a song; we cannot measure the relative greatness of artists, and attempts to do so have produced results that in half a century look ridiculous. In the eighteenth century, which was very fond of that exercise, Giulio Romano always came out top of the poll, which as we all know, by some non-measurable form of knowledge, is incorrect. If you agree with my belief in the symbolic nature of art, the relations between art and materialism become even more uncomfortable, because the value of a symbol lies precisely in the fact that it cannot be analysed, that it unites an inextricable confluence of thoughts, feelings and memories."<sup>(18)</sup>

Is the value of anything else of the kind that can be measured, looked at in this light? Can the amount be measured of the satisfaction derived from an ice

cream, or a cigarette, or a loaf of bread? What is more, has anyone ever claimed to have measured or to have tried to measure the satisfaction derived either from a song or, for that matter, from an ice cream or a loaf of bread? Even if Kenneth Clark means art cannot be priced, he would be open to a number of questions. For one thing, putting a price tag on a work of art is not the same thing as putting a price tag on art. For another, the price of anything is neither fixed nor permanent. There are those who would pay a hundred pounds on the black market to acquire a ticket to Wimbledon in July, and there are those who would not bother to attend the tennis finals even if given a free ticket; there are those who would forgo every comfort of daily life for a very long time to be able to purchase a painting by Gauguin but there are many more who would not give up one day's beer. And at the end of the day, that is what price means: what a person is willing to forgo in order to get something else. That has nothing to do with materialism or with the measuring of values in the sense Lord Clark has in mind: it is a practical translation of the affective weight given by individuals, groups or societies to various things. (The relationship between value and price has already been discussed elsewhere in this work and it has been shown that though one is considered to be non-materialistic and the other materialistic, one is not only translatable into the other but also equivalent to it. It has also been shown that the two are confluent and symbiotic.)

It is difficult to understand what Lord Clark means by 'the symbolic nature of art' but whatever he does mean, it is difficult to discern what bearing it has on what is being discussed and how it makes the relations between art and materialism 'more uncomfortable'. What are the relations between materialism

and the arts? And would it be any the more comfortable or possible to evaluate something of a 'symbolic nature' in terms of idealism than it is in terms of materialism?

It is true that there could be no absolute and universal measurement either of the value of art (or a work of art) or the amount of pleasure derived from it, but then what could there be an absolute and universal measurement of, for that matter? After all, all value is a private code of response between the individual and facets of the world around him and all measurement is a) approximate, and b) variable according to the scale being used.

◆ Every human endeavour, like every natural product, is an economic entity in so far as it affects the welfare or material resources of human beings and in so far as it is part of, concerned with and related to the necessities of life. All the arts are human endeavour, therefore all the arts are potential economic entities. Every economic entity can be and is value-indexed (that is, it has a price tag), has a value-added quality (that is, what goes into it has a lower price tag than what comes out), is part of what is known as 'the economic problem' (which is that human demands are consistently unlimited while resources are consistently limited) and is subject to economic principles one of the most primary of which is the law of supply and demand. Added value is the result of production, which involves four factors: natural resources, labour, capital and organization.

The arts, being potential economic entities, are part and parcel of the economic problem, subject to economic laws and governed by the factors of production. This means that they will consistently have more needs than the limited

resources available to them will be able to meet; that they will consistently have to forgo some of their needs and demands; that they will consistently have to stand in a queue with everything else that needs our attention, time and resources; that they will consistently be subject to the preferences of the majority and at the beck and call of money; and that despite the adoration shown them and the lip-service, they will not, in the ultimate analysis, receive preferential treatment.

◆ On the surface, in one respect the arts seem to vary from all other economic entities, at least under present restricted conditions: increased demand in them does not seem to have brought about an increase in supply. This is well reflected in the fact that as the so-called 'culture boom' has spiralled, as more people have asked for more of the arts, more arts outlets have wound up and more artists have become jobless. There can be a number of reasons for this state of affairs:

a. The arts may be acting, in a manner of speaking, as monopolies in which supply is controlled. Supplies are only controlled in monopolies, however, to push prices up and not down, as seems to be the case with the arts. (This excludes the 'heritage' works of art changing hands at unbelievable prices in the marketplace, however, because as already pointed out, heritage is a totally different aspect and area of the arts. The Gauguins and Van Goghs being sold for kings' ransoms do not belong in the market and have appeared there only because the system has broken down.)



b. Artists and arts institutions are so devoted to the ideals of the arts that they will not let prices rise even though demand is high and supply limited. There are two considerations which waylay this line of argument: firstly that in an open market there are always those who will take an opportunity even if others will not, and secondly that ideals hold only so long as the idealist has not fallen below the breadline.

c. Supply has in fact increased in excess of demand and kept prices down. This could hold true for a very short period of time until the market re-adjusts itself and demand subsides. Besides, as supply begins to increase unemployment falls because an increase in supply needs more labour, especially in the arts which are labour-intensive.

d. Supply has increased but it is not the kind of supply that answers the demand. When that is the case, demand remains unmet, everybody is working but nobody is earning anything, and the cycle breaks down.

The first three of these alternatives rule themselves out as shown, leaving only the fourth, which is not a complementary one to the arts and their handling. However, if a solution is to be found, facts will have to be faced no matter how unpalatable, otherwise there will be no point in pursuing the case for the arts.

◆ When Harold Macmillan said in 1979 that the problem ahead was not going to be work but rather leisure, most of those who heard him either missed the point he was making or thought he was trying to be facetious or to sound clever. He was doing neither. He was making a statement of fact based not

only on the actual post-war experience in Britain but on the post-industrial-revolution history of the whole world.

The industrial revolution did for man what the word processor has done for the written word: it released man from the tyranny of time. The discovery of steam provided man with an alternative source of energy that could do his work for him. Ever since, he has had to spend less and less of his time working for his living. Today the average basic working week of the European industrial worker is thirty seven hours. There are those still alive who remember the seventy-hour week.

As man's working week has shrunk, his leisure week has grown. Today's problem, as Macmillan said, is definitely one of leisure. Even unemployment is now a problem to a great extent of leisure. And leisure is a more difficult task-master to please than work ever was. With work the problem was merely to get through with it. Man did not necessarily have to find work that he would enjoy doing because the ultimate purpose of work was everything but enjoyment. With leisure he now not only has to find it but also like it and enjoy it. Thus the leisure market (of which the art market is a great part) has wider boundaries than the work market. What is more, we are willing to pay for what it has to offer.

There are no statistics to show what the growth-rate of the arts and leisure industry has been and is. There is in fact no possibility of even an approximation of the gross product in the arts and leisure sector because the leisure industry, taken as a whole, forms the largest, the most diversified and

the unwieldiest area of economic activity. Besides that, it is virtually impossible to draw a line of demarcation in any non-leisure industry to separate what is purely utilitarian in it in the industrial sense from what is contributory to leisure. *It would be impossible, for example, to ascertain what proportion of the gigantic world automobile industry is supplying the leisure market through calculating — even if such calculation were possible — by how much international sales of cars would drop if it were ruled that cars were only to be sold to those who want to use them for going to work or for business purposes and nothing else.* One fact is fast beginning to emerge, however, and that is that the leisure industry is bigger than any other including oil, defence and transport. In fact, indications are that it is probably bigger than all three put together.

Bearing all that in mind would inevitably lead to the conclusion that the arts, with their enviable potential, their endless market and the insatiable demand for them would, as the major component of the leisure industry, be the most rewarding of all enterprises. As it is, they are not. There are many far inferior undertakings — inferior as far as potential and structural possibilities are concerned — which have carved themselves secure niches in the economic wall while the arts are still passing their hats round. Why? Why should an industry with all the market and all the possibility in the world be wanting for financial resources? The practical research which has gone into the present work indicates the answer to be that it is not. The real problem with the arts is not the scarcity of resources but rather the unstructured nature of spending. This itself can be broken down into two component parts: unleashed labour costs and the neglect and misuse of funds.

One of the indirect effects of the industrial revolution has been to multiply the cost of labour. The revolts which greeted the onset of the industrial revolution were primarily out of the fear that mechanization would lead to large-scale unemployment. Those involved had thought without the premiss, however, that supply creates its own demand. In effect, the industrial revolution has led to consistent reduction in unemployment and consequently to higher wages. This is not as beneficial as it may seem at first glance, for though higher wages would, if they stopped there, help those receiving them, they usually end up as a disadvantage, particularly to labour-intensive undertakings, because they go on to raise prices. Labour-intensive industries almost invariably price themselves out of the market under these circumstances, as have the arts. An opera takes as many man-hours to produce today as it did before the industrial revolution but it costs many times more at constant prices because it is labour-intensive and labour has rocketed. Added to the narrowness of the economic base on which the arts stand, this makes a healthy balance a virtual impossibility. This is more completely illustrated by W. J. Baumol, Professor of Economics at New York University, when he says:

" Because of the unrelenting and cumulative rise in their relative costs, the live performing arts can be expected to find themselves in permanent crisis, no less a reality for the paradoxical juxtaposition of terms. If the cost of the arts grows say 5 percent more rapidly than the costs of other items supplied by the economy, and does so year-in year-out, then this sector is sure to find itself subjected to at least two chronic financial difficulties. First there will be pressures which make live performance every year more expensive relative to the items that compete for the consumer's expenditure. And second they force upon the organizations that supply live performance fund-raising goals that must rise constantly perhaps at an accelerating absolute rate. Each passing year will render its predecessor's funding target obsolete and inadequate to prevent a reduction in quantity and quality of its offerings. It is certainly not enough for these targets to keep pace with the general rate of inflation, for whatever the rate of increase of prices in the economy, the costs of

the arts rise even faster. Even if revenues and gifts rise precisely in proportion with costs, any shortfall must represent a growing problem. If costs, revenues and gifts each rise six percent per year, then any remaining gap must also rise at a (compounded) rate of six percent, and that cannot continue indefinitely."<sup>(19)</sup>

The argument does not apply only to the performing arts or the visual arts, for that matter: it stands true of all arts because all arts are labour-intensive.

As to the second consideration, no matter how rich an industry is, no matter how powerful and how much in demand, it cannot afford to neglect or waste its resources. Waste and neglect are both by-products of mismanagement. That is precisely why management, in its overall form called organization, is of all other things possible, given pride of place amongst the primary factors of production and why it is as important as any of the other three factors, namely natural resources, labour and capital. This management — or administration, which is the practical aspect of the same thing and more applicable here — the arts do not have. This is because administration is usually looked upon as the inhibitive element whose sole concern is to impede the movement and restrict the freedom of artistic enterprise and artistic expression. That is a rather outdated attitude towards and understanding of the concept of administration. The more unbiased view of administration is one of a mechanism for optimization and flow-acceleration. Of the three countries under study, Britain is probably more wary of — and at odds with — administration, while the United States is the most at ease with it. In the case of Great Britain, the mistrust is probably the end result of the merchantilist (and hence plutocratic) structure of British society and its professional caste system which has resulted in each caste having its own disciplines handed down through well-established apprenticeship

traditions. This gives rise to a mistrust of anything perceived as an 'outside' influence.

In all three countries (but particularly in Britain) administration is considered to be an evil influence linked with governments.

### *15.3 AS FAR AS THE INSTITUTION OF GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED*

◆ Secular societies, as they have put the idea of God into a more practical perspective, have given a new dimension to the concept of government which, in a way, now fills the area left vacant by the rationalization of the concept of God. They thus expect of governments some of the functions they once expected of their deities.

◆ Democratic lore has it that governments are there to do what the people tell them to do. If that were true, governments would be either perpetually idle or permanently going round in circles because

a) people do not have a common purpose or a common mind and hence cannot tell their governments what to do in one voice, and

b) what one person says is countermanded by what the next person adds.

The concept and function of government is, however, much less random than democratic ideology tends to believe, for what has now come to be taken for democratic government is in fact a manner of government which was originally devised by the ancient Greeks when they realized that democracy itself was a totally impracticable concept and that they had to make a system based on

defined principles which served defined purposes. In any dealings (conceptual or practical) with governments, these principles and functions must be borne in mind.

◆ The first practical reality about governments is that they are in only one business, that of governing, and have only one direct purpose, that of perpetuating their own term of government. There is nothing wrong with the first because it is the purpose for which governments are elected and to a certain extent little wrong with the second because it is natural, it acts as a stabilizing factor and it is what gives the people a hold on the government. It should not come as a surprise that governments use every means at their disposal to attain both ends.

◆ Governments are not omniscient, omnipotent or ubiquitous. The amount of nagging and criticism aimed at almost all governments might indicate that nobody thinks they are. However, the criticism itself is proof of the fact that people take governments to be all-mighty and all-able; because criticism is born of unfulfilled expectation. One does not criticize the want of something in someone unless one expects the something to be there. This attitude towards the omnipotence of governments has, in time, been transplanted into the minds of governments themselves. Wishing to substantiate that image of omniscience and omnipotence, governments tend to undertake more than they can accomplish. In reality, governments like every other person or institution, are only capable of a certain load of work and if they are burdened with anything in excess of that, they are rendered incapable of even what they can normally accomplish. Hence, governments have to be used wisely and only for things of

dire necessity which need unified purpose and unified attack. There are many other things that it would be convenient to have governments do. Were governments to be entrusted with them, however, they would either abort other, more essential duties or give the new duties only secondary attention. There are, on the other hand, certain quite essential functions that are safer outside government hands; safer as far as the functions themselves are concerned as well as governments. Religion is one good example. The arts are probably another.

◆ Governments (in Western democracies in general and in the three countries under study in particular) are primarily and mainly concerned with societies and not groups. Their ultimate purpose is to ensure communal and not individual welfare, to serve public and not private interests. The terms 'communal welfare' and 'public interests' do not mean the welfare and interests of all the members of a society but rather that which leads to and ensures a better, more humane, more civilized and more viable society as a whole.

◆ Governments are unwieldy, tractor-like machines. As one American said, you cannot use tractors to thread needles. Thus, even if governments had all the diligence and good will in the world (and they often do not) they would not be capable of many things which require delicacy of touch and refinement of thought. Governments themselves often concede that they are ineffectual in practical terms, that they are cumbersome mechanisms and that they are poor administrators and even poorer businessmen. Yet there are those who seem to think it a privilege for the arts to be patronized and administered by governments.



◆ Even as sources of funds, governments are the worst choices possible.

Government subsidy of the arts, as of anything else, is by nature restricted. It might sound banal to state that governments do not give of themselves and that what they give is what they have received from the public at large through taxation and similar means. Yet it is astounding how often a simple fact of that nature is forgotten. Taxation is intrinsically limited because tax laws have to be broad-based. It would be impossible to have different tax laws for all the different sections and sectors of a society because tax systems are technical nightmares as it is and tax laws a tome unintelligible even to tax experts themselves. The extent to which the same all-embracing law can be stretched is, on the other hand, perforce restricted. In practice a whole nation cannot, for obvious reasons, be taxed at the rate its most affluent class can pay. If it is taxed at the rate those least well-off can afford, there will not be much collected. A tax system which works on an escalating rate, on the other hand, has its limitations and cannot go beyond a certain range. Edward Banfield begins the Introduction to *The Democratic Muse* with a letter from a Leonard Rubin in the New York Times on 1st March, 1981, which well illustrates the problems that can arise:

" I am sorry that Martha Wilson is 'shocked' by the President's recommended cuts in funding for 'the arts', which she believes would be 'dealt a heavy blow' affecting 'the quality of life in America' (letter Feb. 14, 1981).

The worst blow — the unkindest cut — is inflicted when officials and those with a stake in approved high culture decide what 'arts' my tax dollar is to support. I am tired of having people confiscate my movie money to buy what they consider aesthetically preferable. I welcome the Reagan move toward restoring my right to define what constitutes quality in my life.

No matching funds needed, thanks."(20)

The intricacies of tax policies and economics cannot, obviously, form a part of this discussion, but very simply put, taxes are directly related to capital investment on the one hand and inflationary trends on the other and governments cannot play with them as much as many think. Since a government's income is limited to its tax receipts for the most part, government spending is similarly limited.

◆ The medium of government is politics. Governments eat and breathe politics, live politics and die politics. Despite that, there have been examples of governments not understanding even politics. However, whether they do or not, the fact remains that there are very few other things they understand. Anyone who needs to associate and communicate with them or understand them will therefore have to learn the language of politics.

## Popular Attitudes towards the Arts.

If anything effective is to be done with regard to the arts, there are one or two other popular assumptions which will have to be put into their proper perspectives before any suggestions are tabled. These assumptions sound plausible enough at first hearing but lose a shade or two of meaning when further investigated. The most prevalent of these are that:

◆ THE ARTS SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE Extensive research has been conducted into the definition and function of 'availability' and 'accessibility' of the arts to the public. (See Richard Swaim's *Public Policy and the Arts*, Edited Kevin V. Mulcahy and C. Richard Swaim, Westview Press, U.S., 1982) The argument itself is perfectly acceptable as long as it is clear that 'availability' is used in its simple, everyday sense. In practice, however, what is intended seems to be more 'forced upon' than available. It is easy to fall victim to lore, but it is also dangerous. Because there was a time when a certain type and standard of art was accessible only to a particular social and economic class and because this was considered to be inequitable, the issue became the subject of conscientious objection and a platform for equal rights campaigns. In time, the real sense and context of the objection has been forgotten so that today the issue has acquired the proportions of a dictum not only for the provider of the arts but also for the person being provided with them. In this, again, the same tradition rules to which reference has already been made

elsewhere. On the one hand, there is a cacophony over 'elitism' in the arts and the necessity for universalization. On the other, some of those very voices claim that the arts belong to and are created by the people and for the people and that the people have always, until the present, had an abundant share of the arts. Perhaps the protagonists of universalization have the so-called 'high' arts in mind. If that is what is being advocated, the question immediately presents itself as to why this universalization be put into effect. Why, for example, and under what rational argument, should classical music be forced upon the punk who is very happy with his own perfectly legitimate punk or rock music? Those who advocate total accessibility of the arts seem to be oblivious of the fact that what barred the populace from the arts was not so much that they could not afford the prices but rather that they could not afford the time. Leisure was not only a scarce commodity until after the Industrial Revolution but an undesirable one. What is more, everybody does not (and does not have to) like classical music and it is as much an act of imposition to force something upon someone who does not want it as it is to deny another something that he does. The fact that a person may not want something because he is ignorant of its merit, value and necessity does not alter that fact and does not enter the argument.

The elemental need which is satisfied by the arts is there in everyone, irrespective of class, creed, nationality, and race. Even the argument that the appreciation of art depends upon education is a premiss often misplaced in so far as education neither develops a sense of appreciation for the arts in the person being educated nor increases that sense the more of it is given. What

education does do is to give direction to the sense of appreciation which is already there in every soul and make it aware of other possibilities. Thus what the proponents of the argument for education really mean is that those who do not find satisfaction in the same things that they themselves do must be educated into doing so. If it could first be established that deriving satisfaction from those particular things in the particular manner suggested by the proponents of the so-called 'high' arts is of paramount importance to all, then perhaps the argument might be given a leg to stand on. However, there is no logical and rational argument that can even mildly suggest that. Whatever it is in any breast that is satisfied by the arts, finds its satisfaction in uncountable ways and things and there is no criterion by which one specific thing or way may be judged as being bona fide and the rest false. The Chinese finds his poetic sentiment or sense of the aesthetic fulfilled by a single, curved, black line, the Persian by a geometric proportion. Who is to say their yearning for the beautiful is any the less or any the less developed than that of the Western European who, because of his complicated, over-crowded life-style, finds satisfaction in more complicated, over-crowded forms? The Japanese gets the same amount of satisfaction from what is to us a monotonous drone emanating from a single string as the Englishman derives from the most intricate variations of sound and harmony produced by the great symphony orchestras. Who is to rule that the latter's enjoyment is any the fuller or of any a higher order than the former's?

◆ THE ARTS HAVE TO BE SUBSIDIZED IN ORDER TO MAKE THEM AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE

In this variation on the theme already discussed, the assumption is that the less affluent classes do not visit salons, galleries, auditoria, et cetera, because they cannot afford the prices charged. As a result of pressure from arts lobbies, there has been consistent effort, over the years, in all the three countries under study to keep entry prices down. Yet in none of the countries is there any reliable indication that public funding to this end has attracted any more people to the arts than normal population growth and socio-economic amelioration would account for. In fact, if there is any indication at all, it is to the contrary. This lack of response is due to the fact that at least over the last fifty years those who have visited art galleries and attended concerts and opera performances have mainly come from the middle and upper-middle classes, and still do. What is more, subsidies or no subsidies, they probably always will. The reason is rather simple: going to arts galleries, concerts and opera performances is not a matter of economic standing but rather of family and social background and upbringing. It may be argued that economic standing has a bearing on both, and the argument, in a much more restricted way and to a much more restricted extent than is appreciated, is probably true. Application of economic means to individual areas of social necessity is not, however, the most effective and the sanest way of bringing about social change. What is more, however much is spent on rendering the arts more available and more accessible, it will not induce the person who has no interest in them to go to a concert or visit a gallery. If the purpose behind making the arts available to all is to afford everyone enjoyment, it is hardly the function of government; if it is to educate

the public to finer things, it is hardly the best method. In effect, all that the policy of subsidizing the arts in this respect has done is to restrict artistic freedom of movement rather than ensure a wider audience.

## The Arts Problem in Real Terms

That the arts are not doing as well as they could and should be is hardly questionable, as the discussions presented so far have tried to indicate. Those very discussions convey, however, that neither the problems popularly aired nor the solutions popularly advocated for them are necessarily the ones that matter or have to be taken seriously. If the real problems are to be identified and practical solutions found for them, a totally new attitude based on realism and practicality is called for from which a new set of premisses could emerge. Some of the necessary, though perhaps unpleasant, considerations to bear in mind here would be that:

- ◆ The arts and those practising and defending them should stop acting like the spoilt, only child and try to see themselves in the context of a world made up of a great many other things. It is all very well to want everything for oneself and want it now, but if this attitude is to prevent the materialization of anything concrete at all, it becomes fatal.
  
- ◆ The begging-bowl is a successful instrument of trade as long as one agrees to have very low esteem of oneself and is willing to manage with merely making the ends meet. If the arts and the artists involved in them mean to be anything but mendicant, however, they will have to relinquish the idea of depending on the charity of others, public or private.



◆ A great deal has been said all round about the fact that the arts are affected by economic events and considerations beyond their own control. Whenever the point is raised it is raised with the intent of showing that there is bias and intended inequity behind the fact. As far as the fact itself is concerned (as against how it is being made use of) there is not. Everything, material or otherwise, is affected by economic considerations and events beyond its control. It is, however, only the events and the considerations which are beyond immediate control; and even then there is no law or principle which says they cannot be taken into consideration, prepared for and combated against. The fact has to be accepted and lived with that the arts are subject to economic principles like everything else and that they are there in the ring, competing with all the other activities around them and have somehow to survive given these conditions.

◆ Against popular belief, security and peace of mind are not essential to artistic creativity; not any more than to any other kind of undertaking. According to most psychologists who have brought their minds to bear upon the subject, art is, at any period during an individual's life and the life of the species, the means for the release of unconscious energies pent up within because they have not found an outlet. Thus, repression caused by forces from the world at large is at least partly instrumental to art. Studies have shown that there has always been more artistic activity and more prolific artistic production during and just after periods of suppression, frustration and upheaval.

◆ To think that the arts have never achieved the status they deserve shows either singular lack of observation or a fatalistic attitude towards the world and what happens in it which denies the principles of causality and places the

responsibility for events and the outcome of things on extraneous forces. If by status is meant attention, respect and admiration, few things touch the arts in them, despite the fact that the arts have hardly ever tried to acquire them. If, on the other hand, status is taken to mean financial standing, then the arts have got precisely what they deserve; for at whatever else the arts may have worked hard, at a proper management of their own resources and affairs and at the planning of their own destiny they have not.

In real terms, all slogans, smoke screens and prima donna syndromes aside, the arts have two factors working against them:

- a) They have never built themselves a proper and sufficiently wide economic base
- b) They have let themselves be lured into a battle against the law of nature which condemns the putting forward of the worst foot.

In neither instance are the arts totally to blame, but in neither are they entirely free from blame either. In the first, the nature of art itself, the adulation shown *artists and the forces of circumstance which have ruled the arts world* are as much to blame. In the second, because the arts have had such appeal (and hence such great influence) throughout man's existence, they have been abducted by power brokers who have been using them to their own advantage by dividing them into 'high' art and 'popular' art, playing a game of confusion by contraposing one against the other and arraying people and governments against each other to further their own interests. This is the source from which

emanates the idea of subsidizing, supporting and patronizing the arts, and hence the best part of the confusion which has beset them. The arts are economically not viable because every endeavour has been made to render them so by this group of power brokers.

The argument behind this is simple enough. There is an array of arts not only doing well but doing extremely well. There are teenage ragamuffins pocketing tens of millions of pounds a year playing their four-minute ditties to the masses, second-rate child actors making hundreds of thousands of pounds a film, skinheads filling their coffers making and selling leather belts and jackets and boots and gear. They are all, each in their own way, involved in the creative arts and they are in all probability the best paid people of their age and time. They are not exceptions but the rule. A look at statistics will indicate that as far as age, experience, expertise and investment are concerned, the arts have by far the highest rate of return of any industry, including oil. On the other hand, there are the Royal Shakespeare Companies, the Mets and the La Fenices which cannot make ends meet despite the helping hands from governments and benefactors.

The difference between them is that the first group is living, thriving, functional art and the second dead, out-marketed, obsolete art. (That this is so is reflected in the fact that one comes across nauseating instances every day of face-lift operations in the performing arts — Dorabella and Fiordiligi romping about in swimsuits on a plage somewhere on the Riviera or Roderigo in chapeau and contemporary clothes plotting with Iago dressed as a French policeman — where the director, conscious of the fact that he has outdated ware to sell, has

tried to pull the wool over the public's eye through bizarre acrobatics.)

However, the first group is branded as 'trash' art and the second is elevated to the distinction of 'culture' or 'high' art. If left to themselves, the first group would survive and go on and the second die a natural death, or live a limited life of seclusion. (Though even that is only true under existing circumstances and would change if some sanity and good management were to be introduced into the arts. A new collection of Pavarotti arias and songs became the best-selling album of the month in June 1990, beating two of the favourite rock bands and his 'Nessun dorma' from Turandot went to the top of the pop charts). Thus, we have placed ourselves and the arts in the unenviable position where what is obsolete we consider good and want not only to keep but also to inculcate in others while what is alive and thriving we condemn as bad and want to kill off. Yet we wonder why the arts are in such deplorable shape. A look around will indicate that anything which tries to go against the law of natural selection will have the same fate.

Nobody negates the importance and value of the so-called 'high' arts. Yet it would be legitimate to ask whether these have to be appreciated by every member of the human race all the time. Even that could, by itself, be overlooked if it were not for all the other ills that come of the one. Because the majority do not, anywhere in the world, want these high arts all the time, they have to be educated into liking and wanting them; because they have to be so educated, vast resources have to go into their education; because vast resources are so used, the very arts so highly held have that much less to keep them alive.

The tenet that the obsolete arts are 'good' arts is followed by another: that these good arts should be made accessible to more and more people. In time, to the arts and to governments which are the main targets of these demands, this has come to be translated into economic and material terms despite the slogan that the arts have and should have nothing to do with economics and things material. The argument is that the arts so to be propagated can be considered as being within the reach of the general public (meaning the economically less privileged) only if they are free, or nearly free. Heroin and 'crack' are by no means anywhere near free, and yet they are far more 'within the reach' of that general public (if to be within reach means to be made use of) than within the reach of the economically better off. For one acquires, in one way or another, what one considers worth acquiring. In the case of the arts, the very same person who, according to well-wishers, cannot afford to go to the Royal Festival Hall unless the price of a seat is subsidized down to £3 happily invests £25 in January to stand in a crowd in August and hear Bros or Alice Cooper in the Docklands.

As a further illustration, the Japanese Section in the BBC World Service is the outlet for free, unsold tickets to concerts, recitals and performances at the South Bank Complex and the Barbican Centre. For a concert to be held at the Barbican Centre, there were 270 tickets entrusted to it in May, 1990, for distribution. The BBC World Service prides itself in having the greatest number of intellectuals and cultured individuals under one roof of almost any non-academic, non-artistic institution in the land, and yet the Japanese Section had to telephone all its friends to try to entice them into accepting the free tickets. In the end, half the tickets were left unclaimed and there were three rows

almost empty during the concert. This is not a singular incident, it is common practice. Only two weeks after the concert mentioned, there were almost as many tickets on offer for the current play, at the Barbican, of the Royal Shakespeare Company, and they met the same fate. The Japanese Section of the World Service cannot be the only outlet for such hand-outs either: there must be others. That is a bizarre method either of funding the arts or of educating the public to develop a taste for the finer things in life.

What is happening here is bizarre in another sense too. If there is any relationship between a person's level of education and his appreciation of art, then money spent on the higher arts by either the public or the private sector is money contributed to the welfare of the already affluent classes. What is more, as Moore says in the section on the Rationale for Public Subsidies to the Arts in *The Economics of the Arts* :

" Most arguments for aiding the arts have amounted to asserting either that the arts cannot survive without help — which is clearly untrue — or that 'I like the arts; I think there should be more of them; and therefore everybody should be taxed to help them'. On economic grounds, neither of these arguments justifies government aid.'<sup>(21)</sup>

In the verbal tug-of-war over whether the arts should be funded at all or not and whether they should be funded by governments or the private sector, one thing is almost always forgotten and that is the exact identity of the arts being discussed.

When the subject of art and the arts is being addressed, most writers (who do not consider the main-market or 'popular' arts as art at all) think and lead their readers to think that they are speaking of only one thing: that which they

consider to be legitimate art. However, even that area of the arts — assuming it could be demarcated — is itself not confined to one type of art and in effect comprises at least two functionally distinct groups: the so-called 'high' arts and what can only be called the artistic content of the cultural heritage. These two groups may be taken to be one and the same thing from the artistic point of view, but as far as arts administration is concerned they are distinctly separate; and when a writer is discussing the funding of the arts, he is talking administration and not art. Thus, unless the unsuspecting reader is very careful, he can find himself in utter confusion. In the foregoing passage from 'The Economics of the Arts', for example, which area of the arts is Moore talking about? In a cursory first reading it appears as though he is referring to the arts in toto. Yet he cannot be, for nobody has ever been naive enough to suggest that the whole of the arts industry (which includes some very rich gold mines) should be funded by governments.

Thus, there are now at least three groups of arts as far as arts administration is concerned: the main-market popular arts, the high arts and the cultural arts. Each of these has its own requirements and its own venues. Bearing this distinction in mind is vitally important if any sense is to be made of the problems which beset the arts and any possible suggestions that may be made with regard to their solution. The distinctions may, as already granted, be argued to be meaningless as far as the reality, value and function of art is concerned, but they are of crucial significance in arts administration because each of the three areas suggested needs to be dealt with in its own right, has its own needs and

particular requirements, and is governed by a different set of economic considerations.

To make things even more complicated, from a purely economic/administrative point of view, the three groups should really be considered in the light of certain premisses:

◆ The marketable arts, whether they be of the 'high' category or the 'popular', need no support at all from any source. Pavarotti, Domingo, the Berliner Philharmoniker, Paco Pena, or Swan Lake can always be depended upon to earn their costs and more as well as Queen or Michael Jackson or Jean-Michel Jarre.

◆ The non-marketable arts are the ones which have to have at least a measure of support from some quarter. These could again be high or popular arts. However, the reasons behind the first category not finding buyers are different from the reasons for the second. The high arts may not sell because there is not enough overall demand for them. The same cannot be said to be true of popular arts: if popular art becomes unsalable it is because it is not of the quality in demand. To take an example, if RSC's 'Coriolanus' has to give out free tickets it is most probably because there are not all that many people who want to see one of the lesser-known plays from another age. The same cannot be said of the musical 'King' when it closes its doors after only a few weeks, however, because 'Cats' and 'Aspects of Love' and 'The Phantom of the Opera' are sold out for the next six months and there is hardly a seat available for 'Miss Saigon' or 'Les Miserables'. Thus, if 'King' finds no buyers it can only be because it is not a good musical — 'good' here meaning of appeal to prevailing



public taste. In practice, when 'King' lowers its curtain for the last time, nobody has anything to say about it because what has happened is accepted as an economic fact of life. 'Coriolanus' cannot, on the other hand, call its curtain down and go on to something else, for the simple reason that there are those who think it should be helped to survive. There are two ways in which that can be accomplished: either by raising seat prices so that those in favour of the play continuing on stage pay for it, or by getting the government to foot the bill for the auditorium it cannot fill. The first alternative cannot be exercised because it runs contrary to the premiss which stipulates that ticket prices must be kept down. Hence, the only choice left is the second, and this is the one imposed; because Coriolanus is high art, because it is Shakespeare, because a handful of influential highbrows think it should stay so that they can show they have a say in things artistic, or because it adds to national prestige. Whatever the excuse, the wage earner should not be taxed to keep it going and if he is, he should at least be thanked for his contribution and not shouted at and called coarse because he is not contributing more.

◆ Cultural heritage is the one area almost always either forgotten or ignored as a class by itself. It is not non-marketable but rather unsalable, because it belongs to the state or the nation. This is, logically speaking, the only area of the arts for which governments can legitimately be expected to foot the bill. What is more, if they are not burdened with the losses sustained by the second group, they should well be able to.

The first group referred to is already a roaring success and not only pulling its own weight but capable of helping to maintain the other two groups as well.

Proper administration and legal provisions are the only things missing for that to become a reality. If the vast amount of money from the taxation of the earnings within this group (which now goes into government coffers to be spent on what governments see fit, including their own bureaucracies and red tape) were to be channelled into a National Arts Fund controlled by the arts themselves, it could probably provide for every reasonable requirement within the arts sector.

The second group, namely the non-marketable arts, should in the first place never be expected to become (or tried to be made of) a roaring, universally accepted success. Dead burros, as the Mexicans say, cannot be expected to cross mesas. The day has passed of these arts, or it has not yet arrived. They have an extremely specialized and very limited market and a very small following. As such, they cannot ever be made rich. If they are happy with their restricted existence, the genuine ones should be assisted to make the best of it and the rest left to die in peace rather than dragged through the indignity of being forevermore kept on artificial life-support systems.

The third group — the cultural heritage — requires very little support, comparatively speaking. All it needs is to be roofed, protected and maintained. It needs to remain under government supervision and handling because it is part of the national assets, belongs to the nation as a whole and, as such, falls well within the responsibility of government.

Harsh though this line of argument may sound, it may prove in the end to be advantageous for the arts all round. There are two main reasons for the quandary in which the arts find themselves today:

◆ The demands made upon governments to support the arts generally and without discretion ensure that the governments upon whom the demands are made are rendered incapable of even attending to the areas which are legitimately their concern.

◆ The confusion created by irrational expectations and contradictory demands undermine even the limited capability the arts have of managing their own affairs.

If governments are required to be responsible for the welfare of only the cultural heritage, they will be in a much better position to fulfil that responsibility to an acceptable degree. The rest of the arts, released from the confusion into which they have been thrown and given their head, will then be in a position to manage themselves well enough, the marketable ones providing means for the needs created by the experimental fringe and the narrow-based 'high' arts.

As long as the arts, as an entity, depend upon support from without-as against the generation of means from within the arts themselves-they will continue to remain in the precarious position in which they have found themselves for centuries. What is more, the more they receive such support the more they will perpetuate the predicament in which they have been placed.

One of the symptoms of the illness from which the arts suffer is that as time goes by, the artist's lot becomes worse: more arts venues face deterioration in their financial positions and more musicians, actors and dancers become underpaid and eventually unemployed. Strangely enough, however, the worse the situation turns, the more vociferous becomes the advocacy from all around

for more of the same medicine to be prescribed which is killing the patient. The arts scene illustrates this very clearly by showing that the farther removed a section of the arts is from outside help and the less its destiny is ruled by the handout mentality, the better it manages itself and those involved in it. The arts mainly funded by governments and private sector charitable gestures are primarily the ones which are in serious financial trouble.

The contention that the arts as a whole need support is, as this study has tried to illustrate, an unfounded myth. The industry which answers one of man's two most pressing needs cannot, by any logic and in any rational thought process, be considered incapable of survival without extraneous assistance. Those who find it does would do well to return to their mental drawing boards and go over their calculations and logical equations.

That segment of the arts which is incapable of supporting itself is what was art once but is now more memorabilia: it is, in most instances, of greater emotional value than artistic. What is more, it is unsalable because of this emotional value and because of its being patented and unrenowable. If all the canons concerning its availability to all were once and for all waived, it would not only be able to carry on a limited but exalted existence but also be in a better position to be helped to do so. The other category of the arts, the marketable, will then be free to create its own network (as it already has to a greater extent than Britain in the United States and to a greater extent than Italy in Britain) to look after itself and its own. Like any other sector of the economy, it will be in a position to generate funds for research and experimentation, venues for

scouting, developing and training talent, market research for new areas to explore, and foundations to provide assistance where assistance meaningful to the arts is really needed. Once the management and administration of its affairs are in its own hands, there will be little of the shameful wastage there is today, and less bad blood. Here, the educational system can be of real and practical help in nurturing active involvement in the arts in future generations and academia of selfless assistance in the theoretical and conceptual aspects of the arts, their management and their welfare.

If the arts are ever to acquire the sovereignty they deserve, if they are ever to be rid of the image they have had so far of being orphaned and poor relatives, they will have to set themselves a course which will place them squarely on their own feet and render them independent of the charity both of governments and the public. Once they have achieved a one-to-one relationship with the other sectors of the economy, they will have their future confidently in their own hands. On the other hand, as long as they depend upon support from without they will continue to face problems with planning because you cannot project into the future when your very existence in the present is hostage to an outside decision or worse, whim. If the arts cannot plan their future, that future will never be any better than the present; the chances are it will be worse. If it is to be effective and practicable, planning has to be an extension of the existing function of an undertaking. The most important pre-requisite of planning from within is being able to rely upon your resources. That, in turn, depends upon having your own economic base. Once that has been accomplished, even the question of what to support becomes irrelevant because the system will, in the

same way it generates plans for the future, earmark areas that need to be supported and safeguarded. Thus, the experimental fringe in the arts will be not only better off than it is at the moment, hanging on somebody's generosity, but also more rationally catered for so that resources are not wasted on things which are more muck and magic than art.

Governments do, of course, have a role in the arts, but that role will have to be greatly revised. Logically, their role should be to raise the general level of artistic and aesthetic awareness in societies rather than choosing areas of the arts to encourage or discourage and artists to reward or not. This role is best carried out within the discipline of education. If they want to be more actively involved, governments should undertake to ensure opportunities and prospects for the arts rather than provide directions and funds; for governments, whatever they are good at, are neither successful financiers nor connoisseurs of the arts.

In one area, however, governments should be given a free hand, and that is the guardianship of national arts treasuries. This is one area which, as already pointed out, would be better, at least for the foreseeable future, in government hands. The time will come perhaps, once the arts have put their house in order and sorted themselves out, when they may be able to provide for even that aspect of the arts. In the meantime, however, governments are better suited to this task for the same reasons which have involved them in the arts in the first place. In their day to day involvement with the other aspects of the arts, governments should be more the shepherd than the sheepdog, more counsellor than comptroller.

Another consideration well worth bearing in mind is that it is high time some of the politics of the arts were laid to rest. The arts, having been found to be a good means of manipulating people and public opinion, have for too long been used as weapons by those who have no appreciation of them other than means to their own ends. As such, they have come to be part of the armoury of the 'social consciousness' campaigner. Even if the campaign is genuine and the campaigner sincere, the use of the arts in this context is not a healthy one. It may be, under ideal conditions, good for the campaign and for social consciousness, but it cannot be good for the arts. It is to a great extent as a result of these campaigns that the arts now find themselves stranded away from the main body of economic activity to which they belong. For to the social campaigner, economics is a dirty word and in time, anything associated with it has become dirty too. This does not prevent many of those involved in these campaigns from taking every opportunity to beg, borrow or steal the additional pound, of course; but in public, a horror and distaste has to be shown for things material and anything that is in any way seen to be related to them. As Galbraith says:

" Illusion is a comprehensive ill. The rich man who deludes himself into behaving like a mendicant may conserve his fortune although he will not be very happy. The affluent country which conducts its affairs in accordance with rules of another and poorer age also forgoes opportunities. And in misunderstanding itself it will, in any time of difficulty, implacably prescribe for itself the wrong remedies. This the reader will discover is, to a disturbing degree, our present tendency. Yet it would be a mistake to be too gravely depressed. The problems of an affluent world, which does not understand itself, may be serious, and they can needlessly threaten the affluence itself. But they are not likely to be as serious as those of a poor world where the simple exigencies of poverty preclude the luxury of misunderstanding but where, also and alas, no solutions are to be had."<sup>(22)</sup>

One of the favourite objections put forth by those belonging to this mentality is that the arts should not be relinquished to the market mechanism. The reason given for this line of argument is that the market reflects the desires of individuals as weighted by their purchases. Since how much a person spends depends upon how much he has to spend, the argument goes, it will be the rich who will be dictating their terms to the arts market.

This line of argument, if followed to its conclusion, will turn out to be more an advocacy of market mechanisms than an admonition of them. For one thing, since — according to the very sources which raise the objection — appreciation of the arts (or at least those arts which should, according to them, be propagated) depends mainly on levels of education and since — again, according to the same sources — those better off have the means to be better educated, the arts will prosper more if they are thus voted for or against on the basis of incomes. For another, since the less well off are not great advocates of the arts, there will be less of the arts produced (because there will be less purchased) the more weight is given to the votes of those with less financial means.



## PART FIVE

# NOTES

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21. T. Moore, 'Reasons for Subsidizing American Theatre', The Economics of the Arts, Ed. M. Blaug, (Martin Robertson & Co., London 1976) p 40
22. John Kenneth Galbraith, The Affluent Society, (Andre Duetsch, London 1984) p 4

PART SIX

**Conclusion**

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### Overview

In the main body of this thesis every endeavour was made not only to look in detail at three major countries and their systems of arts administration and art support but also to compare each with the others as far as a meaningful assessment was possible and to chart common areas of similarity and discord and narrow down what could be called the real problem underlying the arts and their handling, if such a problem exists.

In Parts Two, Three and Four, the three countries chosen for the study, namely Italy, the United States of America and Great Britain, were discussed, their arts administrations (both in the public and private sectors) expounded, and their attitudes towards the arts detailed. Where applicable and possible, the lines of similarity and discord in the case of each country with the other two were also investigated.

In the next two chapters this comparison will be further pursued in order to give a working model for the secondary aim of the thesis which, as stipulated in the Objectives of the study (Chapter Two), was to use the results of the main survey to prepare the ground for a re-assessment of the real nature of 'the art problem' and make suggestions, where possible, to resolve it.

Part Five presented some of the various considerations and discords that are seminal in the arts controversy, though seldom openly tabled or closely scrutinized. A rather detailed exposition of these considerations was necessary

in order to discount some of the irrelevant points normally raised and throw light on some of the darker areas of the arguments conventionally presented. These were of essential importance to the arguments set forth in the rest of this Conclusion and in order to pave the way for the suggestions which are later tabled.

## **A Comparative Study of Concepts in the Three Countries Studied**

If there is any trouble where the arts and their administration are concerned and if any sense is to be made of the various arguments to which this thesis addresses itself in the three countries chosen for the study, a basic understanding has to be arrived at as regards the exact meaning and weight of certain concepts and the way they are looked upon in each of the countries.

The countries chosen are all in the geo-political zone generally known as 'the West'. As such, they are all democracies and are ruled over by elected governments. In addition, they are considered to be socially and economically advanced. Yet, it is only natural that they should each have their own specific values, ways of life and understanding of premisses.

### *19.1 ATTITUDES TOWARDS ART*

In Chapter Fifteen, art was considered as an independent concept, in isolation from geographic locations and national cultures and traditions. In the present chapter, it is investigated as looked upon and understood in each of the three countries under discussion.

In one of the three countries under study, namely Italy, art and the arts in general are a much more personal and deep-rooted way of life. Not only that: as

already indicated, the country houses almost 50% of the artistic wealth of the world.<sup>(1)</sup>

Italy has had a greater share in a greater area of the arts (or at least the visual arts) and has produced more numerous artists than almost any other country in the world. To the Italians art is a matter of everyday existence and it pervades every aspect of life and everything done or undertaken. It is not a separate function which they think and go about consciously but rather a part of every breath they take. The outward appearance of the towns and the cities belies this endless and deep-rooted aptitude for and involvement with the arts, but one never ceases to be taken completely by surprise at every turn and corner with something breath-taking not only from a glorious past but also from a prolific present. To the Italian, young or old, there is no such thing as high art or low: everything is art and art is everything. And this art has become so much a part of them and their lives that it has stopped to be something specific and distinguishable.

The United States stands at the other end of the scale in so far as it has neither the antiquity of Italy nor the artistic traditions. It is true that native American art, i.e. the art of the American Indians, is probably as old as Italian art, but it has never been as widely spread and as systematically promoted, and is still not today. What is more, there is unfortunately not enough of its influence (in comparison with the influence of European art) in what has come to be known as American art.

The average American, though not entirely wanting in artistic aptitude, is not as artistically motivated and artistically minded as the Italian. This is mainly the result of the American way of life and system of values. The overall American attitude towards the arts is, as attitudes towards everything else, very secular and down-to-earth. This, in a way, is most refreshing in so far as it has none of the stuffiness of attitude which one finds in the Franco-Austrian camp and which has found its way elsewhere as well. To Americans art is an integral part of life, everybody's life, and should therefore be produced and partaken of with the express purpose of complementing and completing that life. As such, American art has a vitality and *joie de vivre* peculiar to itself. All this has in practice resulted in the mystique of the arts being to a large degree done away with. Whether this is, in the end, good or bad for the arts remains open to question.

Britain is the arch curator of the past arts among the three countries, arguably in the whole world. It is true that there is more of the arts in Italy and hence more of which to take care; but to the Italians that is a labour of love, for the arts they look after were produced by them and theirs and have grown to their present enormity from small beginnings within their own country. That is not the case with Britain and yet the British have, if not a greater amount at least a greater variety of the arts for which to care. This becomes more astonishing in the light (but probably as a result) of the superficial appearance that the British are not the most artistically endowed of people. If the country's long history were discounted, Britain would probably appear to be comparatively less productive, at least as far as the visual arts are concerned, than the other two countries. What it lacks in the area of visual, plastic and musical arts is, of

course, more than compensated by Britain's prominence in the fields of literature and the theatre, but as already stipulated, this work is mainly concerned with the visual arts.

The British understanding and appreciation of the arts is rooted in the practical-mindedness of an artisan tradition. Thus, it is not of the same nature as the secularism of the Americans nor the romantic aspirations of the Italians. The Americans are practical-minded in their appreciation of the arts, the British in their attitude towards them.

## *19.2 APPROACHES TO ADMINISTRATION*

Where the Greeks were the source of what has come to be accepted as the Western concept of life, the universe and all meaning, the Romans were the source of what has come to be looked at as Western man's way of handling his world and, to an extent, his universe. The concept of administration is hence something mainly owed the Romans. Strangely enough, however, this has not resulted in the Italians' having the smoothest administrative system, in the arts or otherwise, of the three countries considered. True, the Italians are more at home with the concept of administration than the other two countries, but that is not the same as being better at the application of it.

In Italy, the arts have for centuries been the responsibility of a central body, either a Prince or ruler or a government in the modern sense at central or regional level. Both (the Princes and the governments) have always treated arts administration as a political responsibility and assigned professional



politicians to it. Thus, arts administration has always been a very complicated and multi-layered aspect of the arts, and highly politicized. Italians at all levels and in all walks seem to have come to accept all this as a way of life although there are voices raised at times in protest against the heavy-handedness of administrators and manipulation by the politicians of the arts to their own advantage.

To the people and establishment of the United States, administration is a new science which they try to use with the same obsessive attitude they develop towards most new ideas. To the average American, all knowledge is science and all science is impersonal and effective as a surgical instrument. Life, it seems, has been too full of challenges and too urgent for anybody to have had the opportunity of observing it in peace and coming to terms with it. Practical values are hence the only values understood and worth bothering about. This ascertains the American view of art and the arts (as already pointed out) and also the American attitude towards knowledge. It has its disadvantages, of course, but it also has its uses. In the American way of life, everything is looked at through the eyes of the philosophical dictum that practical consequences are the criteria of knowledge, meaning and value. This makes the application of scientific theories and principles much easier, though none the more effective; and when a principle is applied and fails to give the expected result, it is seldom that anybody stops to ask why and to find a workable way around the problem: the whole project, scientific principles and all, is abandoned.

As such, Americans have made of administration a reasonably successful methodology applicable to most things (even though rather soullessly and indiscriminately) and do not necessarily see it as an evil influence or as an area of government manipulation.

The British do. The British are, for one thing, highly suspicious of anything (including any science) not based on and practically tested in day-to-day experience. For another, though they do not admit to this, they are too masonic in their temperament not to be wary of any rules, practices or principles which do not proceed directly from the discipline in mind or the task at hand. Until not very long ago, almost all the trades, crafts, professions and occupations in Britain were ruled over by the laws of guilds and the ties of apprenticeship. Though outwardly this has changed in time, the mentality and temperamental aspects of it persist. Apprenticeship had its own administrative ways and means. As stories were at one time relayed down the generations from breast to breast, so the disciplines involved in and forming the trades, crafts and professions were handed down from the master to the apprentice, and these included all the various aspects of the technical and business abilities involved in the trade. Thus, the idea of administration as a separate science or discipline is wholly alien to the British temperament and is immediately and invariably interpreted as extraneous intervention and interference.

### *19.3 PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNMENT*

Though all three countries studied are Western democracies, there are distinct differences among them not only as regards the government in each but also

when it comes to people's understanding of the function of government and their affective response to the concept.

Of the three, though Britain boasts the oldest practical implementation of the idea of democratic government, the United States is the closest to the concept of democracy as expounded by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, both in theory and in practice. Italy has had a very chequered history in respect of both government and democracy. Theoretically, democracy was accepted and preached in Rome centuries before it was heard of in the rest of Western Europe. (In fact, it was the Romans who introduced the beginnings of practical democracy into Britain and most of the rest of Europe.) However, Rome itself, the stages through which it metamorphosed and the final cohesiveness it found in a kingdom and then a republic called Italy always had a very ambivalent attitude towards the concept of democracy and democratic government. In Italy, whether it is admitted or not, governments are still looked at as overlords.

In a manner of speaking, in Italy the relationship between the nation and its government is on a one-to-two basis. This, in Britain is a one-to-one relationship and in the United States a two-to-one. In other words, whereas in Britain the nation feels itself equal to its government, in Italy it considers itself to a certain degree subservient to it while in the United States it considers itself preponderant and the government its agent. At least in theory.

In all three countries, however, the relationship between people and government is a love-hate relationship. In a manner of speaking, in practical terms governments almost everywhere only seem to have supporters and followers as

long as they are governments-to-be. Once they have succeeded in having themselves elected, they lose all sympathy and understanding. In a manner of speaking, they probably deserve it.

#### *19.4 IN APPLIED TERMS*

The inter-relationships of these three factors (the arts, administration and government) with one another in any one of the three countries are, obviously, neither straightforward nor simple. When it comes to comparing these complex and convoluted relationships in three vastly different countries, the task becomes almost impossible.

In Britain, it is hard to define what is expected of the government as far as the arts are concerned. It is obvious, however, that whatever role the British envisage for their governments in the arts, it is neither a planning and policy making nor an administrative one. As the traditions of democracy (or at least democracy as seen by the British) have created a setting within which anybody and everybody gives himself the right to speak his mind, so they have made provisions for everybody else, including governments, not to listen. The result is that very often, unless there is a powerful lobby in favour of something, tradition prevails and the law of precedence rules on interminably.

Traditionally, the British seem to be apprehensive of government involvement in the arts. Yet there is more hue and cry in this country than either of the other two about insufficient involvement on the part of government in the arts and shortage of government funding and support.

Even the government is not certain as how to define its own attitude and obligations towards the arts. This can be seen in the sporadic and capricious manner in which certain institutions are funded and others are not, in the fact that some institutions are funded directly by the government, others through the Arts Council and a third group in even more indirect ways. When the question arises as what to support at all and what not, the picture is even more confused. The general public seems to think that the government funds the artistic heritage of the land directly and the non-heritage, 'high' arts indirectly. A close look at the directly funded institutions and the so-called 'national' companies (which are anything but national in the technical sense) will reveal that to be an inaccurate assumption: there is little of the nature of a heritage inherent in the British Film Institute or the English National Opera or the Royal Opera and Ballet. At times there is very little that is 'high' about the high arts being indirectly supported.

In the United States the picture is not as muddled, partly because the country is so much younger, partly due to the fact that with few exceptions, neither the public nor the government sees a place for government support of the arts, except in the custodianship of the cultural heritage of the land. Those who do advocate further government financial intervention have received the idea from Europe and the European tradition. This does not mean, of course, that the government in the United States does not support the arts financially. What it does mean is that:

- a) this support is more in the form of tax exemption and other incentive schemes, and
- b) it is more used as bait in order to encourage support from the private sector.

Since funding and financial support from the government is not taken to be the cornerstone of a healthy arts policy or a necessity for the successful handling of the arts, the government's role and place in the arts is much more realistically and impartially assessed and discussed and there is less time and energy wasted on pursuing high-minded arguments of little practical significance.

Of the three countries studied, the United States is the only one which has in practice given the arts what the writer considers to be their proper place in the economic structure of the country in terms of creating a wide enough base for them to make them viable on their own. This does not mean that there is nothing left to be desired in the USA and in the system it has created, just that it is the only one of the three countries studied which is part of the way there.

As the United States is more successful in its handling of the arts in one direction, Italy is more successful in the opposite: the government's role and place in the support and administration of the arts has been basically accepted and, whereas there is the usual quota of bargaining and bickering, there is no controversy over the principle. In Italy, it is the government that is, overall, in charge of the administration, welfare and education of the arts, the government that decides what aspects of art or heritage may be sponsored by the private sector, and the government that appoints those who are to administer the arts in their capacities as superintendents, commissioners, etc. This is not to say, of course, that because the government's role is primary the system functions more smoothly and in more straightforward a manner. The Italian system of arts administration is perhaps the most complicated of the three countries, besides which it is multi-layered, convoluted and excessively secretive. Over

and above that, there is such a dearth of printed and published information that there have been few writers on Italian arts administration who have been able to get far with their work. The acquisition of relevant and meaningful information on inter-relationships among various government institutions from those institutions themselves, on the other hand, is an impossible task. Overall, however, the government hand is visible in almost every area and aspect of the arts and arts administration.

Italy has two Ministries responsible for the arts, the United States has none and Britain has a Minister for the Arts who is not a cabinet member and whose responsibilities are limited to certain aspects of cultural services in England only, that is, to the exclusion of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, while more than a dozen cabinet ministers have some arts and heritage responsibilities as part of their departmental remits. In Britain, local authorities have had explicit arts and entertainment powers only since 1948, though the 1845 Act for Encouraging the Establishment of Museums in Large Towns empowered local authorities in England and Wales to operate museums — and this was before Italy was even created. In Italy local government could be considered to have had a primary role where the arts are concerned since the early 16th century, if feudalism can be taken to be a manner of local government. In the United States, the silence maintained by the Constitution on the subject is tantamount to saying that everything to do with the arts is in the jurisdiction of the states which are the European equivalents of local governments.

## **A Comparative Study of Art Support in the Three Countries Studied**

### *20.1 GENERAL SURVEY*

In practice, the arts in all the three countries under study fall into the same two fundamental economic sectors (public and private) which form every free economic system, and into which everything else falls which is considered as part of the economic problem.

Over the last three or four decades, American enthusiasm for the coinage of expressions has introduced such terms as 'the agricultural sector' and 'the industrial sector'. These are not, however, terms in keeping with the traditional concept of sectors which only envisages two (the public and the private) sectors, to which this thesis also subscribes.

The public sector is that aspect and part of total economic activity at the hands of local and national governments and their agents made possible through the provision of funds by the nation (via taxes, levies, etc.) and supposedly without concern for returns.

The private sector, on the other hand, is all economic activity undertaken directly by private individuals and groups, primarily with the intent of monetary and financial gain and for ulterior motives.



A narrower and hence more precise assessment (and comparison) is attempted below of these two sectors in the three countries involved in this study.

## *20.2 THE PUBLIC SECTOR*

As already hinted, public sector intervention in the arts is by far the greatest and taken more seriously in Italy than in the other two countries and in Britain by far more than in the United States. This by no means has anything to do with the actual measure of funding or support on the part of the governments involved, of course; it merely refers to the extent of involvement. On the other hand, it does not rely on what the governments want believed but rather on that which can be discerned through the study not only of statistics but also prevalent practices.

In the United States, the government wants to be seen not to give or care too much. This is in keeping with the traditions of the land of enterprise. In reality, however, though direct care and support on the part of the government is minimal and everything seems to have been relinquished to the private sector, the government supports the arts more than at first meets the eye. In Britain the system is rather more tortuous and devicive, which gives the initial impression that a lot more is being done than actually is. Where in Britain the public sector wants to be seen not to be interfering but to be well noticed supporting the arts, in the United States it is the other way round. The reality of the situation, as far as the writer has been able to assess, is that both policies are forced.

In Italy, because of the historic relationship which exists between the government and the people and to which reference has already been made,

public sector handling and support of the arts is, like any other legitimate government function, straightforward and manifest: almost everything concerning the arts and their funding is the domain of two ministries, the Ministry of Culture & Environment and the Ministry of Tourism & Entertainment.

In Great Britain and the United States, on the other hand, governments mainly allocate the best part of their budgets for the arts to autonomous bodies for further distribution, although there is some direct promotion by government departments. Whether this is because the governments do not have any defined plan of action as far as the arts are concerned and hence want to keep their distance or because they do not want to be in a position where they may be seen to be interfering with the arts is difficult to say. That there is in fact interference is an open secret; that as far as both countries are concerned there has not been sufficient serious thought given to what the public sector's position is vis a vis the arts is common knowledge. In his account of the Arts Council, John Pick says:

" The Council's main aim as defined in the 1967 Royal Charter, which supersedes that of 1946, are:

(a) to improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts, and

(b) to increase the accessibility of the arts to the public."<sup>(2)</sup>

Any reference to the Arts Council and its publications confirms the non-committal nature of the Council's (and hence the government's) attitude towards the arts and shows that what the government has vis a vis the arts is not a defined plan of action but a general declaration of intent. Plan of action here should not be mistaken with an intended hand inside the puppet. There is

a difference between a policy towards the arts and a policy for the arts.

Whereas there are very few people who advocate that governments should guide (or misguide) the arts through their paces, there is every reason to want a definite, planned commitment on the part of governments in respect of the arts.

It should be noted that the discussion here is of the real intent of governments as reflected in concrete facts and acts. Every government, everywhere in the world, does say these days that it has a policy where the arts are concerned. What it says is, however, sales pitch and, though it may be presented with all seriousness and decorum, campaign propaganda. A number of references are made in this work by example to this. The latest of such examples is the Labour party declamation in the form of a list of Principles (accompanied alongside with a list of "Conservative failures" in its pamphlet 'Leisure and the Arts'.

The United States does not seem to be at all different, as Edward Banfield argues in *The Democratic Muse*:

" In the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, Congress had declared its purpose 'to develop and promote a broadly conceived national policy of support for the humanities and the arts'. In view of this intention, one might have expected that the first endeavor of the National Foundation for the Arts would have been to translate these purposes into a set of plans and policies. The NEA did settle down to a set of activities called programs, but they were not created by a process that could be called planning. Fourteen years after passage of the act, W. McNeil Lowry, who had been head of the Ford Foundation arts program and had been much consulted when the act was before Congress, complained to a House subcommittee that 'statements of federal policy in the arts are no more precise, and often less so, than they were in the original legislation.'<sup>(3)</sup>

Both books go on to show that despite this want of a proper plan of action, both institutions have been boldly going their way, however. As Banfield puts it:

" Yet the NEA acted in the normal, even the prescribed, manner of a public agency, which tends, more so than any other organization, to do what is most likely to contribute to its own survival and growth."<sup>(4)</sup>

The Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts thus represent the public sector influence in the arts on either side of the Atlantic and work on more or less the same lines though with somewhat different attitudes and somewhat varying styles. Of the Arts Council, John Pick says:

" The visitor will find the door open (until late in the evenings, for officers are at their desks far longer than most Mayfair workers) and a courteous reception desk dealing with a stream of visitors. Producers come to argue a case with a drama officer, bearded men carrying great parcels of unknown art hurry upstairs to plot, secretaries plod through the foyer weighed down with memoranda and minutes of meetings; a curious mixture of the conventional and bizarre, the council building seems midway salon and typing pool. When the visitor peers curiously into one of the public rooms he will usually see a bedraggled mixture of the faceless and the famous locked in well-bred argument, smoking, papers everywhere, for all the world like any other business meeting in the land, except that the pictures on the wall are more outre, the subject matter the creative life of artists."<sup>(5)</sup>

Edward Banfield, on the other hand, quotes the following from Section 5(c) of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act as the authorities and goals assigned the Chairman of the NEA:

" The Chairman, with the advice of the federal Council of the Arts, is authorized to establish and carry out a program of contracts with, or grants-in-aid to, groups or, in appropriate cases, individuals of exceptional talent engaged in or concerned with the arts, for the purpose of enabling them to provide or support in the United States

- 1) productions which have substantial artistic and cultural significance, giving emphasis to American creativity and the maintenance and encouragement of professional excellence;

- 2) productions, meeting professional standards or standards of authenticity, irrespective of origin, which are of significant merit and which, without such assistance, would otherwise be unavailable to our citizens in many areas of the country;
- 3) projects that will encourage and assist artists and enable them to achieve wider distribution of their work, to work in residence at an educational or cultural institution, or to achieve standards of professional excellence;
- 4) workshops that will encourage and develop the appreciation and enjoyment of the arts by our citizens;
- (5) other relevant projects, including surveys, research and planning in the arts."<sup>(6)</sup>

The pompous wording and ambitious expectations aside, the NEA seems to be as much (if not more) at sea as the Arts Council and as much without a stable platform. It has not even started answering some of the questions born with it, such as:

- what is 'exceptional talent' and how is it to be detected and by whom?
- what could be considered as having 'substantial artistic and cultural significance so that it may be provided with support?', and so on.

The provinces are in a better position as far as public sector art funding and support are concerned in Italy and the United States than in Britain. This is mainly because of the difference in the nature of political divisions in the three countries. The United States was born as a group of self-sufficient and almost entirely autonomous states, each with its own government, monitored in a very loose fashion by a federal authority. Italy has retained a great deal of the proto-state format it had prior to 1861. Thus, most of the regions of which the country is made up enjoy a good deal of political autonomy and have greater

powers of decision-making. In this respect there is close similarity between Italy and the United States, Britain being the odd man out.

The system of funding the arts is more sophisticated and more diverse in Great Britain than in the other two countries discussed. Here, though most arts institutions receive the bulk of their funds from one or two sources, there are those which are funded by up to six or seven public and private ones. Whether this is the result of meticulous planning or because one hand does not know what the other is doing is difficult to say. No study has been made, as far as the writer was able to ascertain, to show what the net average support from all the various sources would amount to if compared with a situation (as that in the other two countries) where funding is limited to one or two sources.

As far as the public sector's structure of arts funding is concerned, there is little difference of any importance between Great Britain and the United States: both countries have adopted an arm's length policy of sorts by creating, between themselves and the recipients of their support, a buffer state in the form of the independent bodies (already mentioned) which have been put in charge of the actual handling of the support. Furthermore, they have both assigned their own functions to local entities such as the local authorities, the Regional Arts Associations and the State Arts Agencies. There are, of course, differences between the two countries. These are mainly in their direct provision of funds to the arts. There are 800 local authority museums in the United Kingdom, for example, which benefit from the services and financial support of their respective local authorities. In both countries, there is no specified arts policy to

speak of, fundamental concepts and trends being diverse. This is more so in the United States as the private sector plays a much more significant role in the arts, at least as far as volume of financing is concerned. In comparison, in Italy where private contributions are mainly restricted to certain 'listed' organizations if they are to benefit from any tax exemption, the existence of a cultural policy is more visible. On the other hand, as regions largely decide for themselves as how to utilize government funds, the end product is a more balanced system in Italy than meets the eye at first. And, of course, there is the Roman Catholic Church: a tremendous artistic influence absent from both Britain and the United States.

*In all three countries, tourism is directly linked to the arts in so far as it not only provides copious funds for them but itself half exists because of them.*

Similarities are, however, more obvious between Great Britain and Italy than between the United States and any of the other two. One of the important reasons for this is the richness of cultural heritage that exists in Britain and Italy and which is absent in the case of the United States. (Here again, the American Indian culture and arts are not taken into consideration because it is only very recently that they have been making a come-back into the artistic scene.) Other reasons have already been discussed elsewhere.

In all the three countries studied, governments seem to have inherited the opinion that it is of great importance to make the arts more and more accessible to the public. As a result, they have tried to keep admission fees to arts venues under control, making access available to more members of the public. This

does not apply to all art venues, of course, nor even to a majority of them, but it is a stratagem utilized even though not declared in the form of a policy. No study has been made, as far as the writer has been able to discover, into how much of the high cost of the arts is, in the first place, the result of the *endeavour to turn narrow-market arts into wide-market ones.*

Narrow-market arts — or the arts with a narrow economic base — are those generally referred to as the 'high' or 'serious' arts. They are the arts strongly adhered to by a narrow margin of the population; the arts which, it is presumed by most, would perish and disappear were they denied artificial support from some source — mainly the government — because they do not rest on a market base wide enough to support them.

The wide-market arts, on the other hand, are those normally called the 'popular' or 'light' arts because they appeal to the masses and/or the younger age groups in any population. Because they are economically wide-based, they do not normally require artificial assistance unless they are either not in keeping with popular taste or are experimental in nature. They can earn their keep through their own devices and rely solely upon the market they are based on, which is normally in the private sector.

### *20.3 THE PRIVATE SECTOR*

Though the term 'private sector' is of recent usage in the arts, the private sector as an economic fact is not; neither is its involvement in the support of the arts. In fact individuals, the public en masse and the private enterprise covered by the



term 'private sector' have all had as long a hand in providing for the arts as the government enterprise — or public sector — if not longer. However, in the same way that the concept of government, though almost universal to all human society, differs from one part of the world to the next, so individual attitudes towards what is expedient varies from one human society to another. Thus, what is known as the private sector neither is the same thing from one country to the next nor functions to the same extent or in the same manner.

Man's affective appreciation of his lot ranges from almost complete dependence upon extraneous forces and mechanisms on the one side to almost complete reliance upon his own endeavours and devices on the other. Thus, there are societies or segments within societies which maintain that everything should rely upon, belong to and be handled by public bodies and those, in the opposite extreme, who believe that almost every aspect of human enterprise should be the area of individual concern. That range of attitudes ascertains the extent and importance of the private sector in each society.

Of the three countries studied, the private sector is given substantial scope and real weight within the social system only in the United States. Britain, despite the rapid changes brought about by Margaret Thatcher during the 1980's, still stands at the opposite extreme and Italy falls somewhere midway between the other two. It should be remembered, however, that the private sector to which reference is being made here is not the individual or the public at large, but rather structured non-governmental enterprise. It should also be borne in mind that the private sector as a socio-economic area is being referred to, and not merely the private sector within the limited area of the arts. Where it comes

down to the arts, though the British are probably more enthusiastic in participating in charities, there is not as much organized private sector support for the arts, comparatively speaking, as in Italy.

On the other hand, as Britain and Italy have a cultural heritage to their names, the United States has a heritage of industry, in both senses of the word. This means that the government in the United States does not have as much to support as the governments of either Italy or Britain. However, it does not have the role, in supporting the arts, that the two other governments have either. This is because the possibilities of private enterprise have been more widely explored and utilized in the United States than in the other two countries. As this has happened, the private sector has had to shoulder more responsibility with regard to certain things, including the arts, than it normally would. Even if one ignores the social and political significance of the preponderance of private enterprise in the United States, one has to accede to its economic importance.

Traditionally, Britain and Italy both come from social backgrounds made up of landlords and peasants. In both societies the only relief from this has been the development of a third and middle class which has only in recent history become anything to reckon with. The United States, on the other hand, does not have this background. This is a country built by and through the industry of an independent population which was neither anybody's overlord nor anybody's underling. True bourgeoisie, if and when rid of its Marxist socio-political overtones, is that of the United States. It is this bourgeoisie which makes the American private sector what it is: something quite different from anything in

Europe. And it is this private sector which forms the backbone of the American economy and, within it, American arts.

Where American arts are mainly looked after by the private sector, in both Italy and Britain the arts have come to depend to a far greater extent upon governments. The limited support they receive from the public is, however, different from one country to the other: in Italy there is a longer and greater tradition of corporate support than in Britain. The British seem to be more at home with the concept of personal donations. Though the aggregate amounts donated may be comparable, the former type of support is more desirable as far as the arts are concerned because it is not as random as the latter.

Foundations operate in more or less the same way in all the three countries covered, though there are some private foundations both in Italy and the United States that are said to use their status as non-profit organizations to further their own aims and gains. This, though, is only hearsay as far as the writer could ascertain.

In Great Britain and the United States, there are bodies for assisting business sponsorship of the arts, but in Italy, research did not reveal the trace of anything that could be considered the equivalent of ABSA in Britain or the Business Committee for the Arts (BCA) in the United States.

In a more general manner and on a less practical plane, in all three countries (but particularly in the United States) there seems to be more energy spent all round on the marketing of marketing itself and of arts administration techniques

than on the marketing and administration of the arts. At times, there is even the disturbing notion that there is more being done in furthering the lot of arts administrators and marketing 'whiz-kids' than in creating an atmosphere suitable for the propagation of the arts themselves. That could, of course, be because in the pursuit of information one is more often among arts administrators and marketing experts than artists. The fact of the matter is that most people now being appointed as arts administrators and marketing specialists are administrators and marketing specialists first and people involved in and concerned about the arts second. That is only to be expected, since these administrators and specialists are selected and appointed by boards which are parts of a bureaucracy and are selected for their abilities as marketing agents and administrators. There has been a movement towards the cultivation of a new genre of arts-based administrators and marketing experts, i.e., administrators and marketing experts who are fundamentally artists but have been trained in the applied field of administration and marketing for some time in Britain. The City University has been doing this for over 17 years and the Museums Association for 70 years. What has been done needs to be further expanded, however, and this is one of the lines of reasoning behind the suggestions later proposed.

A second rather odd and confusing point the writer came to confront in each of the three countries concerned — each very different in almost every respect from the other two — was that in each, the system of arts administration was described in almost exactly the same terms as in the other two. Since in practice even similar cultures more often than not go about the same things in

patently different ways, this similarity of assessment in the case of arts administration makes one wonder whether perhaps arts administration has, in time, come to be so divorced from the arts that it has developed into an entirely different discipline which functions for its own sake, irrespective of the arts. Worse still, perhaps arts administration systems have become totally dislocated from the arts they are designed to protect and propagate and have become an independent chapter in, of all things, diplomacy. Here again, whatever amenities this may have for governments and government functionaries, it can be nothing but harmful to the arts.

A third area of concern is the attitude towards — and the handling of the arts by — national institutions in all three countries and the attitudes of those assigned by these institutions to cater to the needs of the arts. It would be unreasonable, of course, to expect every functionary in the vast machinery of every government to have an understanding of and a soft spot for the arts just because he or she works in a government department remotely connected with some aspect of the arts; but that fact does not put an end to the nagging concern roused by the observation of the blatant distractedness and indifference, the mechanical attitude and insensitive touch with which the destiny of national cultures and heritages is dealt with at the hands of aparatchiks most of the time. In this one respect, perhaps one could be allowed to wish for the dubious (but at least partially predictable) alternative of a private sector handling of even the national arts; for governments, when they lose their perspective and their sense of propriety with regard to anything, can be worse than profit-motivated individuals.

More important than anything else, there is pressing need for reading back from the arts into the systems that have been created, at least in theory, to protect, propagate and encourage them.

## The Economics of the Arts

It has for years been a mystery to many how the arts, which together form one of the biggest, most prolific and most profitable sectors of any economy, are consistently in a state of penury and need. The popular retort that they are in that state because governments do not provide them with the necessary funds is, in reality, begging the question. If the arts are one of the biggest and most profitable sectors of an economy (and there is every indication that they are) they should generate their own wealth of funds; if they do, they cannot be in need of funds from governments or any other source. The entire premiss — that the arts are in a constant state of need — therefore seems to be more doctrine than fact. Those who advocate the doctrine, if sincere in their argument, are probably referring to only a restricted and specialized area of the arts not by any means representative of the whole. Those who use the argument to cover the arts in general are probably oblivious of that other vast contingent which is financially self-sufficient. If they are not oblivious of this but ignore it intentionally, they most probably have ulterior motives and cannot be accepted in sober argument.

In practice, all sides to the arts controversy, including governments, those who have accepted the mantle of 'defending' the arts and even artists themselves, seem to have come in time to look upon the arts as an order of mendicancy and upon those involved in them as mendicants. This does not tally with the facts

and figures available in the arts world concerning the arts and their economic potential.

A great many people involved with the arts and their study believe that historically, the arts have been the privilege of the few. This does not make sense for the simple fact that there is ample evidence to show that the man in the street has had as much access to and enjoyed as much of the arts as the next man. John Pick and Malcolm Hey Anderton (1990) give facts and figures substantiating this in their publication 'Industrial Support for the Arts'.<sup>(7)</sup>

Until the Industrial Revolution, it was the affluent squire who had any leisure, any time to devote exclusively to the finer things in life: to art, to music, to the theatre. The great majority of people — who had to spend almost every minute of their lives earning their living — had neither the time nor the inclination for much else. Man cannot, however, live by bread alone and even the busy, labouring peasant or petty tradesman had his share of frolicking. This had to be snatched when and where possible and did not, therefore, have the appearance of the relaxed indulgence available to the rich. Thus, in time, what went on in the mansions came to be looked upon as something quite else, as something exclusive and to be envied. This gave rise to the myth that the arts were fineries only available to the few. What the man in the street got came to be considered (and this was reinforced by the snob value given to the rich man's pastime) as entertainment, while that which went on in the squire's mansion came to be looked upon as art. The man in the street was considered as paying for his entertainment, the rich as supporting the arts. In effect, there was no difference between what was happening and how it was made to happen, but



the myth was created. Thus, however much the masses partook in the arts, it was to the rich that the artists were drawn and in the rich that they saw their future. Today, that accounts, at least partially, for the narrowness of the economic base on which the arts depend. What becomes dependent upon a narrow economic base either starves to death or becomes mendicant by nature if it persists long enough. By the time the Industrial Revolution had placed the West on the road to prosperity, the arts and those entangled in their sphere had accepted the fate that their destiny depended upon the charity of others.

The very factor which had limited the economic base of the arts to the rich few had, however, one other effect which could be considered beneficial in a very round-about way: by not leaving the average man time enough for the arts, it kept the arts more affordable. Had this not happened, the extra demand would, on the one hand, have so increased the price of the arts that even the little which was available to the financially less able would have been priced out and, on the other, lowered artistic standards. As the potential released by the Industrial Revolution materialized into a usable force and took effect and as its displacement factor was accommodated, the distribution of wealth became more equitable and working conditions improved. The more equitable distribution of wealth afforded the man in the street more time and this rapidly inflated the demand for the arts so that it became impossible for the local squire and the odd well-wisher alone to support the arts effectively any more and it was here that for the first time governments had to step in on a large, systematic scale. This stepped-up intervention on the part of governments

confirmed the already existing view that the arts were a poor relative to the rest of industry and needed looking after.

Today, most writing on the subject of the arts tends to confirm this view. Seldom is there a champion for the arts who really and seriously considers them a genuine, potent and viable force. The all too common attitude seems to be that the artist is a second-class citizen, a kind of freak who will not survive unless he is spoon-fed by the healthier, more stable elements of human society (viz., the rich) and that his work is at best a trivial pastime which can contribute to complete one's pleasure in life if one has everything else, but not a serious and viable enterprise. The attitude is not expressed in so many words, of course, but the attitude is there and can be easily discerned. There are very few people, it appears, upon whom the tremendous potential of the arts seems to have dawned. Almost everyone who gives the subject any thought seems to take it for granted that the arts are an orphanage, a poorhouse or a beggars' colony. The rifest argument around is whether the arts should be subsidized, funded or supported by governments, or donated to, patronized or sponsored by the private sector and individuals. Both, those who want governments to support the arts and those who think the arts should be given back to the people to be looked after, obviously think that the arts need to be supported and looked after. That may appear to be perfectly true and harmless. However, there is another side to the equation which is seldom noticed: that the arts can be so desperately in need of support only if they are grossly inept and incapable themselves. That is a myth whose ghost will have to be laid to rest if the arts are ever to get a fair deal. It will have to be accepted for a fact that the arts are

neither inept nor incapable and that they are not in need of any charity, either public or private. For it is mainly because of that unrealistic attitude that the arts have never been given credit for being a creative and viable economic force and have hence never acted as such.

The long history of art support and the malaise associated with the arts seem to make one reality obvious: that if the arts continue to rely upon governments and well-wishers, they will remain within this order of mendicancy no matter how much governments allocate to them and the public contributes. For no matter what proportion of public and private resources are diverted into the arts, they will never suffice them. If the arts are ever to break out of this vicious circle, they will have to become self-sufficient; if they are ever to become self-sufficient, they will have to find wider economic bases because as economic bases, neither governments nor charitable institutions are considered to be at all wide. This is not to suggest that the arts should commercialize themselves but rather that they should develop and implement strategies which will, while maintaining their relative freedom from the economic and commercial dictates of others, provide them with financial resources as the natural outcome of their own function. Commercialization is making financial gain the only (or at least the most important) objective in an endeavour; widening the economic base, on the other hand, is maintaining original objectives and standards while using market forces to advantage, proliferating and finding a more substantial audience.

It may be justifiably argued that the arts have been trying to become independent of outside support but have not succeeded. In a way perhaps they

have. The market for the arts at the tail end of the twentieth century is in no way comparable to that at the beginning, and yet governments have not, proportionately to that expansion, been increasing their support to the arts, and neither has the private sector. The arts have come a long way from the days they were entirely dependent upon the giving hand, but they still have a long way to go to achieve self-sufficiency.

If the transition is to be completed, if self-sufficiency is to be achieved, governments and the private sector will have to continue their support for some time to come, but the arts will also have to step up their endeavour in expanding their economic base. In the meantime, they will also have to reduce their dependence on governments and the private sector at a slightly higher rate in order to break the vicious circle in which they have been caught.

Concern may be expressed at the suggestion of independence for the arts on two scores:

a) that the experimenters and experimental arts, not having a potential for earning, would be starved out of existence and

b) that only a few artists would get themselves a place at the economic table while the rest would barely earn enough to survive.

Both arguments are highly questionable:

a) When the arts become a fully fledged economic sector, they will have ample financial resources of their own to allocate sufficient funds to the experimental fringe. Every other wide-based economic sector does. If the arts do not, at

present, it is because they have not properly developed their earning power; and they have not done so because they have so far been caught in the charity trap.

b) Most artists are unable to make a living out of their work because the market for the arts has not realized its true potential and is operating from a very narrow base. Once that is remedied, there will be a place for everyone.

This does not, of course, mean that every artist who picks up a paint brush or does a jig will be a Gauguin or an Astaire, either economically or artistically; but then neither will everyone who digs a hole in the ground be a Getty. There are always those who fall by the wayside in every profession and trade, and the arts should not be considered an exception. The few who do not make it are either those who are doing experimental work or those who lack talent and should not be in the arts in the first place. The first group will be provided for as indicated in (a) above; the second should be advised to try their hand at something else. The suggestion may sound very harsh, but it should be borne in mind that arts administration has to be realistic or it will never accomplish much. Here, the arts administration to which reference is being made is a field divorced from government, a part of the broader economic domain to which the arts rightfully belong. It is therefore a part of the machinery of the arts themselves and not a monitoring system designed and imposed from outside and above.

The alternative is to continue in the existing vein, with more forceful insistence that either governments or the private sector and the general public (or both) support the arts but at a much higher rate and in a far more liberal fashion. The problem with that would be what it has been all along: the more the arts are

supported from without the more dependent they will become on the source providing the support and the less they will learn to fend for themselves; which is what has been happening so far. What is more, however benevolent governments and people are, they will perforce be eternally limited in their support and will want a say in return for their benevolence. Worst of all, the more governments give the more mercenary and mendicant the arts will feel and will be seen to feel and the less they will be in a position to have a say in their own destiny.

Finally, it will have to be borne in mind that there is politics involved not only in the running of the arts but also in the arts themselves. It is not 'done', for example, to be too rational and practical-minded in the treatment of the subject of art. One has to be seen to pay lip-service to the 'ideals' of the arts (despite the fact that these ideals never seem to have any definite form, meaning or aim) and to artists (even though they have never produced a single work of art). Not to do this is a form of heresy in the same way that until very recently it was heresy not to pay lip-service to certain socialistic ideals, despite the fact that these ideals were known to be mainly starry-eyed longing for Utopian conditions everybody knew were impracticable. Thus, whoever takes on the challenge of trying to put the arts on their feet will also face the barrage of insinuation, defamation and even ex-communication which will ensue. This is less because of vested interests than natural conservatism. All living things object to change because change means an upheaval, an upsetting of the status quo and there is no organism that can take that without showing at least some resistance. An aversion to change is part of the normal function of the nervous

system in all living things. Hence, the author of any suggested change is liable to receive opposition of all kinds, from all quarters and under all pretexts. For, as John Kenneth Galbraith, retired Professor of Economics at Harvard University, points out in his riveting and now classical work *The Affluent*

*Society*:

"... these are also days in which even the mildly critical individual is likely to seem like a lion in contrast with the general mood. These are the days when men of all social disciplines and all political faiths seek the comfortable and the accepted; when the man of controversy is looked upon as a disturbing influence; when originality is taken to be a mark of instability; and when, in minor modification of the scriptural parable, the bland lead the bland."<sup>(8)</sup>

## Suggestionf for Future Research

Among the many areas of thought and future study which have come to the fore as needing further investigation in the course of this study have been the need for:

- ◆ A dispassionate re-assessment, in detail, of the situation in which the arts find themselves and what, in practical terms, can be said to be the 'dilemma' of the arts.
- ◆ Research, through properly structured economic models, of the actual effects that government and private sector support have had on the arts and whether (and to what extent) these effects have been beneficial or detrimental to the arts and their future.
- ◆ Studies of what effects price control has had on the arts subjected to it.
- ◆ There is need for further extensive research into the means and modes of widening the economic base of the arts.
- ◆ Work is needed on economic models to show, in realistic terms, the status of the arts under total government control and totally divorced from government control.
- ◆ Strategies and steps necessary for the total disentanglement of the arts from the institution and function of government need to be established to create a



platform from which to study the possibility and feasibility of such disentanglement.

- ◆ Studies as required into the possibility and feasibility of the creation of a body, entirely divorced from government influence and financial support to act as the executive of the arts function. These studies may then be extended to cover the most practical and appropriate base for such a body, were it to be created.

- ◆ In-depth research can be undertaken into the definition of professionalism and the stage at which an artist may be said to have attained it.

- ◆ Curricula need to be developed for the professional training of artists and arts managers with the view to inculcate the same sense of practical earnestness in the world of the arts as exists in all other professions.

- ◆ Studies need to be embarked upon aimed at the devising and introduction of fresh and meaningful syllabi and curricula into the educational system aimed at educating the young in the arts and inculcating in them a set of values which gives the same weight to the arts as all other subjects being taught.

Some of these studies can be individual efforts, others will perforce have to be communal undertakings.

## CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

### Summing Up

Frederick Dorian begins his now classic *Commitment to Culture* with a Prologue which reads:

" The art scene in the United States reveals a puzzling and painful paradox.

Numerous aspects of art life in the United States can be interpreted with optimism. The creative achievement of American artists has earned world-wide respect and recognition. Public appreciation of the arts has grown from coast to coast. Schools, radio, television, the press, and popular magazines have spread interest in the arts among those who seldom, if ever before, participated in the artistic experience. New art centers have been completed and are functioning for the benefit of the people. The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York dwarfs in magnitude of design and generosity of sponsorship all other projects of its kind.

Reports of a 'cultural explosion' are flooding the country. But the simplified concept of the nation-wide 'cultural boom' has developed into a cliché which in stereotyped repetition obscures rather than clarifies the state of the American art scene. For there is another side to its picture. As the public interest in art and the national income attain an all-time high, the stability and security of many of our cultural institutions are precarious. In spite of all signs of progress and promise, some of our most important art organizations are not assured of continued existence. This is particularly true of institutions devoted to the performing arts, which are a chief concern of this study."<sup>(9)</sup>

Dorian then goes on to complain how, in the 1961-62 season, crisis was besetting the major orchestras and operas of the United States and how the American theatre was in a precarious position, and he ends up by blaming this state of affairs on the fact that the overwhelming costs of the arts have

traditionally been borne in the United States by private patronage and that the 'public purse' has only sporadically opened to aid the arts. He then says:

" The methods of art support in America are in sharp contrast with those of Europe. European art patronage is an ancient tradition and the experience of centuries. The history of art support in Europe proves how a cultural legacy creates simultaneously the enjoyment of and need for a full art life and the means for its continuous fulfillment. As a result of a process spanning many centuries, there prevails in contemporary Europe a secure support of the performing arts, both west and east of the Iron Curtain.

The Europeans have adopted the principle of government patronage. Whatever the form of government — monarchy or republic — European countries have traditionally managed to make large funds available for their theaters, operas, and concert organizations. The sums required are voted by federal and provincial parliaments or by municipal councils, and the allocations are administered by governmental departments. European patronage is perpetual. It has flourished in times of peace. It has survived social upheavals and wars. At all times official recognition has surrounded the arts with an aura of prestige and public importance. And Europeans are constantly extending the scope of a patronage which is their heritage of thousands of years."<sup>(10)</sup>

Obviously a good example not only of the received wisdom that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence but also of the fact that when a person wants to believe something, no amount of contradictory evidence will deter him from so doing. It did not apparently cross Dorian's mind that in the Europe to which he so wistfully refers, whereas cultural legacy may have had something to do with the creation of an enjoyment of and a need for art, it could not have had any bearing on the provision of means for its 'continuous fulfillment'. He furthermore chose not to see the fact that there did not prevail 'a secure support of the performing arts' in Europe and that it was not the Europeans who adopted the principle of government patronage but rather the principle of government patronage which adopted them. And so with official recognition surrounding the arts with an aura of prestige, etc. The fact of the

matter is that while Dorian was so admiringly reflecting upon all the wondrous benefits which were accruing to the arts in Europe, there were thousands of people in the arts in Britain and Italy alone who were raising their voices in objection to the state of the arts in their countries. Even Dorian himself reflects this fact in the later chapters of *Commitment to Culture*.

As this study has tried to indicate, whereas the handling of the arts and the attitudes towards them are different in the three countries scrutinized, what is simplistically referred to as the 'arts problem' is more or less the same, irrespective of who funds the arts and how. In all three countries, the arts are unequivocally considered to be 'in bad shape and heading for worse'. In what shape they actually are, why and how this shape is bad and what is to be done if it is to be improved are questions which do not fetch responses to the same extent unequivocal. According to different groups, some of the specific complaints are that the arts:

- have a very low per capita consumption
- are not looked after properly
- cannot successfully and properly provide for those involved in them
- are stifled and brought to stagnations by government handling and funding
- are not provided with the security and peace of mind so essential to artistic creativity
- have never achieved the status they deserve

- are unnecessarily affected by economic events and conditions beyond their control
- have never been given a fair deal
- are constantly starved of funds

There are unlimited variations on these themes which all revolve around two basic premisses:

- a) that the arts should be given all the money they want, and
- b) that they should be free to spend that money as they wish and have the right to ask for (and receive) more.

Since the arts lobby is not the only one making these demands and since there is something called the economic problem which makes the meeting of such demands, even from one single source, totally and absolutely impossible, the demands and the arguments behind them are doomed to be frustrated wherever and however many times they are raised. The demands themselves are nothing unexpected, of course. It is only natural that every area of human interest should think only of itself and in purely selfish terms. In the end, the diverse forces will create a balance of sorts within which what is possible and practicable finds a chance to assert itself. However, as this work has so far tried to illustrate, the premisses upon which the arguments are based are themselves not as meaningful and relevant as first appears and the tone and intent of the grievances raised indicate once again that the fundamental attitude

underlying them is no different from one group to another or from one country to the next: everywhere the arts are the sick, poor child that needs to be looked after and cared for. This has so far been a very convenient attitude for the arts which have not wanted to accept responsibility for their own lot and in those who do not want them at any stage so to do. However, he who refuses to be responsible for his own welfare can have little hope of any improvement in his lot except through a charitable emotion swelling in a charitable breast. And emotions make a very unreliable economic base.

The elemental part of man's contribution to existence is his creativity. That creativity abides in his thinking and his art. In everything else man is only equal to every other living thing. Whereas in many instances his thinking has taken directions detrimental to its own purpose, his art has never been but benign and benevolent. If there are any exceptions to this in history, the exceptions are where man's thinking mind has used his art to devious effect.

Art has become an integral part of almost every industry and trade. The most concrete and obvious example is industrial design which has become an indispensable part of everyday life. Advertising, window dressing, packaging, architecture, the media and fashion are other areas. Artists are a necessary market force of great potency, and they are here to stay, not as quaint, eccentric oddities as in times past but as a brave new influence which is already beginning to have more to do with our daily existence than any other single consideration. Industry and trade have already taken note of that fact and have reacted accordingly. Governments and public opinion should follow suite or lay

themselves open to ridicule. It is time society in general took steps to welcome this influence, pave its way and facilitate its function. Academic research can and must be the prime means of giving direction to this effort.

The present work has tried to look at the picture of the arts overall and to cover general areas of concern. It has, however, tried to suggest areas where a good deal more of research and thinking are required if any headway is to be made in ensuring a better future for the arts. There are, needless to say, others which can be discovered and suggested.

## CONCLUSION

## NOTES

1. Museums Journal, June 1991, p 24
2. John Pick, Arts Administration (London: E & FN Spon, 1980) p 64
3. Edward Banfield, The Democratic Muse (New York: 20th Century Fund, 1984) pp.63-64
4. Ibid., p. 64
5. John Pick, Arts Administration (London: E & FN Spon, 1980) p. 64
6. E.C. Banfield, The Democratic Muse (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1984) p. 217
7. John Pick & Malcolm Hey Anderton, 'Industrial Support for the Arts (London: Rhinegold, 1990)
8. John Kenneth Galbraith, The Affluent Society (London: Andre Deutsch, 1984) p. 4
9. F. Dorian, Commitment to Culture (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964) p. 1
10. Ibid., p. 2



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